



SPILLING OVER

Music Inspired by the
Life and Works of Bob Thompson

black moon
TRIO



Program Description

In partnership with the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago, Black Moon Trio curates a program celebrating the art and legacy of artist Bob Thompson. The program highlights similar inspirations of Thompson's own work including musical representations of other visual artists such as Francisco de Goya, music influenced by New York City jazz clubs, and works by other artists of color.

Black Moon Trio collaborates with Nicole Bond, Jason Pallas and other members of the Smart Museum team to bring this interdisciplinary experience to life in a relevant, bespoke way for patrons and concert-goers alike.

Program

Suite for the Duo (1971)

II. Freely, Mournfully

Walden Trio (2016)

Filter (2023)

Blackbird (2008)

Un Abrazo para Sharon (2005)

Linda Delia (2008)

Pop Construction

from ***Pictures from Another Exhibition*** (1971)

Billy Strayhorn (1915-1967)

Daniel Schnyder (b. 1961)

Daniel Bernard Roumain (b. 1970)

Nina Simone (b. 1933-2003)

Jeff Scott (b. 1967)

George Butcher and Julius Watkins
(1921-1977)

Leo Brouwer (b. 1939)

Program Notes

Suite for the Duo

Billy Strayhorn (1915-1967)

Originally a distinctive representation of jazz with the French horn, piano and string bass, Billy Strayhorn worked with the French horn-piano duo of Dwiki Mitchell and Willie Ruff on a suite that he originally titled "North by Southwest Suite". Mitchell and Ruff recorded the suite after Strayhorn's passing as 'Suite for the Duo'.



Walden Trio

Daniel Schnyder

Walden Trio was composed in the late 1990s for Lincoln Center Chamber Music french hornist, Robert Routh who premiered it along with violinist Ann Kavafian, and pianist Ann Mc Dermott.

The piece was originally combined with the Brahms Horn Trio, Op. 40 and shares some formal ideals with that composition in order to fit in a program. Walden refers to Walden Pond outside of Boston, Massachusetts.

- Daniel Schnyder



Filter

Daniel Bernard Roumain (b. 1970)

With Filter, violinist and composer Daniel Bernard Roumain conjures the sound world of hip hop and electronic dance music on the acoustic violin. While spinning blistering virtuosic patterns, the performer is asked to "filter" the violin's coloring by moving the bow "as close to, and as far away from, the bridge as possible."



Blackbird

Nina Simone (1933-2003)

Nina Simone is known for her hauntingly beautiful alto voice. She was a jazz, blues, classical, folk, R&B, and gospel songstress, as well as a civil rights activist. The meaning behind Simone's song, "Blackbird" speaks to the struggles and pain of black women, as black birds. She expresses the pain of feeling unloved and uncared for, not understood. Black women face a triple jeopardy of race, class, and gender oppression, which is detailed by the term intersectionality. Simone's lyrics express the collective pain of many black women, the words of her song speaking for themselves.



Un Abrazo para Sharon

Jeff Scott (b. 1967)

Un Abrazo Para Sharon was commissioned by Madelon and John Grobman in 2005 in honor of Sharon Moe, private teacher of their son, Benjamin Grobman. Many thanks to the Grobman family for their support of my dream and belief in my talent.

Benjamin Grobman's parents were none too shy in confessing the difficulties Sharon would have in lessons with the young student, often having to use popular music, by way show tunes, pop, and jazz to encourage him to practice. The piece musically depicts this relationship.

- Jeff Scott

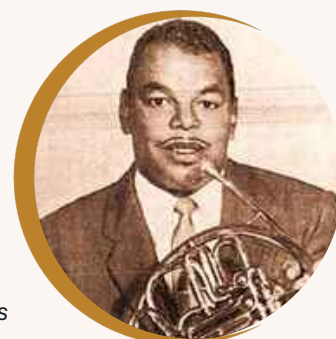


Linda Delia

George Butcher and Julius Watkins (1921-1977)

Julius Watkins chose to explore the technical and interpretative possibilities of the French horn in jazz, performing with names such as Thelonius Monk, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, and Quincy Jones. Watkins' musical legacy has enabled subsequent generations to discover the versatility of the French horn, an instrument that is particularly well suited to improvisation and the sounds of jazz music.

Founder of the Julius Watkins Sextet, Watkins and his colleagues (including pianist George Butcher) recorded and released *Linda Delia* as part of the LP *Julius Watkins Sextet* in 1954, with the original comprised of bass, drums, french horn, guitar, piano, and tenor saxophone.



Pop Construction from Pictures at Another Exhibition

Leo Brouwer (b. 1939)

Leo's Brouwer's *Pictures At Another Exhibition*, with a title that tips a hat to the Mussorgsky suite of 1874, is presented here for a chamber group of Piano, Horn and Violin. The Cuban composer has created a set of programmatic musical depictions inspired by six works of art ranging from Bosch's *Garden Of Earthly Delights* to Rauschenberg's *Pop Construction*. The pieces are brimming with the vitality and energy of Brouwer's Cuban origins.



About the Musicians: Black Moon Trio

Black Moon Trio is committed to collaboratively affecting positive change in communities through chamber music. They reimagine the breadth of a horn, violin, and piano trio by showcasing underrepresented voices in their artistic programming and original commissions, inspiring young musicians and non-musicians alike through captivating educational programs, and connecting community members through the arts. By engaging with diverse audiences, youth, and artists of every type, Black Moon Trio works to prove that classical music is for everyone.

Black Moon Trio was founded in 2022 by Parker Nelson, Jeremy Vigil, and Khelsey Zarraga. Each rooted in musical, cultural, and community organizations across the Chicago region, Parker, Jeremy, and Khelsey aim to continue making classical music available and relevant to everyone. Harnessing the experience from years of professional chamber music performance, music-making in social service settings, facilitating workshops at universities, and developing curriculum for youth in schools and community development through music, Black Moon Trio is excited to provide a classical music experience that resonates far beyond the reverberations of a final chord.

Recent projects include *Spilling Over*: a program created in collaboration with the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago inspired by the works of visual artist and activist, Bob Thompson; *Honeybee*: a co-created performance and workshop of Candace Fleming and Eric Rohmann's award-winning children's book, *Honeybee: The Busy Life of Apis Mellifera* promoting the understanding, appreciation, and preservation of honeybees and other migratory pollinators; and *Sow the Seeds*: a collaboration with New York Times Best-Selling author and Chicago-native, Michael Tyler, in an interactive concert and journaling experience for audiences to actively address subjects of wellness and community through music, poetry, and nature guided by Tyler's *Sow the Seeds: A Composition in Verse*.

Reaching thousands of students annually through its arts-integrated educational programs, Black Moon Trio connects K-12 core curricula to vivid, custom-crafted, and interactive musical experiences which challenge students to share and lead. Black Moon Trio has presented performances and residencies at numerous Chicago public schools in partnership with Classical Music Chicago and Ravinia's Reach*Teach*Play program.

Black Moon Trio is ensemble-in-residence at **Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods**.



About the Author:

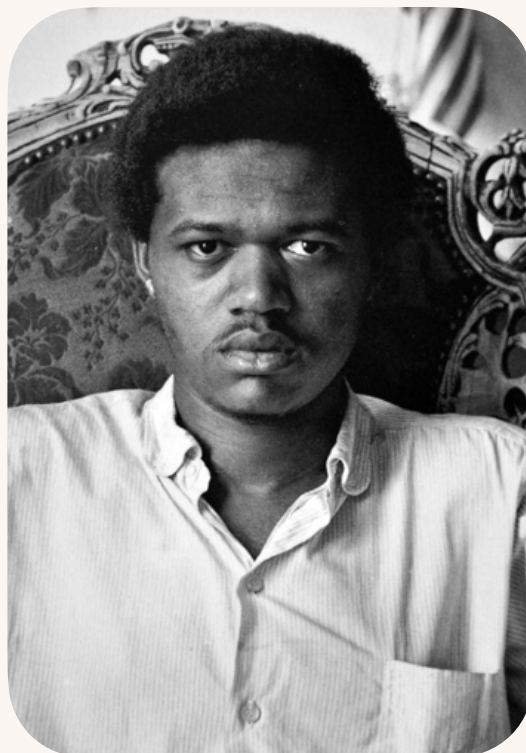
Bob Thompson

Robert Louis (Bob) Thompson briefly studied medicine at Boston University before enrolling in the studio program at the University of Louisville, which had desegregated in 1951. As an art student, Thompson explored the languages of totemic abstraction then in vogue and developed an extraordinary proficiency in academic drawing. He spent the summer of 1958 in Provincetown, Massachusetts, where he continued his training at the Seong Moy School of Painting and Graphic Arts and forged valuable friendships. Thompson also encountered the work of the recently deceased German émigré artist Jan Müller (1922–1958), whose figurative style pointed him toward new expressive possibilities.

Thompson soon settled in New York City, where he joined fellow artists Allan Kaprow and Red Grooms in some of their first so-called “Happenings,” multimedia performance events. A devotee of jazz, Thompson frequented downtown clubs such as Slugs’ Saloon and the Five Spot Café, where legendary performers including Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, and Charlie Haden played. These musicians materialize in many of Thompson’s paintings and drawings including Ornette (Birmingham Museum of Art, 1960–61) and Garden of Music (Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, 1960). This pivotal period was marked by Thompson’s first solo New York City exhibition, and within the next few years his work entered some of the preeminent modern art collections in the United States.

In 1961, Thompson and his wife, Carol, made their first trip to Europe together, spending time in London and Paris and eventually settling in Ibiza. Thompson was able to fully immerse himself in the traditions that formed the core of his practice. While in Spain, he deepened his study of Francisco de Goya (1746–1828), and canvases such as *Untitled* (Colby College Museum of Art, 1962) demonstrate his heady dialogue with *Los Caprichos*, the Spanish artist’s mordantly satirical print series. On a second trip to Europe, the couple settled in Rome, where Thompson died tragically on May 30, 1966, of complications following gallbladder surgery.

Memorial exhibitions at the New School for Social Research (1969) and the Speed Art Museum (1971) celebrated his life and career. In 1998, Thelma Golden and Judith Wilson mounted a foundational scholarly retrospective of his work at the Whitney Museum of American Art. More recently, paintings by Thompson have featured in group exhibitions such as *Witness: Art and Civil Rights in the Sixties*; *The Color Line: African-American Artists and Segregation*; and *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*. The Estate of Bob Thompson is represented by Michael Rosenfeld Gallery.



Written by the Colby College Museum of Art.

Above: Bob Thompson in his studio on Rivington Street, NY, c. 1964. © Charles Rotmil.

Learn more about Bob Thompson and view more of his artwork here:

<https://museum-exhibitions.colby.edu/exhibition/bob-thompson-this-house-is-mine/>

About the Collaborator:

Smart Museum of Art at University of Chicago



The Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago is a site for rigorous inquiry and exchange that encourages the examination of complex issues through the lens of art objects and artistic practice. Through strong community and scholarly partnerships, the Museum incorporates diverse ideas, identities, and experiences into its exhibitions and collections, academic inquiry, and public programming. The Smart first opened in 1974.