



“Dear Husband”

The Words and Life of Harriet Newby

Welcome

Karen Hughes White

Director, AAHA

Introduction

Donna Bohanon and Phyllis Cook-Taylor

Event co-chairs, Black History Committee

Friends of the Thomas Balch Library

“Dear Husband” Aria by Kirke Mechem

Jasmine Muhammad

Robert Stratham, Accompanist

Newby Family History & Genealogy

Sherrie Carter

Communications on the Underground Railroad

Deborah Lee

“Steal Away” Spiritual Traditional

Jasmine Muhammad

Discussion

All

Closing Remarks

Event co-chairs and/or **Karen Hughes White**



Kirke Mechem (b. 1925) is an American composer. His first opera, *Tartuffe*, with more than 350 performances in six countries, has become one of the most popular operas written by an American. He has composed more than 250 works in almost every form. In 2002, ASCAP registered performances of his music in 42 countries. He is often called the “dean of American choral composers” (G. Schirmer bio). The success of *Tartuffe* encouraged Mechem to embark upon his most ambitious work, an opera based on the life of the controversial abolitionist, John Brown. An essay Mechem wrote for the American Music Center’s online magazine, *New Music Box*, describes the long evolution of this work. The premiere of John Brown did not take place until 2008, when Lyric Opera Kansas City scored “the sort of magical success that composers and musicians dream of” (*Kansas City Star*), at which “the crowd leapt to its feet and clapped so long and hard that hands grew sore” (Pitch.com). (www.wikipedia.com)

Jasmine Muhammad—Entering her senior year at the Chicago College of Performing Arts, Jasmine Muhammad is pursuing her Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Performance under the tutelage of renowned soprano Jonita Lattimore. Her Soprano repertoire has developed during her seven years of vocal studies to include Italian, German and French classical arias, spirituals, gospel, and contemporary music from show tunes to Motown to R&B. Her musical education opportunities have included once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to participate in Master Classes with renowned opera diva Denyce Graves and travel to Urbana, Italy in 2007 to take part in the Italian Operatic Experience.

Jasmine attended the metro Washington, DC’s only pre-professional performing and visual arts high school, Duke Ellington School of the Arts, where she graduated as the Most Outstanding Vocalist and academically ranked 18th in the Top 20 of her class. Jasmine’s perseverance is fueled by her conviction that God has blessed her with a gift that she in turn is responsible for fostering and sharing — ‘to whom much is given, much is expected in return.’ She is steadfast in her determination to bring classical music to the masses, primarily young, African-Americans who do not have the opportunity to be exposed to this genre.

Sherrie Carter began her genealogy research with the chance meeting of a fellow researcher who supplied her with valuable information on her mother’s family history. The meeting led to further research on Dangerfield and Harriet Newby. Mrs. Carter attended Virginia Commonwealth University, lives in Fauquier with her husband and three children. She is also an artist whose works are currently on display at AAHA.

Deborah A. Lee is an independent scholar and public historian with an MA in history and a PhD in cultural studies from George Mason University. Her books include *Honoring Their Paths: African American Contributions Along the Journey Through Hallowed Ground* and *Purcellville, Virginia, 1908-2008: A Centennial Anthology*. With the Black History Committee, Friends of Thomas Balch Library and the Loudoun Museum she produced tour maps and guides to Loudoun County’s African American communities and Leesburg’s African American heritage and curated an exhibition on opposition to slavery in Loudoun County. With historian Marie Tyler-McGraw and the Virginia Center for Digital History, she developed the website *Virginia Emigrants to Liberia*, www.vcdh.virginia.edu/liberia. She is a 2009 Mellon Fellow at the Virginia Historical Society, chairs the program committee for the 2010 Virginia Forum and is writing a book on the antislavery movement, including the Underground Railroad, in the upper Potomac region.