



VIRTUAL BACH FESTIVAL

Sunday, June 21, 2020

PROGRAM

Ascend the Mountain: A Walk with Doctor King [2009]

James Lee III

b. 1975

Marvin Mills, organ

Bach Festival organist and choirmaster Marvin Mills performs James Lee III's musical meditation on the speech delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King the day before he was assassinated. In the speech, King said, "I've been to the mountaintop...and I've seen the promised land." The performance was recorded live at the 2015 Mid-Atlantic Regional Convention of the American Guild of Organists in Pittsburgh on the 106-rank Reuter organ at Shadyside Presbyterian Church installed in 1994. Dr. Lee is an associate professor at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Three Spirituals

Traditional

arr. Marvin Mills

Somebody Talkin' 'bout Jesus
Jesus, Lay Yo' Head in da Window
Plenty Good Room

Marlissa Hudson, soprano
Marvin Mills, organ

This performance was also recorded live at the 2015 Mid-Atlantic Regional Convention of the American Guild of Organists and features Marvin Mills as composer, pianist, and organist. He's joined by Marlissa Hudson, described as a "superb lyric coloratura" (St. Louis Post-Dispatch). At home both on the operatic and concert stage, she made her professional debut while a student, performing *Summertime* from *Porgy and Bess* with the Baltimore Symphony Pops Orchestra under

the baton of Marvin Hamlisch. Recognized as an international concert performer, Marliisa has been featured in Bulgaria and Paraguay, and has collaborated in the U.S. with such esteemed organizations as the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Pops Orchestra, Vocal Essence, the 92nd Street Y, and members of the Arianna Quartet.

For more than four decades **Marvin Mills** has performed throughout the United States, often at the invitation of chapters of the American Guild of Organists, having been featured at three of its National Conventions. Concerto appearances include the Jacksonville, Pittsburgh, and Peabody Symphonies in works by Handel, Rheinberger, Hindemith and Jongen. Having served as University Organist at Howard University and music director of The National Spiritual Ensemble, he is organist at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Kensington, MD, and vocal coach at Morgan State University. His wide ranging activities include collaborations with The Ritz Chamber Players (Jacksonville, FL) MasterSingers of Wilmington (DE), Philadelphia Brass and Cashmore Marionettes.

PipeDreams (Minnesota Public Radio) featured Mills in a broadcast *Music of Color*, his Kennedy Center Millennium Stage Recital was webcast, and he was a recitalist for the inaugural weekend of the Dobson Pipe Organ in Philadelphia's Kimmel Center Verizon Hall. A prize winning composer, his *Four Spirituals* for Denyce Graves have been performed throughout the country at colleges and universities by aspiring singers. A setting of a Phyllis Wheatley poem, *On Virtue*, was commissioned by the Cathedral of St. John the Divine for its *Poets Corner*. His theatrical conducting debut was in Joplin's *Treemonisha* with Washington Savoyards in 2010. Mills has been keyboard artist/assistant conductor for the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival since 2000.