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The Oregon Mandolin Orchestra was established in 2010 to revive the tradition of community-based mandolin orchestras popular in the early 20th century. The all-volunteer Orchestra is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization eligible to receive tax-deductible donations.

Your donations help the orchestra to purchase copyrighted sheet music from both classical and modern era composers, allowing us to meet our organizational mission: to provide unique performance and educational opportunities for music enthusiasts of all ages and levels of expertise.

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Oregon Mandolin Orchestra
P.O. Box 1783
Portland, OR 97207

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The orchestra is grateful for the support provided by Friends of the Oregon Mandolin Orchestra, a group of volunteers who help make our concerts possible. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Ed Rosney at edrosney@earthlink.net.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

A CONCERT SALUTE

TO THE MUSIC
OF AFRICAN-
AMERICAN
COMPOSERS

WITH THE HOW
LONG JUG BAND



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

7:30 P.M.

WALTERS CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

527 E MAIN ST, HILLSBORO, OR



A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

As a life-long fan of pop music with a passing interest in history, I have heard for years that much of what makes American music special comes from the musical traditions of enslaved Africans. For example: The modern banjo, that foundation of country and bluegrass music,

descends from instruments first played by enslaved Africans as far back as the 17th century. Appalachian folk music (the forerunner of country music) in the 18th and 19th centuries arose from the intermingling of European folk melodies with rhythms and vocal adaptations from enslaved Blacks. And of course: country music wouldn't be recognizable without the blues, nor would rock and roll or that most American art form: jazz.

These are just a few examples among many and detailing them further is beyond our present scope, but the mandolin does not stand aside isolated from these currents of history. Tonight, rather than just acknowledging the influence and contributions of African American musicians, we'd like to celebrate them specifically and in ways that make sense for our ensemble. This program is not comprehensive by any means, but is intended to include rarities, artistic highpoints and stylistic diversity.

This evening we highlight Black mandolin music with (nearly!) forgotten compositions from Silas Seth Weeks (1868-1953,) an orchestral arrangement of Coley Jones' "Dallas Rag," and music by Lt. James Reese Europe (1881-1919,) a WWI combat veteran whose Clef Club Orchestra featured large numbers of mandolins and was the first African American ensemble to perform at Carnegie Hall. Ragtime and jazz music are represented with selections by none other than the geniuses Scott Joplin (1868-1917) and Edward "Duke" Ellington (1899-1974). We include a nod to popular song and the musical wellspring of New Orleans with "Basin Street Blues" by Spencer Williams (1889-1965,) and two pieces by Florence Price (1887-1953) offer classical music evocative of hymns and spirituals from the Black church.

Special thanks to our friends the How Long Jug Band for their performance tonight, and to the City of Hillsboro for having us back to this wonderful stage. Of course, we would not be here without your support over the years, thank you for coming out, and we hope you enjoy the show!

Christian McKee,
Musical Director of the Oregon Mandolin Orchestra

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SPECIAL GUESTS

THE HOW LONG JUG BAND



The How Long Jug Band's repertoire draws heavily from African American music, celebrating its back-porch roots and the time when musicians regularly made their own instruments.

Left to right: Peter "Spud" Siegel, Giued Hatch, Arlo Leach and Steve Hassett

PROGRAM NOTES

ADORATION

Composed by Florence B. Price in 1951, just two years before her death. The piece was written for solo organ to evoke a prelude or an offertory piece at church.

BASIN STREET BLUES

Composer Spencer Williams wrote this long-time jazz standard in 1928 about the main street in Storyville, the former red-light district in New Orleans.

BETHENA

Composed by “King of Ragtime” Scott Joplin in 1905, combining elements of a piano rag and a wistful waltz. Joplin’s first work after his wife’s death in 1904.

DALLAS RAG

A 1927-vintage rag by Coley Jones, who led The Dallas String Band, the piece gave Jones the chance to show off his skills as a mandolin player.

HEY! THERE!

A one-step composed in 1915 by James Reese Europe, who founded the Clef Club Orchestra to perform at his venue in New York City’s Harlem neighborhood.

MOUNT HARISSA

Duke Ellington recorded this haunting piece in 1966 as part of his “Far East Suite” concept album, which was inspired by his group’s tour of Asia.

ORIGINAL RAGS

Ragtime pioneer Scott Joplin composed this medley in 1899, the first of Joplin’s piano rags to appear in print and a promise of themes he later would explore.

LA PETITE OVERTURE

Published in 1899 by Silas Seth Weeks, the overture ranges from introspective musing and full symphonic voice to a passage inspired by a polonaise.

RANG TANG DANCE

Silas Seth Weeks published this expressive song in 1904. It is presumed to celebrate a popular step for square-dance couples, the Georgia Rang Tang.

STRING QUARTET IN G MAJOR

Florence B. Price composed this piece in 1929, creating a deeply spiritual mood for a classic string quartet. Her gifts for melody and harmony are on full display.

PROGRAM

Basin Street Blues	Spencer Williams (1889 - 1965) <i>arr.</i> Erich Siebert
Dallas Rag	Coley Jones & the Dallas String Band (1927) <i>arr.</i> Rich DelGrosso & Christian McKee
Rang Tang Dance	Silas Seth Weeks (1868 - 1953)
Original Rags	Scott Joplin (1868 - 1917) <i>arr.</i> Alan Jacobson
Bethena: A Concert Waltz.....	Scott Joplin (1868 - 1917) <i>arr.</i> for mandolin orchestra by Bob Puckett
Adoration	Florence B. Price (1887 - 1953) <i>arr.</i> Elaine Fine
Mount Harissa	Duke Ellington (1899 - 1974) <i>arr.</i> Chuck Whitman
String Quartet in G Major (Andante Moderato).....	Florence B. Price (1887 - 1953)
Hey! There!.....	James Reese Europe (1881 - 1919) <i>arr.</i> J. Louis von der Mehden, Jr.
La Petite Overture	Silas Seth Weeks (1868 - 1953) <i>arr.</i> Chuck Whitman

FEATURED COMPOSERS



SILAS SETH WEEKS (1868 - 1953)

Silas Seth Weeks was born in Vermont, Illinois. He sought to make the mandolin independent of other instruments, and his playing emphasized the difficult duo style, a way of playing in which the mandolin takes the melody, counterpoint and harmony parts all at once. Properly done, duo style produces what sounds like “two or more instruments” instead of only one.

Weeks toured North America in “circuits,” performing and teaching, including in public schools in Chicago, Boston, Salt Lake City, and San Francisco. He also led a mandolin orchestra in Tacoma, Washington! Weeks composed and arranged music, performing his own works on tour. He toured England, France and Russia and temporarily lived in London until World War I, when he returned with his family to New York and played in jazz bands. His place of death is unknown.



SPENCER WILLIAMS (1889 - 1965) Spencer Williams was born in Vidalia, Louisiana. He was educated at St. Charles University in New Orleans.

Williams was performing in Chicago by 1907 and moved to New York City about 1916. After arriving in New York, he co-wrote several songs with Anton Lada of the Louisiana Five. Among those songs was “Basin Street Blues,” which became one of his most popular songs.

Williams returned to New York in 1957, before his death in Flushing, New York, on July 14, 1965. Williams was posthumously inducted into the

Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1970.



FLORENCE B. PRICE (1887 - 1953) Florence Beatrice Price (née Smith) was an African American classical composer, pianist, organist and music teacher. Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, Price was educated at the New England Conservatory of Music and was active in Chicago from 1927 until her death in 1953.

Price is noted as the first African American woman to have a major orchestra play one of her compositions. She composed over 300 works in her career, including four symphonies, concertos, choral works, art songs and chamber pieces.

Although her training was steeped in European tradition, Price frequently drew upon African American church music as material for her arrangements. In 1940, she was inducted into the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. Price died in Chicago in 1953.



SCOTT JOPLIN (1868 - 1917) Scott Joplin was an American composer and pianist, dubbed the “King of Ragtime.” During his brief career, he wrote more than 40 original ragtime pieces, one ragtime ballet and two operas. One of his first and most popular pieces, the “Maple Leaf Rag,” became ragtime’s first hit, and his music is widely considered an important forerunner of jazz and swing.

Joplin grew up in a musical family in Texarkana, Arkansas. During the 1880s, he played across the South. His performances at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair elevated ragtime into a national craze.

In January 1917, suffering from dementia, Joplin was admitted to a New York hospital, and died three months later. His music enjoyed a resurgence in the early 1970s, boosted by the 1973 feature film, “The Sting” which featured his piece, “The Entertainer.” In 1976, Joplin was posthumously awarded a Pulitzer Prize.

COLEY JONES (CIRCA 1880s - 1930s) Coley Jones was an American country blues mandolin player popular in Dallas, Texas, in the 1920s. Much of Jones’s background, such as his residency, dates of his birth and death are obscure. However, he is best remembered for leading and recording with The Dallas String Band. Their best-known song was their version of the traditional Irish folk tune, “Drunkard’s Special.”

Jones was born sometime in the late-1880s, in Texas, to a musical family. In 1903, he moved to Dallas and joined a traveling minstrel show.

Between 1927 and 1929, Jones recorded compositions for Columbia Records, singing and playing guitar. His “Dallas Rag” showed off his skill on mandolin. By the end of 1929, no further documentation of Jones is found. He is believed to have performed in Dallas well into the 1930s.



DUKE ELLINGTON (1899 - 1974) Edward “Duke” Ellington was an American jazz pianist, composer and orchestra leader, starting in 1923. Born and raised in Washington, D.C., Ellington was based in New York City from the mid-1920s until his death. Ellington wrote or collaborated on more than 1,000 compositions, the largest recorded personal jazz legacy. Many of his pieces have become standards.

Ellington recorded for most American record companies, performed in and scored several films and composed stage musicals. Ellington was known for his inventive use of the orchestra, or big band, as well as for

his eloquence and charisma. He was awarded a posthumous Pulitzer Prize Special Award for music in 1999.



JAMES REESE EUROPE (1881 - 1919) Europe was born in Mobile, Alabama, and moved to New York in 1904.

In 1910, he organized the Clef Club, a society for African Americans in the music industry. The Clef Club Orchestra became the first group of Black musicians to perform at Carnegie Hall in 1912. During World War I, he fought with and led the regimental band of the 369th Infantry, the “Harlem Hellfighters.”

During the war Europe was key in popularizing African American music with foreign audiences, insisting on playing in his own style: “We colored people have our own music that is part of us. It’s the product of our souls; it’s been created by the sufferings and miseries of our race.”

He died at a New York hospital after being stabbed by one of his band members during an argument. He was buried with full military honors.



MACEO PINKARD (1897 - 1962) Maceo Pinkard was born in Bluefield, West Virginia and was educated at the Bluefield Colored Institute. He became one of the greatest composers of the Harlem Renaissance.

At age 17, Pinkard founded a theatrical agency in Omaha, Nebraska, and eventually founded Pinkard Publications, a music publishing firm in New York City.

In 1919, Pinkard moved to New York City. “Sweet Georgia Brown” became a Number One Billboard hit in the summer of 1925. Pinkard collaborated with two Jewish Americans to write the song, composer Ben Bernie and Kenneth Casey – a woman – who wrote the lyrics. The lively piece was later adopted as the Harlem Globetrotters’ theme song.

Pinkard was inducted in the National Academy of Popular Music Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1984.