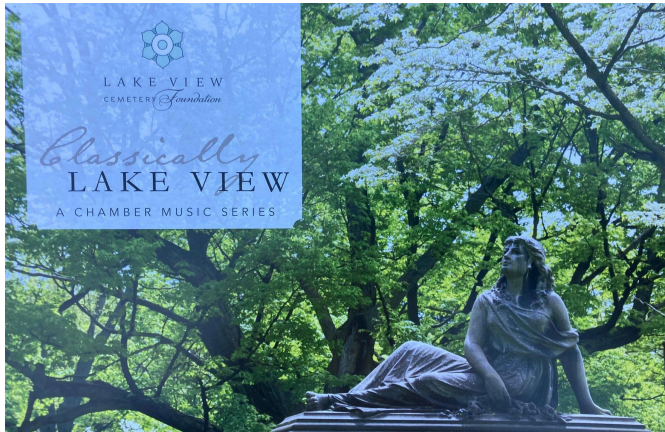


Classically Lake View chamber series celebrates Justin Holland — Cleveland's forgotten composer

by Mike Telin



Set on 285 acres on Cleveland's East Side, Lake View Cemetery's wonderful landscapes, beautiful gardens, and artful monuments make it a serene final resting place as well as a tranquil retreat for the living to reconnect with nature.

On Sunday, July 7 at 3:00 pm in the Community Mausoleum, the recently created Classically Lake View

chamber music series will present "Cleveland's Forgotten Composer, Guitar Hero, and Abolitionist, Justin Holland."

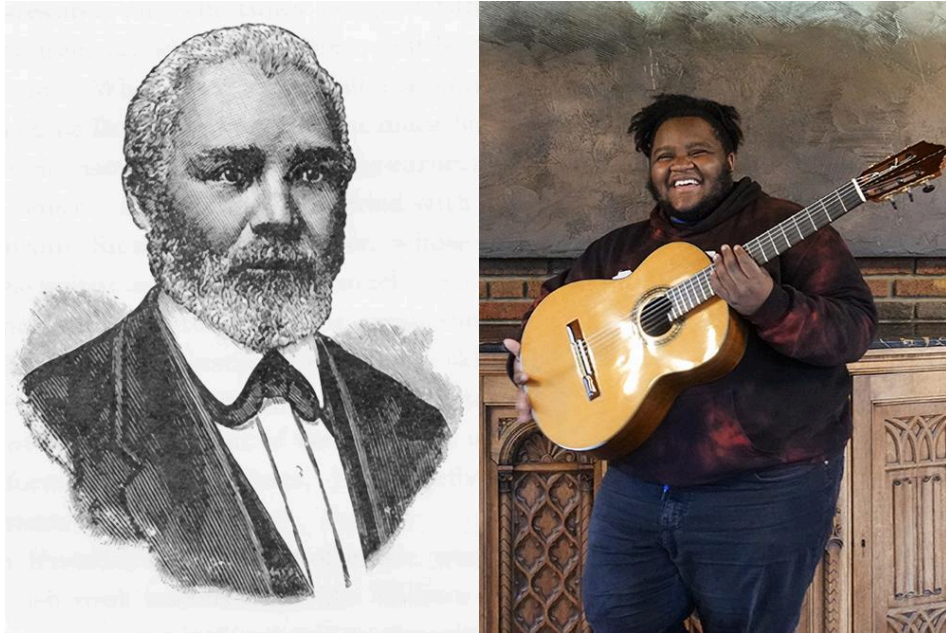
Under the artistic direction of Cleveland Orchestra violinist Isabel Trautwein, the program spans over 280 years of chamber music by Black composers, including Joseph Bologne, Justin Holland, Scott Joplin, Florence Price, William Grant Still, George Walker, and Thomas Flippin. Performers include guitarist Damian Goggans, violinists Liyuan Xie and Isabel Trautwein, violist Eliesha Nelson, and cellist Tanya Ell. The emcee will be Jennifer Coleman, Program Director for Creative Culture and Arts at the Gund Foundation. Tickets are available [online](#).

A native Clevelander, Damian Goggans began his guitar studies in 8th grade at Citizens Leadership Academy under the tutelage of the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society. He has appeared on national television and radio, performed at Severance Music Center, and toured New York and Spain with the U.S. Guitar Orchestra. He is currently a rising senior at Oberlin Conservatory.

"I'm so happy that Damian is able to join us," Trautwein said during a telephone conversation. "He'll be playing some of Holland's music and two pieces by Thomas

Flippin — *Don't Be Weary Traveler* and *Wake Up Jacob* — where he has to sing and play. I've heard him and it's pretty incredible.”

If you think that attending a concert in a mausoleum might be a bit gloomy, Trautwein said not to worry. “People tell me it's enjoyable, especially with the stage and shell that they built. I think it's a great place for guitar because we'll be able to hear Damian quite well.”



Guitar virtuoso, educator, and activist Justin Holland was born to free Blacks in Norfolk County, Virginia in 1819. After the death of his parents he moved to Boston in 1833 where he learned Spanish guitar, flute, and the art of arranging. He would later spend two years studying at Oberlin College.

Unable to afford continued studies, Holland settled in Cleveland where he supported himself as a guitar teacher and composer. He published his *Comprehensive Method for the Guitar* for beginners in 1874 and transcribed Italian opera arias and over 300 popular songs. At least 100 of his works were published by Brainard's Sons Co., Chicago, and many of them are housed at the Library of Congress.

Holland also devoted himself to achieving equitable opportunities for African Americans in the United States. He was an assistant secretary and member of council at both National and State Negro Conventions, working alongside such noted activists as Frederick Douglass. He was also active within the Underground Railroad movement.

Classically Lake View will present three concerts this season in the Community Mausoleum and one in Wade Memorial Chapel, which Trautwein called a spectacular

space. “And one concert will be outdoors. We’re playing a Brandenburg Concerto under the trees so we’re calling it ‘Bach Under the Trees’ — and some of them were probably alive when Bach was alive.”

The concert series also serves as a way to raise awareness of Lake View. “They call it ‘Lake View for the Living’ in their tagline. They want people to come and feel joy and peace.”

Published on ClevelandClassical.com June 27, 2024

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