



**CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH**  
**SNELL LECTURE**

***Sunday, February 22, 2026, 4:30pm***

St. James Cathedral  
106 King Street E, Toronto, ON

The Nathaniel Dett Chorale  
Dr. Brainerd Blyden-Taylor, Artistic Director  
Dakota Scott-Digout, Collaborative Pianist  
Dr. Stephen Michael Newby, Lecturer

The Snell Lectures at St. James Cathedral honour the Right Rev. George Snell, Eighth Bishop of Toronto and are intended to further his desire for deepening the church's teaching and preaching ministry for both the laity and the clergy. Thanks to the Anglican Foundation of Canada for their support of the Snell Lectures.

# PROGRAMME

## Welcome & Opening Remarks

**Nguzo Saba Suite, Op.41** | Glen Edward Burleigh (1949-2007)

- I. Umoja (Unity)
- II. Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)
- III. Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)  
*Benjamin MacDonald, tenor*
- IV. Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)
- V. Nia (Purpose)
- VI. Kuumba (Creativity)
- VII. Imani (Faith)/Finale

**Snell Lecture: “Kindred, Kindness, Koinónia - Black Sacred Music:  
The Music of Andraé Crouch and his Musical Community”**

*Dr. Stephen Michael Newby, Lecturer  
The Lev H. Prichard III Endowed Chair in the Study of Black Worship,  
Professor of Music and Ambassador for the Black Gospel Music Preservation  
Program at Baylor University.*

## Question & Answer

## Thanks

**Total Praise** | Richard Smallwood (1948-2025)

## **A WORD FROM DR. BRAINERD BLYDEN-TAYLOR (Artistic Director)**

As we celebrate Black History Month 2026, we cannot ignore the state of our world, and the anxiety and turmoil that is prevalent in the present moment. The renowned author Toni Morrison stated, *“This is precisely the time when artists go to work. There is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do language [to this I would add, we sing]. That is how nations heal.”* Ms. Morrison goes on to say, *“I know the world is bruised and bleeding, and though it is important not to ignore its pain, it is also critical to refuse to succumb to its malevolence. Like failure, chaos contains information that can lead to knowledge – even wisdom. Like art!”*

It is in this spirit that we offer this evening’s program, beginning with the **Nguzo Saba Suite** by Glenn Edward Burleigh in celebration of Kwanzaa. Dr. Maulana Karenga founded the organization in response to the Watts riots in Los Angeles, California, USA in 1965. It is from this organisation and the philosophy of *Kawaida* that the celebration of Kwanzaa sprang. Dr. Karenga stated:

“From the beginning, the essential task of our organisation Us has been and remains to provide a philosophy, a set of principles and a program which inspires a personal and social practice that not only satisfies human need but transforms people in the process, making them self-conscious agents of their own life and liberation. Such a transformative practice will, of necessity, also lead to the building of moral community and to the constant becoming of the best of what it means to be both African and human in the fullest sense.

The set of principles which we put forth are the Nguzo Saba (The Seven Principles): Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity) and Imani (Faith). These Seven Principles are essential standards of personal and social excellence directed toward building and sustaining moral community, and strengthening and maintaining the community’s capacity to define, defend and develop its interests in the most positive and productive sense.

In addition to being standards of excellence, the Nguzo Saba are also categories of priorities and categories of human possibilities. As categories of priorities, they tell us some of the most important things in our lives, identifying a key set of views, values and practices which we should, even must, put first in our personal and social life. And as categories of possibilities, the Nguzo Saba, offer us a set of principles that encourage thought and practice which help define, develop, and enhance our humanity in the context of community and the world.”

*~Dr. Maulana Karenga*

“While Dr. Maulana Karenga envisioned Kwanzaa as a non- religious celebration, he hoped that celebrants would infuse it with their own personal values and family traditions. Composer Glenn Burleigh has done just that, explaining that he has approached the writing of both music and text for the Nguzo Saba Suite as an African-American man who is very much a Christian. As such, it was important for him to find bridges between the conceptual ideas of each of the Nguzo Saba or Seven Principles, the realities of life in the African-American community today, Scripture, and his own faith.”

*~Dr. James Benjamin Kinchen, Jr.*

“I am grateful to our Triune God (Father, Word and Spirit) for the gift and inspiration to compose this work. It has special significance to me because of its message to [people] of every nation and every tongue!”

*~Glenn Edward Burleigh*

I trust that even as you enjoy the thrilling voices, harmonies, and rhythms this evening, and the inspiring Snell Lecture, that you will be inspired to be self-conscious agents of their own life and liberation, and to share your various gifts, your ‘art’, to promote hope and healing in our world.

# PROGRAMME

**Nguzo Saba Suite, Op. 41** – Glenn Edward Burleigh

## **I. Umoja (Unity)**

*Text – Glenn Edward Burleigh and Psalm 133:1*

Umoja! Unity.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is

For people to dwell together in unity.

Umoja! Behold, how good and how pleasant it is

For all to live with each other in peace and unity.

Got to get together with each other.

We need Umoja!

Got to get together with each other, *each other*.

No more nations against nations.

No more kindred against tribe.

We need Umoja! Unity.

Umoja! Unity, Umoja! Umoja!

Stop that fighting and lend a hand.

We need Umoja!

Stop backbiting, together we must stand.

We need Umoja! (people, my people, O...)

Umoja! Unity.

No more nations against nations.

No more kindred against tribe.

We need Umoja!

Behold how good and pleasant it is to dwell in unity, Umoja!

## II. Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)

*Text – Glenn Edward Burleigh and Philippians 4:13*

Kujichagulia!

Now that I have been set free, *Kujichagulia!*

I will be all I can be. *Kujichagulia!*

I can do all things, *Kujichagulia!*

Through Christ who strengthens me. *I am determined!*

Now that I have been set free, *I, am,*

I will be all I can be. *Determined!*

I can do all things, *I, am,*

Through Christ who strengthens me. *Determined!*

I am determined! I am determined!

Can't hold me back.

Can't hold me back no longer.

I can soar on eagle's wings. *I can do all things, Kujichagulia!*

Through Christ I can do all things. *Kujichagulia!*

I will reach my goal somehow. *Kujichagulia!*

Nothing can stop me now. *I am determined!*

I can soar on eagle's wings. *I, am,*

Through Christ I can do all things. *Determined!*

I will reach my goal somehow.

Nothing can stop me now.

I am determined! I am determined!

Kujichagulia!

Can't hold me back no longer.

I am determined. Kujichagulia!

### **III. Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)**

*Text – Glenn Edward Burleigh and Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4*

Ujima! Ujima!

It takes a village to raise a child.

The “Son” is going down, pick them up.

The “Son” is going down, lend a hand.

Not just parent or sibling, none can stand back and hide,

It takes a village to make a child.

The “Son” is going down, bow your head.

The “Son” keeps going down shamefully.

They are imprisoned in the body, imprisoned in the mind.

It takes a village to set them free.

Look up, O child of colour.

You have a helping hand.

Be strong, O child of colour.

You have a promised land.

Be at one with each other; with your God be reconciled.

We are your village; you are our child.

Your dreams are our dreams.

Your tears are our tears.

Your laughter makes us happy.

Our God will drive away your fears.

The “Son” is rising up; watch them soar,

Rising high on eagle’s wings forever more.

All you needed was a hand for you to reach your promised land.

We are your village; you are our child.

It takes a village to raise a child.

#### **IV. Ujamma (Cooperative Economics)**

*Text – Glenn Edward Burleigh and John 9:4; Malachi 3:8-10*

Ujamma!

Work while it is day, when the night cometh, no one can work.

Work while it is day, when the night cometh, no one can work.

Work while it is day, when the night cometh, no one can...

Work while it is day! Work while it is day!

Share the wealth with each other.

Share the wealth and your means with each other.

Work! Work while it is day, when the night cometh, no one can work.

Ujamma! Ujamma!

Bring a tenth to the Lord's house. Bring a tenth to the Lord.

So that there will be meat in the house for each one and each other.

Work while it is day, when the night cometh, no one can work.

Ujamma! Ujamma! Work!

#### **V. Nia (Purpose)**

*Text – Glenn Edward Burleigh and Matthew 22:37-39; Luke 10:27; John 13:37;  
1 John 4:7-21*

Why was I born? Why was I born?

Was I born to feed hungry children, or to give shelter to the homeless?

Was I born to be my sibling's keeper, companion to the lonely?

I was born to love the Lord with all my heart,

My soul, my mind and strength.

If I love God, I can love all.

This is my purpose. Nia!

Why was I born? Why was I born?

Was I born to preach the Gospel, or to care for aging elders?

Was I born to help the single parent or council the prisoner?

I was born to love the Lord with all my heart,

My soul, my mind and strength.

If I love God, I can love all.

If I love all, I can love God!

This is my purpose. This is why I sing my song.

Nia! Nia! Nia!

## VI. Kuumba (Creativity)

*Text – Glenn Edward Burleigh and Psalm 51:10*

Elohim, Fountain of Creativity.

Kuumba! *Kuumba!* Kuumba! *Kuumba!* “Kumbayah!”

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew in me a right spirit.

How can I make the lonely child with tears in their eyes stop crying?

When infirmity comes, how can I make the withering one stop dying?

Kuumba! *Kuumba!* Creativity comes from You.

Kuumba! Kuumba!

Help me teach the illiterate one how to read, how to write!

Help me teach all the children to join in the fight,

Without fighting each other.

Kuumba! Creativity comes from You, Lord.

Kuumba! Please show us what to do, Lord.

Kuumba! Creativity comes from You. Kuumba!

Show me how to save the drowning one on the drug!

They are hungry, and homeless, and helpless, and hopelessly in despair.

Show me how to rebuild all the run-down houses,

And how to encourage the hungry, the homeless, the helpless,

The hopeless who don't seem to care.

Kuumba! *Kuumba!* Creativity comes from You, Lord.

Kuumba! Please show us what to do, Lord.

How can I bring joy to the lonely heart?

How can I give the one who has lost their job a brand new start?

Kuumba! Creativity comes from You, Lord.

Come by here, Lord. Show us what to do, Lord.

Kuumba! Kuumba! Kuumba! *Kuumba!* “Kumbayah!”

## VII. Imani (Faith) – Finale

*Text – Glenn Edward Burleigh and Hebrews 11:1-40*

Imani!

Lift every voice and sing about Imani!  
Sing a song full of the faith, full of the hope.

I believe in the Triune Creator. I believe in the Eternal Word.  
I believe in the power of the Spirit. Imani!

Substance of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen.  
Without faith it's impossible to please the Lord.  
Abraham, Issac, and Jacob, and Sarah, and Joshua all had Imani!  
Martin said, "We will survive." Jesse said, "Keep hope alive."  
Nelson was jailed, *Mandela was jailed*, yet his mission prevailed.  
How we love our 'Mama Africa'  
Deep in our hearts, Imani! Imani! We do believe.  
We do believe; We shall overcome! We shall overcome!  
We have already come this far by faith!

Although we say, "Let freedom ring!  
Let it ring with liberty and justice for all."  
I must wonder in my mind as I ponder in my heart,  
Do we really mean for all. Imani!

Nguzo Saba! Nguzo Saba!  
Stop that fighting and lend a hand.  
We need Umoja!  
Stop backbiting, together we must stand.  
We need Kujichagulia!  
Got to get together with each other.  
We need Ujima!  
Got to get together with each other.  
We need Ujamma!  
Got to get together with each other.  
We need Kuumba!  
Got to get together, learn to live with each other.  
We need Nia! Imani!  
Celebrate the Kwanzaa Nguzo Saba!

## **Snell Lecture: Kindred, Kindness, Koinónia - Black Sacred Music: The Music of Andraé Crouch and his Musical Community**

*Dr. Stephen Michael Newby, Lecturer*

*The Lev H. Prichard III Endowed Chair in the Study of Black Worship, Professor of Music and Ambassador for the Black Gospel Music Preservation Program at Baylor University.*

### **Total Praise - Richard Smallwood**

Lord, I will lift my eyes to the hills,  
Knowing my help is coming from you.  
Your peace you give me in time of the storm.  
You are the source of my strength.  
You are the strength of my life.  
I lift my hands in total praise to you! Amen!  
~Based on Psalm 121

### **The Nathaniel Dett Chorale**

Dr. Brainerd Blyden-Taylor, Artistic Director  
Dakota Scott-Digout, Collaborative Pianist

#### Sopranos

Athina Babayan  
Gisele Kulak  
Kaisha Lee  
Maddalena Ohrbach  
Annie Ramos  
Alison Ryan  
Karen Weigold

#### Tenors

Matthew Boutda  
Christopher Fernando  
Charles Fowler  
Nicholas Gough  
Benjamin MacDonald  
William Salinas-Crosby  
Paul Williamson

#### Altos

Gabrielle Byrnes  
Jenna Cowans  
Sedina Fiati  
Alexandra Kane  
Alexandra McArthur  
Ianjai Mounsey-Ndemo  
Théa Nappert

#### Basses

Dallas Bergen  
Wade Bray  
Matheus Coelho  
Martin Gomes  
Andrew Gunpath  
Josh Pâté  
David Yung

**Dr. Stephen Newby, DMA**

*Lev H. Prichard III Endowed Chair in  
the Study of Black Worship*

*Professor of Music*

Dr. Stephen Michael Newby currently serves as The Lev H. Prichard III Endowed Chair in the Study of Black Worship, Professor of Music and as Ambassador for **The Black Gospel Music Preservation Program** at Baylor University.



He formerly served as Minister of Worship at Peachtree Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, GA, and as Director for the Center for African American Worship Studies at Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville, TN. He held a tenured Professor of Music post at Seattle Pacific University, where he also served as Director of University Ministries, Director for the Center for Worship, and Senior Advisor to the University President for Missional Excellence.

He has more than three decades of university-level teaching and administration to his credit. He is a native of Detroit, Michigan, and received his Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Music Education from Madonna University in Livonia, Michigan. He received a Master of Music in Jazz Composition and Arranging from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He returned to Michigan to complete his Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and served as an Assistant Professor of Music Composition and Computer Arts. He received his Master of Arts in Theology from Seattle Pacific Seminary.

For more than 35 years, he has served in various church music ministries in Michigan, Massachusetts, Washington, California, Georgia and Texas. His voice and works have earned awards and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (Continental Harmony Grant), the King County Arts Commission of Washington, The Rackham School Fellowship for Ethnomusicological Research in Dakar, Senegal, and the John Wesley Work III National Composers' Award. For more than nine years, he served as national anthem conductor for the Seattle Sounders FC. He created concert

music for The Cascade Youth Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Ann Arbor Symphony, Canton Symphony Orchestra, New Haven Symphony, Savannah Symphony, and the New World Theater Orchestra, among others.

Dr. Newby's concert music works are recorded by Albany Records and Parma Recordings. His gospel music works are recorded and published by Maranatha Music and Newby's Witness Music. His scholarly works are published by Redemption Press, Oxford University Press and Rowman & Littlefield, his worship and praise choral compositions are published by GIA, Gentry, Fred Bock, and OCP. He writes Op. Eds for Christianity Today. He is editor for PRO MUNDO—the African American Sacred Music Series with OCP Choral.

### **Dr. Brainerd Blyden-Taylor**

#### *Conductor*

Brainerd Blyden-Taylor is the Founder, Artistic Director and conductor of The Nathaniel Dett Chorale, Canada's first professional chamber choir dedicated to the creation, performance, and preservation of Afrocentric music of all styles. Born in Trinidad & Tobago, Dr. Blyden-Taylor immigrated to Canada in 1973. He founded The Chorale in 1998, in response to a musical void in Canada; there had never been a professional ensemble dedicated to the diffusion of Afrocentric choral music.

Response to The Chorale in Canada and the United States since its inception has certainly given credence to Dr. Blyden-Taylor's vision. Dr. Blyden-Taylor has conducted several university, youth, and concert choirs, most notably a 25-year tenure with The Orpheus Choir of Toronto. He also works frequently as a guest conductor, having appeared with organizations such as the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Nova Scotia, Hannaford Street Silver Band, The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Toronto Chamber Choir, Ontario Youth Choir, Nova Scotia Youth Choir, and the Central Manitoba Youth Choir.

He has also worked as artistic director and advisor for the Algoma Festival Choir, the Nova Scotia Mass Choir, and the Chatham-Kent Roots Festival.

He launched The North Star Festival in August 2017, in partnership with the Yale Alumni Chorus and the Harriet Tubman Institute at York University. Dr. Blyden-Taylor has served as a member of the teaching staff of the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto and the Faculty of Music, Queen's University.

Dr. Blyden-Taylor has served as a Master Teacher with the Toronto Board of Education, coaching teachers, and students in conducting and choral technique, and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from York University in Toronto for his contribution to education. He is also in frequent demand as a Clinician, Adjudicator and Lecturer both nationally and internationally, and is an active and dedicated church musician.



### **The Nathaniel Dett Chorale**

The Nathaniel Dett Chorale is Canada's first professional choral group dedicated to Afrocentric music of all styles, including classical, spiritual, gospel, jazz, folk and blues. The 21 classically trained outstanding vocalists of The Nathaniel Dett Chorale have shared the stage with internationally recognized artists such as Juno Award-winning jazz pianist Joe Sealy, singers Molly Johnson and Jackie Richardson, and opera star Kathleen Battle and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The ensemble has performed for such luminaries as opera singer Jessye Norman and Dance Theatre of Harlem

founder Arthur Mitchell. The Chorale has performed at events honouring world leaders Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, personality Muhammad Ali, and pianist Oscar Peterson and was the only Canadian ensemble invited to perform as part of the celebrations surrounding the historic inauguration of President Barack Obama in January of 2009.

The multi-faceted vocalists of the Chorale, whose talent stretches beyond the traditional expectations of a classical chamber choir, seek to broaden their vision to include all styles and genres of music, from classical to jazz, folk, blues and popular music, as appropriate to the traditions of the African Diaspora.

The Chorale's vision is to be a premier performer of Afrocentric composers – past, present and future – and to be a touchstone for the education of audiences and communities regarding the full spectrum of Afrocentric choral music.

The Nathaniel Dett Chorale's mission is to build bridges of understanding, appreciation, and acceptance between communities of people, both Afrocentric and other, through the medium of music. The Chorale seeks to dissolve the barriers of stereotype, to empower humans in general, and those of African descent in particular.

The Chorale adds another dimension to all of its activities by creating a cultural and historical context for its music. All of the Chorale's concerts and outreach initiatives include an educational element, and our conductor and singers draw audiences together by increasing their knowledge of Afrocentric music and culture, with the aim of fostering pride in those of African heritage, and informed admiration in those of other cultural backgrounds. The Chorale builds vibrant and healthy communities by uniting its audiences in a love of Afrocentric choral music, and by creating a deeply-contextualized understanding of the complex roots of this music.