



The Teaneck Community Chorus
Skyler Klein - Artistic Director

Proudly Presents

FREEDOM NOW

A JAZZ REFLECTION

all men are created equal

Sunday, May 17, 2026
Helen B. Hayes Auditorium
Teaneck High School
3:00 PM



This program is made possible in part by a grant administered by the Bergen County Division of Historic and Cultural Affairs from funds granted by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.





Greetings from the President

Dear Friends of the Teaneck Community Chorus,

On behalf of the board and all members of the Teaneck Community Chorus, welcome to Freedom Now: a Jazz Reflection, our concert celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

And it's right to celebrate that signing because, however imperfect its language and the political and social life it influenced, the document represented a turning point for those living on this continent and came to symbolize a complicated history: freedom declared (for some), freedom denied (for many), and freedom demanded (by all). It's also appropriate for a community chorus such as ours to be celebrating the Declaration – and with a jazz concert. We are many voices, coming from a variety of backgrounds, neighborhoods, and tribes, and we're trying to sing as one and blend into a unified whole – not by ignoring our differences but by striving for unity.

We are very grateful for all those who helped this concert come to be – our artistic director, Skyler Klein, who with Wes Matsui and our music committee, created the program; our talented accompanist, Bernie Visto; guest artists of the Pittman-Daniels Quartet – Loren Daniels, Belden Bullock, and Jonathon Peretz; our chorus members who have rehearsed with such enthusiasm and energy these past few months; our board members, volunteers, and donors, without whose support none of this would be possible; and by all of you – our friends, family, neighbors, and audience members who share our enjoyment of the music and who encourage us to keep on singing out for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness – freedom for all!

With hope and determination,
Patrick Montesano
President



PROGRAM ORDER

1. "Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor"Irving Berlin,
arr. Mark Brymer
2. "Bonse Aba"Traditional, arr. Victor C. Johnson
Percussion: Bernie Visto, Jonathon Peretz
3. "St. Louis Blues"W.C. Handy, arr. Linda Spevacek
4. "Ain't Misbehavin'"Thomas "Fats" Waller & Harry
Brooks, arr. Larry Shackley
Soloist: Lauren Atari
5. "A Night in Tunisia"John "Dizzy" Gillespie &
Frank Paparelli, arr. Paris Rutherford
Soloist: Loren Daniels
6. "Take The 'A' Train"Duke Ellington
Pittman /Daniels Quartet
7. "Come Sunday"Duke Ellington, arr. Alice Parker
Soloist: Patrick Montesano
8. "Strange Fruit"Lewis Allan,
arr. Kristina Boerger
9. "Inner City Blues"Marvin Gaye
Pittman /Daniels Quartet
10. "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To be Free"Billy Taylor
& Dick Dallas, arr. Jetse Bremer
11. "Reckoner"Thomas Yorke, Jonathan Greenwood,
Colin Greenwood, Edward O'Brien, Philip Selway,
arr. David von Kampen
12. "Someday We'll All Be Free"Donny Hathaway
Pittman /Daniels Quartet
13. "Hymn to Freedom"Oscar Peterson,
arr. Paul Read



Artistic Director – Skyler Klein



Skyler Klein is an active music educator and conductor in the New York tri-state area. His unique approach combines voice science and Kodály-inspired literacy methods to help singers of all ages achieve ownership of their musicianship and vocal technique. With this sequential approach to fundamentals his singers rise to meet the challenges of repertoire and style.

He currently teaches General Music and Choir in Minisink Valley, New York, as well as piano and voice at the Rockland Conservatory of Music in Pearl River, New York. He previously served as Assistant Conductor at the Continuo Arts Foundation in Summit, New Jersey. In that capacity he conducted in the youth choir program for both the men's and women's choirs. He also worked under Dr. Candace Wicke to assist in the preparation of the Carnegie Hall choir-in-residence Civic Chorale. After his time at Continuo Arts he founded the professional choir Qara' Vocal Ensemble where he continues to serve as Artistic Director.

Mr. Klein shares the Teaneck Community Chorus's dedication to inclusion and unity. To that end he eagerly awaits the chance to work with such dedicated singers and explore the wonderful complexity of the human experience. He believes in the importance of repertoire as a vehicle for understanding; by exploring the music of diverse peoples the Teaneck community has a platform to better understand one another and move forward with deeper human connection.

Mr. Klein holds a Bachelors of Music in Music Education from Westminster Choir College and a Masters of Music in Music Education with Kodály Emphasis from Lakeland University.



Chorus Pianist – Bernie Visto



Bernie Visto, is a pianist, music director to several plays, flutist, conductor, an all-around musician and an educator.

Mr. Visto was born in Iloilo City, Philippines. He graduated from Rosa L. Parks High School in Paterson and received a full academic scholarship to Montclair State University majoring in Management Information Systems.

His passion for music and the desire to further his education enabled him to move back home to the Philippines and finish a degree in Bachelor of Music at the University of San Agustin in Iloilo City majoring in Piano performance and Music Education. While in College, Mr. Visto taught high school music at Colegio de San Jose and managed to have a Trio group to play for weddings and other music gigs. He also played piano at church every Sunday and managed a children's choir and an adult choir. Mr. Visto now is a certified K-12 music teacher at Norman S. Weir (K-8) and a high school piano teacher at his alma mater, Rosa L. Parks High School. In the community, Mr. Visto is the music director of the Filipino Diocese choir of Paterson, Alay Awit, serving churches in the Paterson Diocese. Norman S. Weir is his home school and has received a Disney grant to perform a complete musical every year for the next three years. Mr. Visto is also a teaching artist for the Paterson Music Project who performs regularly in Paterson.



Juliette Bowen

Juliette Bowen is a recently retired sign language interpreter, who has won the hearts of the Teaneck Community Chorus audiences for over ten years. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hofstra University, a Master's of Education in School Counseling, Herbert H. Lehman College, Bronx, NY and a Master's of Education in General and Special Education, Touro College, New York. She is fluent in Spanish, English, and American Sign Language.



She currently works with multi-handicapped, autistic, blind emotionally disturbed, deaf, and severely learning-disabled students in NYC. Her first experience with the deaf and hard of hearing was when she was approached to add these students to her caseload while counseling in Valhalla, NY. Juliette did not shrink back but willingly accepted the challenge and decided to provide equal access to these students by learning their language. She began working with deaf and hard of Hearing students in 1994 and later counseled and taught at the Lexington School for the Deaf, Queens, NY. She currently interprets for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Clinton Hills, Brooklyn, as well at Trinity Baptist Church in the Bronx.



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Guest Artists

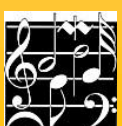




The Reggie Pittman/Loren Daniels Quartet is Reggie Pittman – trumpet/flugelhorn, Loren Daniels – piano/vocal, Belden Bullock – bass and Jonathon Peretz – drums.

The quartet is a group of seasoned jazz musicians/educators from all over the U.S. who now reside in the metropolitan NYC area. Some of the greats that they have played with include Milt Jackson, Blood, Sweat and Tears, Maynard Ferguson, The Allman Brothers Band, Levon Helm, George Adams, Roy Haynes, Andrew Hill, Ahmad Jamal and The Duke Ellington Orchestra. All members of the quartet have taught music to all levels from nursery school to graduate school.

The Reggie Pittman/Loren Daniels Quartet plays original compositions by both Daniels and Pittman and innovative arrangements of jazz classics and popular standards. Their previous release is called *Point A to Point A*. *Smilessence* is the name of their latest release.



Teaneck Community **Chorus Singers**

Artistic Director
Skyler Klein

Pianist
Bernie Visto

Sopranos

Maria Adorno
Sue Akiska
Lauren Atari
Cenesis Gibbons
Karen Ruth Heifetz
Monica Hodges
Olive Kapetanos
Barbara Kinter
Noelle Lloyd

Chi Mei Lu
Amanda Paulsen
Carmel Polizzi
Elizabeth Salvatore
Devorah Schatz
Cail Smith
Jan Sprance
Melanie Stern
Fern Wilensky



Teaneck Community **Chorus Singers**

Altos

Valerie Anderson
Maureen Baldassini
Anita Bluestone
Fredi Brown
Carole Boutry
Cathy Cavallone

Lisa Frazee
Judy Mars
Adriana Rodriguez
Ellen Ray
Jennifer Smith
Nadège Stretz

Tenors

Romeo Cabacungan
Justin Lu

Wes Matsui
Patrick Montesano
Eileen White

Basses

Peter Severino
Ernie Sprance

Jim White



Patrons

Founder's Circle

(\$1000+)

Wes & Mary Matsui

Director's Circle

(\$500-\$999)

Jack & Margaret Aaker

Gary Ostroff & Ellen Ray

Anita Bluestone & David Lyon

Steven Bell

Michel Kinter

Patrick Montesano & Gina Mannix

Chi Mei Lu

Melanie Stern

Fern Wilensky



Patrons

Benefactors (\$250-\$499)

Suzanne & Serhat Akiska

Jacqueline Kates

Justin Lu

Theresa Mannix & Caleb Canby

Robert & Ann Marie Reardon

Lynn Roberts

Nadège Stretz

Noelle Lloyd



Patrons

Friends

(\$100-\$249)

Julia Aaker

Lauren Atari

Anne Atlas

Carole Boutry

Juliette Bowen

Frederica Brown

Coleen Bruce

Cathy Cavallone

Suzanne Cho

Janice & Ed Dabney

Rhonda Eisenberg

Debbie Feldman

Susie Hoffman & Mel Grizer

Lisa Kass & Jeremy Hoffman

Theodora Lacey

Judy Mars

Devorah Schatz

Jennifer Smith

Gail Smith

Ernie & Jan Sprance

Ray & Edie Turkin

Roberta & Kari Walker

Maredia & Charles Warren

Eileen & Jim White



Patrons

Supporters (Up to \$99)

Valerie Anderson

Maureen Baldassini

Joyce Baynes

Alicia Carpenter

Susanne Daley

Lisa Frazee

Michele Garval

Ilene & Jim Gilbert

Barbara Kinter

Peter Severino

Karen Williams

Thank you to our anonymous donors of all levels, we appreciate your support!



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Program Notes

By Cathy Cavallone

Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor - From the 1949 Broadway musical *Miss Liberty*, the supremely talented Irving Berlin reworked the renowned poem *The New Colossus* by Emma Lazarus into a song that was featured in the production. This moving and patriotic piece represents the Statue of Liberty as a welcoming refuge for immigrants from around the world.

Bonse Aba - This joyful folk song, whose title translates to “all who sing,” originates from the Republic of Zambia. It is sung in the language of Bemba and proclaims a celebration of life. The percussion instruments of the djembe and shaker inspire listeners to clap and sway to the jubilant rhythm.

St. Louis Blues - Inspired by a woman in Missouri lamenting the absence of her husband, W. C. Handy composed this soulful ditty in 1914. At the time, the blues was not yet an established genre, ironically. It is, in fact, a blend of genres, such as jazz, ragtime, habanera and the blues. Many artists such as Benny Goodman, Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Bing Crosby, Bessie Smith, Eartha Kitt, Count Basie, Glenn Miller, Guy Lombardo, Paul Robeson, and the Boston Pops Orchestra, are some artists who have recorded it. The hip-swaying syncopation in this one is hard to resist.

Ain't Misbehavin' - Written by Thomas “Fats” Waller and Harry Brooks for the 1929 musical *Connie's Hot Chocolates*, this tune in the stride jazz/early swing style captures the essence of sultry night clubs of the Harlem Renaissance. Louis Armstrong's trumpet solo, later added, brought the song from Broadway to mainstream audiences.

A Night in Tunisia - Vibrancy and exoticism burst forth from this fast-paced melody composed in 1942 by the renowned trumpeter and band leader Dizzy Gillespie. The fusion of bebop jazz, Arabic and Afro-Cuban musical elements all blend together to entice listeners to a far-off land of mystery. First performed under the title of “Interlude” by the jazz great Sarah Vaughan in 1944, this song would later be recorded by other performers such as Ella Fitzgerald and Art Blakey and The Jazz Messengers by its present title.



Program Notes

(Continued)

Come Sunday - In 1943, the great Duke Ellington composed this jazz piece that would become part of a suite entitled *Black, Brown and Beige*. It was originally written to showcase a saxophone solo, but in 1958, it was rereleased as a vocal version performed by gospel singer Mahalia Jackson, which increased its popularity. The hymn-like quality of this sacred jazz tune transports listeners to the land of the sublime.

Strange Fruit - Originating from a 1937 protest poem by Abel Meeropol (aka Lewis Allan), this haunting piece became a song composed and performed by Meeropol, his wife, Anne Shaffer, and singer Laura Duncan in 1939. Meeropol initially wrote the poem after seeing a photograph of two African-American men who had been lynched in Indiana. Later that year, it was recorded by Billie Holiday, for which her visceral performance won her a Grammy Hall of Fame induction in 1978. The mesmerizing harmonies entrance listeners at first until the chilling lyrics awaken them to their terrifying meaning.

I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free - Composed by Billy Taylor and Dick Dallas, this is one of the most powerful freedom anthems to come out of the 1960s. It was originally recorded as an instrumental piece in 1963, but later lyrics were added. Singer Nina Simone went on to record her iconic version of the piece in 1967 for her album *Silk & Soul*. The climactic ending will certainly touch your hearts.

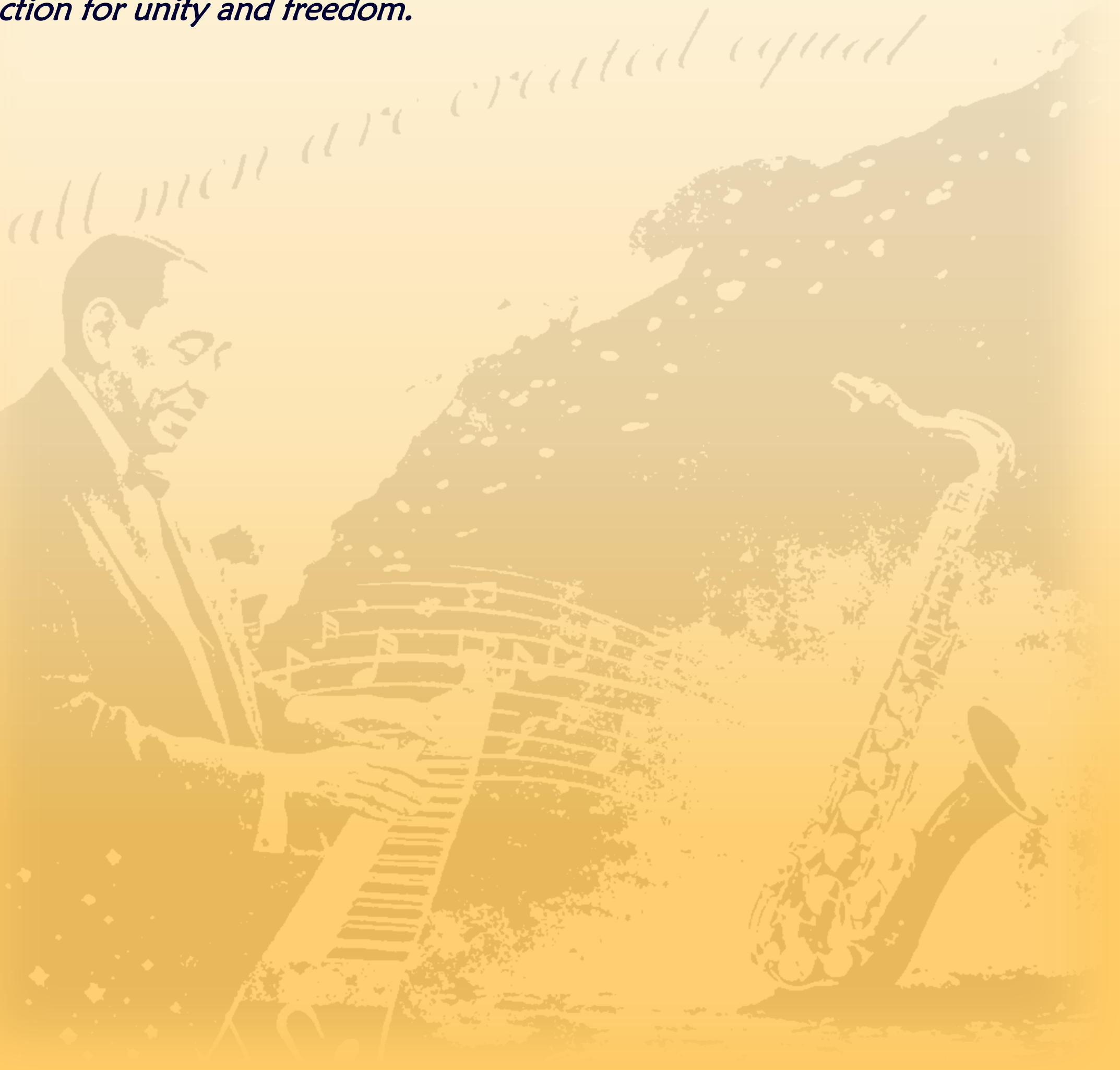
Reckoner - In 2007, English rock band, Radiohead released its seventh album, *In Rainbows*, featuring this moving piece that showcases the genre of rock art. The title is a reference to St. Peter judging souls at the gates of Heaven. The haunting sound is created by a meandering guitar line and the lead singer's falsetto, transporting listeners to another world where spirits separate like ripples on a blank shore.



Program Notes

(Continued)

Hymn to Freedom - Written in 1962 during the civil rights movement, this jazz ballad was composed by Harriette Hamilton and Oscar Peterson. Its gospel-like qualities have made this song a favorite at protests and marches for decades. The lyrics are sure to move listeners as they proclaim a call to action for unity and freedom.



Concert Production

Production Manager

Jeffrey Merrigan

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Ernie Sprance

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Gail Smith

Program Notes

Cathy Cavallone

THS Production Leader

Jamie Boyle

TCC Music Committee Chair

Wes Matsui

TCC Membership Chair

Sue Akiska

TCC Fundraising Chair

Ellen Ray

Reception Coordination

Sue Akiska



Acknowledgements

We thank the Bergen County Division for Historic & Cultural Affairs for their continuing support and partnership with the Teaneck Community Chorus.

We thank the Puffin Foundation Ltd. for their continuing support and partnership with the Teaneck Community Chorus. The foundation's partnership has been critical to our mission of diversity and inclusion in all of our programs.

Thank you to **Jamie Boyle**, for leading the production crew at Teaneck High School. Thanks to the supportive students running lights and audio.

Thank you, **Jeff Merrigan & Michal Kinter** for serving as our outstanding Production Managers!

Thank you to the members of the **Teaneck Board of Education** and **Superintendent, Dr. Andre Spencer**, for continuing our long-standing partnership to increase engagement within Teaneck.





The Teaneck Community Chorus

thanks you for sharing this day with us!

- ▶ *Updates and information about TCC
will be posted on:*
- ▶ www.teaneckcommunitychorus.org
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/Teaneck-Community-Chorus-105307001058>
- ▶ <https://www.instagram.com/teaneckcommunitychorus1/#>



Artistic Director Skyler Klein

Pianist

Bernie John B. Visto

TCC Board Members

Patrick Montesano, *President*

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