

## City Council Testimony for Course Reduction

My name is Dr. Joyce Solomon Moorman and I am an Associate Professor at Borough of Manhattan Community College in the Music and Art Department. My area of research is music composition.

October 15, 2016 I was commissioned to write two art songs for Dr. Louise Toppin, chair of the Music Department at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. The songs were to be performed February 9, 2017 at a music conference at the University of California Irvine. I accepted the challenge of the commission.

I set poetry to music. So first I had to find two poems that I felt would inspire me to write music. I had several times in the past read through poems of Dr. Maya Angelou hoping to find one that would inspire me but had no success. For some reason not expecting to succeed, I decided to try again. This time to my surprise I immediately upon reading "Caged Bird" and "Equality" felt that they would work for this commission. Then after rereading "Equality" several times I decided that it would not work. Reading through Dr. Angelou's poems again, I settled on "Still I Rise."

Though the commission was constantly on my mind, I simply could not find the time I needed to be relaxed and let my imagination flow. So it was Thanksgiving by the time I decided on "Still I Rise." Dr. Toppin called me to find out how I was progressing. I had to tell her I had just settled on the two poems, and that I had not had time to actually start composing the songs. Of course facing final exams and grading in December, I had to say to her when she told me the latest she could give me to finish the songs was January 15, 2017 that I would start working on the songs December 26th, and that I thought (or hoped) that I could finish them by January 15th. So yes I did

finish them by January 15th and Dr Toppin performed them February 9th. I had no children to distract me and I did no after Christmas shopping, which I love to do. That's when you get the best bargains. I worked registration at BMCC January 18th.

In addition to composing the songs, I had to seek permission from Dr. Angelou's agent to write the songs and for the premiere performance. Her agent was more insistent than I expected. It did take a significant amount of time and money to work out an agreement.

Community college Presidents are insisting on more scholarly activity and productivity today than ever before. Dr. Toppin asked me how many classes I teach a semester? When I told her five, she was shocked. At the University of North Carolina the course load is only two. CUNY community college professors are now being required to produce scholarship equivalent to that of senior college professors. We all need a course load reduction to meet increased research demands and to spend more time with our students, especially the community colleges where we are required to teach 27 hours yearly (a 5/4 semester course load) as compared to 21 hours for the senior colleges (4/3 semester course load). If CUNY wants to be competitive with the top American universities, it must reduce the course load for its professors.