

YALE INSTITUTE OF SACRED MUSIC PRESENTS

# Devotion: Meditating on the Black Gospel Tradition

A celebration to launch the ISM's Interdisciplinary Program in  
Music and the Black Church and the publication of  
Braxton D. Shelley's *Healing for the Soul: Richard Smallwood,  
the Vamp, and the Gospel Imagination*

PANELISTS

Braxton D. Shelley  
Cheryl Townsend-Gilkes  
Cornel West

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Pamela Jean Davis *piano*  
Chelton Grey *bass*  
Dr. Melanie Hill *violin*  
Derrick Jackson *organ*  
Eric Johnson *drums*  
Joey Woolfalk *guitar*

NOVEMBER 3, 2021

7:45 PM

MARQUAND CHAPEL

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM IN  
MUSIC AND THE BLACK CHURCH

This new program, positioned within the Institute of Sacred Music but working in partnership with Yale Divinity School and other units, aims to organize and expand the scholarly attention paid to the music of the Black Church and to this tradition's extraordinary influence on a host of musical cultures – confessional and commercial, American and global. Drawing on constituencies at Yale, in New Haven, and beyond, Music and the Black Church will host concert series, residencies, symposia, and course offerings.

Directed by Prof. Braxton Shelley, the program links scholars in the Department of Music, the School of Music, the ISM, the Divinity School, and the Department of African American Studies, fostering interdisciplinary exchange. While focused on Yale faculty and students, the program is not narrowly academic. It trains students at the intersection of practice, performance, and scholarship. Through its slate of activities, the program draws together practitioners and scholars, students and congregants, neighbors and visitors, pursuing a fuller consideration of this crucial strand of African American life and history.

We are proud to have WNPR as our media sponsor.

Please silence all mobile devices.

The use of photographic, recording, or electronic equipment during the performance is prohibited.

Your courtesy is appreciated.

# PROGRAM

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## WELCOME

Martin Jean

Director, Yale Institute of Sacred Music

## INVOCATION

The Rev. Dr. Frederick Streets

Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology, Yale Divinity School

## INTRODUCTION

Braxton D. Shelley

Associate Professor of Music, of Sacred Music, and of Divinity

## INSTRUMENTAL SOLO

Joey Woolfalk, guitar

## DISCUSSION I

Braxton D. Shelley, Cheryl Townsend-Gilkes, Cornel West

## INSTRUMENTAL SOLO

Dr. Melanie R. Hill, violin

## DISCUSSION II

The panelists

## INSTRUMENTAL SOLO

Derrick Jackson, organ

## DISCUSSION III

The panelists

## INSTRUMENTAL SOLO

Pamela Jean Davis, piano

## DISCUSSION IV

The panelists

## FINALE

The ensemble

## ABOUT THE PANELISTS

**Braxton D. Shelley**, a minister, musician, and musicologist, who specializes in African American popular music, is a tenured associate professor of music, of sacred music, and of divinity in the Department of Music, the Institute of Sacred Music, and Yale's Divinity School, and the faculty director of the ISM's Interdisciplinary Program in Music and the Black Church. After earning a B.A. in Music and History from Duke University, Shelley received his Ph.D. in the History and Theory of Music at the University of Chicago. While at the University of Chicago, he also earned a Master of Divinity from the university's Divinity School. His first book, *Healing for the Soul: Richard Smallwood, the Vamp, and the Gospel Imagination* (OUP, 2021) develops an analytical paradigm for gospel music that braids together resources from cognitive theory, ritual theory, and homiletics with studies of repetition, form, rhythm, and meter. His second book, *An Eternal Pitch: Bishop G. E. Patterson and the Afterlives of Ecstasy*, is under contract with the University of California Press. Prof. Shelley's work has been awarded the Alfred Einstein Prize and the Paul A. Pisk Prize from the American Musicological Society, the Jaap Kunst Prize from the Society for Ethnomusicology, the Adam Krims Award from the Society for Music Theory's Popular Music Interest Group, the 2016 Graduate Student Prize from the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music, and the 2018 Dean's Distinguished Dissertation Award from the University of Chicago Division of the Humanities. He has presented his research at Amherst College, Brandeis University, Columbia University, Duke University, Northeastern University, Northwestern University, SUNY-Stony Brook, Tufts University, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and Yale University, as well as at the annual meetings of the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music, Music Theory Midwest, the Society for Music Theory, and the American Musicological Society.

**Cheryl Townsend-Gilkes** is a sociologist, womanist scholar, professor, and ordained Baptist minister. Currently the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Professor of African-American Studies and Sociology and director of the African-American Studies Program at Colby College, she holds degrees in sociology from Northeastern University (B.A., M.A., Ph.D.), has pursued graduate theological studies at Boston University's School of Theology, and is the recipient of an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Ursinus College in Pennsylvania. Several of her journal articles have been reprinted in anthologies such as *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology*, edited by Cornel West and Eddie Glaude, and Kenneth Aman's *The Border Regions of Faith*. Her 2010 essay, "Still the Most Segregated Hour: Religion, Race, and the American Experience" is featured in Patricia Hill Collins's and John Solomos's *Handbook on Race and Ethnicity*.

**Cornel West** is a philosopher, public intellectual, political activist, and social critic. The grandson of a Baptist minister, he draws intellectual contributions from Christianity, the Black church, Marxism, neo-pragmatism, and transcendentalism. He has held

professorships and fellowships at Harvard University, Yale University, Union Theological Seminary, Princeton University, Dartmouth College, Pepperdine University, and the University of Paris. A socialist, West has focused on the roles of race, gender, and class in American society, and the means by which individuals act (and react) to their “radical conditionedness.” He is the recipient of more than 20 honorary degrees and an American Book Award, and has written or contributed to more than twenty published books. Among his most influential books are *Race Matters* (1994) and *Democracy Matters* (2004).

## ABOUT THE MUSICIANS

**Pamela Jean Davis** is a true believer in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost – and confesses that Jesus Christ is her Savior and Lord! She is a writer, composer, arranger, and accompanist, known for her lifelong talents on the piano. Ms. Davis boasts a lifetime membership with the Jordan Conservatory of Music at Butler University in her hometown of Indianapolis, Indiana. She has performed with such artists as Michael McDonald, Shirley Caesar, the Mass Choir, Patti Austin, Women of Worship, the P.U.S.H. movement with Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr., and more. You’ve likely heard her accompaniment to the song, “Order My Steps,” written by the late Glenn Burleigh, or heard her background vocals in tracks by Diana Ross, Michael Bolton, and Barry Manilow. Ms. Davis has served as choral director for Celine Dion and Michael Bolton, and is currently the Director of Worship Arts at the Fountain of Praise Church in Houston, Texas. She continues to write, travel, conduct music classes and workshops, and record internationally. She seeks to spread the gospel through music – giving God honor, praise, and glory!

**Dr. Melanie R. Hill** received her Ph.D. in English Literature with concentrations in Africana Studies and Women, Gender, and Sexuality from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master’s degree from the University of Pennsylvania, a second Master’s degree in Literature from George Mason University, and a B.A. in English with a minor in Spanish from the University of Virginia. Dr. Hill is Assistant Professor of American Literature at Rutgers University, Newark, and has published articles on black feminism/womanism and the art of the sermon in African American literature, as well as on the works of Bessie Smith and Ella Fitzgerald for Oxford University Press. Dr. Hill is also an Associate Research Scholar at Yale University Institute of Sacred Music and Visiting Assistant Professor at Yale Divinity School. Her forthcoming manuscript, “Colored Women Sittin’ on High: Womanist Sermonic Practice in Literature and Music” (UNC Press), is an interdisciplinary analysis of Black women preachers in African American literature, music, and in the space of the pulpit countering social injustices through sermon and song. In addition to her scholarship, Dr. Hill is a Gospel Soul Violinist who has performed at the White House on two occasions during the Obama administration, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the Apollo Theater in New York, the Staples Center in Los Angeles, the Smithsonian

National Museum of African American History and Culture, and for Pope Francis's Papal Mass during his historic visit to the United States. She's also been featured on *Showtime at the Apollo*, *Good Day Philadelphia*, *Philadelphia Style* magazine, BET, TV One, and has performed for Senator Rev. Dr. Raphael G. Warnock, Ms. Sabrina Fulton, Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, Mrs. Susan L. Taylor, Alice Walker, and opened for John Legend and Jonathan McReynolds. Recently, in honor of precious lives lost during the pandemic, Dr. Hill opened for the National Council of Churches before the sermon of Bishop Michael B. Curry, presiding Bishop and primate of the Episcopal Church. Dr. Hill is grateful for God's blessings and remains focused on sharing inspiration through her violin and spreading scholarship along the intersections of literature, music, and theology.

**Derrick Jackson** is a lifelong musician from a musical family. Born in Chicago, and raised in Memphis, Jackson's father founded and pastored a church for forty-seven years. As he grew, Jackson realized he could sing or play anything he'd been acquainted with, musically: gospel, jazz, classical, blues, pop, even country. He eventually began formally studying classical piano and organ in junior high, and classical piano performance at Memphis State University, as well as Shelby State College. Since then, Jackson has performed and recorded with a roster of gospel artists across the country, and has garnered numerous awards. He has scored for, and performed with, the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, as well as the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, and served as the personal organist for the late Bishop G.E. Patterson, particularly, during Patterson's time as Presiding Bishop of COGIC World Missions. Likewise, Jackson has played behind COGIC Presiding Bishop Emeritus Charles E. Blake Sr., and Presiding Bishop J. Drew Sheard. Jackson and his sister Barbara have run a music school for the past three decades, and he is currently the minister of music at his father's church, where his brother serves as pastor, Faith Temple Ministries COGIC in Memphis. He is also the minister of music for the famed Temple of Deliverance COGIC, pastored by Bishop Milton Hawkins. He is married to the lovely Shirley Jackson, with whom he has a son, Derrick Jamal Jackson.


**Joey Woolfalk**, a lead and acoustic guitarist from Chicago, is also a singer, songwriter, and producer. Joey has played professionally for more than 20 years and has loaned his talent to various artist in all genres of music. Joey was the first guitarist and one of the first musicians to win a Stellar Award (for Best Guitarist). Joey has traveled the world playing his guitar. His gift can be heard on several compilations including music for Bishop TD Jakes, Donnie McClurkin, Fred Hammond, BeBe & CeCe Winans, Yolanda Adams, Donald Lawrence, Commissioned and the Clark Sisters, to name a few. Joey is currently working on a musical CD, with plans to release the first single in January, 2022.



**Chelton Grey** holds a B.A. in music and music business from The City College of New York, and is a candidate for a Masters in Entertainment Business from Full Sail University. He presently serves as Director of Music for The Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral of New York, and has performed extensively with artists such as Michelle Williams, Erica Campbell, J.J. Hairston, Sunday Best, Donnie McClurkin, Le'Andria Johnson, the Grammy Award-winning Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, and more. As a producer, music director, and bassist, Grey is the founder of ChelTune Music Productions LLC. He is also a father and music educator.

**Eric Johnson** has been playing the drums since childhood, and professionally from the age of fourteen. Born in New York City, he attended the Professional Performing Arts High School in Manhattan, and later graduated from Berklee College of Music with a degree in Music Business/Marketing. Currently, he serves as a percussionist at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, NY. He has accompanied artists such as Rhonda Ross, Darlene Love, Adrian Haye, and more.

*Musician bios provided by the artists.*

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