



GEORGE
WALKER

Sinfonia No. 1

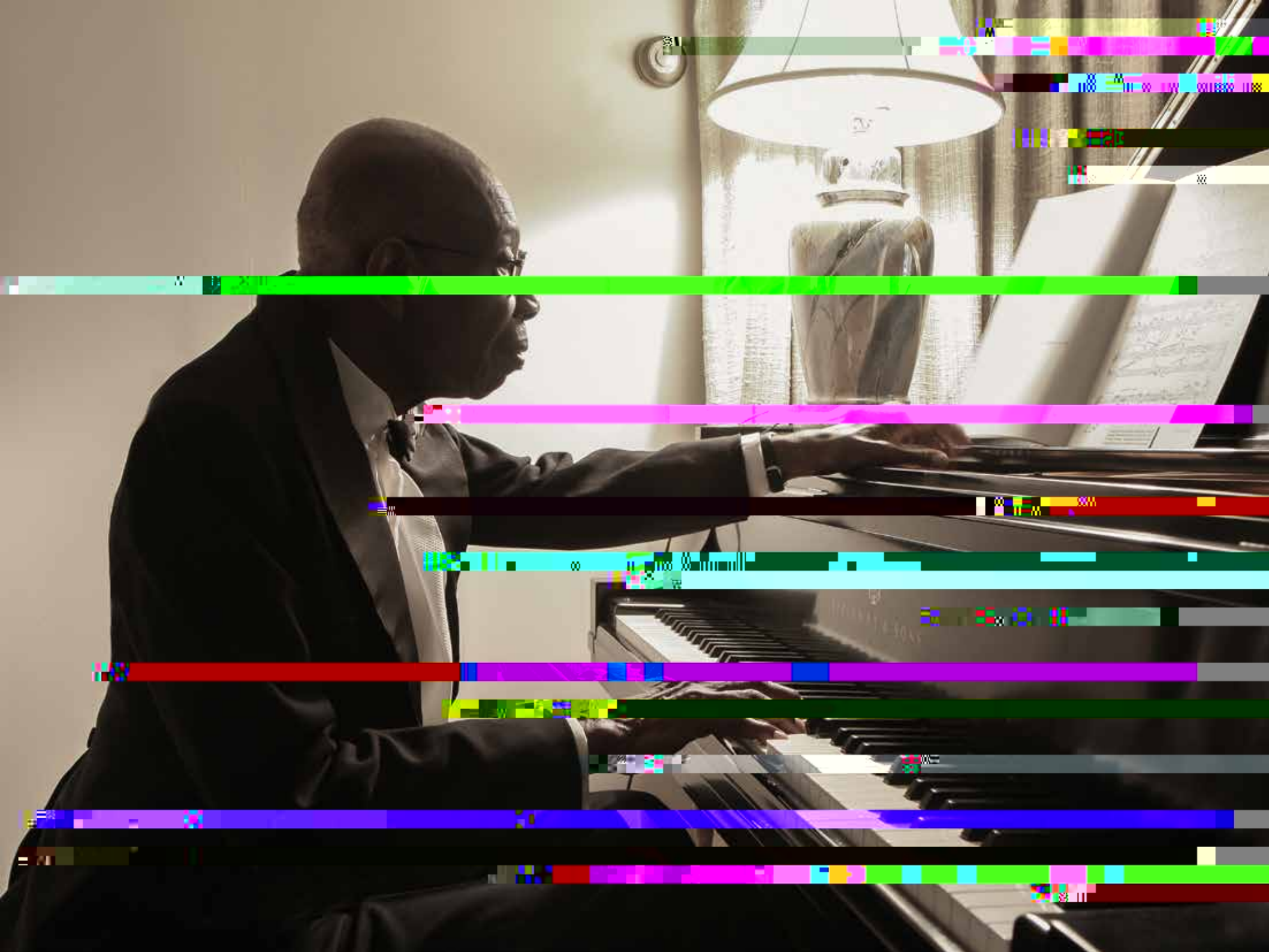


**National
Symphony**



**The
Kennedy
Center**

Gianandrea Noseda



National Symphony Orchestra

Gianandrea Noseda conductor

George Walker (1922–2018)

Sinfonia No. 1 (1984)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------|
| i. Quarter note = 92 | 6:21 |
| ii. Quarter note = 60 | 5:04 |

Recorded live on January 13, 15, and 16, 2022 in the Concert Hall of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Recording producer Blanton Alspaugh, *Soundmirror*

Recording engineer Mark Donahue, *Soundmirror*. **Mastering engineer** Mark Donahue, *Soundmirror*

Executive Producers Nigel Boon and Genevieve Twomey, *National Symphony Orchestra*

Cover photo and George Walker photos Frank Schramm. **Cover design** Scott Bushnell, *The Kennedy Center*

Orchestra photo Scott Suchman. **Conductor photo** Stefano Pasqualetti

Kennedy Center photo Richard Barnes

Sinfonia No. 1 (1984)

George Walker

In January 2022, the National Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Gianandrea Noseda began performing and recording the complete cycle in celebration of the composer's 100th birthday. Remembering and honoring the music of George Walker is particularly special for the National Symphony Orchestra given the mutual connection to Washington, D.C., and the unique history of collaboration and commissions.



“I’ve always thought in universal terms, not just what is Black, or what is American, but simply what has quality,” George Walker said in an interview on the occasion of his 90th birthday in 2012. British critic Tom Service, writing in *The Guardian* in 2015, cited Hindemith and Stravinsky as two of Walker’s “musical

heroes,” but stressed that the American composer “has created a distinctive world that is modernist and multifaceted yet richly communicative.”

This distinguished composer, pianist, and educator, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his orchestral song cycle *Lilacs* in 1996, published a fascinating memoir in which he recounted a lifetime of successes and honors and also spoke quite frankly about his musical likes and dislikes. He had studied piano with Rudolf Serkin and composition with Samuel Barber’s teacher Rosario Scalero at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, performed *Lyric for Strings*, a creative response to Barber’s *Adagio for Strings*. As a composer, he always remained true to his classical roots and built an oeuvre of symphonic and chamber works that earned him the esteem not only of the profession but of a wide audience as well.

Between 1984 and 2016, Walker’s *Sinfonia No. 1*, these, commissioned by the Fromm Foundation, was premiered by the Berkshire Music Center Orchestra under Gunther Schuller at Tanglewood on August 1, 1984. It is a compact work in two movements, in which moments of great energy and powerful outbursts alternate with calm, lyrical sections. There are massive, block-like chords for the brass and wild percussion passages, but also sensitive violin solos and agitated outbursts for the clarinet. Dramatic and tender, the work covers a lot of emotional ground in just over 10 minutes, and ends with a climactic statement for the entire orchestra.

Notes by Peter Laki

This image shows a page of handwritten musical notation on aged paper. The score is written on multiple staves, with some sections appearing to be sketches or drafts. A hand is visible on the right side of the page, with a finger pointing to a specific measure in the lower half of the score. The word "Begin:" is written at the top of the page. The paper is heavily obscured by numerous horizontal, multi-colored digital artifacts that appear to be corrupted data or scanning noise, covering most of the page's content.

Begin:

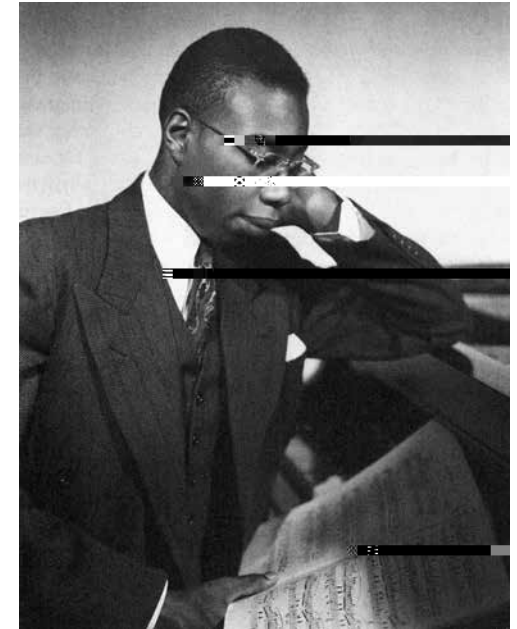
The image displays several staves of handwritten musical notation. The notation includes notes, rests, and other musical symbols, though many are obscured by digital artifacts. The paper shows signs of age and wear, with some ink bleed-through and faint markings. A hand is visible on the right side, pointing to a specific measure in the lower half of the score.

George Walker (1922-2018)

A native of Washington, D.C., George Walker (b. 1922) was a child prodigy. He enrolled in Oberlin Conservatory at age 14 and received his Bachelor of Music degree with highest honors at the age of 18. He subsequently studied piano with Rudolf Serkin and composition with Rosario Scalerò at the Curtis Institute of Music, where he was a distinguished student to receive the Artist Diploma (in both piano and composition, 1945). This accomplishment marked the beginning of a career in music that followed Walker throughout his career. That same year, Walker's New York debut in Town Hall, sponsored by Efrem Zimbalist, was a landmark event for a Black instrumentalist to play a recital in that hall. As the winner of the Philadelphia Youth Auditions, Walker also became the first Black musician to play with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. In 1950, under the aegis of National Concert Artists, he became the first Black musician to be named to the

concert management. And in 1956, he received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree (in piano) from the Eastman School of Music.

Walker was the recipient of several fellowships and awards, among them a Fulbright in 1957 that enabled him to study at the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, where he was a student of Nadia Boulanger and Robert Casadesus. Other fellowships include the John Hay Whitney Fellowship (1958), two Guggenheim Fellowships (1969 and 1987), three Rockefeller Fellowships (1971, 1972, and 1975), and two Koussevitsky Fellowships (1988 and 1998). He was also the recipient of the Harvey Gaul Prize (1963) and the Rhea Sosland Chamber Music Award (1967). Perhaps most notably, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music (April 1996), for his composition *Lilacs for Voice and Orchestra*.



Gianandrea Noseda

Conductor

Gianandrea Noseda is one of the world's most sought-after conductors, equally recognized for his artistry in both the concert hall and opera house. Noseda's artistic leadership has inspired the NSO and in 2019, he and the National Symphony Orchestra earned rave reviews for their performance at New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. The 2019–2020 season saw their artistic partnership culminate in the launch of a new NSO recording label distributed by LSO Live for which Noseda also records as principal guest conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra.

The 2021–2022 season saw Noseda begin his tenure as General Music Director of the Zurich Opera house where the centerpiece of his time there will be a new production of Wagner's "Ring" Cycle.

Noseda has conducted the most important orchestras and at the leading opera houses and festivals including

the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Edinburgh Festival, La Scala, Munich Philharmonic, Met Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, NHK Symphony, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre National de France, Philadelphia Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Royal Opera House (UK), Salzburg Festival, Verbier Festival, Vienna Philharmonic, Vienna State Opera, and Vienna Symphony.

From 2007 until 2018, Noseda served as Music Director of Italy's Teatro Regio Torino where he ushered in a transformative era for the company matched with international acclaim for its productions, tours, recordings, and golden era for this opera house. Other institutions where he has had a significant impact include the Berlin Philharmonic which he led from 2002



to 2011; Principal Guest Conductor of

National Symphony Orchestra

In 2021, the National Symphony Orchestra celebrated its 90th anniversary and Gianandrea Noseda's fourth season as its music director. The Italian conductor serves as the Orchestra's seventh music director, joining the NSO's legacy of such distinguished leaders as

Christoph Eschenbach, Leonard Slatkin, Mstislav Rostropovich, Antal Doráti, Howard Mitchell, and Hans Kindler. Its artistic leadership also includes Principal Pops Conductor Steven Reineke and Artistic Advisor Ben Folds.



Since assuming the leadership of the NSO, Gianandrea Noseda has brought a renewed sense of energy and focus to the orchestra, which has resulted in wide-ranging recognition from local, national, and international publications, increases in subscription and single ticket sales, and the expansion of the Orchestra's reach through live streamed concerts and recordings. The *New York Times* called the NSO and Noseda's 2019 Carnegie Hall appearance "spectacular," while the *Washington Post* wrote that "There's no denying the power of the National Symphony Orchestra," consistently reinforcing that this artistic partnership continues to gain momentum. 2019 recordings include Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* and Copland's *Billy the Kid*, released in 2019 on the NSO's new label, distributed by LSO Live.

Founded in 1931, the Orchestra has always been committed to artistic excellence and

music education. In 1986, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded the NSO a grant for its music education program, which has since become a cornerstone of the organization's commitment to the community.

National Symphony Orchestra

Violins

Nurit Bar-Josef
Concertmaster
Ying Fu
*Associate Concertmaster, The
Jeanne Weaver Ruesch Chair*
Ricardo Cyncynates
Assistant Concertmaster
Jane Bowyer Stewart
Teri Hopkins Lee
Pavel Pekarsky
Heather LeDoux Green
Joel Fuller
Lisa-Beth Lambert
Wanzhen Li
Jing Qiao

Marissa Regni *Principal*
Dayna Hepler
Assistant Principal
Desimont Alston
Cynthia R. Finks
Deanna Lee Bien
Glenn Donnellan
Natasha Bogachek
Carole Tafoya Evans

Jae-Yeon Kim

Hanna Lee
Benjamin Scott
Malorie Blake Shin
Marina Aikawa
Peiming Lin
Angelia Cho
Derek Powell

Violas

Daniel Foster *Principal*
Abigail Evans Kreuzer
Assistant Principal
Lynne Edelson Levine
Denise Wilkinson
James Francis Deighan
Eric deWaardt
Nancy Thomas
Jennifer Mondie
Tsunasakamoto
Ruth Wicker
Mahoko Eguchi

Cellos

David Hardy *Principal*
Glenn Garlick
Assistant Principal
Steven Honigberg
David Teie
James Lee
Rachel Young
Mark Evans
Eugena Chang
Loewi Lin
Britton Riley

Basses

Robert Oppelt *Principal*
Richard Barber
Assistant Principal
Hopwood
Ira Gold
Paul DeNola
Charles Nilles
Alexander Jacobsen
Michael Marks

Harp

Adriana Horne *Principal*

Flutes

Aaron Goldman *Principal*
Leah Arsenault Barrick
Assistant Principal
Alice Kogan Weinreb
Carole Bean *Piccolo*

Oboes

Nicholas Stovall *Principal*
Jamie Roberts
Assistant Principal
Harrison Linsey
Kathryn Meany Wilson
English Horn

Clarinets

Lin Ma *Principal*
Eugene Mondie
Assistant Principal
Paul Cigan
Peter Cain *Bass Clarinet*

Bassoons

Sue Heineman *Principal*
Steven Wilson
Acting Assistant Principal
Lewis Lipnick *Contrabassoon*

Horns

Abel Pereira *Principal*
Laurel Bennert Ohlson
Associate Principal
Markus Osterlund
James Nickel
Scott Fearing
Robert Rearden

Trumpets

William Gerlach *Principal*
Tom Cupples
Keith Jones

Trombones

Craig Mulcahy *Principal*
Kevin Carlson
Assistant Principal
David Murray
Matthew Guilford
Bass Trombone

Tuba

Stephen Dumaine *Principal*

Timpani

Jauvon Gilliam *Principal*
Scott Christian
Assistant Principal

Percussion

Eric Shin *Principal*
Scott Christian
Joseph Connell *

Keyboards

Lambert Orkis *Principal*
Lisa Emenheiser *

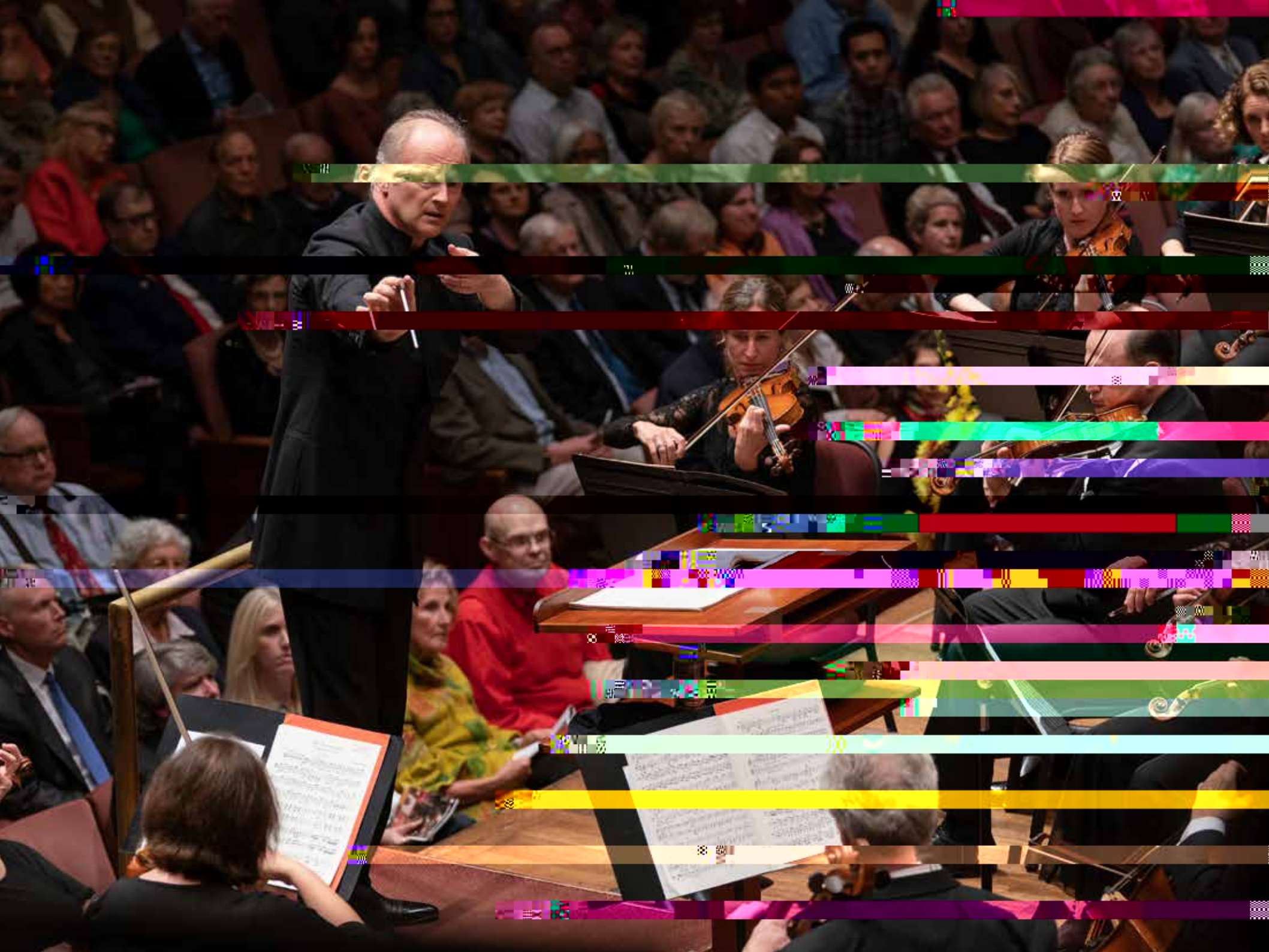
Organ

William Neil *

Librarians

Elizabeth Cusato Schnobrick
Principal
Susan Stokdyk *Associate*
Karen Lee *Assistant*

* Regularly engaged extra



CELEBRATING
GEORGE
WALKER
@ 100

