

# Davóne Tines – Recital No 1: MASS

**Start time:** 7.30pm

**Approximate running time:** 75 minutes, with no interval.

Please note all timings are approximate and subject to change

## Programme

### I. KYRIE

**Caroline Shaw** 1. Kyrie

**Johann Sebastian Bach** 'Wir Jammern Mich doch die verkehrten Herzen' from *Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust*, BWV 170

### II. AGNUS DEI

**Caroline Shaw** 2. Agnus Dei

**Tyshawn Sorey** *Songs for Death*

**Margaret Bonds** *To a Brown Girl, Dead*

### III. CREDO

**Caroline Shaw** 3. Credo

**Johann Sebastian Bach** 'Mache Dich Mein Herze Rein' from *St Matthew Passion*, BWV 244

### IV. GLORIA

**Caroline Shaw** 4. Gloria

**Moses Hogan** *Give Me Jesus*

### V. SANCTUS

**Caroline Shaw** 5. Sanctus

**Julius Eastman** *Prelude to The Holy Presence of Joan D'Arc*

### VI. BENEDICTUS

**Igee Dieudonné/Davóne Tines** *VIGIL*

**For his latest concert, Davóne Tines uses a religious structure as the framework. He says to James Drury that he hopes it will cause people to reflect on issues of racial injustice.**

'When I came into wanting to study voice academically and professionally, it was with a desire to express something,' he tells us over Zoom. 'I earnestly wanted to access the medium of performing, especially in a vocal way, to express something very direct to an audience.'

His intention is not only to close the distance between him as a Black gay man and that fact that he's 'usually a sole African American performer in a largely white context', but also to bring about change. As he explains: 'Lessons that I've learned from some of my dearest colleagues is that you have to try to model the world that you want to live in. But you can't ask people to change until you actually try to change yourself.'

*Recital No 1: MASS* is the latest in a series of Tines's works which speak to the African American experience while highlighting what we as humans have in common. Last year, in collaboration with pianist Conor Hanick and composers Igee Dieudonné and Matthew Aucoin, Tines created *VIGIL* in memory of Breonna Taylor who was shot by police in her own home (the moving work will be a powerful closing to tonight's concert).

Tines was raised in the Black Baptist church in Virginia; members of his family are preachers, and he has a friend who's an episcopal minister. He's infused this religious upbringing with his Harvard sociology degree for this concert. Framed around Caroline Shaw's miniature Mass, the composer's reworked Latin

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service created especially for Tines, this experience interweaves music from the Western European classical tradition, African American spirituals and contemporary compositions.

Two J S Bach works remind us of the composer's strong faith, while provocative African American composer Julius Eastman reflects on someone else's religious conviction in *Prelude to The Holy Presence of Joan D'Arc*. Contemporary composer and multi-instrumentalist Tyshawn Sorey's *Songs For Death* interpret spiritual texts through disquieting settings – never quite offering the listener deliverance.

There's also music from Margaret Bonds and Moses Hogan before the powerful closing *VIGIL*. It's a broad mix of styles and genres.

'It was a goal of mine to have as many entry points as possible for people,' says Tines. 'The Bach might draw somebody in, while a spiritual might draw somebody else in or the prospect of hearing Caroline Shaw in a liturgical piece might pull somebody else in. There are many roads of entry to one idea.'

The idea he's talking about is one of walking the audience through a process of the mass – a recognising of a problem and hoping for change.

His minister friend told him of the concept of tonight's performance: 'You're queering the Mass to your own understanding'. That came from his experience singing at many denominations across the USA.

'I was always cross-pollinating and trying to rationalise how all of these things exist together. What I found was, it's different versions of the exact same story, which is: identifying a problem, the *Kyrie* [Lord have mercy]; *Agnus Dei*: knowing that something has to be sacrificed in order to make change, because that's what change is – something goes away or changes; *Credo*: believing that change can happen. *Gloria* is rejoicing in the fact that that change has happened, or that there's the possibility of change. And *Sanctus* is an acknowledgement of how special the possibility of this process is, that there actually is some sort of road to move on from whatever tension they feel to a release.'

He says he's hopeful this model 'works on any scale, whether that's personal or societal.'

Tines adds: 'In the recital, I'm trying to show [how it applies] on a micro scale, for an individual. I'm saying you can ask for help, you can have a *Kyrie*, you can believe that there will be change.'

While he no longer regards himself as quote-unquote 'religious', 'spirituality plays a deeply important part of my life. And religion works as a way of articulating that spirituality, as I think it does for many people. But I'm also very interested in comparing and contrasting religious practices. Because I feel like religion is a lens through which one can engage spirituality, and ways of perceiving other people's existences is always deeply interesting to me.'

And he explains that he's become interested in titling his work in a way that connects classic music to a religious or liturgical structure. 'That's why it's called *Recital Number 1: MASS*. It's an effort to say that what is done in the concert space actually can have the reverence and human engagement of what happens in liturgical spaces; that they can be synonymous if we actually allow them to be.

'I'm using it as a template to try to show that different aesthetics – meaning different cultures – have equal, yet nuanced, things to say about the same ideas of human existence and spirituality. But also I'm interested in this idea of asking someone to contend with themselves or asking a society to contend with itself. That's what the Mass is: a ritual of walking through a process of hoping for change.'

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## Performers

**Davóne Tines** bass-baritone

**Adam Nielsen** piano

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