The Georgia Laster Branch of The National Association of Negro Musicians, Inc.

Presents

43rd Annual Memorial Concert

“We Honor Our Past For Our Future”

In Memoriam

Dr. Esther Cleaver
Dr. Raleigh Bastine
Shirley Verrett

Sunday, November 18, 2012
3:00 p.m.

Congregational Church of Christian Fellowship
2085 South Hobart Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90018
Rev. James K. McKnight, Pastor
43rd Annual Memorial Concert

“We Honor Our Past For Our Future”

Organ Prelude ................................................................. Perry Hayes

Invocation .................................................................................. Rev. James K. McKnight, Pastor
Congregational Church of Christian Fellowship

Greetings Mamie ........................................................................ Henry, President

Hymn (Pg. 158 AAH Hymnal) ...................................................... Henry F. Lyte
"Abide With Me" Charles Peters, Director

Program

Élégie ....................................................................................... Jules Massenet

Auria Trio
Yolanda Mitchell West, Soprano
Michael Morton, Flute
Perry Hayes, Piano

Prelude in C Sharp Minor .......................................................... Sergei Rachmaninoff
Sulwe Green, Piano
2012 2nd Place Scholarship Winner

When I Survey The Wondrous Cross ........................................ Gilbert Martin
Come To Jesus ............................................................................. A. Frazier
Los Angeles Episcopal Chorale
Canon Dr. Chas Cheatham, Director
Special Tribute to Dr. Raleigh Bastine

Offering ...................................................................................... Rev. James K. McKnight, Pastor
Congregational Church of Christian Fellowship

The Memorial Litany (see insert) .................................................. John Mayes, GLB Chaplain

*The silhouette shown on the cover of our program is Soprano Georgia Laster for whom our branch was named.

L.A. Times critic Martin Bernheimer wrote, “Once in a while, a singer is heard whose voice can truly be called great. Such will be the case when one speaks of Georgia Laster.” Tragically, Ms. Laster and her mother were killed in an automobile accident in 1961. Dr. Albert McNeil, conductor, educator and founder of the Albert McNeil jubilee Singers was instrumental in naming the branch in her honor.
In Memoriam

Dr. Esther Cleaver

The Spoken Memorial
Patricia Royal

Memorial in Song
“Can You See God?” (Recording) Dr. Esther Cleaver (1974 Winner of American Song Festival – Amateur Gospel Category)

“Great is Thy Faithfulness” Traditional
Second Baptist Church Hand Bell Choir Rebecca Haddad, Director

Dr. Raleigh Bastine

The Spoken Memorial
Dr. Hansonia Caldwell

(Memorial in Song
“Holy, Holy, Holy” Paul Sjolund
“Swing Down, Chariot” Wayne Hooper

United Male Chorus
Perry Hayes, Director

Shirley Verrett

The Spoken Memorial
Rev. Alveda Verrett

Memorial in Song
“Mon Coeur s'ouvre a ta voix” from Samson et Dalila C. Saint-Saëns
“Vissi d'arte” from Tosca Giacomo Puccini

Gertrude Bradley, Soprano
Perry Hayes, Piano

Announcements & Remarks Yolanda M. West
Benediction John Mayes, Chaplain
Closing Hymn “The Lord Bless You/Sevenhold Amen” Peter C. Lutkin
(Pg 636 - AAH Hymnal) Sandra Wheeler, Director

Our Sincere Thanks To:
Congregational Church of Christian Fellowship
Rev. James K. McKnight, Senior Pastor
Performing Artists
Supporters & Friend
The Memorial Litany

Litanist: Lord, thou has been our dwelling place in all generations.

People: Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Litanist: Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

People: For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

Litanist: Thou carriest them away as with the flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up;

People: In the morning of flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

Litanist: The days of our years are threescore and ten; and if by reason and strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut of, and we fly away.

People: So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Litanist: O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

People: Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.

Litanist: Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

Unison: Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

Litanist: Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

Unison: And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yes, the work of our hands establish thou it.
Dr. Esther A. Cleaver
Educator, Choral Director, Composer
“Dr. Music”

Esther Althea Cleaver was the younger of two children born in Cushing, Oklahoma, to Walter and Mary Gilmore. She confessed her belief in Jesus Christ and was baptized at the age of nine. Her first piano teacher was her mother and the firm “no-nonsense” persuasion of her principal/minister father, she began playing the piano at the age often for Sunday School, church choirs, school glee clubs and community choruses.

She chose the field of music as her career and graduated magna cum laude from Langston University, Oklahoma. Her teaching career began in Muskogee, Oklahoma as music instructor at the high school from which she had received her diploma. Five years later, while on maternity leave from the Muskogee city Schools, she was drafted to fill a teaching vacancy for piano, harmony and counterpoint at her alma mater, Langston University, Oklahoma.

When the family moved to Los Angeles, Esther changed careers and decided to try her hand at her second love: stenography. She was the first Black to be hired as a crime statistician for the Los Angeles Police Department. She became intrigued with the methods of crime apprehension assigned to her desk and amazed at the thoroughness required. Esther became so adept at helping to solve crime through meticulous M.O. (modus operandi) deductions that she was promoted to chief statistician for the sex crime division.

However, she yearned for the educational closeness with boys and girls. With much regret, the LAPD accepted her resignation. Dr. Cleaver revealed to friends that it was God’s hand that guided her back to the teaching profession and the field of music. After earning her Masters in education from the University of Southern California, she did post graduate work in music composition at the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Cleaver’s California teaching career began at Carver Elementary School, Willowbrook School District, where the PTA commissioned her to paint an oil portrait of George Washington Carver. She was transferred later to Anderson School and while there wrote the “Anderson School Song.” She later was promoted to the position of Supervisor of music for the entire Compton Unified School District.

Dr. Cleaver inspired hundreds of youngsters to pursue their musical interests and talents. She expanded the musical experience of students by initiating after-school programs. Most outstanding of these was the Compton Boychoir, a group of more than 120 boys, age 7 – 13. They became goodwill ambassadors for the district, singing to audiences throughout Southern California and receiving more invitations than they could accept. Other after-school programs were the Coed Choraliers (winner of the Bronze Medal, International Music Festivals, San Francisco). The Do-Re-Mi Tots (K-3) televised guests at the Crystal Cathedral, Anaheim, CA and the Educators Chorus (for teachers and administrators).

During this time, the Doctor of Arts Degree in Music Composition was conferred upon Dr. Cleaver by Western Colorado University. She wrote both the libretto and music to a three-act musical and submitted this original in fulfillment for her doctorate. After this amazing feat, she became known as Dr. Music. She continued to be a prolific composer, writing words and music simultaneously. She received national acclaim in the American Song Festival when her winning gospel song, “Can You See God?” was presented on TV-ABC’s “Wide World of Entertainment.”

When the California State Department of Education developed the statewide Visual and Performing Arts Framework, she was named Supervisor of Visual and Performing Arts for CUSD. Her creative genius manifested itself through the establishment of the Center for Artistically Talented Students (CFATS) an exciting after-school program, which provided in-depth training in vocal and instrumental music, dance, drama, and visual arts. Among the actors and artists to volunteer their services as consulting producers were Carol Ann Tubbs, Dance Department, California State Dominguez University, Hal Williams of TV 227 and the late Esther Rolle, TV Good Times.
In addition to her involvement in the school district, she served as a choral adjudicator: as music consultant of the Carnation program, "The Many Sides of Black Music"; and music instructor for the extension school of Pepperdine University.

Dr. Cleaver’s love for music was evidenced by devoted service to the community. She served as Director of Music (four choirs under her leadership) for the United Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Los Angeles. She also served as interim director, twice, for the Cathedral Choir of Second Baptist Church and interim director of the Children’s Choir, Second Baptist Church for two years.

For more than fifteen years, she served as director of the acclaimed Youth Choir of Second Baptist Church. This group of young people maintained an average of 60 to 75 members, even though the personnel was constantly changing when members became involved in school athletics, graduation, college enrollment and debutante presentations. Somehow, Dr. Cleaver was able to sustain a deep and devoted interest in christian musical service from these teenagers. They not only sang for the worship services but annually presented folk musicals, such as Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. Under Dr. Cleaver’s leadership, concert tours were taken to Seattle, Portland, Santa Barbara, San Francisco and Salt Lake City. Dr. Cleaver’s original composition, I Have a Dream was autographed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at its premier performance by the Second Baptist Youth Choir. Later, Dr. Cleaver was honored in a Special Edition of the Los Angeles Sentinel for this musical accomplishment.

After retiring as Supervisor of Visual and Performing Arts, Dr. Cleaver did not “quit” the music scene. She was a volunteer docent for the Southeast Symphony Association. She developed a Piano Lab System for instructing several students simultaneously through the use of a Master Unit. She directed the Delta Chimes of the Los Angeles Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She was director of the outstanding Handbell Choir of Second Baptist Church. She was an active member of the Georgia Laster Branch; the Los Angeles Chapter of Top Ladies of Distinction; the Southeast Symphony Association; the BMI Performing Rights Organization and the Los Angeles Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

Dr. Cleaver passed away September 10, 2010 and is survived by Dr. Stanley Himes (son), Dr. Renee Himes (daughter), Joi, Amir, and Asia Himes (grandchildren); Jackson Rogers and Justice Himes-Smith (great grandsons); Marylina Thornton (niece); Lloyd and Jan Gilmore (nephews).

Dr. Raleigh Bastine
Organist & Educator

Dr. Raleigh W. Bastine was born in Houston, Texas on May 16, 1945. He attended the public school of Houston and holds the following degrees: Bachelor of Science from Texas University, Master of Science from the University of Colorado, Master of Science from Pepperdine University.

He also received a Doctorate of Philosophy from New York University. Raleigh has taught in the public schools of Houston, Los Angeles and Compton. He formerly served as Vice Principal at Centennial High, Compton High and Davis Junior High School and taught at California State University, Long Beach.

Raleigh has worked with the Los Angeles County Special Schools and was Director of the Harry A. Mier Center of the Crippled Children Society in Inglewood, California. He was also a licensed Religious Science Practitioner, as well as a licensed Realtor.

He was organist and pianist for Crenshaw United Methodist Church, Lincoln Congregational Church, University Seventh Day Adventist Church, Triangular Church of Religious Science, First A.M.E. Church, First Church of Christ Scientist and Seventh Day Adventist Church, in Lancaster, CA and Holman United Methodist Church, along with a number of other churches. He was also a staff musician at the Angelus Funeral Home.

His professional affiliation includes membership in Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. - Beta Rho Chapter, the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, Choral Conductors Guild of Los Angeles and numerous other political and civic organizations. He was known for his close relationship with the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Raleigh was preceded in death by his parents, Dr. Lillian Reedy Bastine (mother); Volly C. Bastine, Sr. (father); Volly C. Bastine, Jr. (twin brother) and Dwight Bastine (younger brother). Raleigh passed away August 6, 2011 and leaves to cherish his memory, Gerald A. Bastine (son), Amir Bastine (grandson), Ronique Robinson (niece), Kim Jacob (sister), Anna E. Phillips (cousin) and a host of other relatives and friends.
Shirley Verrett
Internationally Renowned Opera Singer

Shirley Verrett, one of five children, was born on May 31, 1931, in New Orleans, Louisiana. Her parents were strict Seventh-day Adventists. Her father, who had a construction company, moved the family to Los Angeles, California when she was a young girl. Her parents encouraged her talent, but wanted Shirley to pursue a concert career in the mold of Marian Anderson. They disapproved of opera.

During the first years of her career she was known as Shirley Verrett-Carter. At that time she was married to James Carter. In the early days, like African-American artists before her, she experienced racial prejudice. In 1959, noted conductor Leopold Stokowski hired her to sing the Wood Dove in a performance of Schoenberg's Gurrelieder with the Houston Symphony, but the orchestra’s board would not allow a African-American soloist to appear. To correct that injustice, Stokowski engaged Ms. Verrett to sing with the Philadelphia Orchestra for a performance of Falla's Amor Brujo, which led to a recording.

In her prime, Shirley Verrett was a remarkably complete and distinctive operatic artist. She had a plush, rich and powerful voice, thorough musicianship, insightful dramatic skills, charisma and beauty. In his New York magazine review the critic Alan Rich wrote that Ms. Verrett was “glorious to behold, and her luscious, pliant voice is at this moment in prime estate.” At her best, Ms. Verrett could sing with both mellow richness and chilling power. Her full-voiced top notes easily cut through the orchestral outbursts in Verdi’s Aida. Yet as Lady Macbeth, during the Sleepwalking Scene, she could end the character’s haunting music with an ethereal final phrase capped by a soft, shimmering high D-flat. Some critics thought that she made a mistake by singing soprano repertory after establishing herself as one of the premiere mezzo-sopranos of her generation, riveting as Carmen in Bizet’s Carmen and Delila in Saint-Saëns’s Samson et Delila.

In 1961 she won the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. She also studied at The Juilliard School. Carmen was the role of her 1968 Met debut. Other important roles with the Met included Azucena from Verdi’s Il Trovatore, Eboli from Verdi’s Don Carlo and Leonora in Donizetti’s La Favorita in 1978, a new production mounted for Ms. Verrett. In 1973, when the Met presented its production of Berlioz’s Les Troyens, Ms. Verrett sang not only the role of Cassandra in Part I of this epic opera, but also Dido in Part II, taking the place of an ailing colleague, a tour de force that entered the Met annals. After singing the soprano role of Lady Macbeth in a landmark 1975 production of Verdi’s Macbeth at La Scala in Milan, she became known as La Nera Callas (the Black Callas). Her Lady Macbeth is on a 1976 Deutsche Grammophon recording. There is also a 1987 Unitel film production of her Lady Macbeth on laser disc by London. In 1976, just six weeks after singing Adalgisa (the mezzo-soprano role) in Bellini’s Norma at the Metropolitan Opera, she sang the soprano title role on tour with the Met, including a performance in Boston that earned a frenzied ovation. In the Met’s 1978-79 season Ms. Verrett sang the role of Tosca in a production of Puccini’s Tosca that was broadcast live on public television. In 1981, the Opera Company of Boston, did what was then a bold act of colorblind casting by conductor and stage director Sarah Caldwell, engaged Ms. Verrett to sing the role of Desdemona (a role usually cast with Caucasian sopranos) in Verdi’s Otello. The intensity and vulnerability of her singing cut to the core of the winsome, naïve character of this heroine. In 1994, about to turn 63 and with opera well behind her, Ms. Verrett made her Broadway debut as Nettie Fowler in the Tony Award-winning production of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Carousel at Lincoln Center. In later years, she was a professor of voice at the University of Michigan. She has authored an autobiography entitled, I Never Walked Alone.

Shirley Verrett, the vocally lustrous and dramatically compelling American opera singer who began as a mezzo-soprano and went on to sing soprano roles to international acclaim, died November 5, 2010, at her home in Ann Arbor, Mich. Her husband, of 47 years, Lou LoMonaco (an artist), her adopted daughter Francesca LoMonaco, and a granddaughter, survive her. The cause of death was heart failure after several months of illness. Shirley Verrett was 79 years old.

(Adapted from The New York Times article by Anthony Tommasini – 11/6/2010)
Memorial Donations

Our sincere thanks to each individual and organization that made donations in support of this memorial program.

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**Donations in Memory of Dr. Esther Cleaver**

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Sybil Thomas Coker
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- Henry Lovett Fortson, Father
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- John Louis Fortson, Brother
- Burnett L. Fortson, Brother
- Dr. Marilyn Thompson, Friend
- Don Lee White, Musician
- Vernel L. Ford, Music Teacher
- Versie B. Fortson, Aunt

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    - Alfred Glover, Husband

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  - Lillian McGavock
  - Catherine Savoy
  - Evelyn Clymer

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- Alleen Triggs, Daughter

**Yolanda Mitchell West Remembers**
- Connie Bentley Mitchell, Mother
- James Lee Mitchell, Jr. Father
- Anthony Jerome Mitchell, Brother
- Dr. J. Harrison Wilson, Mentor
  - Dr. Don Lee White, Mentor
  - Dr. Don Lee White

**James E. West, II Remembers**
- James Edward West, I, Father
- Hattie Foote, Grandmother

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  - Delores Hammond

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- Althea Simpkins

**Carolyn Tang Remembers**
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**Andrew J. Thomas, Esq**
- Don Lee White

**John Herod, Husband**
- Carolyn Tang Remembers
- Harriet Whitmore, Remembers

**Mamie Wagner**
- Mrs. Johnnie M. Perry

**Carlton Meredith**
- Linda S. Jackson

**John Anthony Moore**
- Rita Goudin

**Shardrick Boone**
- Jacki Broussard

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- Dr. Don Lee White
  - Dr. Raleigh Bastine
  - Dr. Esther Cleaver
  - Mr. James Kendrick

**Delores Hammond**
- Edward G. Day
  - Janet Lee Day

**June Doty Remembers**
- Cecil L. Doty
  - Mr. & Mrs. Darius Doty
  - Lillian McGavock
  - Catherine Savoy
  - Evelyn Clymer

**Barbara E. Terrell Remembers**
- Alleen Triggs, Daughter

**Yolanda Mitchell West Remembers**
- Connie Bentley Mitchell, Mother
- James Lee Mitchell, Jr. Father
- Anthony Jerome Mitchell, Brother
- Dr. J. Harrison Wilson, Mentor
- Dr. Don Lee White, Mentor

**Dr. Flora Cordett Remembers**
- Letha V. Childs, Mother
REMEMBERING

DR. RALEIGH BASTINE

MASTER ORGANIST, MENTOR AND FRIEND

"THE STRIFE IS O'ER, THE BATTLE DONE; THE VICTORY OF LIFE IS WON."

ANON

WE SHARE FOND MEMORIES OF RALEIGH,
MUCH LOVE, AND DEEP APPRECIATION FOR HIS
DEDICATION
TO OUR MUSIC MINISTRY AND WORSHIP SERVICES

HOLMAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CHOIR

WILLIAM CAMPBELL, JR., DIRECTOR

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REV. GARY B. WILLIAMS, ASSOCIATE
Annual Musical Note Donors

These members and benefactors have made generous contributions to support our work. We are most appreciative of their gifts.

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James Sterrett-Bryant
Alma Burch
Dorothy Hayes
Daniel Weir

Half Notes
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Frederick T. Johnson
James Sterrett-Bryant
Dr. Albert J. McNeil
Geneva Day

Quarter Notes
Gwendolyn Collins
Nadine T. Chastang
Judith M. Baity
Rudy Williams
Francis E. Williams’ Artist Grant

Eighth Notes
Alfred S. Moore
June Doty
Barbara Cole
Bernard W. Kinsey
Gloria Lindsay
Stewart L. Gilbert
Oscar Owens, Sr.
John Mayes

National Association of Negro Musicians
Dedicated to the preservation of African-American Music and Musicians

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