



GEORGE
WALKER

Sinfonia No. 3



**National
Symphony
Orchestra**
The
Kennedy
Center

Gianandrea Noseda



National Symphony Orchestra

Gianandrea Noseda, conductor

George Walker (1922–2018)

Sinfonia No. 3 (2002)

- | | |
|-------------------|------|
| 1. i. ♩ = 76 | 5:20 |
| 2. ii. ♩ = 54 | 4:35 |
| 3. iii. ♩ = 72-88 | 4:05 |

Recorded live on May 12 and 13, 2023 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, George Walker photos and Sinfonia No. 5, “Visions” video stills Frank Schramm.

Cover design Scott Bushnell, *The Kennedy Center*.

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

Sinfonia No. 3 (2002)

George Walker's third sinfonia was premiered a decade after the second, and once more by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (conducted, in this case, by Andrey Boreyko). But it was composed a full 22 years after its predecessor. The fact that it had to wait a much shorter time for its first performance certainly speaks to Walker's growing recognition as an American master.

The present work finds the octogenarian composer at the height of his creative powers, as vigorous and full of energy as ever. In three compact movements following the traditional fast-slow-fast outline, it is a technically challenging and emotionally charged composition, in turns majestic and tender, agitated and more relaxed. An energetic opening sets the stage for an austere first movement, dominated by massive blocks of chords. The middle movement starts out with some lyrical woodwind

lines, yet its elementary melodic gestures build up to a dramatic high point, followed by a resolution of the tensions. The final movement is tumultuous and intense throughout. Unlike many of his younger colleagues, Walker remained a committed modernist in his harmonic language. As the British critic Tom Service has written: [Walker's music] "has a sharp-edged clarity in its modernist dissonances and angularity, and yet you feel his essential desire to communicate with his audiences throughout."

- Notes by Peter Laki



George
WALKER

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 Scalero at the Curtis Institute of Music, where he became the first Black student to receive the Artist Diploma (in both piano and composition, 1945). This accomplishment marked the beginning of a steady procession of “firsts” that has followed Walker throughout his career. That same year, Walker’s New York debut in Town Hall, sponsored by Efrem Zimbalist and his wife, made him the first Black instrumentalist to play a recital in that hall. As the winner of the Philadelphia Youth Auditions, Walker also became the first Black soloist to perform with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. In 1950, under the aegis of National Concert Artists, he became the

first Black instrumentalist to obtain major concert management. And in 1956, he became the first Black student to receive 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 significantly, Walker holds the distinction of being the first Black composer to be awarded the Pulitzer



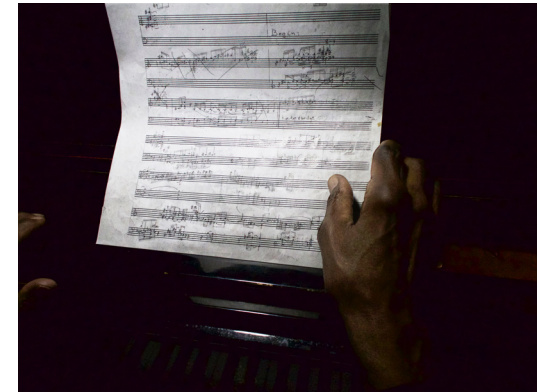
Prize for music (April 1996), for his composition *Lilacs* for Voice and Orchestra.

Walker was a distinguished member of several faculties, including that of the Dalcroze School of Music, the New School for Social Sciences, Smith College, the University of Colorado, and the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. In 1969, he was appointed Professor of Music at Rutgers University, where he served as chairman of the music department. In 1975, he was appointed the first Distinguished Minority Chair at the University of Delaware. Walker retired from Rutgers in 1992 as professor emeritus. He was awarded honorary doctorates from Lafayette College (1981), Oberlin College (1983), the Curtis Institute of Music (1996), Montclair State University (1996), and Bloomfield College (1996). In 1998, Walker received a Letter of

Distinction from the American Music Center for his significant contributions to the field of contemporary American music, and in 1999 he was elected to the Academy of Arts and Letters. Walker published over 80 works, which comprise music for orchestra, chamber ensembles, chorus, piano, string quartet, voice, and organ. His music has been performed by virtually every major American orchestra.

George Walker died on August 23, 2018, in Montclair, New Jersey at the age of 96.

Biography by Ingrid Monson



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. Since 2017, he has served as Music Director of the National Symphony Orchestra.

Noseda's artistic leadership has inspired the NSO and reinvigorated it both at home at the Kennedy Center and beyond via media projects and on tour to New York where in 2019 and 2023, the NSO earned rave reviews both at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. The artistic partnership continues to flourish with the NSO recording label distributed by LSO Live for which Noseda also records as Principal Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra.

In September 2021, Noseda began his tenure as General Music Director of the Zurich Opera House where the centerpiece of his tenure is a new 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, The Metropolitan Opera 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 film projects. His leadership resulted in a



golden era for this opera house.

Other institutions where Noseda has had significant roles include the BBC Philharmonic which he led from 2002–2011; Principal Guest Conductor of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra from 2011–2020; the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, where the Victor de Sabata Chair was created for him as Principal Guest Conductor from 2010–2014; and the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, which appointed him its first-ever foreign Principal Guest Conductor in 1997, a position he held for a decade. He served as Artistic Director of the Stresa Festival from 2000–2020. He was also Principal Guest Conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 1999–2003; Principal Guest Conductor of the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI from 2003–2006; and Principal Conductor of the Cadaqués Orchestra from 1994–2020.

Noseda's intense recording activity counts more than 70 CDs on Chandos, Deutsche Grammophon, and other

labels, many of which have been celebrated by critics and have received awards. He has made numerous recordings with the London Symphony Orchestra.

Gianandrea Noseda's cherished relationship with the Metropolitan Opera dates back to 2002. At the Met he has conducted 13 operas and nearly 100 performances of mainly new productions, most recently *Adriana Lecouvreur* featuring Anna Netrebko. Many of his critically acclaimed performances have been broadcast on radio, Met Live in HD, and released as DVDs.

A native of Milan, Noseda is Commendatore al Merito della Repubblica Italiana, marking his contribution to the artistic life of Italy. He has been honored as *Musical America's* Conductor of the Year (2015) and International Opera Awards Conductor of the Year (2016). In December 2016, he was privileged to conduct the Nobel Prize Concert in Stockholm.



The NSO Music Director Chair is generously endowed by
The Sant Family.

Funding for NSO recordings is provided by generous Noseda Era Fund supporters.

National Symphony Orchestra

The National Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1931 and has been led by Music Director, Gianandrea Noseda since 2017. 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 a certain flair going on at the National Symphony Orchestra," consistently reinforcing that this artistic partnership continues to gain momentum.

The National Symphony Orchestra's media label was launched in 2020 with its first release: Dvorák's Symphony No. 9 and Copland's *Billy the Kid*, and is distributed in partnership with LSO Live.

Founded in 1931, the Orchestra has always been committed to artistic excellence and music education. In

1986, the National Symphony Orchestra became an artistic affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where it has performed a full season of subscription concerts since the Center opened in 1971. The 96-member NSO regularly participates in events of national and international importance, including official holiday celebrations through its regularly televised appearances on PBS from the lawn of the U.S. Capitol for Capital Concerts, livestreamed performances from the Kennedy Center Concert Hall on Medici.tv, and local radio broadcasts on Classical WETA 90.9FM, making the NSO one of the most-heard orchestras in the country.

Additionally, the NSO's community engagement projects are nationally recognized, including NSO *In Your Neighborhood*, an annual week of approximately 35 performances in schools, churches, community centers, and other unexpected venues; *Notes of Honor*, which offers free performances for active, veteran, prior service, and retired members of the military and

their families; and Sound Health, a year-round initiative that focuses on the intersection of music and wellness. Sound Health partners include the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Career development opportunities for young musicians include the NSO Youth Fellowship Program and the NSO's acclaimed, tuition-free Summer Music Institute.

For more information, visit nationalsymphony.org

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
Jing Qiao
Angelia Cho

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
Wanzhen Li
Hanna Lee
Benjamin Scott
Malorie Blake Shin
Marina Aikawa
Peiming Lin
Derek Powell
Meredith Riley **

Violas

Daniel Foster *Principal*
Abigail Evans Kreuzer
Assistant Principal
Lynne Edelson Levine
Denise Wilkinson
James Francis Deighan
Nancy Thomas
Jennifer Mondie
Tsunaka Sakamoto
Ruth Wicker
Mahoko Eguchi
Rebecca Epperson

Cellos

David Hardy *Principal, The
Hans Kindler Chair, the
Strong Family, and the Hattie
M. Strong Foundation Chair*
Glenn Garlick
Assistant Principal
Steven Honigberg
David Teie
James Lee
Rachel Young
Mark Evans
Eugena Chang Riley
Loewi Lin
Britton Riley

Basses

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

Harp

Adriana Horne

Flutes

Aaron Goldman *Principal*

Leah Arsenault Barrick

Assistant Principal

Alyce Johnson **

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*

David Young

Acting Assistant Principal

Steven Wilson

Samuel Blair ** *Contrabassoon*

Horns

Abel Pereira *Principal*

James Nickel

Acting Associate Principal

Markus Osterlund

Robert Rearden

Scott Fearing

Geoffrey Pilkington **

Trumpets

William Gerlach *Principal,*

The Howard Mitchell Chair,

the Strong Family, and the

Hattie M. Strong Foundation

Michael Harper

Assistant Principal

Thomas Cupples

Timothy McCarthy **

Trombones

Craig Mulcahy *Principal*

Evelyn Carlson

Assistant Principal

David Murray

Matthew Guilford

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Stephen Dumaine *Principal,*

The James V. Kimsey Chair

Timpani

Jauvon Gilliam *Principal, The*

Marion E. Glover Chair

Scott Christian

Assistant Principal

Percussion

Eric Shin *Principal*

Scott Christian

Greg Akagi

Joseph Connell *

Keyboards

Lambert Orkis *Principal*

Lisa Emenheiser *

Organ

William Neil *

Librarians

Elizabeth Cusato Schnobrick

Principal

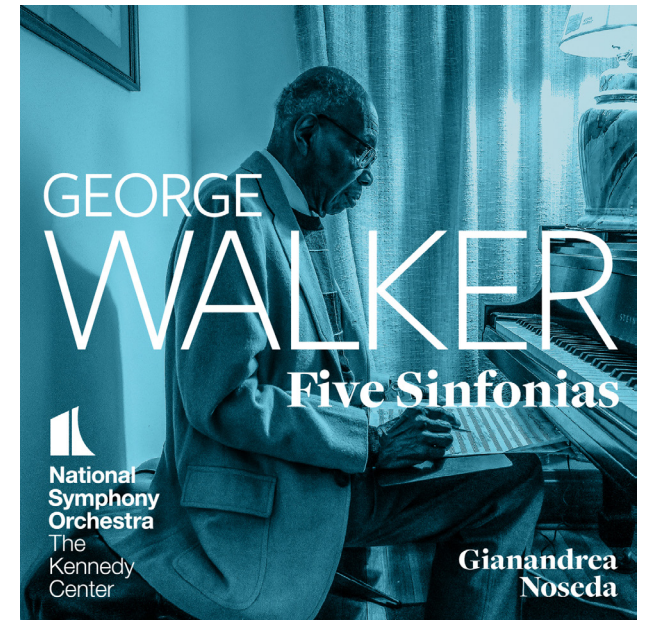
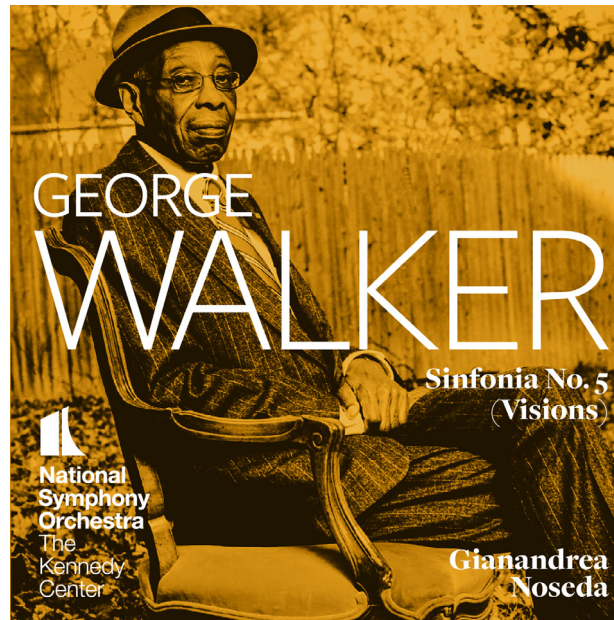
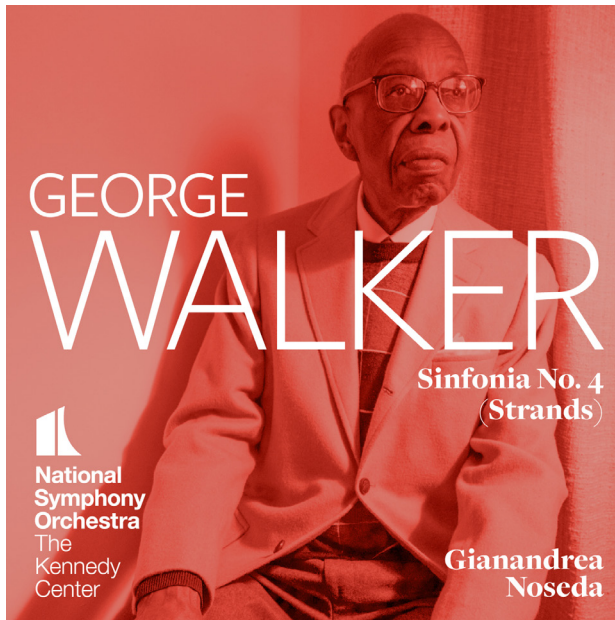
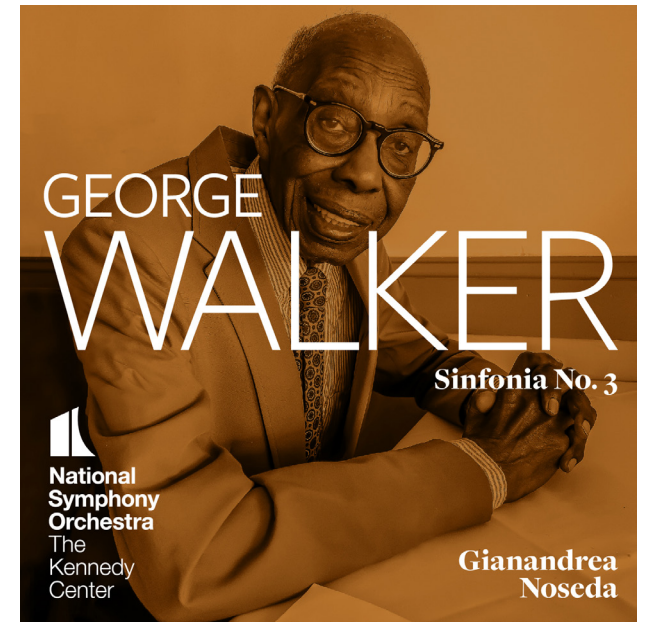
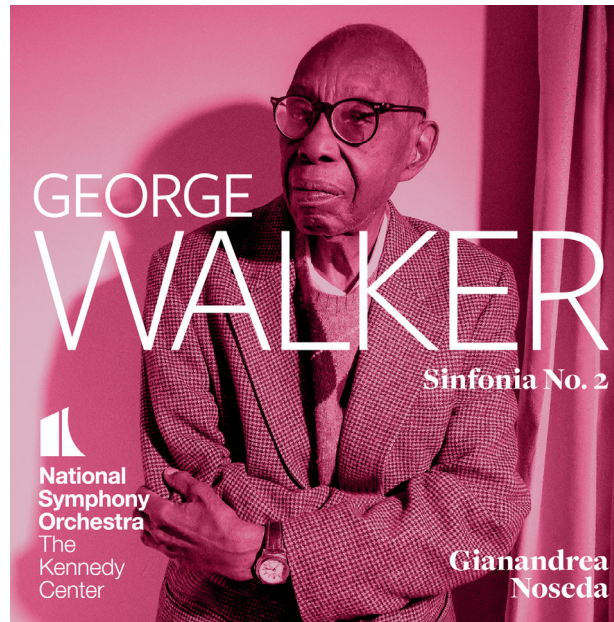
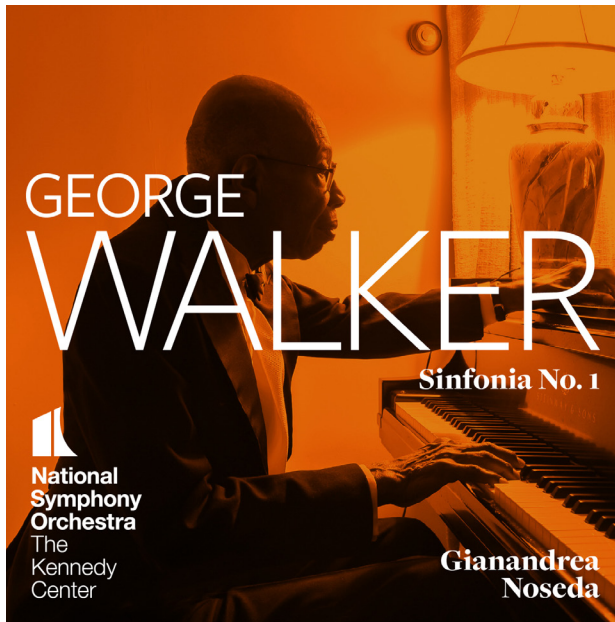
Susan Stokdyk *Associate*

Karen Lee *Assistant*

* Regularly engaged extra

** Temporary position





Celebrate George Walker's work with this digital recording cycle of performances from the National Symphony Orchestra.

Download the complete album or purchase the CD, available September 2023.