

Newcomb College alumna and conductor Odaline de la Martinez to present "The Crossing"

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Tulane University will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation April 27 when Cuban American composer and conductor Odaline de la Martinez, an alumna of Newcomb College, presents the world premiere of her choral piece, "The Crossing."

The concert, featuring members of the Tulane University and Xavier University choirs and percussionists and string players from the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, will begin at 8 p.m. at Dixon Hall on Tulane's Uptown campus.

In addition, Martinez, who graduated from Newcomb in 1972, will give a lecture on "The Crossing" April 19 at noon at the Caroline Richardson Building at Tulane. Both events are free and open to the public.

Considered one of the liveliest personalities on the international music scene, Martinez, known professionally as Chachi, is music director of the London Chamber Symphony and founder and music director of Lontano, a contemporary ensemble based in London. She has appeared as a guest conductor with the San Diego Symphony, New Zealand Symphony, Australian Youth Orchestra and Vancouver Chamber Orchestra, among others.

"The Crossing" is the second part of a three-part composition titled the "Slavery Trilogy." Set on one of the many ships used to bring slaves across the Atlantic Ocean from Africa, it is a large-scale choral and orchestral piece that Martinez developed from Joan Anim-Addo's libretto, "Imoinda." It was commissioned by the Newcomb College Institute, the family of the late Walter S. and Ruth Jenkins and an anonymous donor. Walter Jenkins was one of Martinez's teachers at Newcomb.

In addition, an exhibition commemorating the Emancipation Proclamation will be on display through June 30 at Tulane's Amistad Research Center. The exhibit, "Am I Not a Brother, Am I Not a Sister," features documents and individual stories about international slave trade, the abolitionist movement and the emancipation of slaves in the United States.