

## Fast Facts

### **Valerie Coleman** **Seven O’Clock Shout**

- Born in Louisville, Kentucky in the same neighborhood as boxer Muhammed Ali
- Plays the flute
- Creator of the famous wind quintet, Imani Winds
- Considers Duke Ellington a role model because he wrote for people and personalities
- First African-American woman composer to be commissioned by the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera
- Currently teaches at the University of Miami, while continuing to write music



## The Composer

Valerie Coleman was born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky. Her father died when she was nine, and her mother raised her and her sisters as a single working mother. She began playing flute in the fourth grade and immediately became interested in composing music. By age fourteen, she had written three full-length symphonies and had won several local and state competitions.

Coleman attended college and earned a dual degree in music theory/composition and flute performance from Boston University. Her musical style mixes modern orchestration with jazz and Afro-Cuban genres. Her compositions include works for wind quintet, chamber music, orchestra, concert band, and solo flute. She is currently an Assistant Professor at the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami.

## The Piece

Seven O’Clock Shout is an anthem inspired by the tireless frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the uplifting ritual of evening serenades that brings people together amidst isolation to celebrate life and the sacrifices of heroes. Coleman created the piece to address frontline workers who come home at 7 p.m. to shouts and cheers from grateful bystanders. The work begins with a lone trumpet fanfare to represent the isolation forced upon society, and the need to reach out to one another. The fanfare leads into a lush landscape to depict nature and the celebration of nurses and doctors who are working to save lives.

Commissioned by the Philadelphia Orchestra and written specifically for socially-distanced musicians, Seven O’Clock Shout has become the orchestra’s anthem in response to COVID-19, celebrating the strength of human connection even during times of isolation. Coleman wrote the piece in just two weeks during pandemic lockdown. It was designed to be performed together, in isolation. Each member of the Philadelphia Orchestra individually recorded themselves playing their parts. Those parts were then sent to the orchestra’s sound editors who edited and mixed them together into a single orchestral piece that was premiered as part of the orchestra’s online event.

*“To me, Seven O’Clock Shout is a declaration of our survival. It is something that allows us our agency to take back the kindness that is in our hearts and the emotions that cause us such turmoil. . . We cheer on the essential workers with a primal and fierce urgency to let them know that we stand with them and each other.”*

— Valerie Coleman