

Concerts Pay Tribute to Marian Anderson



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

Veteran Classical musicians Robert McFerrin and Sylvia Olden Lee perform in Philadelphia.

Two historic concerts were held in tribute to Marian Anderson (1897-1993), who died April 8. The first was sponsored by the Schiller Institute in Washington, D.C. at the Ebenezer United Methodist Church on May 29, and the second by the Declaration of Independence Co-signers' Convention in Philadelphia on July 2. Both concerts, with audiences of close to 800, featured much of Anderson's favorite repertoire.

Robert McFerrin, the first Black man to sing at New York City's Metropolitan Opera, two weeks after Anderson made history on Jan. 7, 1955 by singing a major operatic role there, performed in both concerts. George Shirley, who debuted at the Met in 1961 and sang 189 performances there

Co-Signers

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"Whereas, these truths offer us a constitutional and lawful path leading away from slavery, segregation, discrimination, racism, and gender bias. We honor you, who continue to walk that path through your actions on these days of commitment and re-dedication.

"Therefore, the Council of the City of Philadelphia hereby takes a stand with those meeting in this city, July 2 through July 4, 1993 to begin anew the lifelong journey to responsible freedom by co-signing on paper, and inscribing in our hearts, the principle of the Declaration of Independence. We support this great initiative and commend those involved in this important and historic moment."

Fourth Branch of Government

On Saturday, July 3, the convention opened at the Mt. Olivet Tabernacle Baptist Church with nearly 250 people in attendance. The Rev. Bevel told

the audience:

"If you say that all men are created equal and endowed by the Creator with certain inalienable rights, and that 'to secure these rights governments are instituted among men,' first you have to ask yourself the question, 'Do you have these rights?'"

"Let's take life," he continued. "Do old people have the right to life? Well, they seem to lock themselves away behind doors. Do young people have the right to life? Well, look at how many of them die either of drugs or violence in the streets. What about people's wages? What about their own personal and intellectual development?"

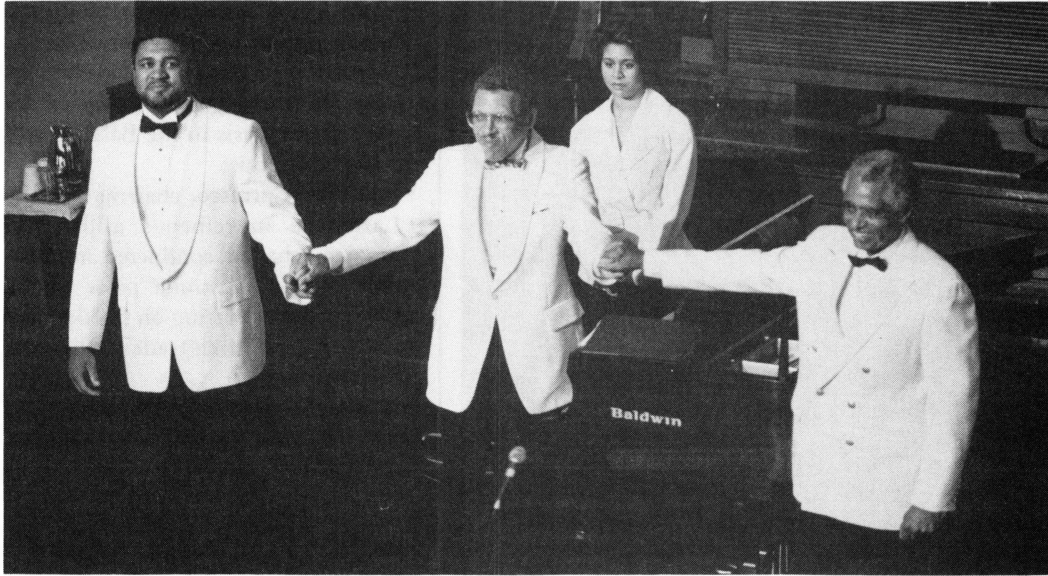
"If that is not going on, can you say that you have government? And if you don't have government, is it not your duty to institute it? That's not a question of waiting for someone to do it; that's a question of this fourth branch of government having to be activated."

Resolutions and Awards

Workshops on the historical and philosophical tradition of the Declaration were held in the afternoon, followed by a plenary session during which

several resolutions were passed, including one declaring that Lyndon LaRouche's imprisonment is a "violation of human rights in what is supposed to be the most humane country in the world," and urging his unconditional release. Three other resolutions passed, including We Will Feed the Hungry, For a Third National Bank and Promoting Economic Development; and Support Constitutional Government in Europe.

On Saturday evening, an awards ceremony honoring leaders of the Civil Rights movement was attended by more than 300 people. Civil Rights leader and Schiller Institute vice-chairman Amelia Boynton Robinson keyed the ceremony and then introduced the Rev. Bevel, Mt. Olivet's pastor, the Rev. Marshall L. Shepard Jr., who gave the opening invocation, and the Rev. James Cokley, who led the whole gathering in singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing." Awards were presented posthumously to fifteen leaders, including Marian Anderson, Fannie Lou Hamer, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon Baines Johnson.



EIRNS Philip Ulanowsky

Gordon Hawkins, Dr. Raymond Jackson, and George Shirley (left to right) at the Washington, D.C. tribute to Marian Anderson.

in 27 roles over two decades, performed in the first concert, as did Dr. Raymond Jackson, the concert pianist known internationally for his anthology of piano music by Black composers. The piano accompanist in the second concert was Sylvia Olden Lee, who in 1954 became the first Black person to work in a professional capacity at the Metropolitan Opera.

The May 29 concert opened with an invocation by Ebenezer's pastor, Dr. Alphonso Harrod, followed by singing of the National Anthem, accompanied by the Reed Elementary School Band. Greetings were read from noted Black singers Shirley Verrett and Mattiwillda Dobbs.

The concert began with Schubert's "Ave Maria" by Linda Mabbs. Alexandra Zalska then sang "O mio Fernando" from Verdi's *La Favorita*.

Gordon Hawkins, a former student of George Shirley, sang "Per me giunto" from Verdi's *Don Carlo* and a version of "Goin' Home," set to the theme from Antonin Dvorak's Symphony from the New World.

George Shirley sang Schubert's "An die Musik" and the spiritual "Little Boy, How Old Are You?" arranged by Roland Hayes. Shirley and Hawkins then sang the duet "Solenne in quest' ora" from Verdi's *La Forza del Destino*.

District Councilwoman Hilda Ma-

son presented the "Marian Anderson Posthumous Recognition Resolution" to honor Anderson.

McFerrin Sings

Robert McFerrin opened the second half of the concert with selections from Schumann's setting of Heinrich Heine's poem cycle "Dichterliebe," followed by "Eri tu" from Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and five spirituals. Now in his 70's and having recently suffered a stroke, McFerrin's performance testified to the triumph of the human soul.

Janice Jackson sang "Re dell'abisso, affrettati!" from *Un Ballo in Maschera*, the aria which Anderson sang when she broke the ban against Black singers at the Met. She also sang "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?"

Regina McConnell concluded with Schubert's "Erlkönig."

The Philadelphia concert opened with an invocation by the Rev. Palmer, pastor of the Tindley Temple. Greetings were then read from a number of prominent singers including Leontyne Price and William Warfield.

The first part of the musical program consisted of six choruses from George Frederic Handel's *Messiah*, performed by the Tabernacle Choir of Mt. Olivet Tabernacle Baptist Church, directed by Samuel R. Cosby, Jr.

In addition to Robert McFerrin and Janice Jackson, who sang at both concerts, Gregory Hopkins sang, "Ah, mes amis!" from Donizetti's *The Daughter of the Regiment*; Christina D'Amico DeVault sang Rossini's "La danza"; Marietta Simpson sang the aria "Cruda sorte" from Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri*; and Derrick Lawrence performed "Non piu andrai" from Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and the "Crucifixion."

Marga Dawson-Hallala sang Schubert's "Ave Maria." Frank Munafo performed "O sole mio." Tichina Vaughan sang Eboli's "O don fatale" from Verdi's *Don Carlo*, and Schubert's "Gretchen am Spinnrade." Reginald Pindell performed the "Figaro" aria from Rossini's *Barber of Seville*.

The concert concluded with DeVault, Simpson, Hopkins, Pindell, Lawrence, and John Sigerson of the Schiller Institute singing "Chi me frena?" the sextet from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

As Lyndon LaRouche commented: "The image of the Black Classical musician as a collective hero is one of the great accomplishments of the Washington and Philadelphia events. Here are people in the image of God, who demonstrate there is only one human race, and here are some heroes who have proven that afresh, if anyone needed to know."