



Hannibal Lokumbe:

# *Veils of Justice*

Trials, Tears, Transcendence:

The Journey of Clara Luper

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**Trials, Tears, Transcendence:  
The Journey of Clara Luper**

1 Veil 1

2 Veil 2

3 Veil 3

4 **John Brown and Blue**

**Fannie Lou Hamer**

5 I Believe in God

6 I Survived Winona County Jail

7 And the Pain of This Old Land

8 If I Have to Die

9 **When the Peace Comes**

Oklahoma City Philharmonic  
Alexander Mickelthwate, conductor  
Karen Slack, soprano; Marilyn Luper Hildreth,  
narrator; Brannen Temple, percussion;  
Ambassadors' Concert Choir (Sandra Thompson,  
Artistic Director); Canterbury Voices  
(Randy Ellefson, Director) 1-3

Igor Lipinski, piano 4

Commissioned by Kronos Quartet  
Hamer String Quartet: Kimberly Fisher, violin;  
Julia Li, violin; Kerri Ryan, viola; John Koen, cello;  
Tulivu-Donna Cumberbatch, vocalist 5-8

Patrick Conlon, violin; Jabee Williams, spoken word 9



**Recorded at:**

Oklahoma City Civic Center Music Hall,  
Oklahoma City, OK  
(May 13, 2023) 1-3;  
The University of Oklahoma,  
Pitman Recital Hall,  
Norman, OK  
(February 6, 2025) 4;  
WRTI 90.1 Radio Station,  
Philadelphia, PA  
(January 20, 2020) 5-8;  
The Academy of Contemporary Music at  
the University of Central Oklahoma,  
Studio A, Oklahoma City, OK  
(March 9, 2025) 9.

**Executive Producer:** Brent Hart

**Producer:** Christina Giacona

**Conductor:** Alexander Mickelthwate

**Engineers:** Patrick Conlon  
and Christina Giacona

**Recording Engineer (tracks 5-8):** Tyler  
McClure

**Mix Engineer:** Patrick Conlon

**Mastering Engineer:** Kevin Lively

**Assistant Engineers:** Chris Prather and  
Nolan Baker



ONYX  
LANE





# PREFACE

## Preface: Oklahoma Stories and the Spirit of Clara Luper

In 2018, shortly after arriving in Oklahoma City, I was introduced to the enduring legacy of Clara Luper—a name I encountered through Sam Anderson’s book *Boom Town*, and whose story quickly became deeply personal through my friendship with Jabee Williams and, later, through conversations with Clara’s daughter, Marilyn Luper Hildreth. What began as a seed of curiosity grew into an artistic calling: to honor Oklahoma’s powerful stories through music. Thus began the Oklahoma Stories series—an initiative to present one major work each season that highlights narratives rooted in Oklahoma’s past and present, stories so meaningful they deserve to be heard across the nation and around the world. From our commemorative piece rooted in healing from the Oklahoma City bombing, to works celebrating Native American voices like Jerod Impichchaachaaha’ Tate, each concert is a gesture of remembrance, recognition, and creative communion.

The commission of this new work by Hannibal Lokumbe, *Trials, Tears, Transcendence: The Journey of Clara Luper*, is a profound continuation of that vision. Hannibal is not just a composer—he is a seer, a poet of sound, a creator whose artistry is rooted in love, freedom, and justice. Collaborating with him has been one of the most inspiring experiences of my career. His process is deeply personal and intuitive. Over the course of a year, he visited Oklahoma City multiple times, met with Marilyn Luper Hildreth, and absorbed the living history that still pulses through this city. The resulting composition tells Clara’s story through the voice of her daughter—a series of musical letters, intimate and soaring, personal and prophetic. Featuring GRAMMY®-Award Winning Soprano Karen Slack, percussionist Brannan Temple, the Ambassador Choir and the Canterbury Voices, this is a story not only of civil rights but of human dignity, peaceful resistance, and the power of teaching children to lead.

As Marilyn once shared, she was just eight years old when her mother taught her about Mahatma Gandhi. That seed grew into one of the first student-led sit-in movements in the country, right here in Oklahoma City.

This performance was shaped by the people in our community. We reached out to churches, schools, and families. We invited new audiences into the concert hall, and on the night of the premiere, the air felt electric—more like a sanctuary than a symphony. Applause erupted at the end of the second movement before the piece had even finished. People were moved. We all were.

This incredible work is paired with three other compositions by Hannibal Lokumbe that each interface with the civil rights movement and the search for peace and equality in this beautiful and complex nation. John Brown and Blue, performed by pianist Igor Lipinski, and Fannie Lou Hamer, originally commissioned by the Kronos String Quartet and performed here by the inimitable jazz vocalist Tulivu-Donna Cumberbatch and the Hamer Quartet (made up of Kimberly Fisher, William Polk, Kerri Ryan, and John Koen) bring the history of the civil rights movement into the concert hall. The final track on the album, *When The Peace Comes*, performed by poet and community leader Jabee Williams and violinist Patrick Conlon, is a deeply-felt meditation on life, death, struggle, and release.

To commission a new work is to believe in the future and reflect on our past. It is to say that the stories of our past are not over, and that we can still gather to create beauty, together. In a world so often fractured, we offer this music as a healing act—rooted in freedom songs, bursting with life, and echoing with the voices of Clara, Marilyn, and Hannibal.

We invite you to listen deeply.

**By Alexander Mickelthwate, Music Director**  
**Edited by Christina Giacona, Producer**

## Hannibal Lokumbe



Hannibal Lokumbe is an award-winning composer, jazz musician, poet, author, and educator whose career spans over six decades. He spent twenty-five years in New York City playing trumpet and recording with some of his jazz heroes (including Gil Evans, Pharoah Sanders, Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, and McCoy Tyner) and is the recipient of numerous awards including The USA Artists (Cummings Fellow), The Joyce, Bessie S., NEA, and Lifetime Achievement Award from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Lokumbe's work has been commissioned and performed by symphonies and orchestras across the country, including The Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra ("Can you hear God Crying?" conducted by Dirk Brossé, 2012), The Detroit Symphony Orchestra ("Dear Mrs. Parks," conducted by Thomas Wilkins, 2005), The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra ("God, Mississippi and a Man Called Evers" conducted by Dr. Leslie Dunner, 2002), and the Philadelphia Orchestra ("One Land, One River, One People," under the direction of Yannick Nézet-Séguin, 2014 and 2015).

In addition to more than 150 musical compositions written and commissioned for orchestra and smaller ensembles, he has published three volumes of poetry: *The Ripest of My Fruits*, *Love Poems to God*, and *Trilogy: Freedom Dance Cycle*.

***Composer-in-Residence, Philadelphia Orchestra  
Founder, Healing Tones Foundation***

## Alexander Mickelthwate



Photo: Shevaun Williams

Alexander Mickelthwate is a visionary conductor known for his innovative programming and ability to connect diverse audiences through music. Now in his eighth season as Music Director of the Oklahoma City Philharmonic and third as Artist-in-Residence at the University of Central Oklahoma Symphony Orchestra, he continues to elevate Oklahoma's cultural landscape.

Internationally respected and classically trained in Germany and the U.S., Mickelthwate has led acclaimed performances with top orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, and Royal Scottish Orchestra. He brings a bold, inclusive spirit to the podium—recent projects include American Indian Symphony by Chickasaw composer Jerod Tate and original works honoring Clara Luper and the Oklahoma City bombing anniversary. A passionate educator and collaborator, Mickelthwate works across disciplines at UCO and previously taught at universities in Canada and the U.S. He is also Music Director of California's Bear Valley Music Festival and Music Director Emeritus of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

Recognized as "The Face of Music" by 405 Magazine, his artistic leadership has shaped Oklahoma City's musical identity. He lives in OKC with his two sons.

***Music Director, Oklahoma City Philharmonic Artist-in-Residence,  
University of Central Oklahoma Symphony Orchestra***

## Oklahoma City Philharmonic



Photo: Jesse Edgar

Since 1988, the Oklahoma City Philharmonic has been a cornerstone of Oklahoma City's cultural landscape. Under the artistic leadership of Music Director Alexander Mickelthwate, the orchestra presents a diverse and inspiring lineup of Classics, orchestral Pops, and Discovery Family Concerts, while also serving the community through education and engagement programs for all ages. At the heart of everything we do is our mission: to serve the community through orchestral music and expand access to music for everyone. We believe music has the power to connect, uplift, and transform lives. We aim to enhance the cultural fabric of Oklahoma City, educate future generations about the value of music, entertain audiences with dynamic performances, and lead with artistic excellence. Through longstanding partnerships with other visual and performing arts organizations, we work to strengthen and unify our community through shared cultural experiences. Whether in the concert hall, classroom, or community spaces, the OKC Philharmonic remains committed to serving as both a cultural beacon and a catalyst for positive community growth. Together, we create more than music—we create lasting impact.

## Karen Slack



Courtesy of the Artist

Praised by The Washington Post as "one of opera's strongest voices at present—both as a singer and a shaper of its culture," GRAMMY® Award-winning soprano Karen Slack is celebrated for her rich artistry, passionate advocacy, and dynamic presence on both operatic and concert stages. She is the creator and performer of *African Queens*, currently on national tour, and recently won the 2025 GRAMMY® Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album for *Beyond the Years: Unpublished Songs of Florence Price* with pianist Michelle Cann. A champion of new music, she has premiered works by leading composers including Shawn Okpebholo, Tamar-kali, Kathryn Bostic, and Brittany J. Green. Slack has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the New York Philharmonic, among many others. A native of Philadelphia, she is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and a proud alum of the Adler Fellowship and Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera.



## Tulivu-Donna Cumberbatch



Photo: Manfred Werner

Tulivu-Donna Lynn Cumberbatch (1950-2022) is a celebrated jazz vocalist from Brooklyn, New York, known for her richly expressive voice and deep-rooted connection to the jazz tradition. The daughter of baritone saxophonist Harold Cumberbatch, Tulivu grew up surrounded by music, singing in church and school choirs before formally studying at Herbert H. Lehman College. She often performed with her ensemble The Magnificent Trio, and shared stages with luminaries such as Hannibal Lokumbe, Kimati Dinizulu, Diedre Murray, The Kronos Quartet, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra. Internationally recognized, she's appeared in the Caribbean, Europe, and Canada, and gained a global following through collaborations with Japanese composers Yoko Kanno (Cowboy Bebop, Song to Fly) and Yuki Kajiura (Fiction).

## Jabee Williams



Photo: Charlie Neuenschwander

Jabee is a 3x Emmy Award-winning rapper, voice actor, performer and community leader from Oklahoma City whose work has been praised by Chuck D saying "Jabee's music has the potential to change the world." His 2020 album *This World is so Fragile and Cruel* debuted at #3 on the iTunes Hip-Hop Charts, and he's now signed to Mello Music Group with his newest release *The Spirit Is Willing* hitting over 400k streams this year. Jabee has toured nationwide, including a 25-city tour with Brother Ali, and performed at several OKC Thunder halftime shows and festivals across the country. His voiceover and acting work includes campaigns for Steph Curry's Under Armour shoes, Thunder commercials, and national brand spots with Nike. He's received numerous local awards, including a Congressional Recognition from Congresswoman Kendra Horn, honoring his impact on youth and community and Oklahoma Gazette Best of 405. Jabee continues to merge music, purpose, and action, amplifying the voice of his city on every stage he touches.



## Igor Lipinski



Courtesy of the Artist

Polish-born pianist Igor Lipinski is an Associate Professor of Piano at the University of Oklahoma School of Music. A graduate of Eastman and Northwestern, Lipinski maintains an active concert career since his orchestral debut with the Buffalo Philharmonic on NPR's Performance Today. As a passionate recording artist, Lipinski has released multiple albums on Spotify and Apple Music under his own label, Vanishing Records. His research interests focus on the evolution of recital programming, a theme explored in his DMA dissertation, *From Liszt to Victor Borge: A Legacy of Unique Piano Performances*. Known for his innovative approach, Lipinski reimagines the traditional piano recital through interdisciplinary projects like *Piano Illusions*, an inventive fusion of piano and magic, featured in venues across the world, from Hong Kong to Vienna, and most recently, at the world's largest performing arts festival, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland.

## Patrick Conlon



Photo: Dylan Johnson

Patrick Conlon is a dynamic and versatile violinist and music producer whose performances bridge the worlds of classical concert works, fiddle, jazz, and contemporary composition. Known for his expressive tone and adventurous programming, Conlon has performed with ensembles including the Los Angeles New Music Ensemble, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, and the Fort Smith Symphony, where he serves as Principal Second Violin. As a session violinist, Conlon has recorded with genre-crossing acts such as Other Lives, The Polyphonic Spree, and Celtic Woman, and has performed as a featured soloist on more than a dozen feature film scores. He is frequently heard on commercial albums, including the GRAMMY®-nominated *Impossible Dream* by Aaron Lazar, *Aquamarine* by Kirsten Agresta-Copely (2024) and GRAMMY®-Winning *An Adoption Story* by Kitt Wakeley (2023).

## Hamer String Quartet



Photo: Amy Dennis

The Hamer String Quartet is a distinguished chamber ensemble comprised of four members of the Philadelphia Orchestra: violinists Kimberly Fisher and Julia Li, violist Kerri Ryan, and cellist John Koen. Known for their dynamic synergy and refined musicianship, the quartet brings a wealth of orchestral and chamber experience to the stage. The ensemble has been featured in performances of new works by composer Hannibal Lokumbe, including *Fannie Lou Hamer* and *A Star for Anne*, and remains active in community engagement and festival appearances throughout Philadelphia and beyond.



Photo: Michael Anderson

## Canterbury Voices

**Soprano:** Crystal Regin, Betty Gutel, Carmen Crawford, Michelle Bradford, Lynn Thomas-Lee, Susan Ballweg, Pam Mowry, Nina Wegrzyn-VanZant, Kelsey Warren Bryant, Haleigh Phillips, Rachel Bannon, Patricia Dennis, Cecilia "CC" Guthrie, Hannah Volk, Aubrey Chapin, Kerry Moore, Caitlyn Esparza, Lexi Skaggs, Amanda Winters, Denise Dougherty, Susanna Brieschke, Kailey King, Megan Reed-Hansen, Charissa Spruill, Janna Montgomery, Candace Fullmer

**Alto:** Margaret Merritt, Jane Anne Slane, Connie Sallee, Micah Bowen, Ling Chu Lin, Susan Pendergraft, Alicia Clifton, Erin Robison, Debra Davis, Lindsey Chancellor, Rosie Lodes, Tammy Russell Mayer, Kevynn Dunn, Denise Peabody-Sveatgoff, Tanya Speer, Mary Nell Brueggen, Lisa Gigstad, Cathrine Morrison, Debbie Neal, Adrienne DeKlotz, Alex Hudson, Jennifer Donworth, Eileen Smith, Dana Hampton, Katie Vogel, Elen Silva, Paula Allen, Hiromi Hood

**Tenor:** Cale Smith, Chris Gonzales, Robert Ward, Lucas Silva, Dennis Moran, Matthew Lawson, Damon Martin, Robert Lintner, Gabriel Reyes, Carson Matthews, Zach Hendrickson, David Burton, Chandler Whittington, David Fauser, Eric Bradford, Robert Bish, Mike Mowry, Ward Romberger

**Bass:** Jerrell Jones, Bruce Young, Kent Graham, Luke Forbat, Mark Brim, Ian Gordon, Evan Clay, Randi Von Ellefson, Rod Porter, Ben Grizzle, George Slane, Robert Cook, Chris Sholer, Bill Perring, Jamie Stephenson, Randy McDanielburg

## Ambassadors' Concert Choir

**Alto:** Ahna Boone, Alberta Bean, Ameyka Pittman, Beverly Bradley, Beverly Williams, Blessing Ameke, Carolyn Starks, Connie Johnson, Cynthia Williamson, Debra Woody, Delaney Kennedy, Donna Vaughn, Evelyn Morgan, Glenda Mumford, Greta Carreathers-Riggins, Janet Rodgers, MD, Joycelyn Brown, Karen Montgomery, Marcia Talley, Meg Sobel, Necole Lewis, Nicole Mukes, Norma Goff, Patricia Terrell, Sheila McGill

**Soprano:** Cora Kemp, Chandra Mack, Chequita Owens, Debbie Formhals, Debbie McCowan, Dimples Carson, Janet Vernon, Janice Frances—Smith, Joyce Cheatham, Judy Rackett, Julie Garrett, Kalya Glover-Dutick, Linda Harrell, Lisa Adams, Maatet Neith-Ratem, Maria Gore, Pamela Straw, Patti Drennan, Paula McCann, Rita Watson, Sharon Barnett-Johnson, Sonya Knight, Susan Jackson, Tyree Donato, Venita Fisher-Johnson, Vernita DeMartra, Vonya Brewer, Rev. Wanda Thomas

**Tenors:** Cameron Barnett, Dale Pfundt, De'Andre Jones, Dishon Rolle, Fred Demerson, John Black, Jude Papouloute, Malcolm Stoughtenborough, Orlando Smith

**Baritone/Bass:** Anceo Francisco, Anthony Francisco, Dennis Scott, Nate Stevens, Stephen Ketola, Wallace Johnson, Jr.

## Oklahoma City Philharmonic Roster

**Violin I:** Gregory Lee (Concertmaster), Marat Gabdullin (Assoc. Concertmaster), Densi Rushing (Asst. Concertmaster), David Hong Zhu, Andrés Caveda, Chandler Fadero, Min Jung Kim, Debbie McDonald, Lu Deng, Chuong Vu, Yajing Cindy Zhang, Edwin Lok-Hin Cheng, Sondra Brudnak, Ashley Cooper, Paulo Eskitch, Wan-Xuan Chen

**Violin II:** Katrin Stamatis (Principal), Catherine Reaves, Angélica Pereira, Ro Sophia, Sarah Brown, Corbin Mace, Audrey Lee, Chloe Johnson, Gena Alexander, Austin Rice, Nicholas J. Han

**Viola:** Royce McLarry (Principal), Mark Neumann, Joseph Guevara, Kelli Ingels, Steve Waddell, Donna Cain, Brian Frew, Shaohong Yuan, Jacqueline Skara, Lacie Savage

**Cello:** Jonathan C. Ruck (Principal), Meredith Blecha-Wells, Valorie Tatge, Emily Stoops, Jim Shelley, Angelika Machnik-Jones, Jean Statham, Vilma Peguero, Jing Yuan, Reed Reagan

**Bass:** Anthony Stoops (Principal), Larry Moore, Parvin Smith, Mark Osborn, Christine Craddock, Kara Koehn, DoYoun Kim, Glenn Dewey

**Flute:** Valerie L. Watts (Principal), Parthena Owens, Nancy Stizza-Ortega

**Oboe:** Lisa Harvey-Reed (Principal), Rachel Maczko, Katherine Mclemore

**Clarinet:** Brad Behn (Principal), Tara Heitz, Jim Meiller, Jared Davis

**Bassoon:** Rodney F. Ackmann (Principal), James Brewer, Barre Griffith

**Horn:** Kate Pritchett (Principal), Stacie Mickens, Mirella Gable, Matt Reynolds, Peggy Moran

**Trumpet:** Karl Sievers (Principal), Jay Wilkinson, Michael Anderson, Michael Mann

**Trombone:** Philip Martinson (Principal), Naomi Wharry, John Allen

**Tuba:** Ted Cox

**Percussion & Timpani:** Jamie Whitmarsh (Timpani), Patrick Womack (Principal Percussion), Stephanie Krichena, Roger Owens, Tommy Dobbs

**Harp:** Gaye LeBlanc



