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# MIRÓ

## QUARTET

WITH KAREN SLACK  
SOPRANO

JANUARY 28, 2026



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# MIRÓ QUARTET WITH KAREN SLACK, SOPRANO

## JANUARY 28, 2026 | 7:30 PM

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### Miró Quartet

Daniel Ching, *violin*

William Fedkenheuer, *violin*

John Largess, *viola*

Joshua Gindele, *cello*

The Miró Quartet and Karen Slack are represented by MKI Artists.

### MIRÓ QUARTET

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The Miró Quartet is one of America's most celebrated string quartets, praised as "furiously committed" by *The New Yorker* and recognized for its "exceptional tonal focus and interpretive intensity" by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. Marking its 30th anniversary in 2025, the quartet has performed on the world's most prestigious concert stages, earning accolades from critics and audiences alike. Based in Austin, TX, and thriving on the area's storied music scene, the quartet takes pride in finding new ways to communicate with audiences of all backgrounds while cultivating the longstanding tradition of chamber music. Since 2003, Miró has served as the quartet-in-residence at the University of Texas at Austin Sarah and Ernest Butler School of Music.

The Miró Quartet's newest album, an acclaimed recording of Ginastera's complete String Quartets, was released on PENTATONE in July 2025. Among its many previous recordings for a variety of global labels, the quartet was nominated for a 2025 GRAMMY® Award for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance for its album *Home* (PENTATONE, 2024) featuring two new commissions by Kevin Puts and Caroline Shaw, as well as works by George Walker and Samuel Barber.

It was also nominated for a 2024 GRAMMY® Award for its album *House of Belonging*, created in collaboration with Austin-based choral group Conspirare.

The quartet's recent and upcoming projects include *Here on Earth* with pianist Lara Downes, the premiere of a new version of Kevin Puts' *Credo*, and collaborations with composers Steven Banks, Tamar-Kali, and Gabriel Kahane, as well as soprano Karen Slack and the Isadore Quartet.

The Miró Quartet took its name and its inspiration from the Spanish artist Joan Miró, whose Surrealist works – with subject matter drawn from the realm of memory, dreams, and imaginative fantasy – are some of the most groundbreaking, influential, and admired of the 20th century. Visit [miroquartet.com](https://www.miroquartet.com) for more information.

*Exceptional tonal focus and  
interpretive intensity*

—Cleveland Plain Dealer



## EVENING SERIES

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### KAREN SLACK

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Praised as "one of opera's strongest voices at present – both as a singer and a shaper of its culture" (*The Washington Post*), GRAMMY® Award-winning soprano Karen Slack is celebrated as both an extraordinary performer and a change-maker in classical music.

Recently, Slack has been on a nationwide tour for her critically-acclaimed *African Queens*, which continues into her 25-26 season, including an orchestral version presented by the Naples Philharmonic in Naples, Florida. Slack's season engagements include world premieres of Tamar-kali's new work with the Miró Quartet for the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music and Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's presentation of Kathryn Bostic's *Drag*, and Brittany J. Green's *Letters to America*, part of American Composers Orchestra's program *Hello, America: Letters to Us, from Us*. She also appears with the Orlando Philharmonic, Chamber Music Cincinnati, and Spivey Hall.

Slack's *Beyond the Years: Unpublished Songs of Florence Price* with pianist Michelle Cann in collaboration with ONEcomposer on Azica Records won the 2025 GRAMMY® Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album. In 2025, Slack was featured on Shawn Okpebholo's album *Songs in Flight*, released with Cedille Records.

Slack has performed at the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, Scottish Opera and many others. In concert, her credits include the Melbourne and

Sydney symphonies, Bergen Philharmonic, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Orchestra of St. Luke's at Carnegie Hall, and Philadelphia Orchestra. She made her New York Philharmonic debut in May 2024.

A recipient of the 2022 Sphinx Medal of Excellence and 2025 MPower Artist Grant, Slack is an Artistic Advisor for Portland Opera, serves on the board of the American Composers Orchestra, and holds a faculty position at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. In the 2024-2025 season, she served as Artist-in-Residence at both Lyric Opera of Chicago and Babson College.

A native Philadelphian, Slack is a graduate of the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music, as well as the Adler Fellowship and the Merola Opera Program at the San Francisco Opera. Learn more at [www.karenslack.com](http://www.karenslack.com).

*One of opera's strongest voices at present – both as a singer and a shaper of its culture.*

—The Washington Post

# TONIGHT'S COMMISSIONED COMPOSER

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## TAMAR-KALI

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Brooklyn born and bred artist and second-generation musician with roots in the coastal Sea Islands of South Carolina, Tamar-kali is a vocalist, performer, award winning composer and Oscar shortlisted composer of Oscar nominated and Emmy award winning films.

Whether her alt-rock power quintet or her all femme chamber ensemble, as a performer, she speaks her lyrical truth with a supreme passion and a voice that will shake your foundation and shatter your expectations with its soulful intensity.

Her debut original score for Dee Rees' Oscar-nominated "Mudbound" received the World Soundtrack Academy's 2018 Discovery of the Year Award and was classified by Indiewire as one of the 25 Best Film Scores of the 21st Century.

The soundtrack for her score to Josephine Decker's 'SHIRLEY' was named The Guardian's Contemporary Album of the month in June 2020.

2022 saw her debut work from multiple commissions; the LA Opera digital short, We Hold These Truths' directed by Peabody award winner dream hampton, a solo cello piece for acclaimed cellist Matt Haimovitz as well as a return to the stage to perform 'Melancholy Ghosts and Other Mothers' a Beth Morrison Projects commissioned song cycle.

Watch Night, a theatrical work conceived and

directed by Bill T. Jones and composed by Tamar-kali with a libretto by Marc Bamuthi Joseph made its world premiere November 8, 2023 as part of the long awaited Perelman Performing Arts Center's inaugural season.

Most recently, her original score for history making Oscar nominee Rachel Morrison's feature directorial debut The Fire Inside made the 2024 Oscars shortlist.

Current projects include a full length chamber opera inspired by William Dorsey Swann, the first person known to dub themselves a "queen of drag" and Sea Island Symphony: Red Rice, Cotton and Indigo; an orchestral love letter to her Gullah Geechee roots.

*The genre-defying artist's latest work for Lincoln Center, Freedom Is a Constant Struggle, is a meditation on sovereignty, creating community, and the impact of Gullah Geechee traditions on American music*

— Harpers Bazaar

# EVENING SERIES

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This evening’s concert is sponsored by the generous contribution of Larry Herron & Harlow Sires.

Tamar-Kali’s *Pleasure Garden* was commissioned by Larry Herron & Harlow Sires.

This program is made possible in part through a collaboration with the Tucson Desert Song Festival (TDSF).

## PROGRAM

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### SAMUEL BARBER (1910–1981)

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*String Quartet in B Minor, Op. 11*

I. Molto allegro e appassionato

### WILLIAM GRANT STILL (1895–1978)

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*Songs of Separation (arr. John Largess)*

### TAMAR-KALI (B. 1973)

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*Pleasure Garden* (World Premiere, AFCM Commission)

When the Green Lies over the Earth

Rain Fugue

Trees at Night

### SAMUEL BARBER (1910–1981)

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*String Quartet in B Minor, Op. 11*

II. Molto adagio

III. Molto allegro

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## INTERMISSION

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### GEORGE WALKER (1922–2018)

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*Lyric for Strings*

### FLORENCE PRICE (1887–1953)

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*String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor*

III. Juba. Allegro

### MARGARET BONDS (1913–1972)

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*Creek-Freedman Songs* (with string quartet)



# PROGRAM NOTES

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## **Barber: *String Quartet in B Minor, Op. 11***

In 1936 Barber received a Pulitzer Travelling Scholarship for composition and happily settled into a hunting lodge in the Austrian Tyrol to write his first string quartet. Unfortunately, winter arrived early and Barber was forced to leave the unheated lodge before finishing the work. “It has a hoodoo on it,” he said of the third movement, which he never quite finished to his satisfaction.

The second movement endures as Barber’s most popular composition through its orchestral transcription *Adagio for Strings*, which he created for Arturo Toscanini. Because of its noble and elegiac character the movement has actually—to Barber’s dismay— become international music of mourning, having been played at the funerals of Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Princess Grace of Monaco. Yet many listeners hear it not as an elegy but as a simple love scene.

The first movement (B minor) develops three themes. The first is bold and arresting; the second calm and chorale-like; the third a widely arched legato melody. The Adagio (B flat minor) is based on a sinuous, stepwise-moving theme that begins with serenity but gradually builds to a peak of intensity as each instrument plays at the upper limits of its range. A subdued coda gently ends the momentum. The third movement, an altered repetition of the first movement in a new tonality, proceeds without pause. The opening tonality of B minor returns at the brief coda.

## **Still: *Songs of Separation* (arr. John Largess)**

William Grant Still’s *Songs of Separation* is a cycle of art songs set to poems by African American writers, exploring themes of longing, identity, and emotional distance. Composed in 1949, the songs reflect Still’s lifelong commitment to giving voice to Black experience within classical forms, blending lyric immediacy with refined craftsmanship.

The music is grounded in expressive melody and clear harmonic language, often inflected with blues and spiritual influences. Rather than dramatic display, Still favors intimacy and direct communication, allowing the poetry to remain central.

In this arrangement for voice and string quartet, the added strings deepen the emotional resonance, expanding the color and weight of the original accompaniment.

*Songs of Separation* stands as a quiet but powerful example of Still’s mature style, uniting poetry and music in works that are personal, dignified, and enduringly expressive.

## **Tamar-kali: *Pleasure Garden***

Note from Tamar-kali to the Miró (from November, as the work was under development):

When we initially spoke about the opportunity to work together I mentioned my commitment to mining text from women of the Harlem Renaissance whose work was not as commonly known as their male counterparts.

In researching works from a number of writers and poets of the day, I stumbled upon some texts that were particularly moving in the imagery they provoked and a theme started to emerge: nature.

The juxtaposition of the burgeoning metropolitan grandeur of Harlem and this longing for the simple pleasures of nature sat so squarely in the ‘*Pleasure Garden*’ phenomenon of the time.

NYC was home to various stately gardens of this kind. Consistent restriction of admittance for African Americans inspired the opening of African Grove which laid ground for *The African Grove Theater*, a financially successful Black owned Theater that staged Shakespearean and original plays, musicals and opera in pre-abolition NY.

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*When the Green Lies over the Earth* — by Angelina Weld Grimké (1880–1958)

When the green lies over the earth, my dear,  
A mantle of witching grace,  
When the smile and the tear of the young child year  
Dimple across its face,  
And then flee, when the wind all day is sweet  
With the breath of growing things,  
When the wooing bird lights on restless feet  
And chirrups and trills and sings  
    To his lady-love  
    In the green above,  
Then oh! my dear, when the youth's in the year,  
Yours is the face that I long to have near,  
    Yours is the face, my dear.

But the green is hiding your curls, my dear,  
Your curls so shining and sweet;  
And the gold-hearted daisies this many a year  
Have bloomed and bloomed at your feet,  
And the little birds just above your head  
With their voices hushed, my dear,  
For you have sung and have prayed and have pled  
    This many, many a year.

And the blossoms fall,  
On the garden wall,  
And drift like snow on the green below.  
But the sharp thorn grows  
On the budding rose,  
And my heart no more leaps at the sunset glow.  
For oh! my dear, when the youth's in the year,  
Yours is the face that I long to have near,  
Yours is the face, my dear.

*Rain Fugue* — by Jessie Redmon Fauset  
(1882–1961)

Slanting, driving, Summer rain  
How you wash my heart of pain!  
How you make me think of trees,  
Ships and gulls and flashing seas!  
In your furious, tearing wind,  
Swells a chant that heals my mind;  
And your passion high and proud,  
Makes me shout and laugh aloud!

Autumn rains that start at dawn,  
“Dropping veils of thinnest lawn,”  
Soaking sod between dank grasses,  
Sweeping golden leaves in masses,—

Blotting, blurring out the Past,  
In a dream you hold me fast;  
Calling, coaxing to forget  
Things that are, for things not yet.

Winter tempest, winter rain,  
Hurtling down with might and main,  
You but make me hug my hearth,  
Laughing, sheltered from your wrath.  
Now I woo my dancing fire,  
Piling, piling drift-wood higher.  
Books and friends and pictures old,  
Hearten while you pound and scold!

Pattering, wistful showers of Spring  
Set me to remembering  
Far-off times and lovers too,  
Gentle joys and heart-break rue,—  
Memories I'd as lief forget,  
Were not oblivion sadder yet.  
Ah! you twist my mind with pain,  
Wistful, whispering April rain!

Summer, Autumn, Winter rain,  
How you ease my heart of pain!  
Whispering, wistful showers of Spring,  
How I love the hurt you bring!

*Trees at Night* — by Helene Johnson  
(1896–1995)

Slim Sentinels  
Stretching lacy arms  
About a slumbrous moon;  
Black quivering  
Silhouettes,  
Tremulous,  
Stencilled on the petal  
Of a bluebell;  
Ink sputtered  
On a robin's breast;  
The jagged rent  
Of mountains  
Reflected in a  
Stilly sleeping lake;  
Fragile pinnacles  
Of fairy castles;  
Torn webs of shadows;  
And  
Printed 'gainst the sky—  
The trembling beauty  
Of an urgent pine.

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### **Walker: *Lyric for Strings***

George Walker was an American composer, pianist, and organist, and in 1996 became the first African American to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Music, awarded for his work *Lilacs*.

Originally titled *Lament*, *Lyric for Strings* began as the second movement of Walker's *String Quartet No. 1*, composed in 1946 while he was a graduate student at the Curtis Institute of Music. The work received its premiere that same year, performed by the Curtis student orchestra under the direction of Seymour Lipkin.

In 1990, Walker arranged the movement for string orchestra and renamed it *Lyric for Strings*. It remains his most frequently performed composition. The piece is dedicated to his grandmother, Melvina King, who had been born into slavery and died shortly before the quartet's completion.

### **Price: *String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor — III. Juba. Allegro***

The third movement of Florence Price's *String Quartet No. 2* is marked *Juba*, a lively dance rooted in African American musical tradition. The *juba* was originally a percussive folk dance developed by enslaved African Americans, characterized by syncopation, rhythmic drive, and bodily motion. By incorporating this form into a classical string quartet, Price affirms vernacular tradition as a source of formal musical expression.

The movement is propelled by buoyant rhythms, offbeat accents, and a strong sense of forward momentum. Short, repeated figures and energetic exchanges among the instruments create a vivid, almost percussive texture, evoking the physicality of the dance itself. Beneath its playful surface, Price's writing is carefully constructed, balancing folk-inspired vitality with classical clarity.

In this movement, Price achieves a synthesis that defines much of her music: the integration of African American idioms within established European forms. The *Juba* serves as both a celebration and a declaration, bringing the quartet to life with joy, resilience, and unmistakable rhythmic character.

### **Bonds: *Creek-Freedman Songs (with string quartet)***

Margaret Bonds' *Creek-Freedman Songs* draw on poetry by Sterling A. Brown, whose writing gives voice to African American life in the rural South with warmth, dignity, and quiet resilience. Bonds, a close collaborator and friend of Brown as well as of Florence Price, was deeply committed to creating art that honored Black cultural experience while engaging classical forms with sophistication and emotional directness.

In these songs, Bonds shapes the vocal line with speech-like naturalness, allowing the poetry's imagery and cadence to guide the music. The string quartet enriches the expressive palette, providing color, atmosphere, and emotional weight rather than functioning as mere accompaniment. Harmonic language remains accessible and lyrical, yet subtly inflected with blues-tinged turns and modal shading.

The *Creek-Freedman Songs* exemplify Bonds' gift for intimate musical storytelling. By blending art song tradition with vernacular influence and poetic clarity, she creates works that feel personal and grounded, offering moments of reflection that resonate quietly but deeply with listeners.



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# 2025-2026 SEASON

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EVENING SERIES	TUCSON WINTER CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL	COMMISSIONS
<b>Jerusalem Quartet</b> Wednesday, October 22, 2025 7:30 p.m.	<b>Winter Festival 2026</b> March 8–15, 2026  Peter Rejto and Bernadette Harvey, <i>Artistic Co-Directors</i>  Goldmund String Quartet Florian Schötz, <i>violin</i> Pinchas Adt, <i>violin</i> Christoph Vandory, <i>viola</i> Raphael Paratore, <i>cello</i>  Nick Canellakis, <i>cello</i> David Fung, <i>piano</i> Bernadette Harvey, <i>piano</i> Kristina Mascher-Turner, <i>french horn</i> Clara Neubauer, <i>violin/viola</i> Paul Neubauer, <i>viola</i> Axel Strauss, <i>violin</i>	<b>Dan Asia</b> Pines’ Last Poems for String Quartet and Voice Amerinet String Quartet with Rachel Calloway, mezzo-soprano Wednesday, December 10, 2025 World Premiere  <b>Patrick Castillo</b> String Quartet No. 2, <i>Libera me</i> Work commemorating Jasper String Quartet’s 20th Anniversary Jasper String Quartet Wednesday, November 19, 2025 World Premiere  <b>Tamar-kali</b> Pleasure Garden Miró Quartet with Karen Slack, soprano Wednesday, January 28, 2026 World Premiere  <b>Michi Wiancko</b> Trio for Horn, Violin, and Piano Tucson Winter Chamber Music Festival Sunday, March 15, 2026 World Premiere
<b>Jasper String Quartet</b> Wednesday, November 19, 2025 7:30 p.m.		
<b>Amerinet String Quartet with Rachel Calloway, mezzo-soprano</b> Wednesday, December 10, 2025 7:30 p.m.		
<b>Miró Quartet with Karen Slack, soprano</b> Wednesday, January 28, 2026 7:30 p.m.		
<b>Juilliard String Quartet</b> Wednesday, February 18, 2026 7:30 p.m.		
<b>Brentano Quartet</b> Wednesday, March 25, 2026 7:30 p.m.		
<b>PIANO &amp; FRIENDS</b>		
<b>Benett Tsai, cello</b> Sunday, November 9, 2025 3:00 p.m.		<i>Tickets online or at the box office.</i>
<b>Don-Paul Kahl, saxophone</b> Sunday, January 18, 2026 3:00 p.m.		<i>For program and artist information, please visit <a href="http://arizonachambermusic.org">arizonachambermusic.org</a>.</i>
<b>Anran Qian, piano</b> Sunday, April 12, 2026 3:00 p.m.	<i>If you are interested in sponsoring a concert or a musician, please contact Cathy Anderson in the box office or at <a href="http://arizonachambermusic.org">arizonachambermusic.org</a>.</i>  <i>If you are interested in sponsoring a commissioned work, please contact Cathy Anderson at <a href="mailto:office@arizonachambermusic.org">office@arizonachambermusic.org</a></i>	

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January 10 at 3 p.m. | St. Philip's in The Hills Episcopal Church

✿ TROBÁR

*Songbook for a King*, Music from the age of troubadours and trouvères

February 8 at 3 p.m. | Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church

✿ DAVÓNE TINES & RUCKUS

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March 1 at 3 p.m. | Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church

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