MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. 2020 special edition

King Defined by Rousing Speeches, Letters

His words continue to have relevance today

BY BEVERLY CORBELL

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER Though he wrote five books and delivered up to 450 speeches a year, Dr. Rev. Martin Luther ing use of language to illustrate King Jr. is often defined by his the racial divides and the hopes most famous speech, "I Have a for progress, ending with its most Dream" delivered at the Lincoln Memorial during the 1963 March

on Washington, and his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" written in the same year.

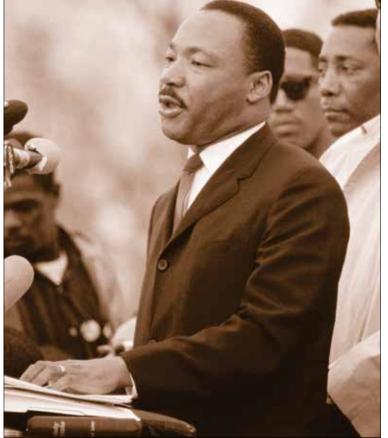
The words of America's foremost civil rights leader stirred great emotions across the country and the world at the time, and are still so relevant even today. An excerpt from the "I Have a Dream" speech illustrates his commandwell-known passage.

"In a sense we have come to



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Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers a speech in Montgomery, Alabama in 1965.

check. When the architects of our was to fall heir. This note was a republic wrote the magnificent promise that all men, yes, black words of the Constitution and men as well as white men, would the Declaration of Independence, be guaranteed the unalienable they were signing a promissory rights of life, liberty, and the pur-

our nation's capital to cash a note to which every American

suit of happiness.

"As we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.'

His "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" is also relevant, especially when we consider the last year's student-led Climate Strike demonstrations and the earlier Women's March.

"We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was 'well timed' in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It

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MOVING MUSIC FORWARD **HIGHLIGHTS THIS SPRING** AT THE OREGON SYMPHONY



BERIO'S SINFONIA BY ROSE BOND March 14, 15 & 16

A musico-cultural portrait of life in the late 1960s, Luciano Berio's monumental Sinfonia includes a powerful movement in response to the assassination of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This lamenting tribute is a bubbling crucible of sounds, styles, ideas, texts, and moods that creates something completely unique and individual.



AN AFRICAN AMERICAN REQUIEM May 23

Oregon Symphony and Resonance Ensemble join forces to present the World premiere of An African American Requiern, Portland composer Damien Geter's bold, thought-provoking musical response to violence against African Americans in the United States. Combining traditional Latin Requiem texts with civil rights declarations, poetry, and the famous last words of Eric Garner, "I can't breathe," this performance will honor past and present victims of racial violence and spur reflection on how to build a more hopeful future.



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