



BACH
to school

**VIRTUAL ASSEMBLY
LISTENING GUIDE**

Featuring an interview with:

Ricardo Castañeda and
Blake-Anthony Johnson

and a performance by:

Chicago Sinfonietta Wind Quintet

Featured music:

Portraits of Josephine

by Valerie Coleman

Libertango

by Astor Piazzola

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Listening Guide

WFMT's Bach to School Virtual Assembly features Chicago Sinfonietta Wind Quintet. WFMT General Manager George Preston will interview Blake-Anthony Johnson, Chicago Sinfonietta's Chief Executive Officer and principal oboist Ricardo Casteñeda. They will discuss the quintet's performances of Astor Piazzola's *Libertango* and Valerie Coleman's *Portraits of Josephine* and also share insights about how their involvement in music has shaped their lives.

WFMT's Bach to School Music Program helps teachers build the foundation for understanding classical music for the youngest members of our community by donating instruments, online resources, and sets of classical music recordings to classrooms in the Chicago area and beyond.

Portraits of Josephine

by Valerie Coleman

Valerie Coleman is an American composer, born in Louisville, KY. She is the founder of the Imani Woodwind Quintet. Imani's mission is to perform music by underrepresented composers as well as original compositions by members of the ensemble. Coleman's music mixes elements of traditional orchestration with jazz, blues and Afro-Cuban genres. Ms. Coleman has written several compositions honoring American historical figures such as John F. Kennedy and César Chávez.

Portraits of Josephine is a four-movement suite, written as a tribute to American born Josephine Baker. Josephine Baker (1906-1975) was a multi-faceted African American dancer and singer, who later resigned her American citizenship and became a French citizen.

We will perform two of the movements.

- II. ***Les Milandes*** depicts the state in southern France where Josephine Baker lived. It is a slow movement using combinations of instruments within the quintet to create different colors and textures. It is written in a more traditional style.
- IV. ***Thank You, Josephine (J'ai Deux Amours)*** is based on one of Josephine Baker's sons. It has jazz and blues influences. The composer indicates that it is to be performed in the singing style of Josephine Baker.



Libertango

by Astor Piazzola (1921-1992)

Astor Piazzola was born in Mar del Plata, Argentina. He was the only child of Italian immigrant parents. In 1925, Piazzola moved to Greenwich Village in New York with his family. At home he listened to his father's records, which included mostly tango music, but also jazz and classical music, especially the music of Bach. While in New York, he studied composition. He was a virtuoso bandoneon player, and at age 17 he moved to Buenos Aires where he became a much in demand player for tango orchestras. In 1954, Piazzola moved to Paris to study composition with Nadia Boulanger. Boulanger encouraged him to continue developing his style.

Libertango is named by combining the words "libertad" (freedom) and "tango" (the traditional Argentinian dance). This piece symbolizes Piazzola's break from the classic tango and his "tango nuevo" or "new tango". It has appeared in over 500 releases and countless arrangements for different combinations of instruments. It was written for Piazzola's ensemble and originally performed and published in 1974 in Italy, where Piazzola was living at the time. This music appears in the Japanese anime "Prince of Tennis", where it is used as the soundtrack to a tennis doubles match.

Chicago Sinfonietta Wind Quintet

- Janice MacDonald - Flute
- Ricardo Castañeda - Oboe
- Wagner Campos - Clarinet
- Collin Anderson - Bassoon
- John Schreckengost - Horn

Chicago Sinfonietta Wind Quintet is comprised of principal winds of the orchestra. Because of the pandemic, it has been difficult over the past couple of years to perform with the full orchestra. The silver lining, however, is that we have been able to explore and perform more chamber music repertoire than we normally would have. The Chicago Sinfonietta Wind Quintet has continued to perform concerts both virtually and in person.



Ricardo Castañeda

Ricardo Castañeda, born in El Salvador, began oboe studies at The National Music School of El Salvador with oboists Francisco Martinez and Alan Julseth. Mr. Castañeda received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in music performance from Northwestern University where he was a winner of the



Northwestern University Concerto Competition and recipient of the Wade Fetzer award for excellence in performance. He was a student of Ray Still, former principal oboist of The Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Castañeda is currently Principal Oboist with The Chicago Sinfonietta and English Horn/ Oboe chair with The Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra. He is also a member of the Chicago Ensemble and Barossa Woodwind Quintet. Previous positions include Principal Oboist with The Lake Forest Symphony, South Bend Symphony Orchestra, Elgin Symphony Orchestra and English Horn with the Mexico City Philharmonic.

Having made his solo debut with the National Symphony of El Salvador at age fifteen, he has since appeared as soloist in Latin America, Europe, Japan and the United States.

An active freelance oboist, Mr. Castañeda has performed as extra/substitute with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera Orchestra, Grant Park Symphony and Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. He has also served as principal oboist for orchestras for Chicago Opera Theater, The Bolshoi Ballet, American Ballet Theater, San Francisco Ballet and Joffrey Ballet as well as numerous Broadway in Chicago musical productions. Mr. Castañeda is on the faculty at Northeastern Illinois University and University of Illinois at Chicago, and he teaches at Birch Creek Music Performance Center in Door County, Wisconsin, where he also serves as Symphony Session Program Director.



Blake-Anthony Johnson

The first African American executive to guide a nationally renowned orchestra, in May 2020 Blake-Anthony Johnson was named Chief Executive Officer at the age of 29 of the award-winning Chicago Sinfonietta, an organization acclaimed as a cultural leader in the field and a powerful champion of diversity, equity and inclusion. A civically engaged leader who sits on the Steering Committee of Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative, he is also a champion of arts education, is a member of the Faculty at Roosevelt University's Chicago Conservatory of Performing Arts, and a member of the League of American Orchestras' EDI Orchestra Management Committee.



A former professional cellist and protégé of Michael Tilson Thomas at New World Symphony, Mr. Johnson has performed with renowned ensembles and music festivals in the US and Europe. His focus on arts administration and education began while he was a music student at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music. Prior to his appointment, Johnson served as the Director of Learning and Community for Louisville Orchestra. Mr. Johnson has worked in arts education and outreach with such organizations as Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute, El Sistema, and the Academia Filarmónica de Medellín.

A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Blake-Anthony Johnson holds a MM from Cleveland State University, a BM from Vanderbilt University, Blair School of Music, and a certificate from Manhattan School of Music in Orchestral Performance. Further professional training includes participation in the Sphinx Organization's two-year arts leadership program LEAD (Leaders in Excellence, Arts & Diversity, 2019-present), workshops in education, community engagement and collective bargaining at The League of American Orchestra's 2018 Conference and a Certificate of Study in American Law from the University of Pennsylvania.

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Funding is provided by Ralla Klepak Foundation for Education in the Performing Arts
and members of WFMT's Encore Society.