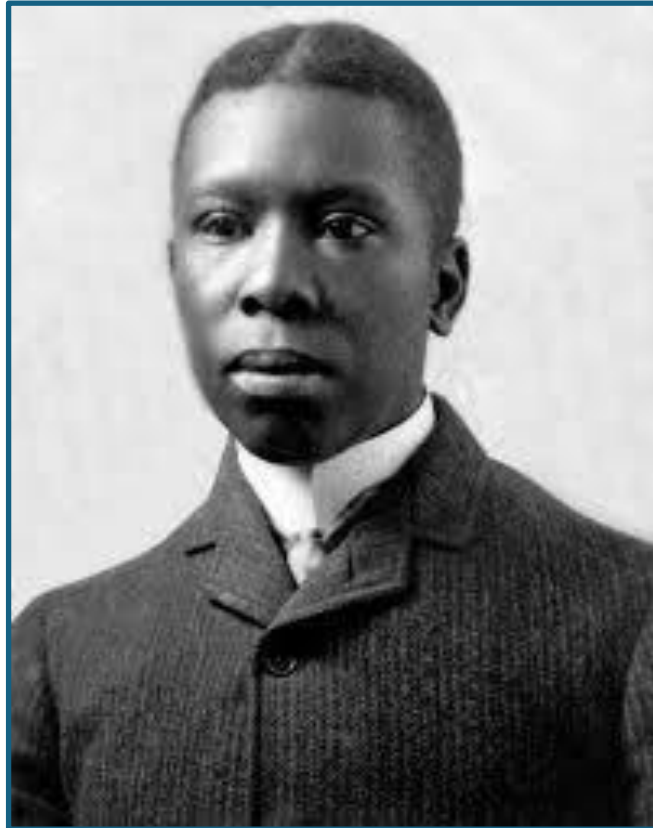


## The Poet

Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)



Known during his lifetime as the “Poet Laureate of the Negro race,” Paul Laurence Dunbar was, at the time of his death, the most famous poet in America. Not only was Dunbar also the first African American author to live by his pen, he knew many of the leading authors of the day, including William Dean Howells, Stephen Crane, and W. E. B. Du Bois. As well, he was well known by many of the leading periodical editors of his day: Richard Watson Gilder of the *Century*, William Dean Howells of *Harper’s Weekly*, Harrison S. Morris of *Lippincott’s*, T. Thomas Fortune of the *New York Age*, and George Horace Lorimer of the *Saturday Evening Post*. He was on familiar terms with Booker T. Washington—he wrote the Tuskegee school song for Washington and lectured at Tuskegee and with Washington elsewhere—as well as the Dodd

family, who ran Dodd, Mead and Company, one of the nation's largest and most respected publishing houses. Dunbar crossed paths with two Presidents, William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, with Roosevelt and Dunbar exchanging books and letters after their initial meeting, and he also met future Secretary of State John Hay during his time in England. Closer to home, he was high school friends with Orville and Wilbur Wright; he met Frederick Douglass at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, and was later friends with the Douglass family during the time he spent in Washington, D. C.

Dunbar's transformation from local figure to national celebrity was a product of William Dean Howells's June 27, 1896 review of *Majors and Minors*; in his review, Howells noted that Dunbar was "most himself" when he wrote in dialect and "least himself" when he wrote in standard verse. While Howells's connection between dialect and race influenced Dunbar's subsequent career, it also made Dunbar an instant success. Barely six months after Howells's review, Dunbar had a book contract with Dodd, Mead and Company for *Lyrics of Lowly Life*, agreed to have Major James D. Pond serve as his touring manager (the same man who represented Mark Twain), and, in January 1897, was on his way to England for a speaking tour. It was during his time in England that Dunbar began writing both his first novel and several of the shorter pieces that would become his first collection of short stories; between 1897 and Dunbar's death in 1906, he published an additional nine collections of poetry, four novels, four collections of 6 short stories, and numerous songs, dramatic works, and essays in leading American periodicals.

While much of Dunbar's work continued to be interpreted by his reading public according to Howells's initial review regarding the use of dialect, at the same time, Dunbar's work offers a sustained

engagement with the period's racial attitudes. Dunbar's response to the social, political, and cultural beliefs of his white readers took a distinctive form in each of the different genres that he pursued professionally—his poetry, short fiction, and novels all reflect subtle, careful, and intentional differences when comparing the literary strategies employed to confront the socially sanctioned beliefs concerning black inferiority. As with other writers in the period interested in engaging contentious social problems (like, for example, Mark Twain), Dunbar employs both dialect and humor to simultaneously entertain and distract readers from the underlying political messages contained in his work. It is for these reasons that Dunbar's work continues to resonate for contemporary readers today.

Dr. Thomas Morgan  
University of Dayton English Faculty

## The Composers

### Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)



British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in 1875 in London, England, to an English woman and a native of Sierra Leone. He enrolled in the Royal College of Music as a violin student in 1890 but switched to composition two years later. Very early on the composer began collaborating with the African American poet and author Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906). Roanne Edwards says of Coleridge-Taylor: “He was also a leading exponent of Pan-Africanism, which emphasized the importance of a shared African heritage as the touchstone of black cultural identity”. Jeffrey Green explains the legacy the composer left for musicians of African descent:

“By including African, Afro-American, and Afro-Caribbean elements in his compositions in melody and in title, as well as by being visibly and proudly of his African descent, the music and the achievements of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor had made black concert musicians proud and able to walk tall, especially in America where the compositions of European masters dominated in concert hall programs”.

Coleridge-Taylor took on numerous teaching positions throughout his career. At the time of his death, he was a Lecturer at the Croydon Conservatoire, and Professor of Composition at Trinity College of Music, the Crystal Palace School of Art and Music, and the Guildhall School of Music. He left a large and varied body of music, both vocal and instrumental.

**Sylvia Turner Hollifield (b. 1951)**



Sylvia T. Hollifield, Ph.D., is a native of Detroit, Michigan. She attended Detroit Public Schools graduating from Cass Technical High School. She received her B.S. in and M.Ed. in Vocal Music Education. Continuing her studies, she received a M.A. in Guidance and Counseling, and an Education Specialist in Educational Administration. Furthering her studies, she received a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Wayne State University. Dr. Hollifield worked in the Detroit Public Schools as a vocal music teacher, counselor, assistant principal, principal, and central office administrator. She also taught vocal music in Lancaster, OH and Rochester, NY. She retired from the faculty of Michigan State University in the College of Education. Musically, she has served as choral director, pianist, harpist, and clinician. She is a self-published composer; whose compositions have been performed by various choirs across the country. Her most recent work, "Shades of Hues", a song cycle was written for solo voice and piano. She has had the pleasure of being the Minister of Music at various churches in the Detroit area. Currently, she is the Director of The Cathedral Choir at Hartford Memorial Baptist Church. She is on leave as a member of the United Voices of Detroit in the also section. Dr. Hollifield served as the National 2nd Vice-President of the National Association of Negro Musicians, Inc (NANM, Inc) from 2015-2019. She is on the National Board of NANM, Inc. and has served as the Convention Chair since 2019. Locally, she is a member of the Detroit Musicians Association (DMA) branch, serving as its Treasurer. She holds membership in Sigma Alpha Iota, Inc. (SAI) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). In 2012, Dr. Hollifield founded Michigan Sings, Inc. a program designed to support vocal music programs in the secondary schools. The program provided exposure to working with choral conductors, composers, and clinicians from around the country. Dr. Hollifield

is a member of the Alpha Rho Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (AKA). She is a charter member of the Detroit Chapter of the Pierians, Inc., an arts appreciation organization. In October of 2021, she was elected as the 17th National President of The Pierians, Inc. She is a member of Triumph Church in Detroit, MI, Pastor Solomon Kinloch, Jr.

**Will Liverman (b. 1988)**



Called “a voice for this historic moment” (Washington Post), GRAMMY Award-winning baritone Will Liverman is the recipient of the 2022 Beverly Sills Artist Award and co-creator of *The Factotum* – “mic-drop fabulous good” (Opera News) – which premiered at the Lyric Opera Chicago in 2023.

Following summer appearances at the BBC Proms in Britten's War Requiem, Tanglewood under Andris Nelsons' baton, and Aspen Music Festival's Opera Benefit, Liverman's 2024/2025 season includes engagements at The Metropolitan Opera (Papageno, The Magic Flute), Lyric Opera of Chicago and San Francisco Opera (Marcello, La Bohème), and Dutch National Opera (Ned Keene, Peter Grimes), plus concerts at Carnegie Hall, San Francisco Symphony, Rhode Island Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra (with Antonio Pappano), Oakland Symphony, National Sawdust, New York Festival of Song, String Theory, The Concertgebouw, and the Oxford International Song Festival.

Liverman's Show Me The Way (Cedille, 2024) with pianist Jonathan King, a "glorious" (BBC Music) celebration of American song, was nominated for a GRAMMY Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album and features guests Renée Fleming, J'Nai Bridges, Nicole Cabell, Lady Jess, Tahirah Whittington, and Terry Liverman. His Dreams of a New Day: Songs by Black Composers (Cedille, 2021) debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Traditional Classical chart and was GRAMMY Award-nominated for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album.

Liverman is a Ryan Opera Center (Lyric Opera of Chicago) alumnus and was a Glimmerglass Festival Young Artist. He holds degrees from The Juilliard School (M.M.) and Wheaton College in Illinois (B.M.). [www.willliverman.com](http://www.willliverman.com).



## Adolphus Hailstork (b. 1941)



Composer and College Professor Adolphus Cunningham Hailstork, born April 17th, 1941 in Rochester, New York, began his musical studies with piano lessons as a child. He studied at Howard University (B.Mus., 1963) and Manhattan School of Music (B.Mus. in Composition, 1965, M.Mus. in Composition, 1966), spending the summer of 1963 at the American Institute at Fontainebleau, France. He earned his doctoral degree from Michigan State University in Lansing (Ph.D., 1971). His principal teachers were H. Owen Reed, Vittorio Giannini and David Diamond, Mark Fax, and Nadia Boulanger. His career as a teacher includes professorships at Youngstown State University, Norfolk State University and Old Dominion University, where he is Eminent Scholar and Professor of Music.

Dr. Hailstork began writing music at an early age. His musical-comedy, *The Race for Space*, was performed at Howard University during his senior year in college (1963), and his master's thesis, *Statement, Variations and Fugue*, was performed by the Baltimore Symphony in 1966. Hailstork writes in a variety of forms and styles: symphonic works and tone poems for orchestra; a piano concerto; numerous chamber works; duos for such combinations as horn and piano, clarinet and piano, flute and piano, and others; a large number of songs including songs for soprano, baritone, mezzo-soprano, some with piano and others with orchestra or chamber group; band works and band transcriptions, and many pieces for piano. Among his compositions are *Celebration*, which, in 1976, was recorded by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra; *Out of the Depths*, which won the 1977 Belwin-Mills Max Winkler Award presented by the Band Directors National Association; *American Guernica*, awarded first prize in a national contest sponsored by the Virginia College Band Directors in 1983; and *Mourn Not the Dead* which received the 1971 Ernest Bloch Award for choral composition.

In 1990, a consortium of five orchestras commissioned a piano concerto which was premiered by Leon Bates in 1992. In addition, Dr. Hailstork was commissioned by the Barlow Endowment for Music to write *Festival Music* for the Baltimore Symphony. Other significant performances by major orchestras (Philadelphia, Chicago and New York) have been led by leading conductors such as Lorin Maazel, Daniel Barenboim and Kurt Masur. In 1999, the composer's second symphony (commissioned by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra), and his second opera, *Joshua's Boots* (commissioned by the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and the Kansas City Lyric Opera), were premiered. In 2002, James Conlon conducted Hailstork's oratorio *Done Made My Vow* at the renowned Cincinnati May Festival. During the summer of 2003, Dr.

Hailstork was Visiting Artist at the Walden School for young composers. A CD of Hailstork's *Symphonies No. 2 and 3*, recorded by David Lockington with the Grand Rapids Symphony, was released during the 2004-2005 season. In 1992, Dr. Hailstork was proclaimed a Cultural Laureate of the State of Virginia.

**Florence B. Price (1887-1953)**



Florence Price is considered the first black woman in the United States to win recognition as a composer. Her parents, both artistic, carefully guided her early musical training, and at age fourteen, she

enrolled in the New England Conservatory of Music with a major in piano and organ. She studied with George Chadwick and Frederick Converse, writing her first string trio and symphony in college, and graduating in 1907 with honors and an artist diploma and a teaching certificate. She taught in Arkansas from 1907-1927 and married Thomas J. Price, an attorney, in 1912. After a series of racial incidents in Little Rock, the family moved to Chicago where Price began a new and fulfilling period in her compositional career. She studied composition, orchestration, and organ with the leading teachers in the city and published four pieces for piano in 1982. Her friendship with the young composer, Margaret Bonds, resulted in a teacher-student relationship and the two women began to achieve national recognition for their compositions and performances. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Frederick Stock, premiered her *Symphony in E Minor* on June 15, 1933. Price wrote other extended works for orchestra, chamber works, art songs, works for violin, organ anthems, piano pieces, and spiritual arrangements. Some of her more popular works are: *Three Little Negro Dances*, *Songs to the Dark Virgin*, *My Soul's Been Anchored in de Lord*, and *Moon Bridge*. Source: Perkins Holly, Ellistine. *Biographies of Black Composers and Songwriters; A Supplementary Textbook*. Iowa:Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1990.

## H. Leslie Adams (b. 1932)



Harrison Leslie Adams is an African American composer, pianist and professor, who was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1932. Adams went directly from high school to the Oberlin Conservatory, studying composition, voice, and piano. He studied composition privately before attending California State University-Long Beach. He entered The Ohio State University in 1968 and secured his Ph.D. in music education in 1973. Adams has had an extremely varied career, having worked as a choral director, pianist, music director and composer.

Adams' compositional language is described by the New Grove Encyclopedia as a "lyrical style that fuses elements of jazz and black folk song with twentieth century compositional techniques."

In 1963 he won a composition competition held by the National Association of Negro Women, and held the 1969-1970 Fellowship of the National Education Defense Act. He received the national award for original composition from Choral Arts (1974) and the

National Endowment for the Arts provided him with a grant in 1979. He was scholar-in-residence at The Rockefeller Conference Center in Bellagio that same year and was a Fellow of the Cleveland Foundation (1980) and the Jennings Foundation (1981). Under a Meet the Composer program he was featured in the Cleveland public schools in 1981, 1984, and 1991. H. Leslie Adams is a Legacy Award Winner of the National Opera Association for 2006. He is also the recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award of California State University Long Beach, 2006.

Biographies from [artsongalliance.org](http://artsongalliance.org)