

THE REACTION

CARL DUPONT

BASS-BARITONE

GREGORY THOMPSON

PIANO



TROY1735

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THE MUSIC

This album of art songs seeks to center a repertoire that is often left on the margins, or consequentially, off the program. As Cori Ellison described in a *New York Times* article entitled “The Black Art Song: A Forgotten Repertory,” the vast majority of art songs by significant Black composers remain inaccessible to students and educators because they are “unpublished or out of print and unrecorded.” Scholarly efforts to address this need have included: Willis Patterson’s two anthologies of art songs by Black American composers; Wagner and Simmons *A New Anthology of Art Songs by African American Composers*; the establishment of the African American Art Song Alliance; and recordings by Louise Toppin, soprano, and Darryl Taylor, counter-tenor/tenor, among others. However, the majority of songs in these scores are written with the high voice in mind and the majority of voices on these recordings have followed suit.

The Reaction positions itself as an intervention. It charts new territory in recording many previously unrecorded works and offers a small sample of the wide range of languages and styles that exist in art song literature written for the low male voice by African American composers. This recording aims to enrich the perception of this genre. With *The Reaction*, Carl DuPont contributes to the long legacy of Black bass and baritone performers who sing art song. This recording recognizes the impact of performers’ choices of repertoire, honors previous performers’ contributions to the cannon of Western Art Music, and enhances it.

By addressing the intersectionality of blackness, politics, gender, sexuality, and spirituality, *The Reaction* reminds listeners of the necessity of authentic storytelling by voices that would otherwise be silenced under a hegemonic narrative that persists into the 21st century. Specifically, this recording invites listeners to consider how the low-voiced singer indexes Black masculinity in the performance of songs by Black composers. Furthermore, it poses a case for the relevance of this music in the applied vocal studio, concert hall, and world stage.

Dolores White’s *Sometimes I’m Not Myself*, written to the words of famed Haitian poet Félix Morisseau-Leroy, opens the recital with a lilting Caribbean feel. This starkly contrasts to the sparse language of improvisatory jazz used to underscore the epic journey White writes for the eponymous *Bed Bug*.

Jacqueline Hairston’s (b. 1938) *The Foolish Heart*, written to the text of Harlem Renaissance poet, Countee Cullen, ebbs and flows with a mixture of modes and moods. Hairston’s penchant for quodlibet makes a powerful impression in *She Sat Down For Freedom* as she interpolates snippets from two familiar spirituals into a philosophical recitative-like rumination on Rosa Parks’ enduring legacy.

Though born in Denison, Texas, Robert Owens (1925–2017) completed his musical studies in Paris at L’École Normal de Musique and lived most of his professional career in Germany. So it is fitting that among his vast oeuvre is a set of hauntingly Neo-Romantic songs featuring German poet and author Herman Hesse.

A Love Cycle by Marques L.A. Garrett (b. 1984) was conceived as a group of songs about the dissolution of a relationship. Garrett weaves together poetry by several different authors and displays an acumen for both efficiency and exuberance in his writing. *Compensation*, set to the words of Paul Lawrence Dunbar, is another example of the composer’s ability to match an economic restraint in the piano writing with achingly lyrical vocal writing to stunning effect.

Like Garrett, Carlos Simon, Jr (b. 1984) and Matthew Evan Taylor (b. 1983) signify a new wave of young contemporary black composers. *Nightfall* is a selection from a forthcoming song cycle entitled *While You Were Dreaming ...* by Carlos Simon, Jr. The text, by Courtney Ware, is set to recurring motivic action in the piano accompaniment and a chromatic vocal line that illustrates the encroaching darkness.

Matthew Taylor’s 2016 composition *The Reaction* is subtitled *a new reality*. This new reality is a bold reimagining of extended vocal techniques in order to illuminate the internal monologue/interview Black Americans once again had with themselves in the face of sustained media attention to police brutality and the results of the 2016 presidential election.

While simultaneously looking towards the future, this program honors the past with composers Howard Swanson (1907–1978), Lena McLin (b. 1929), George Walker (b. 1922), and Eugene Hancock (1929–1993). They represent important groundbreaking composers of the 20th Century, each making a compelling case for their voices being heard.

In these works we hear commemoration of historic modes of combating racist ideology and resisting the physical dangers to the Black male body in public space, as well as a reaction to the everyday challenges peculiar to the post-Obama, Black Lives Matter Era. We also hear a continuation of the important scholarship of Willis Patterson, Margaret Simmons, Vivian Taylor, and Darryl Taylor in their work to canonize and institutionalize the literature. Lastly, we hear *The Reaction* not only as a representation of Black art song historically and contemporarily, but also a guide to vocal pedagogues, singers and composers to the possibilities of a more robust art song literature, thus paving the way for a new reality.

—Martile Newland & Carl DuPont

THE TEXTS

Sometimes I'm Not Myself - Felix Morisseau-Leroy

Sometimes I'm not myself,
There is a wild loa* dancing in my head.
A sorrowful loa which stamps on the ground
When it's like that I'm not myself.

There is a huge drum beating in my heart
A brave voodoo dance in my body.
When it's like that I can't say "darling"
It's comrade-friend I call you.

If you take hold of my hand,
There's a loa revolution boiling in my blood.

My horse is saddled, I'm set to go,
A lambi** of revolution is sounding.

If you've the courage
Take my hand.
My horse is saddled,
Let's go.

*loa: spirit in the Voodoo religion
**lambi: a conch used as a trumpet

Bedbug – Oral Tradition
June Bug's got the Golden Wing,
Lightning Bug's the Flame.
The Bedbug's got no wings at all,
But he gets there just the same.

The pumpkin bug's got pumpkin smell,
The squash bug smells the worst,
But the perfume of that old bedbug
Was enough to make you bust.

W'en dat bedbug came down to my house,
I want my walking cane.
Go git a pot an' su them hot!
Good-bye, Miss Lize Jane.

Fremde Stadt – Herman Hesse
Wie das so seltsam traurig macht:
Ein Gang durch eine Fremde Stadt,
Die liegt und schläft in stiller Nacht
Und mondbeglänzte Dächer hat.

Und über Turm und Giebel reist
Der Wolken wunderliche Flucht
Still und gewaltig wie ein Geist,
Der heimatlos nach Heimat sucht.

Du aber, plötzlich übermannt,
Ergibst dem wehen Zauber dich
Und legst dein Bündel aus der Hand
Und weinst lang und bitterlich.

The Foolish Heart – Countee Cullen
"Be still heart, cease those measured strokes;
Lie quiet in your hollow bed;
This moving frame is but a hoax
To make you think you are not dead."

Thus spake I to my body's slave
With beats still to be answered.
Poor foolish heart that needs a grave
To prove to it that it is dead.

Foreign City – Herman Hesse
How it so oddly makes one sad:
A walk through a foreign city,
[A city] that lies and sleeps in a quiet night
And whose roofs shine in the moonlight.

And over towers and pediments glide
The clouds in their whimsical flight
Silent and immense like a spirit,
That homeless, still seeks its home.

But you, suddenly overwhelmed,
Yield yourself to the waves of magic
And let go of your bundle from your hand
And you cry long and bitterly.

Eine Geige in den Gärten – Herman Hesse

Weit aus allen dunkeln Tälern
Kommt der süsse Amselschlag,
Und mein Herz in stummen Qualen
Lauscht und zittert bis zum Tag.

Lange, mondbeglänzte Stunden
Liegt mein Sehnen auf der Wacht,
Leidet an geheimen Wunden,
Und verblutet in die Nacht.

Eine Geige in den Gärten
klagt herauf mit weichem Strich,
und ein tiefes müdewerden
kommt erlösend über mich.

Fremder Saitenspieler drunten,
Der so weich und dunkel klagt,
Wo hast du das Lied gefunden,
Das mein ganzes Sehnen sagt?

Im Nebel – Herman Hesse
Seltsam im Nebel zu wandern!
Einsam ist jeder Busch und Stein,
Kein Baum sieht den andern,
Jeder ist Allein

A Violin in the Gardens – Herman Hesse

From dark valleys far away
Comes a sweet song, as if from a blackbird,
And my heart in quiet torment
Listens and trembles until the daybreak.

For long moonlit hours
My yearning is ever present,
It suffers from secretwounds,
And bleeds out into the night.

A violin in the gardens
Calls out with a tender stroke,
And a deep world weariness
Cathartically washes over me.

Strange string player down there
That so tenderly and somberly plays,
Where did you find the song,
That explains my entire longing?

Through the Fog – Herman Hesse
How odd it is to wander through the fog!
[Where] every bush and stone is alone.
No tree can see another,
Each one is alone.

Voll von Freunden war mir die Welt,
Als noch mein Leben Licht war;
Nun, da der Nebel fällt,
Ist keiner mehr sichtbar.

Wahrlich, keiner ist weise,
Der nicht das Dunkel kennt,
Das unentrinnbar und leise
Von allem ihn trennt.

Seltsam im Nebel zu wandern!
Leben ist einsamsein.
Kein Mensch kennt den andern,
Jeder ist allein.

A Love Song – Paul Dunbar
Ah, love, my love is like a cry in the night,
A long, loud cry to the empty sky,
The cry of a man alone in the desert,
With hands uplifted, with parching lips,
Oh, rescue me, rescue me,
Thy form to mine arms,
The dew of thy lips to my mouth,
Dost thou hear me?—my call thro' the
night?
Darling, I hear thee and answer,
Thy fountain am I,

Full of friends, seemed the world to me,
While my life was still full of light;
Now that the fog has come,
None of them remain visible.

Truly, no one is wise
Who doesn't know darkness,
[Darkness] that inescapably and softly
Isolates him from everything.

How odd it is to wander through the fog!
Life is being lonely.
No one knows another,
Each one is alone.
(trans. Carl DuPont)

All of the love of my soul will I bring to
thee,
All of the pains of my being shall wring to
thee,
Deep and forever the song of my loving
shall sing to thee,
Ever and ever thro' day and thro' night shall
I cling to thee.
Hearst thou the answer?
Darling, I come, I come.

Herz, sei nicht beklommen – Heinrich Heine
Herz, mein Herz, sei nicht beklommen,
und ertrage dein Geschick,
neuer Frühling gibt zurück,
was der Winter dir genommen.

Und wie viel ist dir geblieben,
und wie schön ist noch die Welt!
Und, mein Herz, was dir gefällt,
alles, alles darfst du lieben!

Adieu - Anonymous
Adieu, jusque je vous revoye
Adieu le droit fleuve de joye,
Mon confort, mon espoir joieulx,
Le partir m'est tant doulereulx

Que scay que faire doye.
Estre joyeulx je ne poroye
Quant j'eslonge que ne vous voye
Mon bien et mon heur gracieux.

Adieu, jusque je vous revoye
Adieu le droit fleuve de joye,
Mon confort, mon espoir joieulx.
Adieu vous dy, dont trop m'annoye,

Herz, sei nicht beklommen – Heinrich Heine
Heart, my heart, don't be anxious,
And bear your fate:
a new Spring will give back
what Winter took from you.

And how much is still left to you,
and how beautiful is the world still!
And, my heart, whatsoever pleases you, All,
yes all of it, you may love.
(trans. Carl DuPont)

Adieu - Anonymous
Farewell until I see you again
Farewell the true stream of joy
My comfort, my hope of joy.
Parting, to me, is such pain.

That I know not what to do.
To be joyful, I cannot
When I go away and no longer see you
My love, and gracious fortune.

Farewell until I see you again
Farewell the true stream of joy
My comfort, my hope of joy.
Farewell to you I say, though it pains me
too much,

Adieu le mieulx qu'amours m'envoye,
Autant de biens vous envoit dieux
Que pour moi mesmes le voudroye.

She Sat Down...For Freedom – Jacqueline Hairston
(In Memoriam for Rosa Parks)
She sat down for Freedom! Yes! Freedom!
Not seeing what this would lead to,
She sat down 'cause she was simply tired,
Tired in body, tired in mind,
But not tired in Spirit.

Her faith was strong!
Did she even know what she started?
She must have sensed that it was time to
make a change.
And little did she know what that change
would bring about.

O Freedom! O Freedom!
O Freedom over me!
Oh, I ain't weary yet;
'cause there's no time for me to fret!
I'll not rest 'til I know all are free.

Who is this Pioneer of Freedom,
Who fought the good fight?
Rose Louise McCauley Parks!

Farewell, the best that love has sent to me
May the gods send you as much good
As I wish for myself.

Has she died in vain?
I think not!
For there is a Balm in Gilead for Rosa Parks
She'll always be an Icon.

Mother of Civil Rights! Rosa Parks!
She will always be a lasting legacy,
For now and forever more!

Nightfall – Courtney Ware
Nightfall is a dream deferred.
Powder blue skies fade to black blue.
Charcoal clouds roll over that beaming light
And blot it out replacing it with artificial
Yellow and orange sparkles
That diminish and die in the distance.
Tree shadows cover green grass
And cracked concrete.
Lush branches are now spare twigs.
The wind is still, the air is shiver cool.
Everything is black, eyes opened or closed.
Hope is dusk and optimism cold as mid-
night.
The sun sets on day dreams
And the moon triggers nightmares.

The Reaction – Matthew Taylor

Fah! Who? . . . What? . . .
When? Where? Why . . .
Who is to blame, benefit, suffer?
Who are they? . . .
Who do I blame for my despair,
His suffering, her confusion?
Who are they? . . .

What does this mean?
What have we done? . . .
Uhhhh. . . .
Where can I go?
Ow . . .
Where can I stay?
Where am I safe?
Where can I turn?
When will we hear each other?
When will we listen?
When will we speak?
Shout! Yell!
When will we be heard?
Will we be heard?

By who? . . .
Why do we acquiesce?
Why not fight back?

HA! Why? . . .

Ow . . . Who?

How? . . .
How can I stop this new reality? . . .
How can I move on when they're laughing?
Can't we do something?
Fah!
Can't we?
Do something,
Something!

A Death Song – Paul Laurence Dunbar
Lay me down beneath de willers in de grass,
Whah de branch'll go a-singin' as it pass
An' w'en I's a-layin' low,
I kin hyeah it as it go
Singin', "Sleep, my honey, tak yo' res' at
las'."

Lay me nigh to whah hit meks a little pool,
An' de watah stan's so quiet lak an' cool,
Whah de little birds in spring,
Ust to come an' drink an sing,
An' de chillen wadded on dey way to
school.

Let me settle w'en my shouldas draps dey
load.
Nigh enough to hyeah de noises in de road.

Fu' I t'ink de las' long res'
Gwin to sooth my sperrit bes',
Ef I's laying 'mong de t'ings I's allus
knowed.

Day – Paul Laurence Dunbar
The gray dawn of the mountain top
Is slow to pass away.
Still lay him by in sluggish dreams
the golden God of day.

And then a light along the hill
Your laughter silvery gay;
A Sun God wakes, a blue bird trills.
You come and it is day.

Compensation – Paul Laurence Dunbar
Because I had loved so deeply,
Because I had loved so long,
God in his great compassion
Gave me the gift of song.

Because I have loved so vainly,
And sung with such falt'ring breath,
The Master in infinite mercy
Offers the boon of Death.

Take, O Take Those Lips Away - William

Shakespeare
Take, O take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn,
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn.
But my kisses bring again,
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain, seal'd in
vain.

Absalom – 2nd Book of Samuel

Absalom . . .
O, my son, Absalom,
Would God that I had died for thee,
Absalom, my son, Absalom.

Nunc Dimittis - Liturgical text

Lord now lettest though Thy servant
depart in peace according to Thy word.
For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face
of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
And to be the glory of Thy people Israel.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and
to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever
shall be,
World without end, Amen.

THE PERFORMERS

Bass-Baritone, **Carl DuPont**, is a vocalist equally engaged in performing, teaching, and research. He has sung a wide range of roles with the Glimmerglass Festival, Opera Carolina, Opera Company of Brooklyn, First Coast Opera, Palacio de Bellas Artes, National Music Festival, Pine Mountain Music Festival, Opera Saratoga and Cedar Rapids Opera. Favorites include Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, the title character in *Dennis Rodman in North Korea*, and Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore*. In concert he has been a guest artist with the Winston-Salem Symphony, Rochester Oratorio Society, Miami Bach Society and at Carnegie Hall. The South Florida Classical Review noted his “dramatic, dark tones” and Fanfare Magazine wrote, “Carl DuPont is firm of conviction and sings with a lyricism that underpins every statement.” He can be heard on Albany Records in the role of Murray in *Death Of Webern*, which was chosen as one of the best new works of 2016 by Opera News. He is also featured on the world premiere recording of Caldara’s *Mass in A Major* with the North Carolina Catholic Chorale as the bass soloist. Dr. DuPont is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, and the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music. He currently serves as an assistant professor of voice and Voice Area Head at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where he maintains an active research agenda focusing on the contributions of Black musicians to the classical field.

Pianist, **Gregory Thompson**, is an associate professor of music at Winston-Salem State University in Winston-Salem, NC. He received the Bachelor of Arts in Piano Performance from Limestone College, Gaffney, SC, the Master of Music in Piano Performance from the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, and the Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC. Dr. Thompson has held professorships at Morris College, Benedict College, Claflin University, Johnson C. Smith University, and Central State University. Dr. Thompson has performed as a solo and collaborative artist in the United States, Europe, and Asia. He made his New York Debut at Carnegie Hall in which the reviewer praised him for his “intuitive feeling for phrase shapes, how to make a melodic line sing and how to inflect it with delicate rubato effects.” As a collaborative artist, Dr. Thompson has collaborated with various artists, including Grace Bumbry, Derek Ragin, Wilhelmenia Fernandez, Louise Toppin, Alvy Powell, Gordon Hawkins, Allan Glassman, Don Krim, Sam Cook, Leslie Burrs, Tayo Aluko, and other vocalists and instrumentalists. Thompson has presented master classes in the US and Asia. He is also Head of Staff Pianists for the University of Miami at Salzburg Summer Program in Salzburg, Austria.



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PIANO

- Dolores White**
- 1 *Sometimes I'm Not Myself* (Felix Morisseau-Leroy) [2:26]
 2 *Bed Bug* (oral tradition) [2:46]
- Jacqueline Hairston**
- 3 *The Foolish Heart* (Countee Cullen) [1:49]
- Robert Owens**
- Three Lieder für Bariton und Klavier, Op. 20* (Herman Hesse) [8:44]
 4 *Fremde Stadt* [2:16]
 5 *Eine Geige in den Gärten* [2:37]
 6 *Im Nebel* [3:51]
- Marques L.A. Garrett**
- selections from *A Love Cycle* [9:36]
 7 *A Love Song* (Paul Laurence Dunbar) [2:37]
 8 *Herz, mein Herz* (Heinrich Heine) [1:57]
 9 *Adieu* (Anonymous) [5:02]
- Jacqueline Hairston**
- 10 *She Sat Down For Freedom* (Jacqueline Hairston & traditional texts) [4:15]
- Carlos Simon, Jr.**
- 11 *Nightfall* (Courtney Ware) [5:49]
- Matthew Taylor**
- 12 *The Reaction* (Matthew Taylor) [6:17]
- Howard Swanson**
- 13 *A Death Song* (Paul Lawrence Dunbar) [3:43]
- Lena McLin**
- 14 *Day* (Paul Lawrence Dunbar) [1:37]
- Marques L.A. Garrett**
- 15 *Compensation* (Paul Lawrence Dunbar) [2:02]
- George Walker**
- 16 *Take, O Take Those Lips Away* (William Shakespeare) [2:24]
- Eugene Hancock**
- 17 *Absalom* (Second Book of Samuel) [3:28]
 18 *Nunc Dimittis* (liturgical text) [4:04]
- Total Time = 59:00



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