

## DR. MARIA THOMPSON CORLEY

Maria Thompson Corley (DMA, piano, The Juilliard School) began composing and arranging as a child. Since then, her music has been commissioned and recorded by numerous musicians and entities. She is published by Walton, Classical Vocal Reprints, NoteNova, and North Star. Her solo piano piece, "Lucid Dreaming," was a semi-finalist in the 2021 international Fidelio competition.

Dr. Corley's short-form opera *The Sky Where You Are* (Jenny O'Connell, librettist) premiered in 2020 as part of The Decameron Opera Coalition's award-winning virtual series, *Tales from a Safe Distance*. *The Place* (Sandra Oyinloye, librettist) was commissioned by Lyric Opera of the North for DOC's subsequent production. An Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Centre, Maria was chosen for the 2020-21 American National Association of Teachers of Singing mentorship program. In 2021-22, she was asked to become a mentor in the same program. Her music has been performed, recorded and/or taught internationally.

## DR. AARON MATHEWS

Dr. Aaron Mathews is an Assistant Professor of Piano and Artist-in-Residence at Xavier University of Louisiana. Dr. Mathews has performed extensively as a soloist and collaborative pianist with vocalists, choral, and chamber ensembles across the United States and abroad. In his performance, scholarship, and teaching, he advocates for the performance of piano music by Black composers. Dr. Mathews holds degrees in piano pedagogy and performance from the Morehouse College, Georgia State University, and the University of South Carolina.

*Loyola University New Orleans School of Music*  
*Presents*

## A Tradition of African American Music

TAYLOR J. WHITE, soprano  
DR. AARON MATHEWS, piano

Featuring the world premiere of *To Meditate in His Temple*  
composed by DR. MARIA THOMPSON CORLEY



Saturday, October 23, 2021

2:00 PM

Loyola University New Orleans  
Monroe Hall - Nunemaker Auditorium

I

Creole Girl.....Leslie Adams  
from *6 Afro-American Songs* b. 1932

The Breath of a Rose.....William Grant Still  
(1895-1978)

Cassandra’s Lullaby.....Mark Fax  
from *A Christmas Miracle* (1911-1974)

Grief.....William Grant Still  
(1895-1978)

II

Witness.....Hall Johnson  
(1888-1970)

Lord I Just Can’t Keep from Cryin’.....Margaret Bonds  
(1913-1972)

This River.....Uzee Brown Jr.  
b. 1950

Frères, priez Dieu (Nobody Knows).....Julien Tiersot  
from *Chansons Nègres* (1857-1936)

Toccatà (Ride on King Jesus).....John Carter  
from *Cantata* (1929-1991)

10 MINUTE INTERMISSION

III

*A special thank you to Mrs. Ellen P. Frohnmayer and the  
Charles Anthony Caruso Professorship of Opera*

*To Meditate in His Temple*.....Dr. Maria Thompson Corley

Psalm 90:1-2 b. 1966

Psalm 27:1-4

Romans 8:28-31

Romans 8:16-18

Phillipians 4:6-7

COMPOSER REFLECTIONS

For many reasons, *To Meditate in His Temple* is very close to my heart. I’d already composed songs for friends when Taylor J. White contacted me. However, this cycle was the first one commissioned by someone I’d never met. Moreover, since I composed *To Meditate in His Temple* during the COVID-19 pandemic, the calming, inspiring Biblical texts Taylor had selected were especially meaningful.

After hearing Taylor sing in two very different styles, I decided to write something that would allow her to explore the full range of her vocal and expressive talents. “Psalm 90:1-2,” is a jubilant opening; “Psalm 27:1-4” has hints of contemporary gospel; “Romans 8:28-31” evokes more traditional gospel music, complete with riffs; “Romans 8:16-18” was inspired by both Baroque arias and jazz. While each song felt Divinely inspired, the final piece, “Phillipians 4:6-7,” is perhaps my favorite. The text urges us to “be anxious for nothing,” which led me to a gently rippling accompaniment and long, legato phrases in the vocal line, in stark contrast to the vocal fireworks in some of the other sections. I chose to end the cycle this way because I wanted to leave the listener with at least a taste of the “peace of God, which passes all understanding.”

I’m extremely grateful that Taylor trusted me to set some of her favorite Scriptures to music. I hope that you will feel as blessed by these songs as I was by the process of creating them.