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Harlan Zackery Jr.  
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A RECEPTION HISTORY AND CONDUCTOR'S GUIDE TO  
WILLIAM GRANT STILL'S ...*AND THEY LYNCHED HIM ON A TREE*

by

Harlan Zackery Jr.

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School  
and the School of Music  
at The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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May 2016

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2016

## ABSTRACT

### A RECEPTION HISTORY AND CONDUCTOR'S GUIDE TO WILLIAM GRANT STILL'S ...*AND THEY LYNCHED HIM ON A TREE*

by Harlan Zackery Jr.

May 2016

William Grant Still's lynching drama ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* is a rarely performed work for white choir, black choir, contralto soloist, narrator, and orchestra. The title and subject matter of the work have been significant hurdles for many conductors who have considered the piece for performance. Additionally, the piece exists in several editions, and among each edition there are inconsistencies in terms of scoring and text, further making the piece difficult to program. Further, the piece, published as a choral ballad, is often labeled as a cantata, oratorio, ballad, or play. It is true that the piece functions much like a theatre piece. ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* contains sound effects, stage directions and a cast of characters; however, the work is sung throughout, except for the narration, which is set in strict rhythm. This document chronicles the performance and reception history of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* and offers practical suggestions for addressing the performance practice concerns inherent in the piece.

To date, there has been only one piece of scholarly research that addresses ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* as its sole focus: Wayne Shirley's article "William Grant Still's Choral Ballad ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*," which was published in the Winter 1994 volume of *American Music*. Still's lynching drama receives scarce mention

in choral and music history literature texts. However, the piece appears in many works lists and receives brief treatment in bibliographic and biographical works dedicated to Still and several music reference sources on African American composers.

Since its premiere, there have been only twenty-seven documented performances of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. The majority of those performances have occurred in the Northeastern States. There is only one commercial recording available for purchase, recorded in 1996 by VocalEssence and the Leigh Morris Chorale under the direction of Phillip Brunelle. This document theorizes that the 1996 recording has played a major role in the increased performance activity of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* since 1996.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my dissertation committee chair and advisor, Dr. Gregory Fuller, for his constant support and encouragement during the research and writing process. I would also like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Joseph Brumbeloe, Dr. Jay Dean, Dr. Edward Hafer, and Dr. Steven Moser, for their guidance and advice in preparing this document. I owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Alec Valentine for his wisdom and expertise in editing this document and helping to shape it into what it has become.

For their assistance in gathering research materials and their hospitality during my visits, I would like to thank the Special Collections staff at the University of Arkansas. I would also like to thank Mrs. Judith Anne Still and Mrs. Lisa Headlee for allowing me to use the materials in the William Grant Still/Verna Arvey Papers at the University of Arkansas, and for sharing their love for their father and grandfather, Dr. William Grant Still. I also extend a hearty thanks to the arts organizations, conductors, and other musicians who have been generous with their time and resources in allowing me to interview them for this document.

For their zeal for music and their role in inspiring and shaping my career in music, I would like to thank Mr. John Davis, Ms. Mary Bryant, Mrs. Carolyn Sumner, Mr. William Wood, Mr. Norman Hutcherson, Mr. Don Martin, Mrs. Nancy Hines, Dr. John Locke, Dr. Amber Nicholson, Dr. Dana Ragsdale, Dr. John Flanery, and Dr. Gregory Fuller. Thank you to my family, friends, students and colleagues for your prayers and encouragement along this journey. It would be incomplete if I did not express my love and appreciation for Mrs. Belinda Runnels for her support and encouragement.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Glory of God and to my Mom and Dad for your constant love and support.

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## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In 2007, the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra initiated collaboration with college and university choral programs across the state of Mississippi. The partnerships were meant to showcase the music of William Grant Still, heralded as a Mississippi composer. Among the works to be performed was Still's *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*.<sup>1</sup> Delta State University and The University of Mississippi, for reasons that were not made clear to me at the time, would be unable to participate if the concerts were to include this work. Concessions were made to these concerns and the work was removed from the program.

This turn of events regarding *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* was nothing new. My research uncovered the fact that this piece has, prior to 2009, had no documented performance in the state of Mississippi, the state that lauds William Grant Still as a native son. I decided to take on the piece as the subject of my doctoral lecture recital and, subsequently, the focus of my dissertation. With the permission and supervision of my doctoral advisor, Dr. Gregory Fuller, I was allowed the opportunity to prepare and perform the Mississippi premiere of the piece with The Southern Chorale at Bay Street Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg (MS) on Tuesday, April 14, 2009, to a warm and receptive crowd. The performance received overwhelmingly positive reactions from the audience.

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<sup>1</sup>Although it is an accepted convention to write the title as *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, I have chosen to display it as *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, in keeping with the print on the cover of the scores, and also in the published text of the poem. Doing so aids in the reading of the title within the body of the text, particularly when the title follows the word "and." In the body of this document, when the title appears as a part of a quote, the ellipsis will not be used.

The positive reactions received during the Mississippi premiere raised several questions: Why, given the audience's reaction, was the piece omitted from the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra programs? Has the reaction of the Mississippi universities that refused performance of the piece been the norm or the exception? How well is the piece known in the national choral profession? How often and where has the piece been performed? Who has performed this piece? This document exists to answer these questions.

Initial research into the performance history of Still's choral works shows that "The Lynching Piece," as it was called by its creators, is one of the most rarely performed works of Still. This lack of performance is due, in part, to the title of the work, which can illicit feelings of racial tension, can easily jeopardize the audience base of established organizations and can foster uncomfortable situations for performance ensembles. The specific performing forces as indicated by the composer and poet, coupled with a desire to remain true to the wishes as indicated in the score, have been another hindrance to performance. Additionally, because of the racial history of the south, the large number of lynchings that occurred in the region, and the discomfort that addressing the topic of lynching can bring, the piece will have received the fewest number of performances in the southern United States. The performance indications read much like those of a play or opera. While these directions give another level of intricacy to the piece, using the suggestions to interpret the piece as a musical stage work, a lynching drama, provides the performer with a significant advantage in overcoming the social obstacles of race and lynching.

## Background

Born in Woodville, MS in 1895, William Grant Still was no stranger to the pains of racism in America. Born only thirty years after the end of the Civil War, when lynchings were common, Still composed with the intent of bringing light to the social issues and injustices of early twentieth-century America.<sup>2</sup> He sought to use American and African American folk material in his “serious” music. By the time Still was approached in 1938 to compose a work on the topic of lynching, his catalog of works had already painted the image of a nationalistic composer focused on the plight of the African American: *Three Negro Songs* (1922), *Darker America* (1924), *Afro American Symphony* (1930), and *Ebony Chronicle* (1933).

Poet Katherine Garrison Chapin, who was married to the Solicitor General of the United States, Francis Biddle, wrote the text of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. Chapin, through influential friends Alain Locke and Charlotte “Godmother” Mason, approached Still in 1939 with the prospect of setting her poem, *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, to music.<sup>3</sup> Alain Locke, considered to be the Father of the Harlem Renaissance, was a well-known professor at Howard University, and Charlotte Mason was an important benefactor of several Harlem Renaissance artists, including Zora Neal Hurston and Langston Hughes. Still and Garrison corresponded through telephone and mail, after which Still agreed to set the text to music.

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<sup>2</sup>Robert L. Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909-1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 6.

<sup>3</sup>Wayne D. Shirley, “William Grant Still’s Choral Ballad *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*,” *American Music* 12 (Winter 1994): 425.

...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* is written for narrator, soloist, white choir, Negro choir, and orchestra.<sup>4</sup> The white choir portrays the white townspeople who lynched the black man, and the black choir represents the black community, family, and friends of the lynched man. There is also a narrator of unspecified race, and a black contralto soloist functions as the lynched man's mother. The narrator acts as an impartial commentator for the events following the lynching. After a statement from the white choir followed by one from the black choir, both in character, the two choirs merge and sing united, functioning as a Greek chorus, commenting on what has taken place.

This document chronicles the performance history of and any obstacles to performance of...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* through conductor interviews and surveys and archival material such as recordings, newspaper articles and concert programs. The reader is also presented with the performance practice issues associated with the piece as well as practical solutions. With those in hand, the reader will be equipped to make informed choices when staging future productions of...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* based upon the documented problems and solutions other conductors have faced. Additionally, this dissertation will, based upon prior performances, provide programming suggestions for future performances.

One of the major hurdles to performing this work is the desire to remain true to the wishes of the composer and poet by using a white choir and a black choir. One can imagine the possible ramifications of requesting a white choir to sing the uncomfortable

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<sup>4</sup>The term 'Negro' in 1940, was an acceptable term used to describe the race we now know as "black" or "African American." In the scope of this document, "Negro" will be used when referring to the indication in the text of the score. "Black or African American" will be used to describe performers or performing ensembles of African descent.

text, which portrays the excitement of just having committed and witnessed a lynching. What is to be done if, in many instances, the choir is predominantly white in composition, with a few black singers? What about those of mixed race, or an ethnicity other than black or white? Considering the lack of racial diversity in some areas of the country, it is at best difficult to faithfully arrange the requested performing forces.

Although the title of the piece is shocking, the text of the work, while direct and deliberate, is much softer than the title suggests. As indicated by Chapin in her forward to the poem, the setting is "...night. In a clearing by the roadside among the turpentine pines, lit by headlights from parked cars, a Negro has just been lynched. The White crowd is breaking up now, going home, a little sobered, but with an hysterical voice lifted here and there."<sup>5</sup> Although the white choir reacts to the lynching, and the black chorus eulogizes the lynched man in a retelling of his life prior to the lynching, nowhere during the course of the piece do the choirs portray an actual lynching. The text of the poem gives no indication of the crime for which the man was later lynched. However, approximately 41% of documented lynchings occurred after the victim had committed a homicide.<sup>6</sup> Regardless of the crime, the man in this work was given a trial and sentenced to life in prison. The poem reveals that the mob, unsatisfied with the legal verdict, took the law into its own hands, broke into the jail and lynched the man. Subsequently, the two choirs converge and sing of unity and justice, warning of the future effects of such lawlessness and mob justice.

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<sup>5</sup>Katherine Garrison Chapin, *Plain-chant for America; Poems and Ballads* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), 117.

<sup>6</sup>Zangrando, 8.

It should be understood that the descriptive title of the piece serves as a hindrance to programming. The name of the piece evokes images of a difficult period in American history and race relations that can easily evoke feelings of uneasiness, and that before the audience has heard a note of the piece. However, there are several other issues that serve as obstacles to performance.

...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* is often referred to either as a choral ballad, a cantata or an oratorio. However, the work possesses the characteristics of the lynching drama. The lynching drama or lynching play, a theatre genre which began in the early twentieth century, was born as a reaction to the realities of lynchings. All such dramas are based upon the premise of lynching, reflect the stance of those who support lynching as well as those who are against it, are written largely by American playwrights and have been produced in all regions of the country. Additional characteristics include a focus on daily routine, the use of poetry and/or music, and the story told through the viewpoint of a woman.<sup>7</sup> ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* fulfills all the criteria for lynching drama. The piece also contains other theatrical conventions such as a cast of characters, stage directions, and sound effects. Approaching the piece with this knowledge requires the conductor to assume the role of a stage director and the performing forces to assume the role of actors. However, currently there is no resource which makes a correlation between this piece and the genre of lynching drama.

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<sup>7</sup> Judith L. Stephens, ed., *Strange Fruit: Plays on Lynching by American Women*. (Indiana University Press, 1998), 4-11.

Although Still's choral music is widely recorded, there is only one commercial recording available for purchase.<sup>8</sup> A YouTube search of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* yields clips of the aforementioned recording as well as an excerpt of a University of Colorado performance and a community production in Putney, VT.<sup>9</sup> In the William Grant Still/Verna Arvey papers at The University of Arkansas, there exists a 1942 recording of Leopold Stokowski conducting the piece.<sup>10</sup> The Stokowski recording is also available from William Grant Still Music.

There is a text discrepancy between the piano-vocal score and the conductor scores for the piece. The conductor scores express the original words as preferred by poet and composer. However, for the premiere, the text as printed in the playbill was altered due to political concerns. The altered text remains in the piano-vocal score which indicates that the following words be sung.

Cut him down from the gallows tree!  
 Cut him down for the world to see!  
 Call him brother and take his hand,  
 And clear this shadow, the long dark shadow.  
 Oh trust your brother and reach out your hand  
 And clear the shadow that falls across your land!<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Phillip Brunelle, conductor, *Witness: Skyward My People Rose: The Music of William Grant Still*, Phillip Brunelle, Clarion CD CCF905, 1995.

<sup>9</sup>Based on a search from Nov. 15, 2015.

<sup>10</sup>William Grant Still, *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*: The William Grant Still Archives, Leopold Stokowski, Archival recording, 1942.

<sup>11</sup>William Grant Still, *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* Piano-Vocal Score, (New York: J. Fisher & Bro., 1941), 43-46.

However, the texts of the conductor scores show the original, intended ending, as follows.

Cut him down from the gallows tree!  
 Cut him down for the world to see!  
 Talk of justice and take your stand.  
 But a long dark shadow will fall across your land,  
 An evil shadow will defame your land,  
 A long dark shadow will fall across your land!<sup>12</sup>

Faced with the conflicting texts, the conductor must make a decision. In addition, the emotional weight of the composition can make the process of choosing repertoire with which to program the piece, challenging. This document addresses these problems and offers solutions.

### Methodology

Chapter II presents the current research on ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* and *Still* as documented in dissertations, articles and books on the subject. It also surveys music history, music reference, and choral literature textbooks to find mention and discussion of *Still* and the piece in question.

Chapter III provides practical information to future conductors of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. This chapter focuses on issues pertaining to performance practice, including a discussion of the use of scores, of which three versions are available. This chapter also addresses the use of racially divided choirs and ways conductors have tackled the issue. I have also investigated the practice of the use of the sound effects, as noted in the score, as well as issues of choir placement and movement. Furthermore, I

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<sup>12</sup>William Grant Still, ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* Conductor Score, (New York: J. Fisher & Bro., 1941), 58-64.



have surveyed programming trends garnered from the performance history of the work. As a professional conductor who has twice conducted the piece, I will assert my own opinion regarding the performance practice issues, formulated from my interactions with the piece.

Chapter IV outlines the reception history of the work, including performances of the piece spanning the last seventy-one years, published performance reviews, and personal reflections from conductors. I have used the scrapbooks of programs of Still's music, collected by William Grant Still Music and stored at the University of Arkansas, to discover performances of the work, to find any geographical trends in performance history and search for performance reviews. I also have spoken with conductors nationwide who are in positions of prominence. I have surveyed choral conductors across the country to gain an understanding of the work's national recognition in the choral profession. To achieve this goal, I have submitted a survey to the President and President-Elect of the American Choral Directors Association in each state to find the following information:

1. Are they familiar with the piece?
2. Have they ever conducted the piece?
3. Do they have colleagues who have conducted the piece?

I have also interviewed Phillip Brunelle, who prepared choirs for the only commercially available recording of the piece. Chapter IV also includes a discussion of performances of the work that have either been cancelled or faced significant obstacles to performance. This chapter also serves as a conclusion in which I have summarized my findings and offered my own assertions and observations of the research.

The appendices include a list of known performances, conductors, locations and soloists of the past seventy-five years, to give the reader a comprehensive list of documented performances. Interviews with conductors associated with ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* are included, also. The final appendix provides the reader with concert programs from past performances of the piece, where available.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

While there is minimal scholarly research published specifically about ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, there exist numerous works written about the life and work of William Grant Still. Those that are germane to this document fall into three main categories:

1. Biographical and autobiographical texts.
2. Journal articles on the works of William Grant Still. The biographical information on Still in these publications is limited, focusing instead on specific compositions, theories on race and Still's music, and bibliographic aids for further research.
3. Theses and Dissertations written mostly after the composer's death. Of the dissertations which apply directly to the research in this document, there are four main types: those that review existing literature or provide catalog information of Still's compositions, comparisons of Still and other composers, Still's place in major compositional and cultural movements of the twentieth century, and biographical studies.

Subsequent to the review of the literature is an initial review of the reception of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* found in specific academic literature including music history textbooks, choral literature texts, and general music reference materials.

There are several trends apparent in the data. The majority of available literature was published after Still's death on December 3, 1978. Of those publications, there was a surge of publications immediately after his death, and again in the mid-1990s, which

coincides with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Still's birth. Prior to Still's death, publications about him began to emerge in the 1930s and 1940s, due in large part to the work of his wife, Verna Arvey. Another surge of activity happened between 1966 and 1978. This time span encompasses Still's 75<sup>th</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> birthdays. It also immediately followed the end of the Civil Rights movement and the emergence of scholars, such as Eileen Southern, Samuel A. Floyd Jr., and Dominique-René DeLerma, who contributed much to the study of black music. The authors who have emerged as the leading scholars are Verna Arvey and Judith Anne Still<sup>13</sup>, William Grant Still's wife and daughter, respectively. Those scholars unrelated to Still are Eileen Southern and Mary Hudgins, who published about Still mostly before his death, and Gayle Murchison and Catherine Parsons Smith who continue to add to the body of knowledge about Still and his music.

### Biography

*In One Lifetime* by Still's wife, Verna Arvey, covers his life in interesting detail but offers little discussion of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. Arvey gives a brief background on Still's introduction to Chapin and the last-minute change of text.<sup>14</sup> Central to this study is Arvey's candid account of composer Roy Harris' quest to outshine Still in the premiere of the piece. Arvey writes,

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<sup>13</sup>Judith Anne Still also has published as Judith Anne Still Headlee.

<sup>14</sup>Verna Arvey, *In One Lifetime* (Fayetteville, The University of Arkansas Press, 1984), 115-117.

Roy Harris read the [concert] announcement in the papers early in June [1940], and apparently decided this was something he would like to share. He thereupon wrote a new composition in four days, according to the newspapers: begun on June 10<sup>th</sup>, finished on June 14<sup>th</sup>. It was scored for – you guessed it – Negro chorus, white chorus and orchestra. He persuaded Rodzinski to open the evening’s program with it, so that his use of the two choruses would precede Billy’s, and he would appear to be the innovator.<sup>15</sup>

She goes on to describe the positive audience reaction to the piece as told by Artur Rodzinski, who conducted the premiere. *The Lynching Piece*, as Arvey calls it, is also listed as a part of a complete works list in the appendices of the book.<sup>16</sup>

*William Grant Still: And The Fusion of Cultures in American Music* exists in two editions, the original of 1972 and the centennial celebration edition of 1995. Both make numerous references to ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. Again, Verna Arvey briefly discusses the piece in the chapter entitled “With His Roots in the Soil.”<sup>17</sup> Arvey describes the piece as demonstrating Still’s “social consciousness, and his selections of subjects which speak of the brotherhood of man.” Among these works, she includes ....*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, *In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy*, *Rhapsody*, and *The Little Song That Wanted to be a Symphony*.<sup>18</sup> In the same volume, Anne K. Simpson describes the work as “Still’s most ambitious and best known work for chorus and orchestra...[containing] motivic rhythms, polyrhythms, antiphonal effects,

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 115.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 249.

<sup>17</sup>Verna Arvey, “With His Roots in the Soil,” in *William Grant Still: And The Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, Second Edition, ed., Judith Anne Still, (Flagstaff, AZ: The Master-Player Library, 1995), 15-20.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 18.

and strong blues tonalities.”<sup>19</sup> Donald Dorr quotes Alain Locke in his description of the piece: “The ballad ‘universalizes its particular theme and expands a Negro tragedy into a purging and inspiring plea for justice and a fuller democracy.”<sup>20</sup> Last, the book includes a complete thematic catalogue of Still’s works, which includes an entry on ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* with dedicatory information, date of composition, duration, brief description of the necessary performing forces and date of premiere.<sup>21</sup>

The 1996 book, *William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography*,<sup>22</sup> written by Michael Darbrishus, Carolyn Quinn, and Judith Anne Still, also merits special emphasis due to its importance to this document and as a starting point for further research. The book is a study of Still’s music through reviews, performance history information, and facts of composition, including premiere date, location, personnel, publisher information, dedicatory information, instrumentation, and duration. Most helpful is the information on selected performances, recording information, and media reviews. While helpful, this source does not include any information about the aforementioned reduced instrumentation arranged by David McCoy.

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<sup>19</sup>Anne K. Simpson, “William Grant Still’s Musical Style: A Monumental Contribution To American Music, in *William Grant Still: And The Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, Second Edition, ed., Judith Anne Still, (Flagstaff: The Master-Player Library, 1995), 87.

<sup>20</sup>Donald Dorr, “Chosen Image: The Afro-American Vision in the Operas of William Grant Still,” in *William Grant Still: And The Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, Second Edition, ed., Judith Anne Still, (Flagstaff: The Master-Player Library, 1995), 152.

<sup>21</sup>Judith Anne Still, ed., *William Grant Still: And The Fusion of Cultures in American Music*, Second Edition, (Flagstaff: The Master-Player Library, 1995), 262.

<sup>22</sup>Michael J. Darbrishus, Carolyn Quin and Judith A. Still, *William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 66.

Catherine Parsons Smith's 2008 biography, *William Grant Still*, includes mention of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. Smith gives further information on the circumstances of composition, citing that the piece was written in response to the stalled debate on the federal antilynching bill.<sup>23</sup> She also states that the "reviews were positive, though some reviewers were bothered by the piece's atypical form. (Black and/or female composers were commonly accused of inability to construct large musical forms, especially when their message, like this one, required unusual approaches."<sup>24</sup>

#### Journal Articles

Gayle Murchison published, in Volume 25 of the *Black Music Research Journal*, an article entitled "Current Research Twelve years after the William Grant Still Centennial."<sup>25</sup> This article surveys the archival, primary source, and secondary source material made available from 1990 to 2005. It also includes an appendix of selected biographical sources and a selected discography of compact disc recordings. The review of the literature contained in this chapter will avoid duplicating the entirety of Murchison's work, except in instances where the source deals directly and mostly with ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* and the biographies written on Still's life.

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<sup>23</sup>Catherine Parsons Smith, *William Grant Still*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 64.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Murchison, Gayle. "Current Research Twelve Years after the William Grant Still Centennial." *Black Music Research Journal* 25 (Spring-Fall 2005): 119-154.

Wayne Shirley, librarian emeritus with the Library of Congress, published an article on ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* in the 1994 winter edition of *American Music*.<sup>26</sup> This article is the only research to date which makes the piece its sole focus. Covered in the article are discussion of the initial creative processes, the correspondence between Chapin and Still, a chronicle of the making of the first performances, and an account of its initial reception. Shirley's article addresses some of the performance practice issues but stops short of offering practical solutions to those problems. Shirley also addresses the issues surrounding the discrepancy of lyrics found in the published scores, citing political unrest at the time and the need for less inflammatory rhetoric in order to bring the piece to performance. The Shirley article chronicles the events leading to the premiere of the work as well as the 1941 and 1942 performances of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. He also mentions the Howard University and Mexico City performances.<sup>27</sup>

David Griggs-Janower published an article entitled "The Choral Works of William Grant Still" in the May 1995 edition of *Choral Journal*. ...*And they Lynched Him on a Tree* occupies a large part of the article. The piece is discussed under the heading "Larger Choral Works," wherein Griggs-Janower covers the circumstances of composition and the early reception of the work. Of the piece's lasting impact, Griggs-Janower writes, "This work has lost none of its appeal and its ability to move the listener in the last fifty years; it is well worth the effort to mount. The chorus parts are not

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<sup>26</sup>Wayne D. Shirley, "William Grant Still's Choral Ballad *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*," *American Music* 12 (Winter 1994): 425-461.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 439-443.



difficult, and the work can be done with one large chorus assuming the roles of the two crowds, though some of the visual drama is lost. The most difficult writing is for the strings.”<sup>28</sup>

Catherine Parsons Smith has authored or co-authored numerous works on the life and work of Still. Her article, “‘Harlem Renaissance Man’ Revisited: The Politics of Race and Class in William Grant Still’s Late Career,” sheds much light on Still’s reaction and perception of public opinion to the premiere of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*.<sup>29</sup> The article, as its title suggests, illuminates the struggles Still faced as a Black composer in a society besieged by racist thought and ideology. While the focus of the article is specifically on Still’s larger works, such as the *Afro-American Symphony* and the opera *Troubled Island*, Smith does include *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*.

The 2002 article, “The Multifaceted Nationalism of William Grant Still,” written by David Z. Kushner, illuminates the struggles with racism that Still faced, and it discusses race in Still’s music. This article provides an implied rationale, in Still’s words, for accepting the commission to compose *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. Kushner quotes Still as saying,

‘If I have a wish to express, it would be that my music may serve a purpose larger than mere music. If it will help in some way to bring about better interracial understanding in American and in other countries, then I will feel that the work is justified. It is not that a race of people should be glorified, but rather that all people should accept all other people on the basis of their individual merit and accomplishment.

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<sup>28</sup>David Griggs-Janower, “The Choral Works of William Grant Still,” *Choral Journal* (May 1995): 41-42.

<sup>29</sup>Catherine Parsons Smith, “‘Harlem Renaissance Man’ Revisited: The Politics of Race and Class in William Grant Still’s Late Career,” *American Music* 15, Autumn 1997, In JSTOR : <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3052330> [accessed September 20, 2015], 381-406.

It is that we are all human beings, citizens, children of God. We need to learn more about each other so that we all may live together in peace and mutual appreciation. Can music help accomplish this? I believe it can.<sup>30</sup>

Kushner draws a parallel between this statement of Still and the subsequent composition of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*.

Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje's article, "Context and Creativity: William Grant Still in Los Angeles," provides new insight and further details on the Los Angeles premiere of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. It is known that Albert McNeil conducted the work with William Grant Still and Verna Arvey in attendance, but more details were not known. DjeDje, in clarifying the growth of the black artistic community in Los Angeles, writes, "In 1952, the Los Angeles premiere of Still's *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*..., at People's Independent, included two of Los Angeles's major choirs: the Cathedral Choir of People's Independent and the Senior Choir of First Baptist Church of Los Angeles (a predominantly White congregation)."<sup>31</sup> Information about this performance did not originate with DjeDje. Her article cites *Music in the Central Avenue Community, 1890–c. 1955*,<sup>32</sup> a source that was unknown to me. Although cited as above, Dr. DjeDje confirmed the source is actually *Central Avenue--Its rise and fall, 1890-c. 1955: Including the Musical Renaissance of Black Los Angeles*.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>David Z Kushner, "The Multifaceted Nationalism of William Grant Still," *American Music Teacher*, August 2002. 32, In PROQUEST <http://search.proquest.com/docview/937104?accountid=13946>. [accessed January 14, 2015], 34-35.

<sup>31</sup>Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, "Context and Creativity: William Grant Still in Los Angeles," *Black Music Research Journal* 31, Spring 2011 In PROQUEST <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/blacmusiresej.31.1.0001> [accessed September 22, 2015], 13.

<sup>32</sup>Betty Y. Cox, ed., *Music in the Central Avenue Community, 1890-c.1955*, (Los Angeles: Black Experience Expressed through Music Foundation for the Advancement of Music, 1996).

## Dissertations

Leon Everette Thompson's doctoral dissertation, "A Historical and Stylistic Analysis of the Music of William Grant Still and A Thematic Catalog of his Works," is the first source to include a thematic catalog. It is also the first source to include performance reviews of the works. Included within Thompson's document are the reviews, premiere information and list of performing forces required for ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*.<sup>34</sup>

Benjamin Griffith Edwards' dissertation, broadly titled, "The Life of William Grant Still," uses primary and secondary sources to document the life and work of Still. Edwards provides documentation for several reviews and performance details of the piece that are not included in other sources.<sup>35</sup> This dissertation was useful in preliminary research in the William Grant Still and Verna Arvey archives at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville.

The 2007 dissertation by Isaiah R. McGee, entitled "The Origin and Historical Development of Prominent Professional Black Choirs In the United States," is a valuable resource. Within this source, McGee chronicles the development of the Eva Jessye Choir, which performed the work with the Schola Cantorum of New York, on the 1942

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<sup>33</sup>Bette Yarbrough Cox, *Central Avenue--Its rise and fall, 1890-c. 1955 : Including the Musical Renaissance of Black Los Angeles*, (Los Angeles: BEEM Publications, 1996).

<sup>34</sup>Leon Everette Thompson. "A Historical and Stylistic Analysis of the Music of William Grant Still and a Thematic Catalog of His Works." Order No. DP29411, University of Southern California, 1966. In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1658154317?accountid=13946>, [accessed September 24, 2015].

<sup>35</sup>Benjamin Griffith Edwards, "The Life of William Grant Still," Order No. 8806075, Harvard University, 1987, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/303469683?accountid=13946>, [accessed September 21, 2015].

radio broadcast of *...And The Lynched Him on a Tree*.<sup>36</sup> This source, including an interview with conductor Alfred McNeill, briefly discusses a performance conducted by McNeill which William Grant Still and Verna Arvey attended.<sup>37</sup> This is the only performance of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* in which it is known that Still was in attendance.

Another dissertation that warrants inclusion is Gayle Murchison's document, entitled "Nationalism in William Grant Still and Aaron Copland Between the Wars: Style and Ideology." The biographical information included within this source is beneficial for establishing a place for *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* in Still's larger body of work. This source is important because it is the first and only documentation of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* as a "lynching drama." While it is not clear if Murchison is referring to the piece as representative of the genre, it is worth noticing that she refers to the piece as a drama, instead of as a cantata or choral ballad.<sup>38</sup>

#### Other Academic Texts

##### *Choral Literature Texts*

To gauge Still's perceived prominence as a composer of choral music, and the reception of the piece, I consulted several texts on choral repertoire, searching the texts and indices of each book to find any mention of Still or *...And They Lynched Him on a*

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<sup>36</sup>Isaiah R. McGee, "The Origin and Historical Development of Prominent Professional Black Choirs in the United States" PhD diss., The Florida State University, 2007. In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304868957?accountid=13946>, [accessed June 21, 2015], 41.

<sup>37</sup>McGee, 133.

<sup>38</sup>Gayle Murchison, "Nationalism in William Grant Still and Aaron Copland between the Wars: Style and Ideology," Yale University, 1998. In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304459754?accountid=13946>, [accessed September 1, 2015], 139.

*Tree*. Appearing on the same program as the premiere of the piece was a premiere of *Challenge* by Roy Harris. As a means of comparison, I have also searched for Harris and *Challenge*, in each of the applicable texts. Roy Harris, a Caucasian, naturally would not fall in the choral literature texts specific to works by black composers. Considering the racial tensions and documented struggles for black composers who were contemporaries of William Grant Still, I have also consulted the choral literature texts for any mention of Nathaniel Dett, a black composer living and composing during the same time as Still.

The first book consulted was *Choral Repertoire* by Dennis Shrock. Outlining the parameters for inclusion, Shrock states,

The purpose of this book is to present and discuss the choral music of the most significant composers from the Western Hemisphere throughout recorded history. The selection of composers has been determined by their impact on the development of choral music as an art form, and the selection of repertoires been determined by the relative merit of compositions as reflected by critical acclaim, popularity and frequency of performance, and availability in academic and commercial publications.<sup>39</sup>

...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* does not qualify for inclusion according to the parameters set by Shrock. In fact, neither Still nor ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* is included in *Choral Repertoire*. Of Harris and Dett, there are brief summaries of their training and teaching careers, as well as a broad description of the choral works.<sup>40</sup> It is worth noting that Harris' *Challenge* is not mentioned in this text.

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<sup>39</sup>Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), v.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 711, 716, 717, 720.

*Choral Music in the Twentieth Century* by Nick Strimple includes mention of both Still and ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. The book describes the latter as, “the powerful *And They Lynched Him on a Tree* (1940) for alto soloist, narrator, double mixed chorus (White singers as the lynch mob, black chorus as commentators), and orchestra.”<sup>41</sup> In comparison with Still, Strimple includes works by and mention of R. Nathaniel Dett. Strimple also discusses the works of Roy Harris, describing him as “among the most important American composers of the century.”<sup>42</sup>

David P. DeVenney has authored a book entitled *American Music Since 1920: An Annotated Guide*. This book includes seventy-six composers, whom DeVenney groups into the following categories: Romantic Tradition, American Composers, Composers of Mid-century, and More Recent Composers.<sup>43</sup> This book includes the choral works of William Grant Still, including ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. Each piece is listed with information pertaining to performing medium, poet/librettist, duration, and publisher. Also included are the works of Roy Harris and R. Nathaniel Dett. It is worth noting that DeVenney includes a listing for Harris’ *Challenge*.<sup>44</sup> I also consulted DeVenney’s book, *Source Readings in American Choral Music*. Although the book deals with choral music, it is not a choral literature text, per se. However, Still occupies a small but meaningful place in this book. An excerpt from Still’s essay, “An Afro-

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<sup>41</sup>Nick Strimple, *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century*, (Pompton Plains: Amadeus Press, 2002), 257.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>43</sup>David P. DeVenney, *American Choral Music Since 1920: An Annotated Guide*, (Berkeley: Fallen Leaf Press, 1993), ix-xiii.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 81.

American Composer's Point of View (1935)," appears in the text.<sup>45</sup> Preceding Still's excerpted thoughts is a brief bio of Still that lists ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* among Still's most important choral works.<sup>46</sup>

*A Conductors Guide to Choral-Orchestral Works* and *A Conductor's Guide to Choral-Orchestral Works: Part II* are both written by Jonathan D. Green. For the former title, the author states,

Works to be included must be for full chorus and orchestra, containing some English text, and composed between 1900 and 1972. These works were originally chosen for having at least one citation indicating a length of twenty or more minutes. During the course of this study, certain works were found to be slightly shorter; however, these pieces were retained if they proved no less than fifteen minutes long. The last qualification for inclusion is that performance materials are commercially available.<sup>47</sup>

For the second publication, the author has "chosen to include a number of shorter works and some which used non-traditional orchestras, because they are a valuable part of the repertoire and, [he believes,] are well served in this venue."<sup>48</sup> Although ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* and other of Still's choral pieces fit firmly within the criteria established by Green, the book has no inclusion of a work by Still. The book does include Roy Harris' *Symphony No. 8, Folk Song*, which is a choral work, despite its title.

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<sup>45</sup>David P. DeVenney, *Source Readings in American Choral Music*, (Missoula: The College Music Society, 1995), 112-113.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 112.

<sup>47</sup>Jonathan D. Green, *A Conductor's Guide to Choral-Orchestral Works*, (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), xi.

<sup>48</sup>Jonathan D. Green, *A Conductor's Guide to Choral-Orchestral Works, Twentieth Century, Part II*, (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1998), xi.

Homer Ulrich authored the book *A Survey of Choral Music*.<sup>49</sup> There is no mention of any work by William Grant Still included in this book. Also, there is no mention of any of R. Nathaniel Dett's choral music; however, Roy Harris' *Folk Song Symphony* is included.

### *Music History Texts*

To establish Still's place in the general history of music and the perceived prominence of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* within Still's larger body of works, I consulted several music history texts, which were most useful in establishing a chronology of the thought that guides the numerous editions and reprints, and in similar books of different titles by one author. As well, I consulted single-edition music history textbooks by one author. These include *The History of Western Music* by Donald Jay Grout, later co-authored with Claude V. Palisca, *The Oxford History of Western Music* by Richard Taruskin, *A Short History of Music* and *A History of Musical Thought* by Donald N. Ferguson, and *Music in Western Civilization* by Craig Wright and Bryan Simms.

Perhaps one of the most popular textbooks on music history, Grout's *A History of Western Music*, was first published in 1960. The first edition of this text contains no mention of Still. Furthermore, the book contains no mention of black composers or large-scale mention of genres rooted in black traditions such as jazz or ragtime, although there is brief mention of jazz as an influence on twentieth century composers.<sup>50</sup> The "shorter" edition provides the same treatment to both Still and black composers and

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<sup>49</sup>Homer Ulrich, *A Survey of Choral Music*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1973).

<sup>50</sup>Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1960), 611, 623, 632.



genres in general.<sup>51</sup> The second and third editions, published in 1973 and 1981, respectively, incorporate only a small amount of information on Still, stating, “Likewise, incorporating specifically American idioms (blues) is the Afro-American Symphony (1931) of William Grant Still (born 1895).”<sup>52</sup>

In Ferguson’s *A Short History of Music* and *A History of Musical Thought*, there appears no mention of William Grant Still. Roy Harris is included within the scope of the book; however, his *Challenge* lacks mention. Similar treatment is afforded Still and Harris in Paul Griffiths’ *A Concise History of Western Music*, Headington’s *History of Western Music*, and Martin Cooper’s *The New Oxford History of Music: The Modern Age 1890-1960*. The latter volume includes no mention of the African American composers of the “modern age” such as H.T. Burleigh, Hall Johnson, R. Nathaniel Dett, Duke Ellington, Scott Joplin or Ulysses Kay. The book also makes no mention of genres birthed out of black musical traditions, such as jazz, blues or ragtime.<sup>53</sup> Likewise, in Headington’s *History of Western Music* there is little mention of black or African American composers. The book only mentions two black composers, James Bland and Scott Joplin, in the seven pages devoted to jazz, swing and musicals.<sup>54</sup> Griffith’s *A Concise History of Western Music* briefly explores the ragtime and jazz genres,

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<sup>51</sup>Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music*, Shorter Edition (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1964), 427, 435.

<sup>52</sup>Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music*, Second Edition, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company: 1973), 678. and Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, Third Edition, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1981), 436.

<sup>53</sup>Martin Cooper, ed., *The New Oxford history of Music Volume 10, The Modern Age: 1890-1960*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

<sup>54</sup>Christopher Headington, *History of Western Music*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1976), 347-354.

mentioning Scott Joplin, King Oliver and Louis Armstrong but omits the other aforementioned art composers of the twentieth century.<sup>55</sup> Donald N. Ferguson's *A Short History of Music*<sup>56</sup> omits discussion of jazz, ragtime or black American composers; however, his book *A History of Musical Thought*, published five years later, does briefly mention jazz.<sup>57</sup> He states, "the idiom of jazz, which we have occasionally noted as coloring the musical speech of twentieth-century composers...[,]doubtless deserves more extended mention than we have allowed it."<sup>58</sup>

*The Oxford History of Western Music*, a six-volume set by Richard Taruskin, carries no mention of Still. The college edition of the textbook of the same name mentions both Still and Harris as symphonists, making no mention of their choral works. Concerning Still, only the Afro-American Symphony is mentioned.<sup>59</sup> However, both Taruskin texts include minor discussion of other black composers, such as Robert Johnson and H. T. Burleigh, and reference to genres such as jazz or ragtime. Similarly, Barbara Russano Hanning's *Concise History of Western Music* discusses Still's Afro-American Symphony.<sup>60</sup> Again, Roy Harris is discussed as a student of Nadia Boulanger<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Paul Griffiths, *A Concise History of Western Music*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 222, 250-252.

<sup>56</sup>Donald N. Ferguson, *A Short History of Music*, (New York: F. S. Crofts and Co., 1943).

<sup>57</sup>Donald N. Ferguson, *A History of Musical Thought*, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc. 1948) 590, 608.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 608.

<sup>59</sup>Richard Taruskin and Christopher H. Gibbs, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, College Edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 997.

<sup>60</sup>Barbara Russano Hanning, *Concise History of Western Music: Based on Grout/Palisca A History of Western Music*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 533-534.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 515.

and as an American symphonist,<sup>62</sup> but Hanning makes no mention of his choral output. In *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, edited by Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople, Still is omitted, with the exception of a mention as a possible influence on free jazz.<sup>63</sup> Harris is also treated solely as a symphonist.<sup>64</sup>

#### *Music Reference Sources*

In the *Historical Dictionary of Choral Music*, which “provides, in one volume, basic information about the most important composers, genres, conductors, institutions, styles, and technical terms of choral music,”<sup>65</sup> William Grant Still is omitted. It is worth noting that, while Roy Harris often appears in the aforementioned textbooks, Harris is also missing from the current volume. However, the *Historical Dictionary* includes other black composers such as Brazeal Dennard, Undine Smith Moore, Scott Joplin, and Hall Johnson.

Both Still and Harris are also absent from the *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century*.<sup>66</sup> This volume, despite its general title, would be more appropriately titled “Encyclopedia of Musicians in Popular Culture.” The majority of musicians listed in this resource are popular musicians, although a considerable number of performers and composers of “art music” are contained within.

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 531.

<sup>63</sup>Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople, eds., *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., 2004), 7.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 292.

<sup>65</sup>Melvin P. Unger, *Historical Dictionary of Choral Music*, (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2010), xi.

<sup>66</sup>Lee Stacy and Lol Henderson, eds., *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century*, (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1999).

*The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, in all editions, includes information on William Grant Still. The Still entry includes a small biographical write-up; however, it gives no information on ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*.<sup>67</sup> *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, in all editions, as well as *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Classical Musicians* includes entries on William Grant Still. Both titles, for Still, provide a short biographical statement, followed by a list of selected works and a bibliography. Neither source mentions ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*.<sup>68</sup>

Two of the consulted general musical reference texts include information on Still's ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree: The New Grove Biographical Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*. Both sources offer a detailed listing on the life and work of Still, as they do for all composers listed within, and a works list. The former source describes the piece as "a protest against the institutionalized racism of the time, attest[ing] to [Still's] dramatic gift."<sup>69</sup>

#### *Sources specific to Black or African American Music and Musicians*

I consulted six texts that are specific to the music of African American musicians and composers. They are *Choral Music by Afro-American Composers: A selected, annotated bibliography*, *African American Music: An Introduction*, *Blacks in Classical*

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<sup>67</sup>Michael Kennedy and Joyce Bourne Kennedy, *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 6th Edition, ed. Tim Rutherford-Johnson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 812.

<sup>68</sup>Nicolas Slonimsky, *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians: Volume 5*, Centennial Edition, ed. Laura Kuhn and Dennis McIntire, (New York: Schirmer Books, 2001), 3482 and Nicolas Slonimsky, *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Classical Musicians*, ed. Laura Kuhn, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), 1313.

<sup>69</sup>Catherine Parsons Smith and Gayle Murchison, "Still, William Grant," in *The New Grove Biographical Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Stanley Sadie, ed., (New York: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), 392.

*Music, Black Music in America, The Music of Black Americans* and the *International Dictionary of Black Composers*. In each source, with the exception of two, one finds at least a mention of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. Although William Grant Still is included in *African American Music: An Introduction*, along with a large discussion of his *Afro-American Symphony*, there is no mention of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*.

<sup>70</sup> Still is also covered in *Black Music in America*; however, there is no mention of the piece. *Choral Music by Afro-American Composers: A selected, annotated bibliography* features a listing on William Grant Still, along with a works list, which includes ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, although the catalog number for the entry is missing.<sup>71</sup>

In *The Music of Black Americans*, Eileen Southern describes the piece as among Still's best-known works, along with *Plain-chant for America*, another Chapin collaboration.<sup>72</sup> ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, likewise, is also mentioned in *Blacks in Classical Music*. For the chapter on composers, Raoul Abdul interviewed Leon Thompson, whose dissertation is discussed above, on his time spent in the Still household as a student. Thompson reflects that the piece (along with *Sahdji*) is a part of Still's second period in which all of his works have a black theme or black subject matter.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Earl Stewart, *African American Music: An Introduction*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1998), 301-304.

<sup>71</sup>Evelyn Davidson White, *Choral Music by Afro-American Composers: A selected, annotated bibliography*, (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1981), 69-70.

<sup>72</sup>Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, Third edition, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997), 433.

<sup>73</sup>Raoul Abdul, *Blacks in Classical Music*, (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1977), 29-32.

Of all of the sources specific to Black composers, The *International Dictionary of Black Composers* contains the most thorough information about William Grant Still. The entry on Still is organized into a brief biography, a complete list of works, plus premiere information and available recordings, publications about Still and his music, principal archival information, a more detailed biography, and a reference list.<sup>74</sup> ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* receives mention in this entry, both in the works list and within the following biography. Of the piece, Gayle Murchison remarks, “A plea for an end to racial violence and racism, this was Still’s boldest, most outspoken work on race issues.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Gayle Murchison, “Still, William Grant,” in *International Dictionary of Black Composers: Volume II*, Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., ed., (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1999), 1057-1072.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 1067.

CHAPTER III  
CONDUCTOR'S GUIDE

Scores

For *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, the conductor has three options for score study: full score, reduced instrumentation score, and the piano-vocal score. Each option comes with its own set of pros and cons. The full conductor score is available from William Grant Still Music Company, although this purchase does not include the cost for the orchestra parts. The parts are only available on rental from the company.<sup>76</sup> The full score consists of sixty-four pages of scoring, which were set using a musical typewriter. This fact is important in considering the ramifications for learning and interpreting the rhythms of the piece. In many instances, successive notes with flags (i.e., eighth notes, sixteenth notes, etc.) are left un-beamed, contrary to what is found in modern notation. This convention can be counterproductive in the initial stages of score study, as most singers are accustomed to reading notation that is beamed.

As mentioned in Chapter I, the text of the work was altered for the premiere performance to satisfy concerns voiced by the conductor, Artur Rodzinski. The work was accepted for performance, but on the condition that the ending text be changed. Rodzinski was concerned that the original text was too inflammatory. Chapin adjusted the text, printing the altered version in the program book while the singers performed the original text. During publication the full score was printed with only the original unaltered text as penned by Katherine Garrison Chapin, but the singer scores were printed

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<sup>76</sup>William Grant Still Music, “*...And They Lynched Him On A Tree - Conductors Score (orch-chorus-soloists)*” William Grant Still Music, <http://www.williamgrantstill.com/And-They-Lynched-Tree-orch-chorus-soloists> [accessed July 25, 2015].

with the altered text.<sup>77</sup> Because the text was changed only for the premiere of the work, the original words should be used. This convention honors the wishes of the poet and composer and follows the precedent set in all documented performances.

David McCoy, a retired band director, bassoonist and arranger residing in Grand Rapids, MI, has arranged ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* for woodwind quintet and piano. The quintet consists of Flute/Piccolo, Oboe/English Horn, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon. Judith Anne Still commissioned McCoy to arrange the work for the West Wind Quintet performance with the East Congregational United Church of Christ in Grand Rapids, MI.<sup>78</sup> The use of the quintet instrumentation is helpful in situations where budget for orchestra is limited. Through interviews with conductors who have performed the work, I have found that knowledge of the quintet arrangement is limited. While useful, the reduced instrumentation comes with its own drawbacks. It is printed on 8.5" x 11" paper, which is sufficient for adequate music spacing, but the print is so small at this scale that it is quite difficult to read even the text without a great deal of effort. It would be helpful if the print were enlarged. This arrangement is available from William Grant Still Music, which includes instrumental parts and conductor's score. Choral books are not included.<sup>79</sup> Although the full score and the piano-vocal score include rehearsal section squares and numbers throughout the score, the reduced instrumentation score includes only measure numbers and squares.

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<sup>77</sup>Shirley, 439-445.

<sup>78</sup>David McCoy, telephone interview to author, July 24, 2015.

<sup>79</sup>William Grant Still Music, "...*And They Lynched Him On A Tree* - Conductors Score (orch-chorus-soloists)" William Grant Still Music, <http://tinyurl.com/nml3jb> [accessed July 25, 2015].



The piano-vocal score is sold only in sets of ten and can be ordered from William Grant Still Music Company.<sup>80</sup> However, I was able to secure a single study copy of the piano-vocal score. The piano-vocal score is essential for study. No other score gives credit to Katherine Garrison Chapin as poet. It is the piano-vocal score, only, that gives what is listed as the “argument:”

It is night. In a clearing by the roadside among the turpentine pines, lit by the headlights from parked cars, A Negro has just been lynched. The white crowd who hung him, and those who watched, are breaking up now, going home. They sing together, get into their cars and drive away. Darkness falls on the road and the woods. Then slowly the Negroes come out from hiding to find the body of their friend. Among them is the mother of the man who was hung. In darkness they grope for the tree; when they find it the mother sings her dirge. The Negro chorus joins her and they retell the story of the man’s life and rehearse the tragedy. She is humble and broken but as they all sing together, the white voices joining the Negroes’, the song become strong in its impartial protest against mob lawlessness and pleads for a new tolerance to wipe this shadow of injustice off the land.”<sup>81</sup>

Further, without the piano-vocal score, the conductor has no access to the following vital performance information.

For: White Chorus, Negro Chorus, Contralto Soloist, Narrator, and Orchestra. In the event that it is not possible to secure both a White chorus and a Negro chorus, the composer suggests that the available chorus be divided, one half representing the White people and the other half representing the Negro people.

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<sup>80</sup>William Grant Still Music, “...*And They Lynched Him On A Tree* - Conductors Score (orch-chorus-soloists)” William Grant Still Music, <http://www.williamgrantstill.com/They-Lynched-Tree-pno-contralto-solo-satb> [accessed July 25, 2015].

<sup>81</sup>William Grant Still, ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* Piano-Vocal Score, (New York: J. Fisher & Bro., 1941), ii.

The various other Choral Solo Parts are, for the sake of economy, to be sung by members of the Chorus.

The Narrator should be a man with a low pitched, resonant voice. His lines are to be spoken.<sup>82</sup>

Still's acknowledgement of the Julius Rosenwald Foundation is also absent from the other scores.<sup>83</sup>

While the piano-vocal score proves helpful in providing essential information about the piece, as a performance score it leaves much to be desired, especially for the piano accompaniment. The piano reduction often omits important articulations and dynamic markings that are included within the full score. Such oversights prevent the pianist from giving any type of faithful rendition of the composer's intent, but the score remains essential for the choristers, for it is the only vocal score available.

None of the scores specifically mentions the use of a soprano or a bass soloist within the introductory material. At rehearsal square 7, there is a baritone solo singing, "Come along fellers! Come along home!"<sup>84</sup> Also, at three measures before rehearsal square 8, there is a "hysterical" soprano soloist who sings, "God, 'm glad he's no son of mine!"<sup>85</sup> In comparison to the parts for the narrator and the contralto soloist, the baritone and soprano soli are minuscule yet essential for an accurate performance of the piece.

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid, 10.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid, 11.

## Nomenclature

Due to the awkward title, the history of challenges in introducing the piece to choirs and boards of directors and the unique nature of the performing forces and subject matter, it is necessary to categorize the piece appropriately. In reading the correspondence among the persons responsible for the creation of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, one finds the different descriptors used for referring to the piece. At times called a cantata, other times a choral ballad, at other times, “the Lynching piece,” the final work remains lacking of a definitive categorization. In fact, in the literature the piece is referred to as a lynching drama, choral drama, oratorio, cantata, ballad cantata, and play. It simultaneously shares characteristics with the oratorio, ballad and cantata, labels that are readily familiar to most choral conductors. Building a case for considering the piece as a dramatic work offers the conductor a firmer rationale for performance; putting forth this subject as a purely musical work is a much more difficult proposition than asking singers to portray a character or to function as an actor in a play or opera.

Although I have searched for a definition of the term, choral ballad, I have not been able to find such. I have been able to find a definition of the word “ballad,” which is a

term used for a short popular or traditional song that normally frames a narrative element. Scholars of the term’s history and origin take it to signify a relatively concise composition known throughout Europe since the late Middle Ages, spreading later to the New World, notably the Americas: it combines narrative, dramatic dialogue and lyrical passages in strophic form sung to a rounded tune, and often includes a recurrent refrain. Performance is predominantly by solo singers, though choral and dance elements are known in some cultures.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>James Porter, et al, “Ballad,” Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lynx.lib.usm.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/01879>, [accessed July 27, 2015].

As it is, the text of the piece was published as “A Ballad Poem for Chorus.”<sup>87</sup>

...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* possesses the narrative element (the re-telling of the lynching event and the surrounding circumstances), lyrical passages (the mother’s solo), solo singers, and choral elements. While the piece is through-composed, it has a type of refrain in the opening narrative (come along, come along home, come along fellers).

...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* differs from this definition in that at nineteen minutes in length, it is not concise. As stated before, the piece is not strophic.

The cantata is loosely defined as a work for voice and orchestra. However, finding a clear meaning for the term as it applies to choral works of the 19th and 20th century is a futile exercise. Grove Music Online states,

both the secular and the sacred cantata sharply declined in importance after the middle of the 18th century. In contrast to the previous 100 years and more, the cantata has enjoyed no consistent independent existence since then, and the term has been applied, somewhat haphazardly, to a wide variety of works which generally have in common only that they are for chorus and orchestra.<sup>88</sup>

In the shadow of this statement, it is clear that “cantata” is not the best label.

The oratorio genre flourished in the Baroque period to become an important genre of choral music. With dramatic elements, a compelling, usually biblical story, and the contrast of soloists, orchestra and chorus, it shares many elements with opera, stopping short of the staging, costumes and scenery. ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* has the

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<sup>87</sup>Chapin, 117.

<sup>88</sup>Colin Timms, et al, “Cantata,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lynx.lib.usm.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/04748pg6>. [accessed July 25, 2015].

characteristics of an oratorio: the lynching story and background, soloists (the mother, narrator, wailing woman), chorus. I hesitate to leave this label with the piece because there is no biblical element to the lynching story. Although parallels can be drawn between the lynching story and any number of stories in the bible, it is not, on the surface, drawn from scripture. In this way, the work differs from the oratorios of the twentieth century.

Among them are Charles Sanford Skilton's *The Guardian Angel* (1925), Robert Nathaniel Dett's *The Ordering of Moses* (1937), Stefan Wolpe's *Israel and his Land* (1939), Bernard Rogers's *The Passion* (1942), Franz Waxman's *Joshua* (1959), Vincent Persichetti's *The Creation* (1969), Dominick Argento's *Jonah and the Whale* (1973) and Charles Wuorinen's *The Celestial Sphere* (1980).<sup>89</sup>

Additionally, *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* contains apparent stage directions, such as the use of sound effects, the entrance and exit of its characters (the White mob and the black community), the indication to sing “hysterically,” etc.

The term *lynching drama* is borrowed from the theatre world and is a very specific type of drama from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially popular and cultivated among the writers of the Harlem Renaissance. This is important to recall when one takes note of the key players in the creation of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*.

Alain Locke, professor of English and Philosophy at Howard University in Washington, DC and a noted African American philosopher and author, was very well known amongst the most influential minds of the Harlem Renaissance. He was

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<sup>89</sup>Howard E. Smither, “Oratorio,” Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lynx.lib.usm.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/20397>, [accessed July 27, 2015].

instrumental in the thought processes of the movement as well as supporting those within it.<sup>90</sup> It was Locke who arranged a meeting between Katherine Garrison Chapin and William Grant Still. In a letter dated August 9, 1939, Locke writes to Still,

Indeed I wish I could come out now, especially for a matter that I must take up by letter. Personally I think it important enough for a trip, if I were not committed to some work here that must be finished. I know how many [commitments] you have already; so you can be sure that I would not urge you to take on another [except as] it seemed a singularly important advance step.

Mrs. Biddle, who writes as Katharine Garrison Chapin, has done a powerful poem on lynching, really an epic indictment but by way of pure poetry not propaganda. As you will see by the enclosed documents she is far from a novice in these matters, and has written her lines deliberately as a choral chant for mixed voices with a contralto solo voice. The ideal set-up for this, it seems to us, is Grant Still composer, a racially mixed choral group as executants, a dramatic debut under such auspices as would be assured by Marian Anderson as soloist. You will think this wild wishful thinking until you read the poem/ it is more powerful than the Lament for the Stolen, but has the same skill at transforming a melodramatic situation into one of tragic depth and beauty.<sup>91</sup>

It is apparent from the letter above that Chapin and Locke were already both familiar with each other. They were both very familiar with Mrs. Charlotte Mason, known as the “Godmother” of the Harlem Renaissance.

Mason was a wealthy widow who had taken a keen interest in black art and culture. She gave financial support to many of the legendary artists of the Harlem Renaissance such as Langston Hughes, Zora Neal Hurston, Hall Johnson, Claude McKay

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<sup>90</sup>Leonard Harris, *The Philosophy of Alain Locke: Harlem Renaissance and Beyond*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 4-8.

<sup>91</sup>Alain Locke to William Grant Still, August 9, 1939, William Grant Still Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, NC.

and even Alain Locke. She often enlisted the help of Katherine Garrison Chapin.<sup>92</sup>

“When Godmother wished to communicate with her godchildren by mail, she employed the services [of]...sometime poet Katherine Garrison Chapin and her sister, sometime sculptor, Cornelia....Plenty of those letters the Chapin sisters were obliged to write for her to Alain Locke, after all, expressed her open hostility toward organizations designed to improve relations between the races.”<sup>93</sup>

With these affiliations established, it is apparent that Still and Chapin were well aware of the genres and movements of the Harlem Renaissance. It would come as no surprise that the pair was at least partially familiar with the working of the lynching drama. Judith L. Stephens, editor of the book, *Strange Fruit: Plays on Lynching by American Women*, asserts that

All lynching plays include a focus on the threat or occurrence of a lynching incident and the impact of this incident on the characters. The plays by women share additional commonalities; for example, the home is the most common setting, and dialogue is interspersed with alternative discourse in the form of music, poetry, or prayer. A distinct heritage is reflected in the plays by black women in that the lynching incident is described, most commonly by a woman, to other characters, and this verbal re-creation or telling of events plays a prominent role in the drama.<sup>94</sup>

All of these elements are present in Still’s ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*.

Although William Grant Still is the composer, Katherine Garrison Chapin is the poet, the librettist for the work, which fulfills the requirement of a female author. The focus on the

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<sup>92</sup>Bruce Kellner, “‘Refined Racism’: White Patronage in the Harlem Renaissance,” in *The Harlem Renaissance*, ed. Harold Bloom (Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004), 56-57.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Kathy A. Perkins and Judith L. Stephens, eds., *Strange Fruit: Plays on Lynching by African American Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 9.

occurrence of a lynching occurs at the beginning of the piece, as the white crowd is dispersing, singing the words, “We’ve swung him higher than the tallest pine. We’ve cut his throat, so he ain’t goin’ter whine.”<sup>95</sup> Although the supposed lynching has occurred just moments earlier, the threat still remains as the black crowd cautiously enters singing, “Look dere, look dere, is dat a shadow? Look dere, look dere, is dey all gone? Creep softly, de dawgs are in de meadow, Creep softly, de dawgs have just gone along.”<sup>96</sup> The mother of the lynched man sings, “Oh sorrow, oh sorrow, You’ve taken my hand. I must walk with you to the Promised Land...Oh my son! Oh Jesus, my Jesus What have they done!”<sup>97</sup> Her words communicate the immediate grief, fear and sense of loss, the impact, of losing her son.

Considering the description of lynching dramas as provided by Judith L. Stephens, it must be noted that there is no real dialogue within ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. However, there is music and the poetry of the text that makes up the piece. Although Stephens points out that the following characteristics are specific to lynching dramas by black women, (Chapin is white), it is worthy to mention that the other characteristics do exist. The mother, along with the members of the Negro chorus and the narrator, share the responsibility of describing the events that led to the lynching.

#### NEGRO WOMAN

...him creeping home, running from the men and the dogs baying in the pine woods...I remember the flies buzzing in the courtroom and the judge saying, for the rest of your life, for the rest of your life...

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<sup>95</sup>Chapin, 117.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 118.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 119.



## CHORUS

...He was a man, quick with a gun, he fell on evil days.  
 Trouble was after him, trouble followed his ways.  
 Trouble lay behind the edge of his smile.  
 Trouble got him in the end, trouble was waiting all the while.  
 Women all loved him, women came at his call.  
 They stood in the doorways, they watched from the fence,  
 They waved from the windows. He was strong and tall,  
 Women all loved him, but he had no sense.  
 So he ended in jail, and they gave him "life,"  
 Took away his name and his coppers and his knife.  
 Took away his name, in the name of the law,  
 But justice was a slow thing to be waiting for!  
 ...They took away his freedom, in the name of the law,  
 But justice was a slow thing to be waiting for!  
 Justice was too slow the white men said,  
 So they got together when the sun was high,  
 They marched to the jail, and broke into the cell,  
 And roped the prisoner to drag him out to die.  
 They dragged him on his knees, and they lynched him on a tree,  
 And they left him hanging for the world to see.  
 Justice was a slow thing to be waiting for,  
 In the false name of justice they broke the law!<sup>98</sup>

*...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* clearly fits most of the basic criteria of the lynching drama as laid forth by Judith L. Stephens. The likelihood of the creative minds behind the piece being at least casually familiar with the genre is also clear. The fact cannot be ignored that the two choruses and the contralto soloist are all functioning as characters, as listed in the introductory text that accompanies the piano-vocal score. The white chorus, or half of the available chorus, portrays the white people and the black chorus, or the other half of the available chorus, portrays the Negro people. The contralto

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<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 119-122

soloist portrays the man's mother, and the soprano and baritone soloists portray random members of the white mob. With the cast of characters, the setting, as described in the "argument," the stage directions, and sound effects, it is highly plausible that ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* was conceived, consciously or otherwise, to be a lynching drama.

#### Racial Delineation

The first words of the piano-vocal score are "FOR: White Chorus, Negro Chorus..." The conductor of the work is immediately faced with a dilemma: where to secure a white chorus and/or a black chorus for performance. Still answers the question in the next paragraph, stating, "In the event that it is not possible to secure both a white chorus and a Negro chorus, the composer suggests that the available chorus be divided, one half representing the White people and the other half representing the Negro people." In the preparations for the 1940 premier of the work, finding a Negro Chorus proved to be troublesome, as the leading black choirs of the day could not be engaged. Still suggested using grease paint as had been done for white singers in black roles in a production of Still's opera, *Troubled Island*.<sup>99</sup>

We are far enough removed from the era of blackface minstrelsy that the notion of performing in blackface will be offensive to many of our performers and audience members. In contrast to Still's allowance for grease paint, Chapin felt differently about the matter of race. The sound of the black Hampton Institute choir had so impressed her as a child that she had hoped that a black choir would be utilized for the concert. Her wish was granted as the all-black Wen Talbert Choir performed for the premiere.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Shirley, 445.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 445-446.

At the time, Still was concerned about the adequate preparation of the black choir. He cited the fact that most black choirs, at the time, were most comfortable singing the music they were often called upon to sing: spirituals. To him it was not a question of talent, but a question of ease of musical delivery of a different genre of music.<sup>101</sup>

In 2009, at the University of Southern Mississippi, I conducted the Southern Chorale in a performance of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. At the time, the Southern Chorale was composed primarily of white students and a few black students. The prospect of a white choir and black choir was not an option, especially given the restraints of a short rehearsal schedule. The choir was divided evenly with black students and white students assigned to both choirs. In dividing the choir, I intentionally split the few black students between both choirs to assure that both groups were racially mixed. The contralto soloist, a black student, was chosen through an audition in which all females, regardless of race, were encouraged to participate. The contralto was chosen solely on the merits of her musicianship and vocal quality as it suited the solo part. I selected two white male students and a white female student as the narrator, baritone and soprano soloists, respectively, due to the timbre of their voices.

Similar approaches have been used in other performances of the piece. Donald Dumpson's performance of the piece with the Westminster Jubilee Singers was similar. The Jubilee Singers was a mostly black ensemble. Dumpson divided the choir evenly for the preparation and performance. The same approach was used with the First Congregational Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Albany, NY performance by Albany Pro Musica, the Phoenix, AZ performance by the choir of the All Saints

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<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 446.

Episcopal Church, in Beverly Hills and Los Angeles, CA with the Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers, in New York, NY with the Westminster Interracial Fellowship, and also in Boulder, CO, in Bloomington, IN. In Raleigh, NC, Lawrence Speakman divided the Concert Singers of Cary along racial lines, reserving all of the white singers for the white choir and the black singers for the Negro choir. The black singers were smaller in number than the white singers; however, the singers and conductor recruited singers from the community, church choirs and schools to add to the numbers for the negro choir.

Conversely, several performances have come closer in racial delineation to the intent the of piece's creators. Dr. Phillip Brunelle, Artistic Director of Vocal Essence, prepared the ensemble for the only commercial recording of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. For the recording, Vocal Essence, a mostly white choral ensemble, joined forces with the Leigh Morris Chorale, an African American ensemble founded by Dr. Robert Morris. Vocal Essence performed the role of the white choir and the Leigh Morris Chorale formed the basis of the negro choir. Similar arrangements have been used in performances in New York, NY (Schola Cantorum of NY/Wen Talbert Negro Choir 1940, Schola Cantorum of NY/Eva Jessye Choir 1941), New Haven, CT (New Haven Chorale/Heritage Chorale of New Haven), Greensboro, NC (Bel Canto Company/Choirs of Bennett College and North Carolina A&T State University), Hilton Head Island, SC (Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia/Choir of South Carolina State University), Putney, VT (Putney School Madrigals and Members of the Bennington County Choral Society/Germantown Concert Chorus), and in Boston, MA (Coro Allegro/Heritage Chorale of New Haven). In each of the preceding performances, a professional, community or collegiate white or mostly-white chorus has joined forces with an existing

black or mostly-black college, professional or community choir. Alternatively, there has been a precedent set for inclusion of black or mostly-black church choirs in conjunction with white or all-white choirs. This has occurred in Philadelphia, PA with the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, conducted by Alan Harler, and the Bright Hope Baptist Church Celestial Choir, conducted by Donald Dumpson. The initial preparations for the performance by Coro Allegro involved collaboration with an African American church choir; however, the church choir reneged on the collaboration upon finding that Coro Allegro is a gay- and lesbian-friendly organization.

Given the sensitive nature of race in this country, I consider it important to establish the history of the race of the conductors of these performances. It is my intent to show that the conductor's race has not been a prohibitive factor, overall, in the performances of *...And The Lynched Him on a Tree*. In total, I have documented twenty-eight performances of the work since its premier (1940-2015). Of those twenty-eight performances, white conductors directed seventeen, black conductors conducted eight, a Mexican conductor has conducted one performance and the race of two of the conductors is unknown.

#### Movement and Sound

Page seven of the piano-vocal score indicates, "Exeunt the white chorus. At intervals the sounds of starting motors and of occasional auto horns are heard off stage, never loud enough to interfere with the music, and growing steadily fainter up to No. 10 at which point they cease. These sounds must be omitted if, upon trial, they prove to be

ineffective.”<sup>102</sup> More stage instructions are found on page fourteen with, “At No. 10 a quiet moaning begins. The Negroes come out of hiding and gather one by one, feeling their way in the darkness.”<sup>103</sup> Again, on page thirty-four, a final set of instructions is provided, indicating that, “During the Narrator’s lines the White Chorus has re-entered very unobtrusively. They stand back of the Negro Chorus.”<sup>104</sup>

Through reading the correspondence between Chapin and Still, and Chapin and Rodzinski, I have found no evidence that any movement of choirs or sound effects were used during the premiere of the work. This is not to assert that these elements were not used, only that there is no evidence to support it. In the cassette recording of the 1942 performance, there is evidence of neither movement nor sound effects. Regarding sound effects, of the eleven conductors I have interviewed or surveyed, none has used sound effects in performance or recording. The prevailing consensus is that the music as composed by Still speaks well enough for itself, that the use of sound effect is not needed. In my own case, the omission of sound effects was a logistical choice owing to the limitations of the performance facility. Largely, the exit and appearance of both choirs have been eliminated from the documented performances. Two exceptions were encountered through the interviews for this document. Alan Harler recalls that The Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia was placed in front of the Bright Hope Baptist Church Choir, facing the audience for the opening section, turning around and facing the church choir for the negro chorus section and facing front again for the ending section.

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<sup>102</sup>William Grant Still, *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* Piano-Vocal Score, (New York: J. Fisher & Bro., 1941), 7.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, 34.

Lawrence Speakman recounts that the Concert Singers of Cary moved to the side during the performance and moved back into place for the ending section, but the African American chorus remained in place for the entirety of the performance. Again, the consensus among the conductors is that the piece stands well without the movement.

### Programming

Often, performing organizations are faced with the challenge of simultaneously raising money through ticket sales, pleasing the musical appetites of audience members and musicians alike, and successfully marketing to the community, while bringing a wide variety of literature to the community. Coupled with these needs is often the desire to expand the musical horizons of the organization and challenge the mindset of audiences. With this in mind, programming a concert with a work titled as provocatively as *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* can be difficult. However, examining the approaches prior conductors have used in programming the piece is helpful in establishing a precedent of success with the piece. Four programming themes emerge when surveying the performances chronicled in this document. Many performances have successfully used the title as a focal point on concerts dedicated to birthday celebrations and other milestone anniversaries of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. The 1995 performance conducted by Paul Anthony McRae and the 2015 performance conducted by Cailin Marcel Manson were both concerts dedicated to the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. King's birthday is January 15, and the holiday celebrating his birth is observed each year on the third Monday in January. Considering the work to which King

dedicated his life and career, this observance is a most appropriate setting for a performance of the piece. It is also conceivable that audiences and performers alike would be more willing to overlook the title on such an occasion.

The second theme, related to the first, concerns concerts scheduled during the month of February. February has long been recognized as Black History Month. American history and the history of blacks in America cannot be accurately and completely told without discussing the topic of lynching. Although any month has always been appropriate, February as Black History Month is an appropriate time to schedule concerts dedicated to the music of black composers. In it a conductor can find an opportunity to program ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. This has been done in Albany, NY (Albany Pro Musica), Princeton, NJ (Princeton Pro Musica), New Haven, CT (New Haven Chorale/Heritage Chorale of New Haven), Boston, MA (Coro Allegro/Heritage Chorale of New Haven), and in Boulder, CO (University of Colorado-Boulder).<sup>105</sup>

A third theme exists in concerts dedicated to the music of William Grant Still. The Mississippi Symphony Orchestra series of planned concerts was to include ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. Although this piece was removed from performance and rehearsal, the concerts celebrating Still's music were successful. Coro Allegro/Heritage Chorale of New Haven's successful 1999 concert, as well as the performance in Grand Rapids, Michigan was dedicated entirely to the music of William Grant Still.

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<sup>105</sup>It should be noted, that while all of the mentioned performances were not tied exclusively to the performance of music by black composers, all the performances, with the exception of the New Haven, CT performance, occurred during the month of February. The New Haven, CT performance, occurring on January 30, 1999, was a concert of music by black composers. Worth mentioning, also, is the performance on February 23, 1957, which occurred during Negro History Week.



Last is the theme of social consciousness. The piece is well suited for this type of programming. In fact, the premiere of the work was planned to aid progress on a stalled congressional anti-lynching bill. The performance in Phoenix, AZ was a part of a series of concerts on social injustice. Likewise, Mark Brennan Doerries' 2008 performance is a part of a series entitled *Ensnaring Hate*, made up of mixed-media performances dedicated to illuminating the condition of racial injustice.

The review of the reception and performance history in the next chapter will show that ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* has had relatively few performances in its seventy-five year history. My hope is that future conductors of the work will benefit from the information provided above. Equipped with programming ideas, a clear categorization of the work and knowledge of the workings of all available instrumentations and scores, conductors will be able to avoid some of the setbacks experienced by the conductors discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV  
RECEPTION HISTORY

Published Reviews

The 1940 premiere performance of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* is well documented by Wayne Shirley's 1994 article. Receiving overwhelmingly positive reviews in the major press, the piece was performed several times, including a performance in Mexico, during the 1940s. Shirley chronicles these early performances within the scope of his article.<sup>106</sup> An exhaustive list of documented performances, including those discussed by Wayne Shirley is listed in Appendix C of this dissertation. This document focuses on the performances from 1950 through 2015.

The performance reviews of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* are few; however, those that exist are essential to a documentation of the public reception of the work across varying regions of the United States and in different periods of time. For example, reviews exist from 1967 in Los Angeles, 1995 in Greensboro, NC, the 1996 recording by Phillip Brunelle, 1999 in Boston, 2000 in Raleigh, NC, and 2011 in Boulder, CO. Although there is a large gap between 1967 and 1995, the reviews span forty-six years and are representative of the West Coast, East Coast, Northern and West North Central States.

It should be noted that while the quality of performance is crucial to a positive reception of a work, the assessment of quality is easily swayed by opinion, bias and even emotion. Thus, the focus of this section will be on the portions of the review that judge the piece itself. In the majority are positive reviews of Still's talent as a composer and

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<sup>106</sup>Shirley, 425-461.

reviews of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. The first performance review of the period spanning 1950 through 2015 is of the Los Angeles Jubilee Singers' 1967 performance. Donald Vail Allen wrote a review of the performance in the *Los Angeles Times* remarking that "William Grant Still's *O Sorrow!* (an excerpt from the composer's ...*And They Lynched Him On a Tree*) and *Psalm for the Living* are pleasant pieces. Mr. Still, who was in the audience, is not the most daring of contemporary composers."<sup>107</sup>

Although this critique implies that only an excerpt of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* was performed, it offers insight into the perception of Still as a composer. While the focus of this document is primarily on choral performances of this piece, it is worth noting that the mother's lament has often been excerpted for performance, notably on three occasions. The first occurred in a recital performance on March 11, 1956 at the Pasadena Playhouse, Pasadena, CA. This recital was a duo recital by Georgia Laster, soprano, and Still's wife, Verna Arvey Still, pianist. Included on the concert program was the contralto solo from ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, listed on the program under "operatic arias." William Grant Still was in attendance and also spoke on the program in a speech entitled "Sharing the Nation's Cultural Life."<sup>108</sup> The second performance is documented above and the third solo vocal performance occurred on April 18, 1995 with Beth E. Strittmatter performing, accompanied by Adam Tyler on piano.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Donald Vail Allen, "Jubilee Singers Perform," *Los Angeles Times*, March 27, 1967.

<sup>108</sup>Concert program of the Pasadena Playhouse, March 11, 1956, MC 1125, Box 8, *William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers*, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

<sup>109</sup>Concert program of Northern Arizona University, April 18, 1995, MC 1125, Volume 94, Part 1, *William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers*, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

The 1995 performances of the work by the Greensboro Symphony received two separate reviews, both positive. Henry Black Ingram of the *Greensboro News and Record* remarked, “[t]he text focuses on the racial injustices in our nation during the early decades of this century, and the work makes a rather powerful and effective statement with its dramatic juxtaposition of musical and textural elements.”<sup>110</sup> Tim Lindeman of *TRIADstyle* called the piece “powerful and provocative...a solidly conceived and dramatic work.”<sup>111</sup> Likewise, the 1999 performance in Boston received a positive review which appeared in the *Boston Globe*. *Globe* correspondent Susan Larson reported:

...It is called "And They Lynched Him on a Tree," and it turns an unflinching gaze on race-hatred and violence. Here is an American Stabat Mater touching on such terrible shame and sorrow that the participants, both Coro Allegro and their guests, the New Haven Heritage Chorale, John Q. Berryman, director, must have lived through some shattering times together just trying to perform it.<sup>112</sup>

Although Donald Vail Allen criticized Still for his lack of daring as a composer, the available performance reviews reflect the piece positively. This fact has assisted in promoting the piece, particularly in major metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles and Boston. Perhaps more important, are the reviews of the commercial recording of the work. Consider the nature of audio recording; they serve as permanent records of a performance. In the instance of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* only one commercial recording, to date, exists to influence the reception of the piece. This is a sharp contrast to pieces such as Handel’s *Messiah*, of which countless recordings exist. I

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<sup>110</sup>Henry Black Ingram, “Concert Piece Focuses on Early Racial Injustices/*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*,” *Greensboro News and Record*, January 14, 1995.

<sup>111</sup>Tim Lindeman, “Two Great Performances This Week,” *TRIADstyle*, January 17, 1995.

<sup>112</sup>Susan Larson, “Coro Allegro concert tugs at heart, conscience,” *Boston Globe*, February 23, 1999.

believe the recording is partially responsible for the most recent performances of the piece. Over the span of fifty-five years, I have documented thirteen performances of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. However, in the nineteen years following the release of the recording of the work, there have been fourteen documented performances: a significant increase over time.

Recorded in 1996, VocalEssence's performance of the piece received a review in *The Musical Times*. Wilfred Mellers, seemingly unimpressed with the piece, states that,

The biggest piece on this CD is in fact called *And they lynched him on a tree*.... The verses, if not distinguished, carry a high emotive charge in recounting events that ought to be still blush-making to whites. Musically, Still handles double choir and orchestra with some expertise, though the intrusion of the speaking voice seems, as usual, otiose. The musical idiom is somewhere between 'American' Dvořák and White-Negro Gershwin; though the music hasn't potent individuality, it holds the attention as well as much, though not all, American music composed around 1940.<sup>113</sup>

Mellers compares Still's talent as a composer to that of his European counterparts and finds Still "holding on to an academically 19th-century idiom in to the mid 20th century."<sup>114</sup> Mellers' comparison of the piece to other works from the late 1930s and early 1940s lends credibility to the work, in spite of the generally lukewarm review.

Positioning the piece more positively is a review by Eric Salzman in *Stereo Review*. Although Salzman gives the CD an overall rating of "okay,"<sup>115</sup> he praises Still's work as a composer in ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. Salzman writes,

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<sup>113</sup>Wilfred Mellers, "New World Oldies," *Musical Times*, 137, no. 1838 (April 1996): 20.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid.

<sup>115</sup>Eric Salzman, "Still: *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*; Wailing Woman/ Miss Sally's Party; other works," *Stereo Review*, Vol. 61, no. 8 (August 1996): 97.

*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, a cantata or oratorio for double chorus, mezzo-soprano, narrator, and orchestra, is as powerful a piece of work as you will find in American classical music. The strength is partly in the peculiarly American subject, but it is also in the music, which is a strong, dark, and dramatic expression of the horrific scene conjured up by the words. Still's use of traditional material, once thought to be dated, now seems fresh and relevant again, and the power of the material is as Biblical as that of any Bach Passion.<sup>116</sup>

Michael Fleming reviews the piece in a similar fashion but is less complimentary of the choral element, describing it as “underpowered and unfocused.”<sup>117</sup>

The Brunelle recording of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* is the second of four discs in a series entitled *WITNESS*. Brian Burns reviewed the entire series in the May 2007 issue of the *Choral Journal*. He states, “[a]lthough compelling and hauntingly beautiful in many places, this is a difficult piece to listen to. Here is art that confronts the listener and forces him or her to acknowledge and consider the tragedies of our recent past.”<sup>118</sup> Ten years prior, in the same publication, Weyburn Wasson described the piece: “[A] powerful dramatic cantata...[a] chilling work, when taken in its historical context of a still militantly segregated nation in 1941, is a bold and foreboding work. Musically it is one of Still's greatest but, alas, not well-known works.”<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Michael Fleming, “Plymouth Music Series: Philip Brunelle, conductor, ‘Witness Vol. II: William Grant Still,’ (Collins Classics),” *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, March 31, 1996, accessed September 15, 2015. <http://www.lexisnexis.com/lxacui2api/api/version1/getDocCui?lni=4722-D340-01K4-G234&csi=270944,270077,11059,8411&hl=t&hv=t&hnsd=f&hns=t&hgn=t&oc=00240&perma=true>.

<sup>118</sup>Brian Burns, “The WITNESS Collection,” *Choral Journal* 47 [May 2007]: 75.

<sup>119</sup>Weyburn Wasson, “Witness, Volume II,” *Choral Journal* 37 [April 1997]: 60.

### Conductor Interviews

The interviews and surveys of conductors were tremendously useful in documenting the reception of the work throughout the choral profession. Through the interviews I was able to document the growth in awareness of the piece throughout the country. Furthermore, the documentation of the performance history illuminates geographical and chronological trends of performance.

There are no documented performances of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* between 1944 and 1952. The 1952, 1967 and 1974 performances occurred in California. This is a natural occurrence when considering that Still, from 1934 until his death, lived in California.<sup>120</sup> Albert McNeil, a native Californian, conducted each of the California performances. Between the performances of 1952 and 1967 was a 1957 performance in New York by the Westminster Interracial Fellowship Chorus, owing most likely to the premiere performances of the 1940s in New York.

It is interesting to note that although William Grant Still died in 1978, an event which, for other composers, has led to memorial performances of their work, there are no documented performances of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* between 1974 and 1993. Between 1993 and 2015, the decision to perform the piece has been informed by two factors: Judith Anne Still (the composer's daughter) and knowledge of previous performances.

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<sup>120</sup>Verna Arvey, *In One Lifetime*, (Fayetteville, The University of Arkansas Press, 1984), 115-117.

Through the interviews and surveys several conductors referenced becoming aware of the piece through mailings from William Grant Still Music and Judith Anne Still. Most of the conductor interviews commented on Judith Anne Still's zeal her father's music and willingness to educate the public about his compositional output. Her work has been the source of inspiration for the 1994, 1995, 2001 performances, a cancelled performance of the piece in 2007 and the undated Grand Rapids, MI performance. Conversely, Alan Harler, conductor emeritus of The Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, and his performance of the work with the same group, have inspired performances at Westminster Choir College (which subsequently led to a performance in Raleigh, NC), Hilton Head Island, SC and Boston, MA. The 2009 performance in Hattiesburg was inspired, in part, by knowledge of the planned 2007 performance by the Mississippi Symphony. An undated performance in Ann Arbor gave inspiration for the 2011 performances in Boulder, CO.

Through the process of documenting each performance, several trends have appeared. These trends are important to note because they happen with such prevalence that they can reasonably be expected to present themselves in subsequent attempts at producing *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. Initially, there is resistance to the idea of performing the piece, primarily fueled by stigmas associated with the title of the work, requested performing forces, and internal struggle with the subject matter. Following this stage is deeper examination of the text and an acceptance, in most cases, of the subject matter. For example, in the 2009 Mississippi Symphony Orchestra performance, the



conductor and President of the Orchestra had high hopes for a planned performance but were met with resistance. Crafton Beck, conductor of the Mississippi Symphony recounts

All I know is that we proposed it.... a number of weeks...passed by, and when it came back, it was a very strong response. It was not just from the music departments; mainly...it was as much from the administration of the school[s] as it was from the music departments. It wasn't at all that this isn't a topic that should be talked about...It was simpler than that. It was just "we don't want to go there right now."<sup>121</sup>

The "there" of which Beck speaks is the subject of race, a theme which saturates the discussion of the planned performance which never occurred. Judith Anne Still, who was consulting with the coordinators, stated:

That's because, I think it was the head of the department, or the head of something, he was a racist, and he claimed to me on the phone, in a bombastic voice, that, "the black people didn't want them to do it. They didn't want to bring it up." I said, "hmmm, I know that's wrong." So they cancelled the performance. You know, Mississippi is going to be the last bastion of hatred for a long time...He didn't want to do it for racial reasons and he wanted to make it appear that the black people had killed the performance.<sup>122</sup>

Mrs. Still could not recall the name of the man of whom she speaks, or his capacity in the project.

It is possible that, as messages were relayed from person to person, that the race factor began to play a perceived role which was larger than actual. Richard Waters, then Director of Choral Activities at Delta State University, remembers a milder, though no-less serious, discussion which centered on around his students, mainly those of color:

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<sup>121</sup>Crafton Beck, Interview to author, August 1, 2015.

<sup>122</sup>Judith Anne Still, Telephone interview to author, September 8, 2015.

None of the people that were at DSU at that time are still there. As I recall, it wasn't so much an objection from the Bologna Center as it was from students and the music department chair, David Schubert. The semester before the program (spring 2007 I believe), I described the piece and read the text of the first movement to my choral conducting class. One of my students (an African American) said, "Dr. Waters, my momma would kill me if I sing that! I respect you and all, but I'll take the F." Other students expressed similar sentiments. After discussing it further with the music chair..., we asked the [Mississippi Symphony Orchestra] if another piece would be considered instead. I had mixed feelings about it, but ultimately felt that my students' voices deserved to be heard and respected.<sup>123</sup>

Don Trott, choral director at The University of Mississippi, spoke on behalf of his institution. While the decision to choose another piece was shared with Delta State University, the reasons were different.

...I do remember that it simply was the title that caused the administration to not desire to program this work in the Ford Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Mississippi. In prior years, the university had celebrated the fortieth anniversary of James Meredith's entrance into the university. Diversity was and is an important focus of the university. It was deemed better to not take a chance on such a title creating an issue with the forward momentum of the continued efforts toward civility and diversity.<sup>124</sup>

The feelings were not unanimous from one university to the next. At the opposite end of the state is William Carey University. Carey choral director Mark Malone was the Mississippi Arts Commission liaison for this project and was instrumental in selecting repertoire for the series of concerts. Malone recounts that,

The opportunity to present a work by Mississippi native son, William Grant Still, was quite wonderful given a [National Endowment of the Arts] grant to share the choral works of this renowned composer born in the Magnolia State. Shockingly, administrations of both The University of Mississippi and Delta State University were reticent to perform the controversial work, *And They Lynched Him on a Tree* and forced a

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<sup>123</sup>Richard Waters, email message to author, August 3, 2015.

<sup>124</sup>Don Trott, electronic survey to author, August 1, 2015.

decision to be made that eliminated the piece from the concert program...[William Carey University] students were much in favor of performing the piece, which continued the position of past administrators who led WCU to be the first private institution in MS to admit African American students...<sup>125</sup>

Two years later, in Hattiesburg, MS, the same concerns were present. As I prepared to conduct the work with The Southern Chorale, I was tremendously concerned with having the support of the Chorale. My doctoral advisor shared similar concerns, expressed through his exercising the precaution to secure the approval of both the Dean of the college and the Chair of the School of Music. Fortunately, no serious issues arose.

With the racial history of the southern United States to consider, it is easy to assume that this issue of initial resistance is unique to the south. However, conductors from other locales also experienced difficulty in convincing their respective organizations to perform the piece. Alan Harler, then conductor of the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, remembers initial resistance from the ensemble's board of directors. "They were so alarmed by the title that they wondered whether or not we should do it. But then when they understood the overall meaning of ...the fact that there was an African American chorus or a black chorus and a White chorus and that they played a part of what was really a drama, a scene, a terrible scene...,<sup>126</sup> they agreed to allow the performance. Lawrence Speakman of the Concert Singers of Cary, NC recounts vivid memories of his encounter with the board of directors:

When I brought this up, they looked at me like I'd lost my mind. And the executive director said to me, "How am I supposed to market this? How do we publicize attendance for this program?"...So I explained my motivations

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<sup>125</sup>Mark Malone, electronic survey to author, July 31, 2015.

<sup>126</sup>Alan Harler, interview to author, August 29, 2015.

and said... “Well, if you feel this is too hot to handle, I understand that. If you think it’s too risky I understand that. But I want you to know that, if you decided that we shouldn’t do this program, I’m going to do this program on my own. I would produce it myself apart from the chorus.”<sup>127</sup>

Speakman was able to convince the board of directors to allow the performance, which was received positively.

Following the acceptance of the subject matter is the beginning of the rehearsal process, which has typically involved a process of catharsis for those involved and, in many instances, a healing process or starting-point for conversation on the topic of race. The New Haven, CT performance of 1999 is most indicative of the latter. The initial preparations for the performance received coverage on National Public Radio’s *Morning Edition*.<sup>128</sup> During the *Morning Edition* segment, Elizabeth Blair interviewed members of both the black choir and the white choir. Members of both ensembles expressed the difficulty they experienced in dealing with the emotional weight of the texts and the portrayals of the black and white communities. The broadcast also excerpts portions of the ensembles’ rehearsals. Of particular importance in the radio broadcast is the discussion of the privilege of Yale University in contrast to the poor economic conditions of the larger New Haven Community. Jonathan Berryman, Director of The Heritage Chorale of New Haven, a black choir existing in New Haven, CT, spoke to the relationship between Yale and the community. “This is first time in the five years that I have been here that there will have been any significant African American presence on the concert stage in Woolsey Hall performing any type of music. It just has not been

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<sup>127</sup>Lawrence Speakman, telephone interview to author, August 4, 2015.

<sup>128</sup>*Morning Edition*, “Play Evokes Strong Emotions,” featuring Elizabeth Blair, aired January 29, 1999, on National Public Radio, recorded broadcast in private collection.

done in this community.”<sup>129</sup> Meanwhile, New Haven Chorale member Charlotte Holloman states, “It’s face to face in an age where we have very little contact with each other. We tend to not see each other. We don’t have the opportunity to talk to each other. So this brings us together in a musical venue which makes it perhaps easier to talk about this.”<sup>130</sup> For the performance, Paul Mueller, the conductor of the New Haven performance, recounts that the performance location, Woolsey Hall of Yale University, was full with more African American audience members than white. He believes that, for many of the African Americans in attendance, it was their first time in that venue. Both local and state politicians were in attendance. Mueller also received many letters and emails from audience members who were moved by the performance, including a letter from a relative of Katherine Garrison Chapin who attended the performance. Many of the choristers continue to speak fondly of the performance to Mueller, sixteen years later.<sup>131</sup>

Jonathan Berryman’s memory of the event is much the same as Mueller. He recalls, “. . .I have never yet seen Woolsey Hall that full for a musical performance. When I say never, I mean never. There are two balconies. The first balcony goes all the way around. And then, the second balcony is just in the back of the hall. Full! All the way around. Full!”<sup>132</sup> Berryman’s ensemble, which continues to exist, was formed because of the need for a black choir for the New Haven performance of the piece.

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<sup>129</sup>Ibid.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid.

<sup>131</sup>Paul Mueller, telephone interview to author, August 6, 2015.

<sup>132</sup>Jonathan Berryman, telephone interview to author, August 16, 2015.

Donald Dumpson, who has conducted the work with the Westminster Jubilee Singers and has prepared the Celestial Choir of Bright Hope Baptist Church for performance with the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, recounted a rehearsal process at Westminster in which the white choir and black choir were not allowed to interact. Of that process he stated, “[it] was very emotional.... I really, if you think about phenomenology, wanted it to be a real lived experience for them. So, we really, really created a sense of segregation and really worked pretty intense[ly] about allowing those feelings to be real. They would journal about it.”<sup>133</sup> Lawrence Speakman, who consulted Dumpson in his preparations with Concert Singers of Cary, also created a physical separation of the choirs (rehearsing in separate locations) during rehearsals. Speakman’s approach to the piece encouraged dialogue about race and injustice in the rehearsal process.<sup>134</sup>

Coro Allegro, directed by David Hodgkins, experienced slight trouble in initial preparations for the performance of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. The ensemble originally made contact with a Boston-area church choir, which would sing the role of the black community in the performance. Coro Allegro is a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community organization and markets itself as such. As David Hodgkins discussed, “about a month or two before the performance, [the black choir] discovered that Coro Allegro was a gay chorus and they decided to back out; which is kind of weird because the piece is about oppression and racism and overcoming our

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<sup>133</sup>Donald Dumpson, telephone interview to author, August 7, 2015.

<sup>134</sup>Lawrence Speakman, telephone interview to author, August 4, 2015.

differences to unite. So there was a whole other layer to this. So we were without a chorus.”<sup>135</sup> Meg Oakes, Coro Allegro singer and Past President of the organization, gives further details:

As it was explained to us, some members of that church choir were not comfortable singing about such a painful, difficult, and sometimes personal subject as the lynching of blacks, did not have enough time to prepare the music, and were not willing to perform in collaboration with lesbians and gay men. Our reactions to this news were as varied as we are, but many of us felt rejected, angry, or worried. We spent part of a late-January rehearsal discussing how we felt. We spoke about the guilt, sadness, and anger we feel when we sing the part of the white chorus; about our unrealistic and unfair expectations of the original black chorus; and about our desire to educate ourselves and our audience, coupled with our obligation to not hurt our collaborators, our audience, or our members. We also spoke about the excitement and pride we feel as we present such important and moving music by an under-performed composer...As lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and supporters, and as a predominantly white group, we hope, through this performance, to reach out into the black community to form connections, and together create art that, in itself, seeks to challenge racist assumptions by forging a connection between disparate communities...The program is powerful. It has changed many of our lives, reminding us of the reality of racism and of homophobia, challenging us to open up to one another, enabling us to see other gaps we would like to bridge, and especially, reiterating the importance of breaking silence.<sup>136</sup>

A rewarding outcome of the rehearsal process has been the overwhelming success ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* has experienced with audiences in every documented instance of performance. A violinist with the Albany Symphony Orchestra who also

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<sup>135</sup>David Hodgkins, telephone interview to author, August 23, 2015.

<sup>136</sup>Concert program of Coro Allegro, February 21, 1999, MC 1125, Volume 98, *William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers*, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, AR.

performed the piece recounts that, “the performance of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* was very well received by the audience. It is, of course, a profoundly moving and disturbing piece and I think the audience was deeply affected by it.”<sup>137</sup>

Paul Anthony McRae of the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra recalls that the audience “responded really well. I have to tell you that it was very well received.”<sup>138</sup> Of the audience reaction at the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia performance, Alan Harler remembers, “... the audience was stunned, you know. It’s so vivid and Marietta [Simpson]’s aria was so incredibly beautiful that I think the audience was holding their breath by the end of the piece. And so I think it was a very favorable response, not that the people were left feeling great about it, but I think they had been moved and changed by both the text and the music.”<sup>139</sup>

The Concert Singers of Cary presented a performance of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* on May 21, 2000. Speakman remembers of the performance that

[they] found it to be a wonderful experience for us, one of the most artistically meaningful things. I mean, to this day, people just talked about that; ‘Wow, we did that! What a wonderful work that was, and what a revealing work that was!’ The postscript to this, and I found this interesting as well, is because it was so well received, we got a request...to perform it again locally.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>Ann-Marie Baker Schwartz, Email message to author, August 6, 2015.

<sup>138</sup>Paul Anthony McRae, telephone interview to author, August 15, 2015.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid.

<sup>140</sup>Lawrence Speakman, telephone interview to author, August 4, 2015.



Although The Concert Singers Of Cary was invited to perform the piece a second time, the members were reticent to do so, fearful that subsequent performances would diminish the value of the initial shared experience. In fact, Speakman recounts that the experience was “transformative.... And since [they] did do this with people who knew each other, the relationships deepened after that, and it was really, really wonderful to see.”<sup>141</sup>

On March 21, 2001, Scott Youngs, Director of Music at All Saints’ Episcopal Church in Phoenix, AZ conducted a performance of the work. Youngs recounts that the performance was well received and the “singers loved the work, and putting it together with an entirely different tradition made it even more interesting.”<sup>142</sup>

Fred Peterbark, formerly of the University of Colorado Boulder, conducted a performance of *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* on February 12, 2011. This performance was a collaboration with dance professor, Onye Ozuzu. Peterbark recounts a performance that greatly differed from other documented performances.

....[I]t was presented almost as if it was a ballet where you have your musicians typically in the pit and then you have the staged ballet above it. This was all on one floor in a black box theatre. So, the musicians and myself, we were in simply a corner of the room and you had the stage area...where the dancing was taking place... And it was just very, very special and unique because...the entire time that I was conducting I was not looking at the dancers. I was only looking at my musicians.

...There was one [performance installation] that I specifically remember of a woman and I think it was a story of someone giving birth but the baby was, essentially, already being lynched. And she had this red rope that went up her dress from the bottom and came

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<sup>141</sup>Ibid.

<sup>142</sup>Scott Youngs, electronic survey to author, August 9, 2015.

out from up the opening above her breast and the rope just continued to come out. She had to deal with this rope--this red rope that--as it was being used for lynching purposes...

And that was one of the most significant things that I remember prior to the performance of ...*And They Lynched Him*. The fascinating impact of what Onye decided to create within ...*And They Lynched Him* was a conclusion, shall we say, to these --because the piece doesn't end with a period. It ends with something that we all--a deceptive or half cadence. It's unfinished almost. And at the end of that there was this African drumming that happened. And there were two gentlemen that were suspended the entire time in this hanging silk as if they were in a cocoon. And there was this woman that would come out almost as if she was--her face was painted white and it was almost as if she was a witch doctor but I think she was supposed to represent the mother. And she actually released these two individuals from their cocoons--from their places of captivity.<sup>143</sup>

While ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* has a record of positive experiences in performance, the data shows that the reception of the piece has been limited. In seventy-five years, the piece has had only twenty-eight documented performances, the equivalent of one performance every 2.7 years. The majority of performances of the work have occurred in the northern states, including New York, Vermont, Washington, DC., Massachusetts, and New Jersey. There have been few productions of the piece in the southern states (North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi), southwestern and western states (California, Arizona) and mid-western states (Michigan, Indiana, Colorado). As stated previously, there has been an increase of performance activity in the wake of the release of a compact disc of the work, as well as mention in prominent professional journals in the 1990s. As knowledge of the piece has become more widespread, so too have the performances of the piece.

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<sup>143</sup>Fred Peterbark, telephone interview to author, August 19, 2015.

## Summary and Conclusions

As the performance history illustrates, ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, despite its unique title, dynamic performing forces, important composer, and its continued relevance to social issues in America, has been rarely performed, and it is often overlooked in the academic literature. In spite of enjoying overwhelmingly positive reactions from each documented performance, the piece has been largely hidden from the collective mindset of the choral profession. To date, there have been no dissertations written on the piece, and only one journal article exists to focus on the piece. Why has such a composition gone virtually unnoticed by the wider profession? As well received as it has been in performance, perhaps the timing of composition hindered its gaining initial widespread fame.

World War II had begun in 1939, and the United States had not yet officially become active in the conflict. ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* did not have to compete with the worries of the war; however, after the Pearl Harbor attacks in December of 1941, the collective attention of the country was focused less on its racial problems and more on global affairs. Although the piece received a 1942 performance broadcast over NBC radio, it would not receive another documented performance in the United States until 1957. In the seventeen years between 1940 and 1957, despite receiving national exposure over the radio waves, ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* would be performed in this country only in New York and Washington, D.C. The piece did receive a performance in Mexico City in 1944, but the next documented performance did not occur until 1957. Because of the collaboration and the successful premiere performance of the work, Still and Chapin soon went on to collaborate on a second work,

*Plain-chant for America* (1941), a large work originally written for baritone and orchestra with organ and later arranged for SATB chorus and orchestra. From the title and the subject matter of the *Plain-chant*, it seems as if Still and Chapin also had fixed their sights on speaking to a broader theme. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, and upon hearing that a “colored” soldier was the first to perish in the attacks, Still wrote *In Memoriam: The Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy* (1943). Subsequently, *In Memoriam* received a 1944 premiere with the New York Philharmonic followed by several performances from the likes of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Cleveland Orchestra.<sup>144</sup> Still went on during the war to receive other commissions and premieres, including *Mississippi* (1942), *Highway 1, USA* (1942), Suite for Violin and Piano (1943), *Poem for Orchestra* (1944), *Fanfare for American War Heroes* (1944), *Festive Overture* (1944), *Songs of Separation* (1945), and Symphony No. 5 (1945). The combination of the War and Still’s professional successes and ambition had buried the memory of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* during the 1940s. Still’s success and the public regard for the piece are well summarized by Gayle Murchison.

The fifties and the following decades were difficult for [Still], as new aesthetics promulgated by composers Milton Babbitt, John Cage, and others gained prominence and displaced the more conservative nationalist music of the composers of Still’s generation. As his popularity began to decline in the 1950s simultaneously with the ascendancy of this new avant-garde and in the 1960s with the Black Power and ‘Black Arts movements,’ Still was viewed by critics more and more as a conservative composer.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup>Gayle Murchison, “Still, William Grant,” in *International Dictionary of Black Composers: Volume II*, Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., ed., (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1999), 1067.

<sup>145</sup>*Ibid.*, 1067-1068.

After the 1940s, Still's music, in title at least, ceased to focus on African American themes. The 1920s through the 1940s, compositionally, had given Still a chance to focus on African American topics. "After that period was over, he began to think that 'now that I've said something in terms of experimentation and I've said something in terms of my own roots, I now want to speak in general about music.'"<sup>146</sup>

Indeed, Still did speak in general about music, race, and society, penning articles and books and granting interviews. Although he spoke on racial relations in America and on his own music, Still remained, in print, silent about ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* for the remainder of his life. While we cannot put the onus of future performance solely on Still's shoulders, his own silence about the piece may have contributed to the lack of performance. Considering his silence alone, however, would be naive.

Although lynching is a dark part of American history that must not be forgotten, one must consider the relevance of the subject matter to the collective psyche of Americans. The Tuskegee Institute issued an annual report of lynchings in the United States from 1882, seventeen years after the end of the Civil War, to 1968, widely regarded as the end of the Civil Rights Movement marked by the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. The Tuskegee reports reflect a sharp decline in the annual number of lynchings from 1935 to 1936 with twenty lynchings in 1935 (two white and eighteen black) and eight lynchings in 1936 (eight black). From 1940, the premiere of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, until 1968, the annual average number of reported lynchings per year was roughly two persons per year. Any number of lynchings is of course too many. Lynching during this time was no longer an epidemic on the scale it had been from the

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<sup>146</sup>Abdul, 29-32.

1880s through the mid-1930s. While it is likely that the fear and emotional weight of the scourge of previous decades existed during this decline, it is conceivable that the piece was ignored either because of fears of a resurgence or because the lack of constant news of lynchings removed the urgency to sing or protest about it.

It is curious that the piece received only one documented performance during the years of the Civil Rights Movement. Although lynchings were few during those years, certainly racially motivated violence was commonplace. With murders of civil rights workers, church burnings, shootings, and assassinations of civil rights leaders, it is conceivable that ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* could have found a renaissance, a new purpose beyond that of the protest of lynching. Sadly, however, it is also plausible that racial tensions in the cities and states with the most unrest would have made it difficult to find the forces to perform. Alternately, the states with the least perceived racial conflict might have been oblivious to the need of such a protest or act of solidarity.

The piece has found a renewed hope of continued performance as marked by the increase of performances in the 1990s and beyond. This may be, in part, due to the centennial celebration of Still's birth in 1995. Certainly, the recording of the piece issued by Collins Classics has assisted the piece in reaching a broader audience. However, research and discover are only as helpful as that which can be researched and discovered. With the advent of computing, the internet, and the digital age, information is more readily available than in decades past. Performances can be marketed to a wider

audience in less expensive ways and in a greater variety of ways than ever before.

Perhaps ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* has received far more performances than have been found in this body of research but have been hidden from discovery due to lack of promotion.

Rarely performed, ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* deserves a place in the canon of choral literature. As a musical work, it addresses a topic rarely broached in the entirety of choral music. As a piece of theatre, it stands alone as the first and only completely musical lynching drama. In what many consider to be a post-racial society, with accusations of racial profiling, police brutality, economic disparities between the races, and a host of other ills handed down from history, perhaps we need to perform it now, more than ever.

## APPENDIX A

## SURVEY FOR AMERICAN CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP

I agree that I have been provided with a description of this study, complete with an explanation of any risks, benefits, and confidentiality. (The information listed above is included in the email, which directed you to this survey.)

- Yes (1)  
 No (2)

I would like to submit my responses anonymously

- Yes (1)  
 No (2)

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To Are you familiar with the piece...If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Please provide your name and state...

Please provide your name and state. (for example, Harlan Zackery, Jr., Mississippi)

Are you familiar with the piece...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, by William Grant Still?

- Yes (1)  
 No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Answer If Yes Is Selected

How did you become familiar with this piece?

Answer If Yes Is Selected

Have you ever performed ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, either as conductor, singer, or instrumentalist?

- Yes (1)  
 No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Do you know of any performances of th...

Answer If Yes Is Selected

Did you perform this piece as a singer or as a conductor?

- Singer (1)  
 Conductor (2)

If Conductor Is Selected, Then Skip To With what ensemble did you perform th...If Singer Is Selected, Then Skip To Did you participate as a part of the ...



Answer If Did you perform this piece as a singer or as a conductor? Singer Is Selected

Did you participate as a part of the Caucasian chorus or the African American chorus?

- Caucasian (1)
- African American (2)
- Click to write Choice 3 (3)

If Caucasian Is Selected, Then Skip To What were your feelings about your pa...If African American Is Selected, Then Skip To What were your feelings about your pa...

What were your feelings about your participation in the preparation and performance of this work, particularly as a member of the Caucasian chorus?

What were your feelings about your participation in the preparation and performance of this work, particularly as a member of the African American chorus?

Who was the conductor of the performance?

With what ensemble did you perform this piece?

What was the date and location of the performance? (please provide as many specific details as possible, such as time, performance venue, city, state)

Answer If No Is Selected

Do you know of any performances of this piece?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey. If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To Please provide information about those...

Would you be willing to participate in a telephone interview about this piece?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To Thank you! Please provide an em...If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Do you know of any other performances...

Answer If Would you be willing to participate in a telephone interview about this piece?

If Yes Is Selected

Thank you! Please provide an email address or telephone number where you may be reached to schedule an interview.

Do you know of any other performances of this work?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To Please provide information about those...If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Answer If Do you know of any other performances of this work? Yes Is Selected

Please provide information about those performances in the space below. (date, location, performing ensemble, conductor, etc.)

## APPENDIX B

## CONDUCTOR INTERVIEW AND DIGITAL SURVEY QUESTIONS

(Referenced in Chapter I)

How did you come to know about the work ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?

Why did you choose to program ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?

When did you perform ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?

Where did you perform ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*? Please include city, state and venue, if possible.

In what hall/venue did you perform ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?

Who was the soloist for this performance? Who was the narrator?

What performing ensemble(s) were used for this performance?

Were the choirs racially divided for this performance?

Were there any special markers used to define race/differences? (i.e., lights, masks, clothing, manipulation of physical space, etc.)

What accompaniment was used for this performance? (piano, orchestra, wind quintet and piano)

Did you use the text as printed in the choral score, or the original text as printed in the conductor score?

What was the audience/public reaction to this performance?

What was the reaction of the singers to the prospect of performing/rehearsing this work?

How receptive was the performance venue to a performance of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?

How did you introduce this piece to the chorus?

How did you market/advertise this performance to the community?

Does a recording of this performance exist? If so, may I secure a copy?

May I get a copy of the printed program to include in my dissertation?

Do you know of any other conductors who have performed this work? If so, will you give their name and organization, if known.

Did you use the sound effects as indicated in the score?

Did you use the "staging" as indicated in the score (i.e., the movement of the choirs on and off stage)?

May I use your responses to this survey in the scope of my dissertation?

- Yes, you may use my responses (1)
- No, you may not use my responses (2)

## APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW AND SURVEY TRANSCRIPTS<sup>147</sup>

(Presented in alphabetical order of surname)

## CRAFTON BECK (MISSISSIPPI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA)

- HZ: If you will, tell me about the experience you had with ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* during the planning of the William Grant Still Concerts with the Mississippi Symphony.
- CB: It's a remarkable piece, it's a remarkable piece, I'm saying that, in so many ways. Of the three big choral pieces – Wouldn't you say that there are three unless there's one I'm forgetting?
- HZ: There's the *Plain-Chant*...
- CB: The *Psalm* and then *Lynched*.
- HZ: The *Psalm* and ...*And They Lynched Him On A Tree*.
- CB: I don't think there's any question that this is the best, the most significant, but historically, I think both *Plain-Chant*... What's remarkable about it to me is that they're so ahead of their time. They're 15 years ahead of their time, if not 20. The fact that Biddle and, of course, he was there but... the politicians were there – Roosevelt, the whole administration –that there was kind of a mass consciousness all going on at least in D.C., clearly at the top, that was a full 20 years before it became mainstream with Kennedy and Johnson. So, it's just remarkable it even exists. When you consider where our country was in the war looming, that they're putting energy in civil rights at that point too is extraordinary. Out of that, that's why this piece is amazing. You're reminded it's 1940-1941 with these two pieces.
- It's a real shame because I don't think that piece is done enough. I think that the world is getting to a place – I'm maybe naive – that's even different from where it was. Was that six years ago we did that show?
- HZ: That was 2007 or 2008.

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<sup>147</sup>Within the interview transcripts I have indicated myself as HZ. For the survey transcripts I have indicated each survey question as SQ.

CB: That's six, almost seven years ago. I think it would be easier to do it in Jackson. It would be easier to do it in Jackson six-seven years ago but it would be even easier now. The climate is different. I don't know if that's the Obama thing. I think it's mainly just the world changing.

HZ: As a matter of fact, I did it down at Southern Miss and when I ordered the scores, Judith Anne sent me an email and she said perhaps it's because of Obama that people are willing to do this.

CB: I just feel like we've moved on in a sense. The issues today now are shifting or evolving so that it makes this look, this historical civil rights stuff seems to be like the energy around it kept us from doing it. It's not there anymore.

It would be really interesting to see if we put this proposal for the various schools now, if we would run up against it. I continue to think about this piece a lot. The art museum is doing civil rights the next exhibit. Are you aware of it, in May?

HZ: Yes.

CB: They were talking about doing a concert outside, at the art garden. I don't think that's the right setting for this piece. But it did come across our mind that actually it might be the perfect setting because it can be very dramatic, we could do it in a dramatic way, but I'm just concerned about the micing of the voices and such.

The piece continues to come to our mind. It's something that we will do here at some point, the symphony will do it, because it's a good piece.

HZ: That it is.

CB: And it needs to be done. My point is that I'm not sure that the climate hasn't changed; I think it has.

To talk about it, I guess I was as close to the middle of it as I could be but I was not because the choral directors at Delta State, at Ole Miss and at Southern, which were the three big schools, they had conversations totally with each other – I was not part of – and they certainly respectively had their conversations internally and I was not part of that. So, I don't really have any clue. All I know is that we proposed it and it was a number of weeks that passed by, and when it came back, it was a very strong response. It was not just from the music departments; mainly I got it was as much from the administration of the school as it was from the music departments. It wasn't at all that this isn't a topic that should be talked about. It wasn't that. It wasn't that; it was simpler than that. It was just we don't want to go there right now.

What was said to me was that we're trying to heal and this would just take us backwards rather than take us forwards. My response, of course, was really? This piece, if done the way I wanted to do it, would be a piece of healing. That's the whole point. I think the only way to do this piece is as a communal thing, as collaborative – it is a collaborative piece but it has to be approached in that way. The way we were going to do it, which was the way that Judith Anne immediately from the very first time we talked about the piece, she said, this is the way you can do it and that's where the black choir is sung by the white choir. The black part is sung by the white chorus. So, you switch the parts and you do it with masks, so it's done in a very dramatic way. I'm sure you know about that approach.

That approach where you do it with masks, almost like in a Greek fashion, and then your masks are removed at the end, probably at the end of the chorus, I don't know but I've always assumed in the chorus even dramatically in the last movement and you find out. Exchanging those roles is just powerfully healing to me. If you don't do that, then I can see how I would be uncomfortable doing the piece. I would just – whew – that part, it would still be too emotional for me to do it the other way, I think. That's just showing my own pain of growing up here.

But the other way is tremendously healing. It's ritual. That's what I wanted to do – do as a ritualistic piece, as communal piece, as a dramatic piece.

So, I disagreed with them and I don't know how far up the line, how deep that disagreement got voiced. I got to think not very far, but we certainly talked about it internally. I think Michael Bailey did go back to them and say, well, just want to make sure you understand what we talked about doing was exchanging the roles, putting masks and everything. Still it wasn't in the conversation that they would even have.

HZ: Not open for discussion.

CB: It wasn't.

HZ: I spoke with Richard Waters and he said that his students were the first people that came to him, the black students, and said, I can't do this piece.

CB: Interesting. The first I heard that.

HZ: I thought that was interesting. He read the text to his conducting class and his students objected to it. Said they couldn't do it.

But on the reverse side, when I did it at Southern Miss – I did the same thing, I read the text to the choir – everyone was excited about doing it and in my preparation for proposing the idea, Dr. Fuller said to me, do you think it would have been different had you been white?

CB: If you had been white?

HZ: If I had been white proposing this piece to the choir, would I have had a different response? I don't know the answer. I don't know that I can find the answer to that but it's an interesting thought.

CB: Yes. I don't know. It's interesting you're telling me about the black students at Delta State because I think that guy is the same guy that I feel when I even conceived of doing the piece with the white choir being forced to sing those words. I'm almost getting tears and choked up but even now, never in my lifetime will I be able to go to that place and be comfortable with it. Yes, I would do it because you and I are both artists, so we both understand what it is to do a piece for the piece's sake, to put it up there as a piece's sake. So, I could do the piece but I can understand those students saying, especially if they saw themselves having the black part. It would be too powerful.

But again, for me, the whole point would be we failed at presenting the possibilities of that piece. At that time, we failed and I'll take responsibility for it. We failed because I was completely naive. It never even occurred to me that anybody would say no to this piece. I just programmed it and how we're going to do it and they said, no, we're not doing it. Are you kidding me? That's how naive I was.

Now that I know, now that you and I both know, viscerally, the response that people have when they see the words and they see the cast. The next time I do this I'm going to be prepared for it and I'm going to present the whole idea in a way that says we have to do this piece. This piece is a historically significant repertoire, just like Afro-American Symphony, because of when it was written and how far ahead of its time it was. Because it, in a way, came from the establishment, but also it's important for us to do today because it's the piece that we can heal through, and say we're going to do this and we're going to do it this way, and begin to build a consensus around that from the first step.

For example, again I don't think it's the right platform but if we were to do it, here we have our Mississippi Museum of Art who are already engaged because they're doing this exhibit. They've come to us and said, we want to do something extraordinary, and they do. So, if I came back and said, well,



this is the piece, I know that there would be a buy-in from the beginning. So, once again, you have the establishment saying we're going to do this. I think that's the way this piece will get done and this piece in the near future can really have an impact on people.

HZ: When you talk about doing it with the masks, I will mention that, in the archives, the William Grant Still archives, there is correspondence between Biddle and Still in which Still recommends doing the piece with grease paint, the same as what happened in another of his works. I considered doing it with masks at Southern Miss, but because of the time constraints with rehearsals, and what, how the masks would affect the projection of the voices, I avoided that. What do you think about that? Considering his stance on grease paint?

CB: That's news to me. I didn't know that. Again, at this point in my life, this conversation comes into context of *Salome*. I've never conducted *Salome* but knowing the piece *Salome* and John the Baptist's head being cut off, and the severity of that. This is one of many examples that you and I know even the *Rite of Spring* and I've seen *Carmina Burana* done with almost nude dancers on stage, things that might cause people discomfort but they're important to do because of what they are. So yes, I can do the piece that way. It would be much more difficult for me personally and maybe that's the point of doing the piece that way.

Well, two things, I want to ask you a question. Do you think that was Still's intent though from the beginning? I don't think he ever wrote this to shock people.

HZ: I don't think so.

CB: I think he was naive to himself about where this was going to go.

HZ: At this point, he had escaped New York, Ohio, gone to California – he lived in California when he wrote this piece. I think in that environment in the '30s, in the early '40s, it was a racist climate in California, but most likely different than what he experience on the East coast. Certainly, he felt the effect, being a black man married to a white, Jewish woman.

CB: What is most shocking about the piece to me today is the ending because it just ends with the line, "... and it'll be darkness ...", help me.

HZ: "A long dark shadow will fall across."

CB: "A long dark shadow" and that's it. In many ways, I don't know this but I've always speculated that *Plain-Chant* came partly one year later because there might have been some charge that that was an unpatriotic thing to say in 1940.

The same team, he and Biddle, created another piece that doesn't shy away from anything but talks about freedom and its chorus is a patriotic piece. So, I speculate to wonder if that almost was a little bit of a defensive step on his part to say, don't misunderstand me.

So, I'm glad to hear you say that because I knew nothing about any of his music that I've ever thought was—glib is not the word but aggressive. We had the word a minute ago. Of course, we're sitting on the other side of the civil rights movement and not that he didn't live knowing ...he's the one who wrote about lynching, not us. You and I've had to live through conversations which he had not ever had to live through.

I guess the thing that I want to say to this point is my job as music director is always to—I interrupt to say it's true of us doing *Rite of Spring* last year after this orchestra has never done *Rite of Spring*, it's true this orchestra's never played Mahler's Third Symphony and we did it last year for the first time. So, it's my job to program music, first and foremost, when I think this orchestra is ready to play it. Technically, they were able to play it and we can give it musical justice, and both those pieces are good examples of pieces that we were not ready to do before last year.

But also, second to that, is that it's the right time of the audience. Similarly, we would have never done Mahler's Third Symphony five years ago either; this audience wasn't ready for it. This audience was clamoring for Mahler—I'm saying Mahler's Third, Mahler's Fifth, we did Mahler Five last year. So, it was the right time too. Anyway, getting back to my point, it's my job as music director to program pieces at the right time and in a way that our audience can absorb, can jump to their feet and say thank you. We do a good job of that and have done a good job of that since I've been here.

That's where I'm coming from with this piece. That's why I, up till now, have said I don't think I would even consider doing it in another way because when we do it here, I want it to be a tremendous success. I want people to go wow! I want everybody to go wow, what a powerful piece, what an effective piece, thank you, thank all of us for getting through that and doing it. For me, I would stand on my head if I thought that that's the way to make people have that response.

Maybe without the masks and all that is the right way to do but my instinct right now is that I would have to think long and hard about it.

HZ: It's an interesting prospect to do it without.

CB: So you did it without?

HZ: Without, yes, with mixed choruses on both sides.

- CB: I know that they had memories that they had trouble finding a black chorus in 1940. We wouldn't have that trouble today, of course, not even just in Jackson that we wouldn't have... They ended up having a black choir and white choir, didn't they?
- HZ: Right. They used the Wen Talbert Negro Chorus the first time.
- CB: Is there a recording of that performance?
- HZ: No, but there is a recording from two years later, an NBC radio broadcast.
- CB: Is it good?
- HZ: Relatively, for the era in which it was recorded. The performance itself was good; the recording is not as clear as modern day.
- CB: Did the orchestra play well? Did the choir sing well?
- HZ: Yes, they did.
- CB: And the contralto?
- HZ: Contralto. Eva Burge ... Louise Burge.
- CB: And she's good?
- HZ: She's good. I believe I read that William Grant Still didn't care for her. He did not want her to sing.
- CB: Did not want her to do it.
- HZ: But he wasn't there.
- CB: He wasn't there?
- HZ: He never saw. Albert McNeil did a performance with piano in Los Angeles in 1968 and he was there. That's the only performance he saw, I believe. He heard the recording of the premiere but other than that, he never saw.
- CB: He didn't go?
- HZ: Never saw, never heard it.
- CB: You're making me think again, you're making me think about all this.

HZ: When you talk about preparing the singers for that, how do you propose preparing the community or the audience? Or do you need to prepare the audience?

CB: I think we prepare the audience. You've been to a number of concerts where I talk to the audience a good bit. So, whenever it's a piece of music that I think that they need some kind of doorway or window to be opened for them to better hear it, to better access it, whatever I can say in two or three minutes. A good example is the piece we did in October from 1932 by Hindemith, *Mathis der Maler*, which is totally about him being in Berlin in I think 1935 maybe, him being in Berlin, literally being locked down in his home, hoping he wasn't going to be killed, and getting up at night. His homeland, his country, workers going crazy, shouting fascism. The piece at that time was just ugly and I talked more than I ever talked – I think I talked five or six minutes before that piece. It was right to do. I felt like beforehand it was right and afterwards it was real clear that the audience was really glad that I did it and it allowed them to hear the piece, listen to the piece.

That is the essence, that's the whole instant. It has to be done. I don't know if much could be done beforehand, before the concert. I think your program notes are there. My instinct is that all you're going to do is just service, the people will make up their minds so that piece is something before they get there. I'd much rather not make a big deal of it. Because people trust us now to know that when they come and sit down in that seat, a seat that they've paid \$30 to sit in, that they're going to be given if not an experience that's beautiful, at least an experience that might be thought-provoking. I think Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*, many parts of it are chorus and moving. Others are just moving emotionally and more intellectual. In the right balance, every one of our audience evidently, they stick with us, realizing that that's why they come to the symphony.

My feeling is that the preparation you're asking about mostly would take place in those moments, those minutes before the piece, and then in the way that we present the piece.

You and I should have this conversation now that your paper will be done. We'll certainly have this conversation after we do it and I will have had the experience of doing the piece, which I don't have right now. You have, but I don't have.

The students, what did they feel when you performed it?

HZ: There were a couple of students who voiced to me that they didn't care for the piece, but they were willing to do it. The vast majority was pleased to be doing the piece.

CB: My guess is that rehearsals were the hardest.

HZ: They were, they were.

CB: Because you had to sing these words and rehearse these words.

HZ: It was a three-week rehearsal process and we did the concert. It was quick, a short rehearsal process. The piece itself was a part of what was almost a two-hour concert. There was so much on that concert. But they did a really nice job of it, really sensitive. They sang well. They put a lot of emotion into it. The audience – there was an overwhelmingly positive response from the audience. Like you said, I talked for a good five minutes before we did the piece. I finally got the feeling they were just ready to hear music. We did it; they loved it.

There were people who came up afterwards and recalled hearing the piece before at different places. There was one guy from Indiana. He said he heard it there and heard it in Ohio. But in my research, I hadn't found any of those performances. It's interesting.

So, how did you first come across this piece?

CB: Judith Anne.

HZ: Okay.

CB: When we knew we were going to do this concert, the Still concert, we knew we wanted to make the choral aspect of it almost the core of the piece, that we're going to build the program around the choral involvement and to involve the various schools from all over the state. That was the design. I went to her and I had talked to her before because she had helped me hear all the symphonies because there were five or six symphonies and she helped me get scores for that stuff. So, she and I had talked some but she, real quick, gave me an education of what the pieces were, what the choral repertoire was. I did buy the book, the purple that's the biography book. It has all the repertoires listed. Then I saw the smaller pieces too. So, I did a major education of it but right away, she said that the piece to do is ...*And They Lynched Him* and then she mentions *Psalm for the Living* and *Plain-Chant* as well.

Of the three, I like *Psalm for the Living* the most. It's probably easier to listen to, more tonal, less raw. But for me as a music director programming music for an audience, that's a piece that I know that could be accessed. We closed the first half, I think, of the concert with that piece. When I programmed that concert, I didn't know repertoire. I wish I had done it the other way, I wish I had closed the first half with *Plain-Chant* and then ended the concert with

*Psalm for the Living* because it would have been a more uplifting ending. So, that bias comes again only from the place that I've been trying to sell repertoire.

HZ: What genre do you consider it to be in?

CB: I consider all three of these pieces to be in the genre of orchestral classical music with chorus, with *Testament of Freedom*, with Copland - It's a single piece for chorus that Copland [unclear].

I think that's where I put it in. My point in bringing it up is that I said that they had this recording here. Why are these three pieces on an album with *Testament of Freedom*? I'm sure there are some Howard Hanson from that period too. There's some conversation of us doing an album. They want us to do an album with the Mississippi Symphony at some point. The only way I will be involved in a project like that is to do something that is significant that only we can do. The world does not need us to perform the Sibelius Second Symphony.

What we would do obviously is do an album of Mississippi composers and I'm picturing Jimmy Sclater, Ben Williams, maybe even something of mine and all the William Grant Still stuff. All three of these pieces really would be great to be on it. Of the three, almost in order, one that you have to do would be ...*And They Lynched Him*, but then *Plain-Chant* would be the next to do for the album.

My point is I think it's part of that genre and that genre is not a big genre. I can't tell you another piece of *Testament of Freedom*. If I've got my books out, my resource guides, I think right away, you and I will, oh yes, I remember that piece and oh yes, I remember that piece. But there's not a lot of great pieces in that and my point is that certainly the first two, *Plain-Chant* and ...*And They Lynched Him*, are as significant as anything in that list. They're certainly as great as Randall Thompson, if not better. That's where I put it, choral cantata, I suppose.

But from an orchestral conductor's point of view, we think of concertos, we think of symphonies, and then we think of works with chorus. Under the works with chorus, there are the requiems and then there are the secular cantatas. So, I suppose these are secular cantatas.

HZ: The thing I'm wrestling with this is I just stumbled upon, with my work at theatre, this book – I can't remember the title of the book but it's about lynching dramas. According to the definition provided by that writer, this would be considered lynching drama with dramatic indications, much like you see in the script. Primarily, all lynching dramas that she has found have been written by women and with some element of music. All of them have some element of music.

CB: Drumming.

HZ: Drumming or just incidental music along with chanting. So, I look at that and I'm wondering, I'm not going to go down that path just so I can finish the dissertation and then get done. But it's interesting.

CB: So, there is a genre.

HZ: There is a genre called lynching drama.

CB: But that's a theater drama?

HZ: Yes. Primarily from the '20s and the '30s.

CB: Only a few are aware of it.

HZ: I'm sure. I'm sure Biddle was aware of it. Then there's Charlotte Mason, the godmother of Harlem Renaissance, who was instrumental in getting the two together.

CB: She was friends with ...

HZ: She was friends with ...

CB: I'm just vaguely remembering this.

HZ: Alain Locke. She was friends with Alain Locke and she suggested that the two of them get together and write something on the subject of lynching. It's interesting where this piece comes – right before the war, right after the Harlem Renaissance, before the civil rights movement. In the statistics of lynching, there were hundreds of lynchings happening in the early 1900s and there were only six or seven lynchings a year documented by 1930-something. By the 1930s, they were on a steady decline. They picked back up in the '50s and '60s but at this time, lynchings were at an all time low.

CB: It's only natural that civil rights would have started...

- HZ: So, it's amazing where it comes in the whole scheme of Twentieth century history.
- CB: Again, that's fascinating. It's a little gem that gives us a bird's eye view or inside view of what was happening in Washington in 1940, at the very top. Roosevelt was there. Remind me, what was the Biddle thing? She's the wife of?
- HZ: She was the wife of the Solicitor General.
- CB: Solicitor General of Roosevelt?
- HZ: Yes.
- CB: I was actually thinking Secretary of State. I knew there was something there, there's a real close connection.
- HZ: Because of the tensions in the world and as much focus was on the New York Philharmonic at that time, and their political involvement, they changed the words to the ending of the piece.
- CB: What I remember was that they did not change the words actually at the performance but they changed the words in the program. So that when people saw them on the outside, there was something about it Rodzinski was trying to get ...
- HZ: He wanted to get a family member here.
- CB: Political.
- HZ: Right. So much.
- CB: Yes.
- HZ: So much racked up in there.
- CB: I'm sure Still must have gone, what? What? Are you kidding me?
- HZ: There seems to be a lot of that whenever this piece is performed – a lot of “What?”
- CB: Yes. I will never forget Michael Beatty telling me at the office – I remember we did a face-to-face about that time, when he first told me that we're being told that they're not going to perform the piece. I literally looked at him and what? And he went, I know. He kind of smiled and said, I know. So, I didn't see that coming. I remember saying that I didn't see that coming. So naïve.



HZ: I remember being told as a student that we're not going to perform this piece. I was so disappointed, so disappointed. They performed this piece in Greensboro when I was a freshman but William Grant Still wasn't on my radar.

CB: Because I've conducted them. I know the executive director there actually, a friend of mine.

HZ: William Grant Still wasn't in my radar when I was a freshman in college, so I didn't go to that performance.

CB: You don't know what it was like or how it was received.

HZ: No. I didn't know that. I was preparing for the situation outside the performance. In 1994, I was a freshman there.

CB: You were a freshman.

HZ: So, I had no idea.

CB: That's about the time I conducted the Greensboro Symphony. Yes, right at that time.

What else? There's got to be another one further question. Did we get it all?

HZ: I think that's it. You mentioned Michael Bailey. For the purposes of collecting as much information as I can, do you think he's someone I need to talk to as well?

CB: You certainly could, there's no reason not to. Michael's a remarkable man. I don't think you're going to get any more information. I know more than he does because I had interaction with the conductors after the fact. We lived with the decision and talked about it a couple of times here and shrugged our shoulders and looked at each other. But I don't think he knows anymore about the details. All he would give you would just be his own opinion about us doing it in the future, the kind that you talked about.

HZ: That might be useful.

CB: Which is very useful and Michael's a tremendous musician. What he could talk to you is the business side of choosing and not choosing to do a piece like that where there's a board involved and finances involved. Unfortunately, we work for a board that it would never occur to them that Michael and I thought we should do it for them to say, you're not going to do that. That board doesn't exist for us. Surely you're not going to lose anything by talking to him. You'll gain something by talking to him.

HZ: I'm sure I could think of more to ask.

## JONATHAN BERRYMAN (The Heritage Chorale of New Haven)

- HZ: How was that for you? You prepared the second chorus, the African American chorus.
- JB: Well, it was that... it was actually the first that I had heard of the piece. It was not something that I'd ever heard of or encountered. It was certainly one of those pieces that never came up on the radar. And I wonder if it is because the family holds such tight reigns on the music. It's not public domain. In order to get it, you have to go through the family. That always holds challenges to how available music is.
- HZ: Well, when you introduced the piece to your choir how did they respond to it?
- JB: Well, this is Connecticut so it was, it was... the response was...well they were actually glad to do the piece.
- HZ: Okay.
- JB: They were, and then actually after we did it with Paul Mueller, we did it with Coro Allegro in Boston. We did it with them because the black choir that had originally scheduled to do it with them, pulled out.
- HZ: Okay, okay.
- JB: And that was, I think I was 1998 or '99. Maybe, ninety-nine.
- HZ: Okay.
- JB: Coro Allegro
- HZ: Alright.
- JB: Which is interesting because they are a predominantly gay choir.
- HZ: Okay. Wow!
- JB: Yes, exactly. So this predominantly white, gay choir decided they wanted to do ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. And the black choir backed out of doing it. I think that was the response... was more of them learning that it was a predominantly gay choir than it was to the piece.
- HZ: Okay.
- JB: So it was a different kind of prejudice.
- HZ: Yeah, yeah, definitely, oh wow!
- JB: Definitely it has its own irony. When we sang it here...people...the choir was glad to sing. The choir is now known as the Heritage Chorale. The concert we did with Paul Mueller is the concert that gave birth to this group.

HZ: Okay.

JB: They're still going

HZ: Oh, wow! I've seen the website. And he mentioned that the group was just starting when you all did it.

JB: That's the reason we started.

HZ: Okay. They're still all together. Do you all perform a variety of works or is it dedicated to African American works?

JB: At this point is mostly stuff we think black people want to hear.

HZ: Right, right. Okay.

JB: Most of the members are older, sixty plus. So it's the stuff that they would have learned in college. You know, Handel, *Messiah*, some of the older anthems of the black church...*Let Mount Zion Rejoice, Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates*, all that kind of stuff. And we've also done more of the GIA, especially Nathan Carter stuff, Roland Carter stuff. And so we've tried to remain relevant in that respect. Our challenge now is, we are about the only ones who still sing this music in New Haven. Most churches don't have the musicians to do it. And even if they had the musicians they don't have the choir members. So the only way to hear an anthem now...the only way to hear an anthem done with forty people, forty black people, is to hear it through us...in New Haven. So part of our challenge now, some sixteen years later...when they started, there were a number of musicians who did this music, but then they died or moved away. And then as, I guess, the vision of the church changed, where it became, "fill the seat and get all the money you can," as opposed to worship in spirit and in truth, the music changed.

HZ: All over the country.

JB: So part of our challenge now is to engage people in the conversation of what music is anymore and what it's intended to do. We have new music, but our challenge now is to put it in the context of what has come before. But back to your dissertation and your original issue...so the choir sang, on that original concert, ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, Adolphus Hailstork's *Done Made My Vow* and Undine Smith Moore's *We Shall Walk Through the Valley*.

HZ: Sorry, I'm writing here.

JB: No problem. ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* was quite interesting, as you can imagine, just to have the two choirs themselves. Now, the New Haven Chorale, which we sang with, had a few black members, and they sang with the white mob.

HZ: Okay. Did you all have any white members singing with the Heritage Chorale?

JB: At that point, no.

- HZ: Yeah, okay.
- JB: I was thinking about that this morning. I wonder how, they perceive this.
- HZ: Uh Huh...
- JB: That's why I say, the northeast is very different, in terms of its attitudes.
- HZ: Right...
- JB: Because if I were singing in a predominantly white choir and a piece came up that involved a white choir and a black choir, because I am from Virginia, I would probably sing with the black choir. I think...what was so stark about this is that we sung standing side by side as opposed to mixed. And so you really did get to hear it and see it. When you have this white group standing beside this black group...It became...you've got this visual piece, now read the text.
- HZ: Okay.
- JB: And then the *Done Made My Vow* we did as an integrated group.
- HZ: Okay.
- JB: ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* was very much black and white.
- HZ: At any point during ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* did you all integrate as one mass choir or did you all remain separated, side by side?
- JB: During ...*And They Lynched Him*?
- HZ: Yes.
- JB: Separated.
- HZ: The whole time, okay.
- JB: And I believe that it was the intent of the piece. I think it's... that it's much more poignant to have them separate. And, one, I had never seen Woolsey Hall that full. It seats 2000. And I have never yet, seen Woolsey Hall that full for a musical performance. When I say never, I mean never. There are two balconies. The first balcony goes all the way around. And then the second balcony is just in the back of the hall. Full! All the way around. Full. I have the poster right here. January 30, 1999 at 6pm.
- HZ: Okay. Do you think it was the concert itself, the purpose of the concert or the repertoire that packed the hall or was it something else?
- JB: It was all of that.
- HZ: Okay.
- JB: And we got great press on it as well.

HZ: Good, good.

JB: It was in the newspapers, it was...I know we did an interview... the black newspaper called *The Inner-city*

HZ: Ok.

JB: For the northeast to address racial issues in that way, especially people up in New Haven, it was unheard of. And keep in mind, this was not a Yale production. Yale pretty much runs New Haven. Yale has never done that piece, to my knowledge. Nor do I know that it's been done here in New Haven since. It was significant, you know, to have a white choir and a black choir standing side by side talking about lynching is not something you see everyday. Even to address some of the horrors of American history. One of the reasons people probably agreed to do it here is because it is the North. Not that there isn't racism. You know, there was slavery in Connecticut, but people are now far-enough removed from that...and most of the people who are here, who were participating are...were not necessarily born...do not have roots in America. I mean, some of them do...so the mindset is different in terms of how people get along. New Haven itself is very much a melting pot. The Irish came, the Italians came...so all of them know what it is to be discriminated against.

HZ: Okay.

JB: Because whenever that new ethnic group came over, they had people who were told not to hire them. They couldn't get jobs. They were in their ghettos: the Polish, the Hungarians. Everybody had their ghetto. So the one thing about here is, people may look white, but they do not all have the same background. And they still very much identify with being Italian, or Irish, or German or whatever mixture they are.

HZ: Interesting.

JB: Growing up in the south, we had black and we had white. It had no connection to Europe. It was just white. They don't identify with coming from Britain, or Germany. It's just white. To the point where, if you're Italian, they look at you funny, when you're in Virginia. "You aren't from here." If you have anything that looks particularly ethnic, if you had red hair and looked...no, you aren't from here.

HZ: That's something.

JB: Because your whiteness is different from the whiteness that they know. In thinking about why a place would receive it well, and willing to entertain it and talk about it. Also, in people playing music, why were they even willing to do it? The programming of that piece with the other pieces made sense. It was... *Done Made My Vow* was a much longer piece, and really kind of gave the resolution that we more so craved from having sung about the lynching.

HZ: A needed contrast.

JB: Absolutely! That's why I say, I think it's important to note, we're dealing with...The black people here, most of them who participated were actually born here, and some of them have roots in the islands. So, they didn't necessarily grow up with the stories of people having been lynched. At least it wasn't so fresh in their minds. It's very different when you live in a community where you know somebody who was lynched. There are much deeper wounds. Or when someone in your family is a member of the KKK.

HZ: So true. Well, how would you say the piece was received in Boston?

JB: The piece went well in Boston, as well.

HZ: Good, good.

JB: Fortunately, we are a community choir, so we didn't necessarily have to deal with those hang-ups. That was 1999. And I said, "we're going to sing with a gay and lesbian chorus? What?" You know, that was fairly new. Yeah, nobody was getting married...well, a few people. Back then it wasn't the norm to have a predominantly gay and lesbian choir singing choral literature. It's one thing to do it by yourself, but another thing to ask the Baptist church choir to sing it with them. And they chose not to, they pulled out of the deal. That's probably who you need to contact and find out why they didn't do it.

HZ: Yeah, I'm wondering if anybody will speak to that.

JB: Yes, there's somebody who will tell you the truth. I mean, granted, they could say the music was challenging for them, because I don't know what church it was. I mean, if you are a church choir, you do have other stuff to do. I don't know if it was because they didn't want to cross that line between them being traditional Baptists and they're singing with this gay chorus would validate the gays. Saying, "it's okay to be gay."

HZ: Now, did they market themselves as a gay chorus, or was it the membership just happened to be gay, predominantly?

JB: No, it's well known that the membership is predominantly gay.

HZ: Okay.

JB: They are a chorus....that's a good question. How do they market themselves? You know, you don't have to be gay to be in it. But at that time, they were definitely marketing themselves as a gay-friendly chorus.

HZ: Interesting, a gay chorus and a Baptist church singing together. It wouldn't happen here.

JB: Well, it didn't happen there. There are some things...you know, is gay the new black? It's one of those things that the black church is still grappling with.

HZ: Very much so. And certain denominations of the mainstream white churches.



## PHILLIP BRUNELLE (VOCALESSENCE)

HZ: Can you hear me okay?

PB: I do. I can.

HZ: Great.

PB: Yeah.

HZ: So what I want to ask you first is what made you choose ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* for your recording, The Witness recording?

PB: Well, I wanted to do it as part of the Witness program, since William Grant Still is such a pivotal figure, and, you know, and is even known as the Dean of African American music. I thought, "well, then I need to do one of the CDs in the series devoted just to him." And if I was going to do that, then I was really interested to, to look as kind of diverse... a listing of music that he had composed rather than it just being, say, oh, all instrumental or all something else. I just wanted to kind of show the diversity of the man. And certainly, one of the pieces that gave him great notoriety was ...*And They Lynched Him*. It definitely made people kind of sit up and take notice added to the fact that Leopold Stokowski was, you know, interested and instrumental in seeing it performed.

HZ: Right. Okay.

PB: Does that make sense?

HZ: Yeah, it does. That's makes a lot of sense.

PB: And so, I mean, you know, that was really one of the first pieces I chose for the CD. And then around it, you know, I just looked at everything because Judith sent me a ton of music. And of course, she's like, "now you're doing several CDs, yes?" No, I'm doing one, you know. And so I just needed to kind of figure out what I felt showed kind of the diversity of his style, because composers can do many different things. And it's sort of like if you're going to do one composer's music, I think showing what they... what the range is and the interests of what they have, it makes a more complete picture of the composer.

HZ: Right. True. I understand that. Yes. So in the preparation for the recording, was it a performance and a recording or was it just a recording?

PB: Both. We did--we performed the work. For the last 25 years, we have done a program called Witness, which I started mainly because I was curious about music of African Americans that... again, I wanted people in the Twin Cities to try to get a better sense that, you know, because what happens is in every kind of line

of work, people tend to pigeon hole. I mean, it's just the fact of the way we all work. So therefore, it was easy to say, "well, if it's an African American composer, it must be spiritual or jazz." And I think, "well, it could be, but there's more."

HZ: Right.

PB: And so I was just trying to show, you know, the broader diversity and that was why the very first year that we did it, I had commissioned David Baker to write a piece and commissioned several others and then Bill Banfield...well, any number. And then I just began looking around the country for who is out there...what was...what music that perhaps no one had known about. They haven't had a chance to have it performed. So over the last 25 years, we kind of tried to celebrate the breadth of African American music. But also, in some cases, historical figures and let people be reminded about why they were important. And that's where I knew that most people didn't really know the name of William Grant Still. And that's why I wanted to have that as one of the Witness concerts.

HZ: Okay. Okay. How did you find out about ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?

PB: Oh, I just remember reading in a couple of history books about, you know, notable things. And, you know, there was...it's going to take me a minute and I may have to send it to you. There's a fellow who was in Wisconsin and I'm blanking on his name. I haven't been in touch with him for a few years. But he was one who...African American guy taught...oh, maybe in Milwaukee. But he really had just kind of an encyclopedic knowledge of important pieces.<sup>148</sup> And he was one of the ones that "you got to look at this piece." And that got me interested in it. And of course, the story itself was just, you know, horrendous but very dramatic to do. And then just the idea of how you would put together telling the story and that you would have both a black choir and a white choir to make it work. And I thought, "hmm, you know, we could do that here." And, you know, I'm sure...and I'm remembering reading some places that William Grant Still was like, you know, he just wanted it performed and so it would be like, well, anybody could do it. And I thought, "no, it really needs to be...we need to be historical and tell the story the way it was."

HZ: Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm. Right. I'm thinking of a letter between he and the poet when William Grant Still says it's okay to use grease paint if you can't find a mix chorus, if you can't find two different choirs to do it, use grease paint. Of course, we can't do that today.

PB: Right. No, exactly. I mean, that was...you know, that was simply, you know, of the time. No, no, no, you wouldn't do that today. No, you know, it's very interesting down in South Africa, my daughter works at Cape Town Opera. And

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<sup>148</sup> He later emailed to clarify. He was speaking of Dominique-René DeLerma

there, the opera company resembles the population. So it's about 80% black, 20% white. And so in the chorus, that's the representation. And they were doing a piece a couple years ago about Nelson Mandela's early childhood. And I was there for rehearsal and there we just kind of... But I remember saying, "you know, what happens to these four or five white people when you do that?" "Oh, they just...they become black." And I went, I said, "oh, that would not happen in the USA. Thank you very much." But, you know, but back with William Grant Still, you know, that was a different era. And so I would understand but I...but I think that I can understand composers are so often so anxious to get their music performed that, you know, they're just grateful for anybody that shows interest in the piece.

HZ: Right. All right.

PB: So I can understand where that came from.

HZ: Yeah. Yeah. In your preparations for the piece, just maybe that the...I'm thinking the social preparation of the two choirs, and also the musical preparation. As a conductor, how did you approach that with both of those groups?

PB: Well, I knew the Leigh Morris Chorale people and so I knew the conductor there, and had spoken to him about the piece, and we talked about it. And we've done some other work with Leigh Morris. So this was not like a one time only. We had done some other concerts where we had worked together. And so this just felt like, you know, a very natural extension that we would collaborate on a piece like this. And given its historical importance, musically and telling the story, you know, my singers and his singers were all, you know, very much ready to embark on the piece.

HZ: Okay. Oh, those trumpets are driving me crazy.

PB: Yeah, I hear them. I hear them. They're right there. So good that you get that on your recording.

HZ: Yeah. I'm going to have a time trying to transcribe this. What was I going to ask next? Oh, when was that performance? Do you...I know I'm asking a lot.

PB: I'm going to...you know what, I'm going to make a little list here. I will find out. I'll get you that name of that guy and then I will get you the date that we did this...that orchestra hall. I don't remember but we have all that, so I can email you that. Yup.

HZ: All right. The...if you recall in the score, it talks about the moving...the white group moving and the black group coming in, and then both of them moving in together. And sound effects. Did you use it? How did you deal with that movement or did you do any movement at all?

- PB: Well, the only movement...I mean, we started with the white choir off stage.
- HZ: Okay.
- PB: It's like it's marked...and then came on. You know, it was...we weren't able to do all of that just because the way the risers are in Orchestra Hall. There's, you know...you...I think so often, you know, composers have an idealized idea in their mind. And, you know, I am a big believer that I will try to do what a composer wants. But sometimes I can't. I just can't. I can't make that work. I remember doing a big John Tavener piece and at the St. Paul Cathedral. And he wanted, you know, the choir to be in, for one movement, in the round surrounding the audience. There's no way, not in that building. It, you know, it just couldn't happen. So I just figured out another way that I think was fine. And Tavener came from London for the performance and he was absolutely thrilled. I said, "well, you know, this is an idea," and he went, "oh, no, no." I, you know, you have to deal with what works and I think that will be the same thing I think with William Grant Still.
- HZ: Okay. Okay. Did you use any of the sound effects called for in the score: the dogs barking, the horn, car horns honking?
- PB: I'm trying...I have not listened to the recording for a while. Is any of that on the recording?
- HZ: No.
- PB: Then we didn't.
- HZ: Okay. All right.
- PB: Yup. Sometimes again...Orchestra Hall, it's better now in terms of their sound effects and microphones, but back in the earlier days of the hall, they were not equipped to do a lot of other things. And I thought those are, you know, those are nice effects but the piece stands on its own. It's a solid enough piece that the dogs barking and the car horns aren't going to make the difference. If they would make the difference, then the piece really isn't strong enough to be by itself.
- HZ: Right. Right. I have...
- PB: Well, I mean, you know, it would be the same thing when a composer says to me, "oh," you know, you hear a piece with piano and they go, "oh, well, but don't judge it by that." And I'm going, "well, actually, I will." I mean, if it needs...if it has...if the orchestra part will enhance, great. But if the orchestra part has to rescue the piece, that...no, the piece isn't strong enough.

- HZ: I agree. You know, in fact, I interviewed all of these conductors and no one has used the sound effects.
- PB: Yeah.
- HZ: Yeah. No one has. And very few people have used movement within this.
- PB: Yeah. And I would...I would do as much of the movement as I could. I think that's very striking and visual if you can...if those...if the location will do it, but no. I just think a piece has to have strength on its own to make it work. You know? Now the other places that have done it, have they been able to make it work as white choir and a black choir?
- HZ: Yes. Most of them. I'm finding that most people are engaging church choir or...sad to say that most of our churches are segregated, most of them. But it works in that because you can find a black choir.
- PB: Exactly.
- HZ: I'm finding a little bit that William Grant Still was fearful of using certain all-black choirs at the time because they were used to singing spirituals, and nothing but. And I think this...a little bit of the same problem comes in but it hasn't been a big hindrance. You get people to sing and it works. The visual effect is there. It may not be...
- PB: I mean, I think...I think the big thing that the Leigh Morris folk, you know, were good readers. But I mean, the big challenge is in some of the black churches where everything is learned by rote. You know, and so it's all possible, it just takes longer.
- HZ: Yeah. Yeah. Just go in planning for that. And I found a couple instances where there's been a black college nearby and so those students will come and sing...
- PB: Sure.
- HZ: ...the role of the black choir.
- PB: Right.
- HZ: So people...
- PB: Right. Exactly.
- HZ: ...And then the Westminster Jubilee singers with Donald Dumpson, he just took that choir and split it down the middle and they performed it like that.

PB: Oh, good. Yeah. Great, great.

HZ: So they're going to...both ways, lots of ways.

PB: Yup. Absolutely.

HZ: So in your experience or since you recorded it, how has that CD been received?

PB: Well, I, you know, found that people who live there were very moved by the piece. And even though it's been a number of years since we did it, I will still from time to time find people who were at the performance and say, "oh, do you remember that piece about a lynching?" And I go, "yes." And then, you know, so it's still, you know, it sticks in their mind because they do remember the power of that.

HZ: Awesome. Awesome.

PB: Yeah. Yup, yup.

HZ: I had a chance to speak with Robert Morris. He used to teach here. And...

PB: He did?

HZ: It was long before I came, but I met him through some of the students who are now professors and what not, some of the community people who still keep in touch with him. I met him and spoke with him about it. And he still seemed very moved by that piece of that...

PB: Oh, yeah, well...and of course, I met him when he was teaching at Macalester College. And then after he left there, but stayed in town, and then he was at one of the churches in St. Paul. So we, you know, we kind of...we kept it...we certainly kept in touch all that time, which was why I tried to find some opportunities to have his chorale and then also involve some of this arrangements on some of the Witness concerts too.

HZ: Okay. Great. Great. Oh, at the end of the piece, I don't know if you remember, there in the conductor score, there's one word...one set of words in the piano score. There's another set of words about the long dark shadow will fall across your land. They changed the words for the first performance. So they wanted to make sure...why did you choose...I know you used the original words, do you recall that being a definite...

PB: Oh, I know. Oh, sure, I do remember. And the reason I did is because I wanted to honor what the poet and composer originally were hoping for. I mean, the only reason they changed those last words were that at the time it was done, it would have been a bit too politically inflammatory. And I think...that was one of those

cases, where Stokowski, he had to say, “you know, I really want to do this piece. Here's where the problem is. Can we find a way around it?” And I fully believe that if Stokowski were alive and doing the piece, you know, now, he would of course not change anything. You know, but sometimes, I mean, those things happen and you...you know, if you believed in the piece but you can see what...politically where you're at, you do have to make...you have to make a little but...but I had...there was no question. From the first time I looked at it and I said, “no, no, no, we're going to do what William Grant Still originally wanted.”

HZ: Mm hmm.

PB: Yeah.

HZ: Thank you for that. I really am moved every time I listen to that recording. You're just...it's wonderful.

PB: Oh, wow, just to me, that was so important because that was an important point in talking about the...in talking about the subject and the power of why it had to be set that way.

HZ: Great. I...

PB: Those instruments are lovely. Oh my!

HZ: I'm going to take you off of speaker phone now because I'm...it's just getting overpowering in here.

PB: Okay.

DONALD DUMPSON (WESTMINSTER CHOIR COLLEGE JUBILEE  
SINGERS/BRIGHT HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH CELESTIAL CHOIR)

- HZ: If you could, would you just tell me about your preparations and your involvement in this particular performance of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?
- DD: In Philadelphia, the Mendelssohn Club had a concert at Girard College which has a very rich history about educating blacks, in terms of educating blacks. But at this particular venue, a very, very phenomenal musician from Philadelphia, Alan Harler, the artistic director and conductor of the Mendelssohn Club, decided to do this piece, ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. The soloist, the mezzo, was Marietta Simpson and the narrator, now deceased, was Reverend Charles Walker. My choir was the Bright Hope Baptist Church Celestial Choir. About forty singers were involved in this particular project. Then there was the Mendelssohn Club. It was a very powerful experience preparing a choir, an honor to be doing William Grant Still. A number of them didn't know who William Grant Still was. So there was an educational opportunity, socio-culturally, within this black church community, to expand their understanding, in terms of understanding the depth of the work and the contributions that William Grant Still made to choral music.

A very complex subject. The choir didn't interact, in their roles, the tension that was created amongst the choir. And, I actually did personally conduct the work. The [unclear] was orchestra [unclear] and it gave the Westminster Choir College [unclear] singers that was taking one choir and then combining the choir so they had tied up [unclear] singers. A very small number of blacks were those who identified themselves as black [unclear] and they can make a decision which choir they choose to be in.<sup>149</sup>

The rehearsal process of that was very emotional. I didn't allow the singers to talk to each other. They rehearsed in separate spaces. When they came into the room, they weren't allowed to interact. I really, if you think about phenomenology, wanted it to be a real lived experience for them. So, we really, really created a sense of segregation and really worked pretty intense about allowing those feelings to be real. They would journal about it. Again, this is very, very powerful to be able to work a piece with one choir at an institution like Westminster Choir College, and to give the students a real intense look at the experience of what it was like from within, I would say again, the lived experiences of black people, white people, how they're feeling. There were two Latinos. They were able to make a decision about where they wanted to be. I don't remember the stats on who ended up where, but I think the two Latino students ended up with the black choir, but I can't say that for sure, but if I remember correctly, that's what the decision was.

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<sup>149</sup>During this portion of the interview, I received another phone call. The incoming call signal obscured the caller's voice on the recording.



But again, just really interesting to have this discussion because it's very, very different, and then to me as a conductor and the preparer, to work with the black church choir, to bring them together to work with premier classical choirs in the city of Philadelphia. There's an energy that that creates, the energy as conductor that I have, wanting them to meet the challenge and exceed the challenge, and they did. That process of finding the choral sonority that allowed this choir to have this extraordinary sound, but to match in and to connecting beautifully with the Mendelssohn Club.

So, that experience was very...was one. And then, of course, with Westminster Choir College, which was just an opportunity to work over weeks, and to really, really have some profound stuff happening. There was even a moment where I did some work with the black choir, did a section of the piece sitting on the floor, while the other choir, the Caucasian choir, were in a certain elevation, and just what did that feel like for both. When you have car horns, you look here and look there, is that a shadow and all the text issues, the story with the court scene, and the lament of the mother and all that, the narrator, honk those horns, all that stuff that comes with, again, the writing, the text and everything. I don't want to go on too much but those were the two very different experiences for me as a conductor.

HZ: When you did the piece with Westminster, was there an option of not participating?

DD: No, there was no option of not participating, but I'm aware that if somebody opted not to, we would have had to navigate. But the option to not participate was not one...everything came up and it was not one that I even in that context, you know, there was no need to even offer it.

Even my awareness of it now, if somebody had an experience that was not...but there was no student who expressed not...there were students who expressed struggle over who to be, you know, if you are mixed race, where do you go, but that was a very, very rich opportunity to look at who you are, and how you're getting presented, and what it means to make a decision to be one versus the other part of you. It's a very rich opportunity for discussion and learning, self-exploration, expanding and understanding of who I am in reference to community. So, there were rich discussions that occurred, but no one opted to be...again, this was so long ago that I...and it's just possible that we had and understood...but I don't think there was an official "if you don't want to sing, it is fine to not sing." You know, there are people who have different religions that are doing Bach or you're doing Mozart. Students who had opted not to sing a religious thing is different. It could be very complicated when doing the literature we were doing at Westminster. You just can't do the *Missa Solemnis*, you can't do the Verdi *Requiem*, you can't do the Bach *Mass*, you can't do that. It's such a central part of the program and education, so...

- HZ: The Mendelssohn Club and the church that you were working with, where did that performance occur?
- DD: At Girard College. If you were to look up Girard College in Philadelphia, it's an institution that educates mostly minorities, but there was a time when blacks were not allowed. But if you were to look at that extraordinary institution you'd find a lot of information just about the significance of doing the work there. Historically, there are really rich ties in terms of bringing some essence to the piece itself in that particular setting.
- HZ: Is that the traditional performance venue for the Mendelssohn Club?
- DD: No. The Mendelssohn Club performs throughout the city in different venues and I think getting them from the Kimmel Center or to Girard College or to a church, this depends on their calendar and the type of work they're doing.
- HZ: So, that performance was there by design?
- DD: I would say so. I didn't have discussions with the administration in terms of why they picked that, but knowing Alan Harler and how he thinks, I would say that there was...I don't think they would have been there if it wasn't a good place to sing in. I think the first thing was finding a venue that could hold...then I think there were some socio-cultural and some other layers were a part of making the decision.
- HZ: The performance with Westminster Choir College, where did that occur?
- DD: That occurred in the Bristol Chapel, the concert hall on the Westminster Choir College Campus. That, for most of the performances, was the venue with Westminster Choir College.
- HZ: For both of the performances, what version of the accompaniment did you all use? Because there's the orchestra, there's a woodwind, quintet and then there's piano.
- DD: For the Westminster Choir College, there was piano; and for the Mendelssohn Club, there was orchestra.
- HZ: I don't know, you may know or you may not, but the text for the work was altered for publication and that's the text that's in the work. Then there's another text that's a little darker...has a little darker meaning, and for that reason, they chose not to publish it. Do you remember which version of the text you all used for either of the performances?

DD: No. I do know that the music that I had...and again, if I had the questions ahead of time, I could have prepped a little better. But what I would say is in that there were some options in a couple of places. If I remember correctly, one particular text option, the ending option, if I remember correctly. I would need to get the music and just look at that again and make sure I'm accurate on that, the data.

HZ: The venue. We'll speak about Westminster, the Westminster performance. Did you receive any resistance for programming the work?

DD: No, none at all. There was no resistance at all. None from the administration. No. The environment was right for it. The soloists, two students, were just phenomenal. In that case, there were two black students who did the solos and sang. In the mezzo-soprano/contralto role, she...totally in her classical voice, but this unbelievably beautiful voice. Then the narrator...again, very much so when you think about different styles of oratorio style and different ways of speaking, definitely in the standard classical approach to it and very powerful.

But I could imagine it being done and not necessarily someone who was speaking and sounding like someone who would also do standard classical literature. I could see how the narrator could be, if someone were thinking that way, could have been a different voice saying those same words. It could have a very, very different impact.

HZ: Do you remember the names of the soloists and narrator?

DD: Yes. The soloist was Kimberly King and her last name now is Harley, H-A-R-L-E-Y, but then she was Kimberly King. The narrator was Samar Newsome, N-E-W-S-O-M-E.

HZ: That's Samar?

DD: Samar, S-A-M-A-R.

HZ: As much as I can, I'm trying to get a complete listing to include in the dissertation of the performances: the venue, the soloist, the conductor, and so on and so forth.

DD: I definitely don't have...I have the programs stored somewhere. So let me look for that particular program and I could send it if I can locate it on the computer. But you can send me an email or something, like a list of things that would be helpful. I can sure try to track some things down and give them to you.

HZ: Yes, definitely, definitely, it'll be very helpful. Great. Well, you covered all of my questions.

DD: Okay.

- HZ: That's all the questions I have and I'm not allowed to ask any more specific questions outside of the ones that have been approved already.
- DD: Okay, fine. What I would say... Alan Harler just posted online. He just retired from the Mendelssohn Club and he is so like not wanting to be bothered with stuff. I'm not sure if he'd want to do an interview. If you send me an email, again a separate email that's forwardable... "Dear Dr. Dumpson, I appreciate our interview. There was someone you mentioned at the Mendelssohn Club. Is it possible to speak with him?" I would be happy to forward that to him and then he can respond if he chooses to. You put in it your name, the school you're at, the contact number for you. So, if you can send me that, so I can just send to him, that would be great and I would be happy to do that. It would be wonderful to interview. I'm just not sure he's going to want to do that right now.
- HZ: Okay, I understand, but thank you.

## ALAN HARLER (MENDELSSOHN CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA)

AH: When I brought it up to my Board of Directors, they were so alarmed by the title that they wondered whether or not we should do it. But then when they understood the overall meaning of the...and the fact that there was an African American chorus or a black chorus and a white chorus, and that they played a part of what was really a drama, a scene, a terrible scene. But, you know, a scene nevertheless out of American history. And so the board did concede that we should do that. It was on a program, and I can't right now remember what we entitled it. But with Donald's group, of course. And they sang alone as well as...that was the Bright Hope Baptist Celestial Choir.

HZ: Okay.

AH: And I don't think we had ever done anything quite like that. You know, they were Donald's church choir, wonderful singers. But many of them didn't read music, so Donald had to teach a lot of it by rote, but that all worked fine. I remember...so then Donald did oh some wonderful spirituals and gospel stuff. And we did...the whole evening was African American composers.

HZ: Okay.

AH: And so we did Nathaniel, I can't remember for sure, but we did Nathaniel Dett. We did a commissioned piece by a young composer that was at Curtis at the time, a black composer by the name of Jonathan Holland.

HZ: Okay.

AH: And I think Jonathan teaches on the east coast some place now. I'm not sure where. So we did all African American music and then the evening was sort of capped off with the William Grant Still. What else do I remember? I remember we got scores from...there is, and I'm sure you know about it, the William Grant Still kind of a family agency or something.

HZ: Yes.

AH: I don't remember what it was, something. Do you know what I'm talking about?

HZ: William Grant Still Music Company.

AH: Yes, yes exactly.

HZ: Out in Arizona.

AH: Yes, yes exactly. And I remember that we had notes from a woman there. I sort of thought...maybe I remembered she was a relative, but I don't know. I can't remember for sure.

HZ: I do know his daughter has done the music there..has been.

AH: His daughter! That's right! It was his daughter. And she was very, very helpful to get parts and all of that. Because I don't know...it hadn't been...you've probably got some kind of a history of performances, but in Philadelphia, I'm not sure that it had ever been done in Philadelphia. And of course it was like the perfect piece for that program of the Mendelssohn Club and the Celestial Choir because I think there was one white person in the Celestial Choir, in Donald's group. And I only had maybe four or five African Americans in the Mendelssohn Club.

AH: I remember that our question was, "wait a minute, what should those people sing? Should they go over to the..." I can't remember the solution. I think we kept our black singers in our choir.

HZ: Okay.

AH: Simply because they were at our rehearsals. What else can I tell you? We were just blessed because Marietta Simpson, who you probably maybe know that name.

HZ: Yes.

AH: She's a fabulous mezzo and she is from Philadelphia, originally. In fact, went to Temple, in fact, as a trombone major at Temple University.

HZ: Wow.

AH: Yes, and a wonderful singer. She sang the part of mother.

HZ: Okay.

AH: It was just so meaningful. And then we were really blessed to have her with us, too.

HZ: Yes.

AH: There were some uncomfortable moments; I mean the music is so vivid and the scene is so awful that it made...it was very emotional for both choirs, I think. And the thing about it that I found difficult is that the

music, to me, never really resolves. And the piece in my ears is like a question mark, and, in a way, I think it was...it was probably intended. I think William Grant Still was probably saying that this isn't over yet.

HZ: Right.

AH: And so it ends...it doesn't...what would be good programmatically...it would be wonderful if it came to a beautiful harmonic resolution, and said, "well now everything is going to be okay," but I think he probably knew that it wasn't going to be okay, and that the problem was still going to exist. And so he left it hanging sort of in a dissonance...you know what, if you would go to the Mendelssohn Club website, which is [www.mcchorus.org](http://www.mcchorus.org)...

HZ: Okay.

AH: On that website I think there is a copy of all of our programs in the last many, many years. You might check it out. And, also, if that program's there you can see exactly what we performed. But, also, the program notes; we have a wonderful program note writer, and as I recall he wrote wonderful notes for that program. It might be useful to you in your document.

HZ: Okay, great, great. I'm there now and I see yes, there are plenty of programs.

AH: Did you find something that says programs or something like that?

HZ: Yes.

AH: Okay. I don't know if you have any trouble seeing that let me know and I'll help you find it.

HZ: Yes I see past concerts, program notes as well.

AH: Oh, good, good. So maybe if you just some place enter "William Grant Still" you'll find those notes.<sup>150</sup> I think Michael Moore just writes fabulous notes, and they're very thorough.

HZ: Okay.

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<sup>150</sup>The program notes for the *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree* concert could not be found on the website.

- AH: So you might find something good there. Also, I think it might be interesting to see exactly what music we did do, because it was a really widespread sampling of African American composers.
- HZ: Okay. Okay. Well let me ask you this, how did you first find out about the piece?
- AH: Well, I'm trying to think. Just let me think on that for a minute...I, you know I'm very old and I can't remember everything.
- HZ: No...
- AH: I can't remember that right now. I think I'm almost sure that someone told me about the piece and it may have been Phillip Brunelle.
- HZ: Okay.
- AH: Who...Phillip Brunelle has, you know, has a group called Vocal Essence.
- HZ: Yes.
- AH: In Minneapolis, St Paul I think.
- HZ: Yes.
- AH: And I am not sure about it, but Phillip may have brought my attention to the piece, or maybe Donald. I don't think it was Donald, but that's also possible. I know I had never heard the piece and I also had never heard of the piece. But the minute I heard it I thought, "wow what a strong and kind of perfect thing to put on this...in planning this program with Donald." We were in a...we did about a five year...I had just retired from twenty-seven years with Mendelssohn Club. We had about a five or ten year period where we did a lot of multi-cultural concerts, and this was one in that series of multi-cultural concerts. And on those multi-cultural concerts we did the repertoire of whoever the guest culture was, but we also would always commission a piece from someone of that ethnicity. And that's why Jonathan Holland was commissioned to write the piece for that program.
- HZ: If you bring something up that's fine, but I can't ask but a few questions. I'm looking at my list to see what we haven't touched on. Who was the narrator, do you remember, for that performance?
- AH: No, it will be in the program and also Donald would remember. He was pretty sure from a...I'm pretty sure he was the minister at a largely black



congregation of one of the churches and was sort of well-known for his oratorical skills. But I...without my program I can't remember the name right now.

HZ: And you all used a full orchestra version?

AH: Yes, we did.

HZ: Okay. Now, I know it's hard without the score in front of you but the score that's...the music that's printed in the score...The text at the end, the words that were changed from the original text, do you remember if you used the original text or the text printed in the score?

AH: I think what was the...do you have the revision, what were the new words?

HZ: The words in the score...it's just a small change. It says, "call him brother and take his hand, clear the long dark shadow that falls across your land. So...

AH: Yes, yes, yes.

HZ: The original says, "Talk of justice and take your stand, cut him down, but a long dark shadow will fall across your land". And you just got...

AH: I think...yes, I think we did the original text.

HZ: Okay.

AH: Once again if you could find that program the text will be printed in that program as we did it.

HZ: That's great. Great.

AH: And if you have any trouble again with the program I'll find it and send it to you.

HZ: Okay, okay.

AH: But I think you'll find it there, I'm not sure.

HZ: Thank you for that.

AH: And you know what, also Donald would have a copy of that program, I'll bet.

- HZ: Okay. How did the audience react to this performance?
- AH: I think the audience was stunned, you know. It' so vivid and Marietta's aria was so incredibly beautiful that I think the audience was holding their breath by the end of the piece. And so I think it was a very favorable response, not that people were left feeling great about it, but I think they had been moved and changed by both the text and music.
- HZ: You spoke about the board having some initial trepidation about the piece, what about the choir? How did they feel about performing it?
- AH: Yes, yes did the choir also...for some of them it was just too striking, it was too much. Some of the singers...of course, we had discussions about this and so they – I prepared them for it. But I think there was that question in everybody's mind, too, about our black singers. And Donald would probably remember the solution to that, too, but I think the black singers...I can't remember for sure but I think that they stayed with us. But the singers in the long run really were very moved by the piece, and they loved Marietta ,and that helped having her there. And it was just really, really powerful. Donald did this piece on the same program, which the narrator...our narrator...I don't know what the name of...I don't remember, but Donald did with his group the piece, and the narrator narrated some of Martin Luther King's famous speech. And then there was singing around that. So it was...it had political overtones to it, the concert. Even more so than we usually have...you know with the big community chorus like that you often avoid controversial, political questions. But with this, everyone was on the same page.
- HZ: The venue, where did you perform the concert?
- AH: We performed it at the Girard College Chapel, and that's a very interesting part of it because Girard College was started by this...I can't think of his first name, but by a man who was at one time the wealthiest man in the country. And he built this very, very elegant building with these columns and all of...this new chapel...because it was free...and this huge chapel and very, very beautiful. And the interesting thing is that Girard, back in the 19th century when he started this college, he had left all the money to keep it going, he made a stipulation that it was for white children from broken families or something like that. And so at the beginnings of that school, for many, many years it was only white students. And then I think maybe in the sixties that, of course, didn't go and the board of the college was nuts with the public outcry and everything. They changed the stipulation that Girard had put in the will so that African American kids could come to the school. I think actually the original was white boys, it was just male children. And so they changed it, I'm pretty sure, so that it was open to everyone including boys, girls, black, white; everyone. And

now the interesting thing is the school is probably; I don't know the number but it largely African American. So in a way it seemed like a great place to...

HZ: Right. It doesn't seem like it could have worked out better with that history...in the history of the

AH: Yep it really made sense.

HZ: So that's not the normal venue for your performances?

AH: No, we move around a lot. We perform in the Kimmel Center, which is our big symphony orchestra hall. We perform in large churches around town. We just...the performance we just did last weekend was outdoors at the waterworks; it was site specific. You know, we do a lot of site specific works, so...we have performed other pieces, other performances and other programs at Girard too.

HZ: Okay.

AH: But we move around quite a bit.

HZ: In the score there are indications for movement of the chorus, where the white choir would move after they're done singing.

AH: Yes.

HZ: And the African American choir would come into place. Did you all do that?

AH: We modified it as I recall because it was kind of a tight space, and to get the white choir out of the way would take too long. So what we did, and I thought it was a great solution, I simply had my choir turn with their backs to the audience and then the African American choir came in front of them.

HZ: Okay.

AH: So it was like they had stepped, even though they were still visible, it was like they had stepped away from the performance. And then when they joined again all they had to do was turn around again and face the audience.

HZ: Okay. Did you use any of the sound effects in the score? The car horns, dogs barking.

AH: You know, we didn't.

HZ: Okay.

AH: And that's strange that you should ask that. I had completely forgotten about the sound effects, but we did not use them.

HZ: Okay.

AH: I wish we would have.

HZ: I haven't encountered anyone yet who says that they used those sound effects.

AH: Isn't that something?

HZ: Yes. And I did the piece a couple of years ago and I was able to do it but my rehearsal process was so limited that in the process of teaching the piece and making sure everyone was comfortable with it...

AH: Yes. I didn't even think about the sound effects until it was all said and done. That was probably my reason too. Like always everything's there to rehearse. It's a big deal trying to line up a car horn and all of that.

DAVID HODGKINS (CORO ALLEGRO)

HZ: How did you first encounter . . . *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?

DH: I had heard about this piece through Alan Harler, my mentor at Temple University and was a long time director of the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia. He did it in Philadelphia, I'm pretty sure. I had also heard about that piece through David Janower. He was at Albany Pro Musica for years. It's funny that you mention Paul Mueller. He did the performance a few weeks or a few months before we did it.

HZ: Yes. Can you tell me about the preparations leading up to the performance?

DH: For our performance we had lined up a black chorus in Boston and about a month or two before the performance they discovered that Coro Allegro was a gay chorus and they decided to back out; which is kind of weird because the piece is about oppression and racism and overcoming our differences to unite. So there was a whole other layer to this. So we were without a chorus.

And as you probably know, we did not have a whole lot of black choruses around. So I came across Tom Berryman, no, Jonathan Berryman. Jonathan had put together this chorus, which was amazing. So I went down and I asked him if he would be interested in putting the chorus together and doing the performance in Boston. And so he said yes and so I went down and worked with them. And it was just an amazing experience.

There was an educational portion to this as well. And Judith Anne Still came to the dress rehearsal and it was just amazing. Our whole concert was William Grant Still. We did *Psalm for the Living* and *Plain-chant for America*. Marietta Simpson was our soloist. I tear up just thinking about it; it was just so moving. Boston may never really . . . may never have encountered anything like this. My group, Coro Allegro, at the time had a very hard time taking on the role of these people who would actually do this to somebody, you know, hurt somebody. The way we performed it is we had both of the choruses on stage. The black chorus was in the front rows and the white chorus was in the back rows. And at the beginning, the white chorus was singing by themselves and the black chorus had their back to the audience. And the white chorus was singing that very difficult text, right into the faces of the black chorus. And when the black chorus sang the black chorus turned around and the white chorus turned its backs to the audience. It was quite amazing.

We were also facing some budget difficulties and were not able to have a whole orchestra, so we did a reduction for piano and other instruments.

Anyway, it was done in Jordan Hall; we had a great audience. And at the end of that piece, there was a long, long silence. I just remember a long silence and taking a moment to put my hands down at the end of the piece. It was one of the highlights, from an emotional standpoint, of my career. We tried to do other projects and get that group together again, but I don't think we were able to do that. I was disappointed about that, but I was able to go down just a couple of times to do some work with the chorus.

I really do feel like the piece, in the end, tried to bring the races together, and I just think it's a piece that needs to be heard. It was so much with the chorus dropping out in Boston. It was just a different kind of a pressure, but, as it turned out, we were able to meet such wonderful people.

It took me a while to figure out what to program with it. And so we came to the decision to do a whole concert devoted to William Grant Still. And we also did *Christmas in the Western World*. We did ...*And The Lynched Him on a Tree* in the first half and we did *Christmas in the Western World* in the second half, because you have to have something to counteract the other.

HZ: Describe for me the reaction of the audience. How did the audience react to the piece?

DH: I had some people there in the audience who were pretty high-up, pretty well-known people in Boston, and they would come up to me after the performance and just start crying; that's the impact of the piece. Have you ever done the piece?

HZ: I did do the piece, maybe two years after the Mississippi Symphony project. We did it as a part of my doctoral lecture recital. We were on tour in Mexico and my advisor told me that he would allow me to do the piece, but that there would only be a three-week window to prepare the chorus for the performance. So I got in touch with Judith Anne and she said, "I don't think that's enough time." I assured her that the group was talented quick-learners. I talked with the group...had sectionals like crazy. I dealt with the piece long before I ever had to stand in front of the chorus. I met with the singers, read the text, and they all decided that it was something they would do. Not everyone was comfortable, but everyone was willing.

DH: It's a difficult piece. It's not easy and it's a credit to Still to take this text and set it so successfully and take this orchestra and arrange it so successfully.

And sometimes I wish it were not named as it is. It's a credit to Still to take these lyrics and set them so beautifully and to orchestrate so beautifully. Sometimes I wish it was not titled that way. There is no way to soft pedal around the topic. On the same token, I think people see the title and they're not sure.

HZ: In my conversations with Judith Anne, she always refers to it as “The Lynching Piece.”

DH: You know, it was great to get to know Judith Anne. She was great; funny in fact. We had several phone conversations and she came and did a presentation. There were pictures...an exhibition. She did a presentation about her dad, a man who needs to be up there, needs to be...his name needs to be synonymous with Pinkham, Copland. Perhaps if he were white it would be. He did a lot. The television stuff, the jazz stuff, the arranging, the...I remember Judith Anne referring to the piece as *The Lynching Piece*. I think one of the problems with trying to launch a performance of it is the title. And considering that you have an orchestra, a whole orchestra with the piece. And it's only like fifteen or twenty minutes. And so it's not even half of a program, but it's so intense you can't close your program with it. And it's not long enough for any kind of half of a program. That's why I ended up putting it at the end of the first half, because you need time and silence to absorb what has happened. Time to get put back on the earth, so to speak. It's so lofty. How do you program around it?

You know, it's almost impossible to contrast that with the...and then finish with Charpentier or the Mozart *Requiem*. It's just hard to balance it. And so I saw that and I think the *Psalm for the Living* was a great way to open that concert, followed by ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. It's a good contrast, even harmonically; a good sound pallet to open that concert with.

You know our accompanist, Darryl Hollister, is an African American and has been our accompanist for about 22 years. He and I are very good friends. And he accompanied Marietta Simpson on the solos. And I think we did *Summerland* as well. Like I said, it had to be very carefully planned to pull that piece off and have the concert make sense.

We did have only one African American singer in our group. He has passed away also. You know, the discussions with the chorus, they took a long time. Dennis talked quite clearly about being an African American in the Baptist church, a gay African American in the church. And how homosexuality is really shunned in the black church, in the Baptist church and in the black community. And he was conflicted. He couldn't figure out whether he should sing with the black chorus or with Coro. It was

very hard for him to decide which chorus to be with because he felt such friendship with Coro but he also felt out of place. I think he ended up singing with the black chorus, but it took a lot of courage for the chorus to take this on.

In Boston, and this was in the nineties, people are still feeling somewhat of the tension of the uproar, the racial tensions of the seventies in Boston. It's not talked about as much anymore, but it's still there. In one perspective, it's an integrated Northern city, but there's still that racial divide.

Do you have any other questions for me?

HZ: You're covering them all quite well. You mentioned the orchestra. Do you remember if you all used orchestra or the piano, or the piano and woodwind quintet, or some other instrumentation.

DH: I think I basically...I can't remember the exact orchestration. Are there brass in the piece?

HZ: Yes.

DH: I think I may have taken all of the winds and the brass, for the instrumentation, I think I took all of the winds and the brass and a...we used strings. Not a huge compliment. Maybe twenty-six or so. I can't remember if we had piano playing brass or winds, but we used the string parts. I wanted that richness.

HZ: Did you all use the original text or the altered text?

DH: I don't remember right now. I remember the conversation about the words at the end, but I don't remember what we did. I do remember there being a need for the people to come together, bring the choirs together. There was a unification. There was a feeling of solidarity, a bond, because we had done something.



MARK MALONE (WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY)

- SQ: In 2007, the Mississippi Symphony proposed a series of concerts dedicated to William Grant Still's music. ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* was among the pieces to be performed. That piece was removed from the program because several universities were apprehensive about performing the piece. What were the feelings of your constituents regarding a performance of this piece? (Students, administration, performance hall management, yourself)
- MM: The opportunity to present a work by Mississippi native son, William Grant Still, was quite wonderful given an NEA grant to share the choral works of this renowned composer born in the Magnolia State. Shockingly, administrations of both The University of Mississippi and Delta State University were reticent to perform the controversial work, ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* and forced a decision to be made that eliminated the piece from the concert program. (I would like to comment on my thoughts concerning the action of UM and DSU, but would like those anonymously shared. Please feel free to call me at school ###-###-#### if you would like more info). WU students were much in favor of performing the piece, which continued the position of past administrators who led WCU to be the first private institution in MS to admit African-American students. As Project Coordinator for the concerts I was a part of the selection of the work to be performed.
- SQ: What elements about the piece or proposed performance were preventative to a performance with your students?
- MM: None of the elements were preventative to a performance with the WCU students. Collectively it was decided that to preserve consistency in the concert program and harmony within the project the piece would be eliminated. Dr. Gregory Fuller, at USM, was quite disappointed with the action and provided several possibilities to overcome the proposed stigma of performing the work.
- SQ: What elements about the piece, or proposed performance were conducive to a performance with your students?
- MM: Again, as the first private institution in MS to admit students of color, not only were the historical elements conducive, but also the religious.
- SQ: How did you first become familiar with ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?

MM: As Project Coordinator for the MS Arts Commission NEA Grant to produce concerts of the choral music of WG Still, I was sent copies of choral pieces by Still's daughter.

SQ: I would like your permission to use your responses within the text of my dissertation.

MM: Feel free to share my responses

DAVID MCCOY (EAST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND WEST  
WINDS WOODWIND QUINTET)

DM: Hello?

HZ: Hello, Mr. McCoy?

DM: Yes.

HZ: This is Harlan Zackery. How are you?

DM: Fine.

HZ: Good. I was talking with Judith Anne Still of William Grant Still Music, and she told me that you had prepared an arrangement of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree?*

DM: Yeah.

HZ: For Woodwind Quintet.

DM: Woodwind Quintet.

HZ: Quintet and piano. Okay.

DM: Yeah.

HZ: I was just calling to get a little bit of information about that. As we discussed earlier, I am writing my dissertation on that piece. Can you tell me a little about why or for what reason that arrangement came about?

DM: Well, we had Judy...I live in Grand Rapids, Michigan and I had a quintet, of course, with piano, and I had done a lot of her father's music. She gave me permission to do a lot of arranging for that group.

HZ: Okay.

DM: And so, we decided to have her here for the weekend. And that was one of the numbers that she gave us permission to do with the church choir, which was, at that time, a very good choir. And so, we had Judy the whole weekend. We did something else too...another major work. Just a minute. You got a minute?

HZ: Yeah.

DM: I have...I have to pull that up on my computer...just a minute, if I can find it. It starts with M I think. Okay. It was quite so many years ago...hang on...I'm going to put the phone down a minute.

HZ: Okay.

DM: I put you on speakers.

HZ: All right. That's fine.

DM: I'll be up to speed here in a minute.

HZ: Okay. No problem.

DM: You're down in Mississippi somewhere aren't you?

HZ: Yes, the University of Southern Mississippi.

DM: Okay. Yeah, just a minute.

HZ: All right.

DM: All right. Yeah, he was a great composer.

HZ: Yes, indeed.

DM: Fantastic stuff. He was at the wrong place at the wrong time.

HZ: That's true. If he had lived just twenty years later, I think his whole career would've been just a little, no, a lot different.

DM: Yeah. The late fifties would have made a difference. Okay, now just a minute.

HZ: Okay.

DM: I've done just a ton of his works.

HZ: All right.

DM: Okay, I'm getting there. You know Miss Sally's Party?

HZ: I do, I do.

DM: That's fantastic. I think we did some of that, but I'm not sure we did...but I did the arrangements for that whole bit. Just a minute.

HZ: All right.

DM: Okay. Hang on mate, hang on. Hang on .

HZ: Okay.

DM: Oh! Wailing Woman.

HZ: Yes, wonderful piece!

DM: I think we did those two works: ....*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* and *Wailing Woman*. Judy was there the whole weekend, and Willis Patterson, who knows Judy, he's the professor at U. of M. (Michigan). I got the degree there after the Air Force there. And so, he was there for the weekend also. We did those two works and then we did some of his spiritual arrangements.

HZ: Okay.

DM: I tell you, I can't...because I can't speak to them anymore specifically. You have any specific questions about that?

HZ: Well, I was writing...my dissertation is going to be on, you know, the reception history: when it was performed, how many times it's been performed and all that. And I had a lot of information about a lot of performances, but then Judy told me about this arrangement because I was going to conduct the piece. I wouldn't be able to do it with the full orchestra. And she's...

DM: Oh yeah. Well, it works pretty well.

HZ: And she said, "Well, instead of doing it with piano, why don't you start with piano and this quintet." And I said, "All right." And I looked at it, but in writing the dissertation, I didn't have any more information on, you know, why... Well, actually, I assumed it was written for a specific performance but I didn't know...

DM: It was. It was the East Congregational Church where my wife and I attend. The choir organist, he had a very good choir. Well, it's not easy. That piece is not easy, and unfortunately, the conductor warned them about it. (Laugh) The summer before we did it I said, "Larry, you've got to get that score and you've got to get into it." You know, William Grant Still's music sounds easy, but it is not easy. Not by any means. But I guess it came across okay. The choir, like most choirs, they struggled with it, but after they got done they said they really liked it. It was for a weekend occasion. We had an afternoon concert and a morning worship service in which Judy spoke. Told about her father...all the trials and tribulations. So that was the occasion for that.

HZ: Great. Do you remember when that was?

DM: I don't know...oh boy, let me see. That was...hang on. [to his wife] Do you remember when Judy Still was here?

Wife: Who?

DM: Judy Still, when she was here for the week. What year was it, do you remember?

Wife: [inaudible]

DM: No. I don't have a program. It's somewhere else. Are you in contact with Judy? Do you still talk to her?

HZ: Yes. I do.

DM: Well she might...she might bring it up easier.

HZ: Okay. All right.

DM: We're trying to get all our stuff together. Well, I'm 86 years old. I'm trying to nail some things down. She would certainly have that weekend date.

HZ: All right, all right. I'll call her and find out.

DM: Yeah. Give her...give her a buzz and tell her I told her to get on the stick! (laughter) No, she's a very great gal.

HZ: Well she is, she is, I love her!

DM: I'm sorry I can't pinpoint these dates.

HZ: That's quite all right.

DM: It's been at least ten years, I think.

HZ: That's quite all right.

DM: Okay.

HZ: But that's helpful for me, because I just didn't have any other information other than...and I found an article in, I think the East Lansing newspaper, I think it was when...when you retired. A celebration for you.

DM: Oh yeah, yeah, I remember that.

- HZ: I tried to find the lady who wrote that article, and she got me in touch with...she got an email address for you or phone number for you and that's how I got...
- DM: Well, I don't know what to say, but, I'm trying to get back in the shadows.  
(laughter)
- HZ: Well you're pretty hard to find at first, but when I found that article, she did...was able to give me your number to your new place so, I was able to get in contact with...
- DM: Well, did you like it, did you like my work?
- HZ: I did, I loved it, I loved it
- DM: Yeah. It's a powerful piece of music.
- HZ: That it is.
- DM: Yeah. He wrote a lot of stuff for my trio, oboe, clarinet and piano, and I would transcribe a lot of those. Well, she's got all the stuff I did for her...mostly quintet and piano, so.
- HZ: So, you played with the quintet?
- DM: Well, I'm out of the quintet now. When I retired...I retired at 1990 and right after that, I got a clarinet friend of mine and we decided to start this quintet. And then everything was managed...my arrangements...it was a little painful when the piano player would lose the music, but I finally got into a program...Encore, I use Encore. It works very well for me. And then I heard Judy...I heard William Grant Still's folk song suites for piano trio, and I finally got a hold of Judy, and she sent me all his scores. Did you ever see any of his scores?
- HZ: Yes
- DM: They're all manuscript and they line up better than published scores.
- HZ: Yes.
- DM: Must have spent 24/7 on his music. He's got a lot of music, you know. But she...so she sent me some of his scores, then I requested her permission to do some arrangements and one thing led to another and just got all...probably maybe hundred and fifty, two hundred arrangements of his music.
- HZ: Okay. Okay.

DM: Anyway, it was fun to play, you know. We gave...we just gave our music to somebody that would take the quintet over. So I have not been playing in the quintet for maybe ten years.

HZ: Okay. What was the name of your quintet?

DM: Well, it's called the West Winds.

HZ: Okay.

DM: They're based in Grand Rapids.

HZ: Okay.

DM: Yeah. And we set it for quintet plus one. (laughter) But once you find a good piano player, the arrangements come easy. Yeah, so, nice talking to you.

HZ: Thank you so much.

DM: Okay nice talking to you.

HZ: You too.

DM: Bye, bye.

HZ: Bye, bye.



## PAUL ANTHONY MCRAE (GREENSBORO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA)

PAM: I really enjoyed a lot of these performances. Especially the William Grant Still one. It was extremely provocative, as you can imagine, and I received a lot of critique from people when they saw the brochure coming out for these concerts and that was on it. I mean, their eyebrows were really raised.

Were you there at that performance or no?

HZ: No. Actually, I was not. When I started my research on this, I realized I was in Greensboro for at the time for college, but for some reason I did not make it to that concert.

PAM: I see, okay.

HZ: Yeah, I didn't make that concert.

PAM: Alright. It would have been great to be able to talk about it with you as an audience member and me as a performer.

HZ: Right.

PAM: But that was a very good performance. It was a really good, high quality performance. I think, if I remember, frankly, Harlan, you have to forgive me because it would be very difficult for me to converse with you in technical aspects of the composition...

HZ: Right.

PAM: Because it's something...I haven't even looked at the score in twenty something years and it would be difficult for me to give you all...

HZ: I definitely understand.

PAM: But I am happy to share all my recollections and hopefully it might be helpful with your dissertation.

HZ: Right.

PAM: That was the same thing that I experienced, but the good news for me is that I had such strong control of the orchestra and the board of directors and everything else, because the orchestra was really performing strongly and they were all thrilled that I was their music director, so they trusted me.

They trusted me because programming is a specialty of mine. That's something I really would like to do.

Yeah. Let me ask you something. Has there been any recent performance other than in Greensboro or just twenty years ago?

HZ: I've searched all over in newspapers, articles...there's a big gap. There were five or six performances in the forties and fifties.

In the 1970s, I found two performances, both by Albert McNeil out in California with the Jubilee Singers. And I believe, I don't have proof and haven't been able to talk to Mr. McNeil, but I believe William Grant Still was at one of those performances.

PAM: But that was before Greensboro though, right?

HZ: Yes, and then I think I have found 11 performances between 1991 and 2015.

PAM: Oh, well that's okay. It's decent

HZ: So it's coming and people are becoming more and more familiar with it. As a matter of fact, last night, there's a lady who emailed me and said that she remembers doing it in this performance I didn't know anything about. She said she thinks she remembers doing that piece. I don't know what that entirely means, but she said, "I think we did that piece in the eighties."

PAM: Wow! That's good too!

HZ: But my main thing is trying to find out which performances and where they have happened and how they were produced.

I don't know if you recall, but the score almost reads like a theater piece instead of a musical piece. There are so many stage directions.

PAM: Yeah, I think you're right. Yes, absolutely right!

And I think...It just rings to my memory a little bit...we had a white chorus that I think was from...

Can you hear me?

HZ: Yes I can.

PAM: The chorus was from UNCG. And you don't have the actual playbill do you?

HZ: No I don't. I've called the Greensboro Symphony to see if I can get a copy of that, but I haven't got anything yet.

PAM: Even a photocopy, a photocopy would be good.

HZ: Yes.

PAM: You can ask if they can send you that.

But I remembered the black chorus; I believe it was from NC A&T?

HZ: A&T? Okay.

PAM: What was the name of the university again?

HZ: North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

PAM: Yeah, it's NC A&T, right?

HZ: Yeah.

PAM: Yeah, that's right.

Hold on one sec...

HZ: Okay

PAM: I got two little puppies. They're out here.

Okay, hold on.

Okay, so I think it was NC A&T was the black chorus and then the other one was the UNCG. I'm pretty sure of that.

HZ: Okay.

PAM: So what I did is, from a production standpoint, what I decided to do is to get the backing of the state. The cultural, I don't know, department. And I told them that what I was doing was having complete diversity of having a black chorus, and a white chorus from the University of Greensboro.

And the fact that it was black history month. All of those things coming together were quite impressive.

HZ: Right.

PAM: So, like I said, it was very controversial, it was very provocative.

Because of my success with the orchestra, people decided to trust me.

HZ: Right.

PAM: So I was a little fortunate. And it's funny that Crafton Beck...do you know him personally?

HZ: Yes, I do.

PAM: Okay. So Crafton, I believe was one of the...when I left the orchestra in Chicago, I think January of '96, I think he was one of the finalists for taking over my job. I think he's one of the finalists back in 1996. So if you do get to talk to him, you might mention my name?

HZ: Alright, I will.

PAM: We never got to meet him. Is he English, British?

HZ: He's American. He's actually from Mississippi. Well, he's not from...his family is from Mississippi, but I think he's from Ohio.

PAM: He's from Ohio? Okay, good!

[At this point the call was disconnected, and resumed]

HZ: I think we were talking about so many things. I was thinking, after we got off the phone, about the audience at that performance.

PAM: You mean how they responded?

HZ: How did it respond to it?

PAM: Well, it responded really well. I have to tell you that it was very well received. I don't have the review, unfortunately. A lot of the reviews that I had when I conducted the symphony, I put on my website. The other ones, I let them go, but I remember it was very well received. It was very well received, yes. And I think good critical press too, as well.

HZ: Good. I haven't been able to find any reviews from the *News and Record...Greensboro News and Record*. I found the concert advertisement listing, but I didn't find the review yet.

PAM: Who was the mezzo? Did you remember that in the advertising or no?

HZ: I don't remember

PAM: Okay.

HZ: No.

PAM: She did a good job. I had to do a lot of coaching, both with the white chorus and the black chorus. Obviously it needed a lot of character. They needed more character in the vocal section, both of them, because obviously each group would react and respond to the text differently.

HZ: I'm looking now but it doesn't say.

PAM: It doesn't say? Okay.

It might say on the playbill. If you check with the Greensboro Symphony office, you know, I think you can go into the archives very easily and they can photocopy and scan it and email it to you.

HZ: Okay.

PAM: And did you recall I invited William Grant Still's daughter on that weekend?

HZ: Yes.

PAM: What a wonderful woman, beautiful woman.

HZ: Oh, yes.

PAM: What was that year, 1992 or 1993? When did I do that performance? Do you remember?

HZ: 1995.

PAM: It was in 1995, okay. It was my next to last year there. That was in February of '95, right?

HZ: Yes.

PAM: Is that correct? Yeah, and I left in December of '95.

HZ: Okay.

PAM: So it was in the last year of my directorship of the orchestra there. And I left in the middle of that season. I left in the middle of the 95-96 season so it was exactly twenty years ago...a little less than twenty years, nineteen years ago, that would be correct. And this coming December would be twenty years.

HZ: Twenty years, okay.

PAM: Nineteen right now, nineteen years. But I want to recall the performance, and I told you it was one of those rare opportunities in my musical career, to bring some justification and acknowledgment about, you know, history.

HZ: Yes.

PAM: And the history that we obviously cannot be proud of.

HZ: Right.

PAM: So it was significant for me and I really mean that sincerely. I hope you can feel that.

HZ: Oh yes, definitely.

PAM: I mean, in my email to you, that's the kind of man I am. I just do not like injustices to anyone and especially with the black people who've had to endure in this country. And that was very important for me.

As I said in my email to you, I grew up in Long Island, New York. I was about sixty miles away from New York City. So I grew up as a young boy, I never had black students or black friends because I was pretty much isolated out on Long Island. That's far from New York City.

HZ: Right.

PAM: So as I said, I used to be a really great athlete. When I was young I was exceptionally gifted when it comes music, and I was exceptionally gifted when it comes to athletics, sports.

And the team that I was on won the New York State Championship, and then we had to then go to the Southeastern Regional Finals. The Babe Ruth League. After little league it's the thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen year-olds called the Babe Ruth League.

HZ: Okay.

PAM: And we won the New York State Championship, and then we had to travel over from Long Island, New York down to Virginia and the Southeastern states to compete with the Southeastern Regionals with all the other state champions.

So, as we were traveling from one state to the other in the South, I was shocked as a fifteen-year old boy to see...and this is probably before your time. What I'm saying is you probably don't know that, but when I was fifteen and I'm sixty-nine so that was how many years ago? Forty-five years ago, I guess, something like that. Oh no, fifty-four years ago.

I was shocked when we would go into these gas stations and on one side of the gas station is for colored only and the other one is for white only. And then when we stopped at this little restaurant and some kind of lunch counter and colored people, as they were called then, were not allowed to sit at the luncheon counter with the white folks. And that's when it really hurt me.

HZ: Yeah.

PAM: That, for me, was a real rude awakening. You see how horrible it's like to be black in this country. And to be discriminated against is just a horrible scenario.

HZ: Yeah.

PAM: But it's always easy to look back and so it's very easy and it's comfortable to complain and look for pity. But the truth is, today, the opportunities have grown so much incredibly for black people, you know, African Americans.

And that's the way I like to focus on that. Deep down in my heart, in my thought process, I was thinking about doing a book. Writing a book, "From Slaves to Gods and Goddesses," which I think is a great topic. It could be best-selling.

You know how marvelous African American celebrities we have today, with the richest people in the world now, and look at this; we got President Obama, all these things. I mean, what a really great topic, "From Slaves to Gods and Goddesses." And some of the most beautiful women in the world today are black women. They're stunning. And yet they are so discriminated against and deprived. But now the opportunity is so much greater, still we have these problems. I think they're never going to be gone. I think the only way that those feelings will be gone is in time.

HZ: Right.

PAM: It will be gone in time, I hope, and I think that because it's pretty difficult for black and white persons to live together, to live today in the society that could harbor those feelings and show those with other people because I think too many decent people in this world would not probably have those kinds of feelings.

HZ: Right.

PAM: It would be pretty difficult for anybody to get a good job, but if they are harboring these kind of feelings...so it would be transparent. So, I like to think about the positive things, but I understood that you're right, that there's still a lot of it. It's pretty sad.

HZ: Yeah.

PAM: But what great progress when we have a black president? I think that's a nice...

HZ: Oh, yeah.

PAM: I never thought I could see that in my life.

HZ: Yeah, awesome!

PAM: Yeah, I think it's awesome. It really is.

HZ: Well, let me ask you, how did you come across ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?

PAM: I was doing a research regarding William Grant Still and everyone says you have the American Symphony. I mean that's probably the most well known of his standard literature.

HZ: Yeah.

PAM: Personally, I'm not a great, great aficionado of that particular work. I think it's very basic. I think it's kind of...compared to many, many other great composers, not because most of them are white, but I'm just saying that composition, in comparison to most and many other compositions, I think it's very low on the totem pole.

HZ: Right.

PAM: Strictly from a musical standpoint, it's nothing that I think you could really get literally thrilled and excited about, even to perform in a concert.

I said to myself, "I've got to do something to honor him. I'm always looking for was to be creative and express good opportunities in the orchestras both in Chicago and in Greensboro, too.

And I kept studying and reading his repertoire and I came up, I saw this ...*And they Lynched Him on a Tree* and I said, "God! I want to do this." As I go into it and I studied the background on it, I realized that it was almost like a little cantata, actually.

HZ: Yeah.

PAM: For the mezzo soprano, the alto, the two choruses, the black and the white and then a text of...it was a black poet wasn't it?

HZ: She was white. She was a white American.

PAM: She was white?

HZ: She was actually the wife of the Solicitor General at the time, Francis Biddle.

PAM: Ah, Francis! Okay, I thought that she was black. Again, this has been out of my hands for twenty years now.

HZ: Right.

PAM: So it's hard for me to realize that all those things that far back. I don't have everything in front of me.

HZ: Right.

PAM: And I kept getting into it, delving into it and I found out about Judith Anne Still and I spoke with her, and I called her.

Before I programmed the work, I spoke to Judith, Judith Anne. She was in Washington. She was up in Washington, living there in Virginia and Washington. And she was thrilled that I was interested and she started sending me some photographs of her father and a lot of information about when it was first performed...it was done by the New York Philharmonic, isn't it?

HZ: Yes.

PAM: I recall New York Philharmonic, right?

HZ: Yes.

PAM: And she sent me some good background information and I started thinking about, "Wow!" I know it's controversial, it's an eye-opener. We don't usually program things like this, but it needs to be done. And pardon my "French," but I just had the balls to do it and I did it.

HZ: Right.

PAM: And I'm grateful that I did it. I'm really, really thrilled that it came off as well as it did. It was something that people will really remember, I'm sure.

HZ: Yeah.

PAM: So that's how it all got started. And Judith gets corresponding with me and then finally when she came...she came down...Washington down to Greensboro. She was there the whole weekend because we were performing on Saturday evening and then on a Monday night. So we did two of these performances on a Saturday and on a Monday.

So I spent the weekend with her...lunch and dinners and getting to know her really well...and I guess she's totally in-charge of her father's collections.

HZ: Yes.

PAM: I don't know if she still is now, this was twenty years ago, but then she was basically the administrator for his library.

HZ: And still is. She and her daughter are running William Grant Still Music.

PAM: Do you know how old she is, Judith Anne?

HZ: I don't know.

PAM: Yeah, I'm sixty-nine so when she was with me twenty years ago, she was a beautiful woman.



HZ: Oh, yeah.

PAM: I couldn't take my eyes off her out of admiration, not for anything else, but for admiration. She's beautiful!

HZ: Oh, yes.

PAM: A nice lady, and I connected really well with her. I remember we wrote back and forth a couple of times afterward, but you know, but then of course when I left music...

HZ: I certainly did not know that. I thought that you were still...of course after I read your email I found out, but I thought you were still conducting somewhere.

PAM: No, no, no, no. I will tell you this. I guest conduct. I do some guest conducting now. I have conducted in Europe and in Norway and when we were living in Colombia, the governor of the state appointed me to be the music director of the Governors State Symphonic Band.

HZ: Wow!

PAM: And I conducted about 210 concerts in two years that I was music director there.

HZ: Wow!

PAM: So yeah, it was beautiful. And I have photographs of the President of Colombia with his arms around me with in different events. He became a good friend of mine. Juan Manuel Santos is his name.

HZ: Okay.

PAM: And I was conducting around the country with the symphony; all professional. They're all fully paid, and then we do sometimes, ten concerts, ten full concerts in a month. We were very busy.

HZ: That's awesome! Wow!

PAM: Yeah, so it's like a professional wind ensemble, about forty-five musicians. In Colombia, most of the...

## PAUL MUELLER (NEW HAVEN CHORALE)

HZ: So I guess that leads me to ask, how was that piece received when you did it in Connecticut?

PM: Well, I think you need to understand the context. I was the conductor of the New Haven Chorale in New Haven, Connecticut at that time and the board of the group wanted to do something different. We had a meeting and we were talking about the upcoming year. I had suggested doing something in conjunction with... isn't February African American Heritage Month or something like that?

HZ: Yes.

PM: We wanted to tie in to that. So, we ended up doing a concert related... that was our impetus, let me put it that way. The concert ended up being in January just because of schedules and availability of the hall and so forth. But this group decided to go forward with the William Grant Still piece and I suggested that, given the topic and the text of William Grant Still's ... *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*, we needed to pair this with something more positive. So, I ended up doing Adolphus Hailstork's oratorio, *Done Made My Vow*, on the same program.

So, you have this sense through music and the text of these pieces that the paradox, or even the comparison of the early history of the African American, lynching, the south and the *Done Made My Vow* is really about civil rights and the various personalities involved in civil rights. There's a narrator and soloists. I was going to use the mezzo in the Still piece, so the combination of the two pieces was really very, very, effective.

Related to that is there was a young African American guy going to school at Yale. His name is Jonathan Berryman. I haven't been in touch with him for a while, but he started a chorus in New Haven, an African American chorus, specifically to keep the traditions of the African American heritage alive in that community. I think they were called the Heritage Chorale.

I approached him and he was very much interested in it. This chorus was a little uncertain with how they would feel about this, given the topic and also singing with the white chorus. They sang in the Hailstork as well. You know William Grant Still; he specifically said to keep the white and black chorus separate. So, we did that and then when we came back on stage for the Hailstork, we were mixed.

I conducted both of the concerts and Jonathan also conducted as sort of part of a planned ovation, a spiritual, more like a hymn really than a spiritual. It was a huge success. The Heritage Chorale particularly went to all the black

churches in the neighborhood. I would say they were probably more African Americans present in Woolsey Hall of Yale University than there were white people.

For many of the African American people, it was probably the first time they'd been in this historic hall in New Haven.

So, it was a big success. In fact, there were quite a few politicians present, both local and state. NPR got wind of this. I don't know how you could search the archives but NPR came to New Haven and they interviewed the two choruses, and that was broadcast on NPR. I might still have a cassette recording of that if you're interested.

HZ: Very much so.

PM: As a result of that NPR radio broadcast, I got a number of letters and emails from people who had some connection to William Grant Still that they wanted to share with me. It was really quite a remarkable experience for me...not only for me but I think for everyone who was involved in that concert, in that project. We called it *Songs of the Journey* and to this day, people of the New Haven Chorale, when I see them, I no longer conduct them, they still refer to that project with great affection.

It turned out that Jonathan Berryman was contacted, because shortly after our performance there was another performance in Boston and the African American chorus who was to participate in the performance pulled out at the last minute. I do not believe that performance was with orchestra but I know that the Heritage Chorale of New Haven did go to Boston.

I can't remember exactly. I could get you more information. It would take time.

In addition to that, there was an African American artist in New Haven whose specialty was painting on leather. He would engrave the leather and then he would add oil painting on top of the leather. He had witnessed himself a lynching, and so many of his paintings have something to do with lynching or just the life of the African American in the south. We put up all of his artwork in the lobby of Woolsey Hall. Subsequent to that, much of his art was purchased by a big art dealer here in New York City. I went to that showing. It was just a couple of years ago. The paintings, they were selling for \$30,000 and \$100,000.

HZ: Wow!

PM: This was a project which had a very broad scope but much of it wasn't planned. What I mean by that...it reached out in many different ways. For example, this artist who really had no idea all this was going to happen. So it came together in quite a remarkable way.

Unfortunately, the local media did not review the concert, but it is still strong in the minds of the people who were involved in it.

HZ: I'm making notes here. Great. A lot of useful information. The performance in Boston, do you recall the other chorus?

PM: I don't know who that was. I can give you Jonathan Berryman's contact information. It may not be accurate, I just don't know. I have his cell phone. I just haven't seen him for a couple of years. His cell phone is [withheld]. So many people have switched over to Gmail that I don't know if this is even current. But you might be able to Google him. So, Jonathan, J-O-N-A-T-H-A-N, last name Berryman with two Rs, B-E-R-R-Y-M-A-N. He used to live in New Haven. I just don't know if he's still there. He was active in several churches. He was getting his degree at the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University. I think he was actually interested in eventually going into the ministry. I'm not exactly sure, so I just don't know where his path has led him.

HZ: Do you remember who the contralto soloist and narrator were for this performance?

PM: I will get back to you with names

HZ: Great. You all performed this with orchestra, correct?

PM: Yes.

HZ: What orchestra did you all use for the performance?

PM: This was just a pick-up orchestra in New Haven, CT, some pros from the New Haven Symphony and some graduate students from the Yale School of Music.

HZ: Okay. If you will recall, there was an alternate ending in terms of the wording, the text at the end of that piece, "the long, dark shadow will fall across your land." Chapin changed that text for the initial performance and that's what stuck in the printed version. Do you remember if you all sang that text that's printed: clear the shadow or long dark shadow?

PM: I'm pretty sure whatever materials were sent us, that's what we did. My scores are not here at home, so it's a little hard for me to go back and look. Just one second, let me just look on my computer here.

[Pause]

PM: What year was that?

HZ: That was 1999.

PM: Okay. Oh! We also had a talent contest. We reached out to various schools and we got students to participate. My mind is...the mind is a weak thing, young man!

HZ: (Laughter.)

PM: I have a note in here: "Use alternate text version A." What does that mean?

HZ: Version A. Well, the original version...I don't know if that's what you mean but the original text reads, "a long dark shadow will fall across your land," but the text was altered to say, "clear the shadow that falls across your land"

PM: That sounds very familiar to me.

HZ: The other version says "A long, dark shadow will fall across your land".

PM: Oh, I see. I can pull the actual program but I don't remember.

I do remember this, I got a very moving letter from Harry Chapin. I don't know if you know that name.

HZ: No. Is that one of Biddle...Chapin's relatives?

PM: Here, let me just read it to you.

"I was moved to hear via NPR that you are going to perform the William Grant Still's ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* poem by my relative, Katherine Garrison Chapin. I made an effort to go to New Haven...Thank you for unearthing the piece of my father, Schuyler Chapin."

Schuyler Chapin was a very, very important person in New York City.

“My father Schuyler Chapin remembers being at the premiere in Philadelphia with [Haas] conducting. He was essentially raised by Katherine and her husband, Francis Biddle, after his father died when my father was only fourteen. I’m a musician and educator in New York and I’m writing to acquire a copy.”

We also did *We Shall Walk Through the Valley* by Undine Smith Moore.

“I love the moment when all of you, soloists, conductor and singers, all joined voices, immediately after the Still, in this lovely gospel hymn.”

We did the William Grant Still, then we sang this gospel hymn, *We Shall Walk Through the Valley*, and then there was intermission.

HZ: Wow. That’s amazing.

PM: Then we had a citywide talent search for the young soloist, because we wanted them to sing on stage. There was a small child solo in one of those pieces. I think there were some little children solo in *Done Made My Vow* and we did a talent search. We put together a little group of fifth through eighth graders and that was also a good way to promote publicity. I believe we had a grant from the State of Connecticut. It’s a while ago, it’s so long ago.

Okay, let me just look in another folder.

PM: Looking at Special Programs. Yeah, I don’t have it. I don’t have the actual physical program.

HZ: That’s okay.

PM: The text was in the program. So if you want to send me some follow-up questions after we finish our phone conversation, I can dig and look for you a little bit.

HZ: Great.

PM: Anything else?

HZ: Yes, was there movement of the choirs? The score indicates for the white choir to start alone and exit, after which the black choir enters. At the end, both choirs stand and sing together. Do you recall using this staging?

PM: There was simply no room on stage for this. It was a concert stage and not a theatre. We did have the black choir stand in the middle and the white choir to the right and left of the black choir.

HZ: In regard to the concert hall and the choruses, I know there was talk about the other performance, but was anybody apprehensive about scheduling the performance, the concert hall or any of the choruses?

PM: No, there was no issue with the concert hall. My conversations with Jonathan Berryman were always fantastic. It was like, "yes, let's do this." I think the members of his chorus were a little bit apprehensive. I think that the New Haven Chorale was extremely excited about this.

I have to say it was very difficult for me as a white man to go to this and stand in front of this black chorus. That alone was not a problem. The problem was feeling with ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*...but had we been doing the *Messiah*, who would have cared? But then all of a sudden, you're dealing with this. It just added an emotional and a racial component that you just...how do you deal with it?

I just remember at some point in the rehearsal I said, "I'm very humbled by this experience. But we're in a rehearsal and we have a job to do and that is to simply learn the notes and to give a convincing performance of this piece. Our feelings about this and our feelings towards each other are something that is difficult to talk about. We just feel it and let it go where it's going to go." Everybody just kind of shook their head yes, and I said, "let's get to work." So when I went to the rehearsals I wasn't wringing my hands. I said, "let's work, let's get this laid down." So, that was the whole approach that we took, that we were various musicians working together to give a performance. Later, as a result of that, bonding went on, talks were shared and that sort of thing. It was quite a moving experience.

HZ: Actually, you have gone through...just letting you talk has gone through all of my list of questions that I had. I have a couple of favors to ask of you and that will be about the cassette that you mentioned. If I could get a copy of that, I would be eternally grateful.

PM: I can probably have it converted to an MP3 and I'd be able to mail it to you.

HZ: Great.

PM: I'm sure I have it here somewhere. Yes, I see it right here. It's not long. It's not a long tape. But when I got this, I got a phone call from NPR. You just got to be kidding me. How'd you find out about this?

The funny thing is that the woman who contacted me and I said, “Oh, will you allow a personal question?” She said, “yes.” I said, “I went to high school with a fellow who ended up working for NPR and I know that he is at NPR in Washington,” and I said, “His name is Don Leach.” “Oh, he’s sitting right here next to me.” I grew up in the Midwest. This kid that I went to high school with, that I hadn’t seen in 30 years, was sitting next to this person I was to talking to on the phone. It’s kind of a funny coincidence.

I could probably also put you in contact, if you’re interested, with the woman who was president of the New Haven Chorale at that time.

HZ: That would be great.

PM: Peggy Rae. I think she’s still in New Haven. Of course, I haven’t spoken with her in a very long time.

HZ: That would be great.

PM: Let me see whether I can find it. Here I think. Again, I don’t know if this is current, but I have a home phone number for her, which is [withheld]. I’m sure she’s still living there. I have contact with some of the people in New Haven Chorale socially, so I do see them occasionally. I live in New York City. I do see them occasionally and the last time...I’m pretty sure you’ll be able to reach her on that phone number. Just use my name and let her know what you’re up to.

She was very involved in this and she could give you an insider’s perspective on this a little bit too.

HZ: Great. That’s awesome. Let me ask, do you have a recording of the New Haven performance?

PM: I don’t think so. I just remember I took the tempo too fast. You know how you get excited and you’re going at it and before you know it, you go, “you know, I think that was just a little too much.”

HZ: Right. I think I did the same thing when I did it in Hattiesburg with the Southern Chorale. It just went way too fast. I thought it’s the nervous energy. Let me ask you, do you remember using any of the sound effects notated in the score for the performance?

PM: No, no sound effects were used.

HZ: Okay



PM: Yes. But anyway, I don't think I have a recording. Have you been in touch with Phil Brunelle?

HZ: Yes. He's scheduled to talk with me next Monday.

PM: Okay. I don't know if he knows of other performances and people involved. I have to say, I saved the letter from Chapin just because of the connection, but I did get other emails from people who either knew me personally and heard the NPR broadcast and sent me an email, "Hey Paul, I heard this incredible concert." So, to me, it has far-reaching influence.

I have to say it's one of my prouder moments that we were able to do this, completed the project, and have such a positive reaction from people.

HZ: Yes. Awesome. Well, I can't think of any other questions that I have for you. That's been a tremendous help, I promise you that.

PM: Feel free to contact me with something. I usually work from home on Fridays. That's why I suggested calling you. I can dig up what I can dig up because I do remember that I did save a lot of that stuff. That's why I pulled out the folder. But I will take the cassettes to school and I'll have my technician convert it to MP2 or MP3, if that's what you like.

HZ: Thank you so much.

PM: I do remember one of the things, I can't remember how I'd said this...you should listen to that NPR thing. The interviewer kept turning to me at one point. I can't remember exactly how the conversation was going but I remember saying, "this is a period of history in America...is not one that is terribly positive." I said, "isn't it interesting that if you think of the horrible aspect of the holocaust and there's a holocaust museum present in every major city in the United States, but where do you go for the lynching museum?" I'd said, "in fact, that gives a much, much more important aspect of our own American history which we've just swept under the rug." After I said it I went, "I guess I shouldn't have said that."

HZ: But you're right.

PM: Anyway, it's just you think about the power and the money of Jewish institutions that have enabled all of these remembrances erected in Washington, New York City. They're everywhere. Granted it was 6 million, but is that more horrific really?

Anyway, food for thought.

HZ: You're right. Things I've said about before, here in our own country there's no memorial to it.

PM: Yes. That's what was so fantastic about having that artist whose painting depicted lynching. They weren't all about lynching. Some of them are just like a picture of a shantytown or a main street or some Southern people in a gas station there and that kind of thing. So, it was very interesting.

Peggy could help you with that. Peggy could give you the name of the artist and she could probably even send you...I wonder if I still have it too. When I went to that art showing of his works, I took the catalog. I have it. It's called *Memories of My Youth*. The artist's name is Winfred Rembert.

HZ: Rembert, okay.

PM: R-E-M-B-E-R-T. You may be able to find him, something about him. Peggy may have an extra copy or something. She and another woman, I don't her name, knew Winfred and that was the connection. Then they might actually be able to put you in touch with a member of the Heritage Chorale.

HZ: This is Jonathan Berryman's group?

PM: Maybe they know where Jonathan is because they've been living there. You know, Peggy is a resident of New Haven. All right?

HZ: All right. Thank you so much.

PM: My pleasure. Good luck with your paper.

HZ: All right, thank you.

PM: You bet.

HZ: All right. Bye.

PM: Have a good weekend.

HZ: You too.

PM: Bye-bye.

HZ: Bye-bye.

FRED PETERBARK (UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, BOULDER (CONDUCTOR)  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN (SINGER))

- HZ: Well, you've pretty much covered my first question, how did you first encounter ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* and that was back in University of Michigan, correct?
- FP: Yes, it's at the University of Michigan. It was with the Black Arts Council for the Martin Luther King Symposium Concert of the University of Michigan.
- HZ: All right. And what led you to stage your performance of this in Colorado?
- FP: In Colorado, in 2000...gosh I got it right here...2007. In February 2007, I produced a collaborative concert for what was called Diversity Week at Colorado. It was a concert...a vocal piano concert that had art songs composed by African American composers, as well as arrangements of spirituals, paired with the readings of Langston Hughes' poetry. That idea was taken from a CD on...that I found at the Naxos music library that had a similar...a similar kind of theme with poetry throughout that was read by William Warfield, I believe. I know that Daryl Taylor, the countertenor, was singing on a majority of that concert. But that's where the idea came from, and at the end of that performance the graduate dean at Colorado, Steven Bruns, came to me and said that was the most powerful and impactful concert that we've had, and it said more than even the keynote speaker said in Diversity Week. So, I said, "fine, I will create the largest thing possible." And the next year was a tribute to black pioneers in music performance that talked about the integration of opera in America and the world and produced a...or I had to create a sixty-two-piece orchestra, along with bringing in Metropolitan Opera singers. Marietta Simpson was amongst those and she sang on behalf of Marian Anderson. The concert honored William Grant Still. We actually opened with his *Festive Overture*. Then we honored Todd Duncan, who was the original Porgy in *Porgy and Bess*, but was the first African American to sing what was considered to be a white role with an all-white cast. That was Pagliacci. We honored Marian Anderson. We actually programmed for her "Mon coeur s'ouvre a ta voix" from *Samson and Delilah* and Marietta Simpson sang on her behalf. We also recognized Mattiwilda Dobbs who was the first African American to sing at La Scala. She also integrated the San Francisco Opera.
- HZ: Okay.
- FP: And then, of course, we ended the first half of the concert by honoring Leontyne Price and Leona Mitchell, who is the next soprano to come to the Met after Ms. Price, sang on her behalf.
- HZ: Okay.

- FP: On the second half of the concert we honored Grace Bumbry, Shirley Verrett and George Shirley. Patricia Miller from George Mason University sang in honor of Grace Bumbry. Shirley Verrett I actually got to know while I was at Michigan because she was a faculty there, though she passed away just a few years ago. And she was a colleague of my teacher at Michigan, which was George Shirley, the first African American tenor to sing at the Met. George Shirley actually came and sang on his own behalf. So it was a very special concert. And then, I believe, in 2009...it was either 2009 or 2010 that I ended up collaborating with Onyo Ozuzu in the dance theater department, as she was interested in doing a collaboration. So, we did this on the...with the ATLAS, the Alliance for Technology in Learning and Society. So, that was the acronym, it was ATLAS. And they had a performance series that year, and they wanted some ideas. So, we applied for that and Onyo said, "This would be a perfect thing for us to do." So that was...that was what lead to the Colorado performance of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*.
- HZ: Okay. I suspect, I don't know, but that performance is different than the regular, you know, stand in place and sing kind of concert that I normally heard about doing with ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*. Can you tell me how that...your performance differs from that kind of performance?
- FP: Well that performance differed in a couple of ways. Number one, there is an arrangement with woodwind quintet, and piano, and choir. And so that was the performance that we used.
- HZ: Okay.
- FP: In fact, I ordered that piece from Judith Still, who, I believe, is William Grant Still's granddaughter or niece. I forgot.
- HZ: Daughter.
- FP: It's his daughter?
- HZ: Yes.
- FP: And, in addition, she sent me...gosh, she sent me everything. So I ordered the piece. The woodwind parts, the piano part, and the score, and she also sent me a full score manuscript, which was impressive to have...I was glad to have that. But it was different in terms of the colors in certain places, but it really worked in terms of having just a chamber choir. I believe the Colorado concert only had maybe a total of ten singers and a soloist.
- HZ: Okay.

FP: So it was very unique in terms of the number of musicians that we had participating. But in addition to that, the...it was presented almost as if it was a ballet, where you have your musicians, typically, in the pit, and then you have the staged ballet above it. This was all on one floor in a black box theatre. So, the musicians and myself, we were in simply a corner of the room, and you had the stage area was where the dancing was taking place. So, it was definitely interpretative dance reflecting this music. And it was just very, very special and unique, because also the entire time that I was conducting I was not looking at the dancers. I was only looking at my musicians. And the rehearsal process...I rehearsed with the singers and the musicians separately. The dancers rehearsed separately. They were primarily using a recording of ...*And They Lynched Him* that had been produced. I forgot who the recording was. Who did that recording? It's a...there's a picture of William Grant Still on the front of that cover, but I can't look at it right now. But they rehearsed using that music. Of course, that was the full work...the full orchestrated version. So it was a little different in terms of the sonority.

HZ: Right.

FP: But all that came together, I think we had two...yeah, we had two rehearsals together, maybe three of a kind of a staging and tech rehearsal of it. And then the...we had two performances. You know, this was not the only piece that was performed on this. It was a faculty dance series concert. Sorry, we did three performances: one in ATLAS, in the Black Box Theater of ATLAS. Actually, all three were in the same...excuse me; two of the three were in the same venue, in the Black Box of ATLAS.

HZ: Okay.

FP: The third performance was done in the University Theatre and I believe it was the Charlotte Irely Studio Theater. And in that one it was a part of the Department of Theater's Dance Series, their faculty dance series.

HZ: Okay.

FP: In terms of how the program went, in ATLAS there was...it was fascinating. It was like a maze. There were installations of theatrical performances that were happening. One was done in an elevator, in the freight elevator. So people went into the freight elevator and there was a theater installation. There was also another person on another location, and I was actually involved in something else that was done in, basically, a cage where the student was. I don't remember what was...what the motive was but I entered the cage and upon entering the cage I sang Evelyn Simpson Curenton's *Lord How Come Me Here?*

HZ: Uh-hmm.

FP: And so I entered, sang that, and then left, and he continued ending his piece. Those same installations happened again in the theater, the Theater Department presentation, but rather it was...everyone was center stage. There was a...there was one that I specifically remember of a woman, and I think it was a story of someone giving birth, but the baby was, essentially, already being lynched. And she had this red rope that went up her dress from the bottom and came out from up the opening above her breast, and the rope just continued to come out. She had to deal with this rope, this red rope that...as it was being used for lynching purposes.

HZ: Uh-hmm.

FP: And that was one of the most significant things that I remember prior to the performance of ...*And They Lynched Him*. The fascinating impact of what Onye decided to create within ...*And They Lynched Him* was a conclusion, shall we say, to these, because the piece doesn't end with a period. It ends with something that we all...a deceptive or half cadence. It's unfinished almost. And at the end of that there was this African drumming that happened. And there were two gentlemen that were suspended the entire time in this hanging silk as if they were in a cocoon. And there was this woman that would come out almost as if she was...her face was painted white and it was almost as if she was a witch doctor, but I think she was supposed to represent the mother. And she actually released these two individuals from their cocoons, from their places of captivity.

HZ: Uh-hmm.

FP: And they came down. And after they came down the drumming increased in terms of intensity and syncopation, and it released the two individuals into dancing, and flipping, and cartwheels, and all as if it was break dancing, but just showing the release and freedom of where they had come from. It was very unique because, again, it brought about a sense of conclusion of what could happen upon clearing the shadow that falls across the land.

HZ: Okay. And those are the words that you said...that end...the original?

FP: Yes, we did.

HZ: Okay.

FP: I know there are a few different versions. I think only two.

HZ: Yes.

FP: I don't know if you have come across...there was an NPR, I think, interview that pretty...that something that happened at Yale.

- HZ: Uh-hmm.
- FP: Yeah, and which they talked about that, the difference of words that had happened in the past.
- HZ: Yeah. Okay, okay. Now, you've mentioned this choral ensemble of ten musicians?
- FP: It was about ten from what I remember.
- HZ: Okay.
- FP: Or maybe twelve.
- HZ: Did you split the choir for that, the white choir and the black choir, or did they sing both?
- FP: No. No, they sang both.
- HZ: Okay.
- FP: In fact, I have been involved in...in both performances that I've been involved with, the one at Michigan and the one at Colorado, both were done with one choir singing both parts.
- HZ: Okay. And in the score there is a request, if possible, for sound effects: the horns blowing, a car starting, dogs barking, things of that nature. Did you use any of that in Colorado?
- FP: We didn't.
- HZ: Okay.
- FP: We didn't. Even in the production in Michigan we didn't. And I think one of those...one of the reasons for it is, I think, that Mr. Still had everything really already there. Even if you couldn't hear car horns, the fact that the narration tells you exactly what's going on, leaves almost nothing to the imagination. It can be use for enhancement but it's not necessarily always pertinent, or most important, or a must have of the performance.
- HZ: I have noticed with everyone I've talked with, every performance I've heard, no one has used any sound effects. The piece stands alone without that.
- FP: It does.
- HZ: How did the audience receive that?

- FP: The audience received it, I think, in such a different way. I mean, I can definitely...I can definitely remember my two experiences with it. And I remember kind of how the Michigan concert was framed. I remember Daniel Washington, at the very beginning of it, talking about how these events that were going to be offered, and approached, and discussed, remembered in that performance. Those events were only sixty years old.
- HZ: Right.
- FP: It was something that still happened in the lifetime of some people that were in our audience. In Colorado, I think it was just so much different because the diversity aspect; the aspect of diversity is completely different than we have in Michigan.
- HZ: Right.
- FP: Other than...is...demographically. Part of that also is just in terms of city. Boulder, Colorado is a little bit farther away, I believe, than Detroit is from Ann Arbor. And also just the general population diversity...the population there...I do believe there's much more diversity in the State of Michigan than there is in Colorado.
- HZ: Uh-hmm.
- FP: And so those were things that people don't necessarily have to deal with or did not have as much of experience with. But in Colorado people receive it just in terms of being able to visualize something. To...some people didn't have that background to automatically connect with. And the one thing that was a constant conversation or remark between the very first art song in the spirituals concert, the black pioneers concert, and even the ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* concert. And there was actually with another one in between that. So actually I think for that reason...yeah, for that reason I think ...*And They Lynched Him* happened in 2010, but at the end of it all everyone kept saying, "I learned something," and that was the difference for me in the presentations that I have been involved with lately, in terms of producing.
- HZ: Uh-hmm.
- FP: A lot of times, in music and good performances, our audience comes in to it saying, "I'm either going to like this or I'm not."
- HZ: Right.
- FP: And I've been very excited to have this continuous remark of people leaving the performances that I've been involved with and saying, "you know what, even if I liked it or even if I didn't like it, at least I learned something."



HZ: Uh-hmm.

FP: And that, I think, is something that, especially all musicians, can use to, again, try to enhance and grow our audiences. Knowing that it's not just something we're either going to like or not, but the reason I'm coming to this event is because I'm, if nothing else, I'm going to learn something. It's going to be worth my time to go.

HZ: Wow. And in both performances do you recall there being any objection or even encouragement on behalf of the administration or the concert venue for support or not supporting this piece?

FP: I think in both locations...I think the support came because you...because there was faculty support.

HZ: Okay.

FP: That was really in both locations, actually. That was where it originated. It originated from the faculty saying, "We want to do this. We want to...we want to deal with this topic in a different way." And so I think that's incredibly important. I think it also assists when you are in an educational environment in which the opportunity to present such a topic or discuss such a topic is just more easily approachable because that is the mission of the university, is to discuss, to make people think, to learn.

HZ: Okay. Okay. Did you, in preparation of the singers, approach it in any different way than you would most other choral pieces, in terms of the social aspects of that piece?

FP: No.

HZ: Okay.

FP: I would say I approached it in Colorado...I can absolutely say this...I approached it as if it was an opera, because most of my singers were studying opera.

HZ: Uh-hmm.

FP: And so it was no different that if we were doing *La Bohème*.

HZ: Wow.

FP: You have never died of consumption.

HZ: Uh-hmm.

FP: So how can you find something in your past that can connect you with feeling sick? And so in this case it was, you know, you might not have necessarily been oppressed or felt oppressed but when have you felt a little fear? When have you felt not safe? Or when have you felt marginalized?

HZ: Uh-hmm.

FP: Or when have you felt confident like nobody can do anything to you, because all of those things are part of the connections with this piece.

HZ: Right.

FP: I remember talking to Marietta Simpson once, because there was a student actually in the...he was a baritone, in the Colorado performances that she had taught at Indiana. And she said, "Oh, yes. I remember him very well. You know, he can sing spirituals just like everybody else." And when I asked him about it...Adam Ewing was his name, just like Patrick Ewing.

HZ: Uh-hmm.

FP: Adam Ewing...when I talked to him and he said, "Oh, yes. You know, Marietta believes that everyone can sing Spirituals." And I couldn't agree with her more.

HZ: Right.

FP: But I believe that the reason she always said that, and the reason she felt that was because everyone can bring to the table their own connection as long as they bring their connection. It's no different than opera.

HZ: Uh-hmm.

FP: You haven't necessarily dealt with or have to deal with the events that these characters are dealing with, but how can you connect with that? And I think there was a...I believe it was Joshua Majors who was the opera director at University of Michigan. I believe during an opera workshop class I was taking with him, I believe. He said, "The only reason people will believe you are playing a character or you are the character that you are playing, the only reason that the audience believes that is because the program said so."

HZ: Uh-hmm.

FP: Because not that you looked like you're dying of consumption, so you must be Mimi. It says your name, the character is Mimi. Period. The end. And I think that's something that is so impactful. And it is difficult at this day and age where I know that a lot of companies that have been wanting people to look a certain way on the stage or look a certain way in an audition so that they look a certain way on the stage.

HZ: Right.

FP: I just always believe that we have costume and make up for that so that you make people look any kind of way.

HZ: Uh-hmm.

FP: And my argument for that in the past has been Otello who up until just a few years ago have never been played by an African American. That was Michael Austin in, I believe, the Toledo Opera or somewhere in Ohio.

HZ: Uh-hmm.

FP: He was the first African American to ever play the role of Verdi's Otello, and everyone else had always done darker make-up. And now all of a sudden we're having conversation just a few weeks ago, maybe a month ago now, of the fact that I believe that the Met is no longer having Otello paint darker.

HZ: Right.

FP: Which is, you know, a very interesting move at this day and age where we fix to how people look like because, typically, now the operatic world has moved on to TV and into the movie theaters. So now, yeah, it's all about how do you look on the big screen. The origin has lost itself a little bit because of the environment. So it's not this environment of the small playhouse now. It's a movie that we can play over and over again.

HZ: Right. Well...

## LAWRENCE SPEAKMAN (CONCERT SINGERS OF CARY)

- LS: Let me tell you about how I came in contact with the piece.
- HZ: Okay.
- LS: First of all, who are you doing your study with in Mississippi?
- HZ: Gregory Fuller.
- LS: Greg Fuller, okay. Yeah, I couldn't remember which school. As I was sitting and waiting for your call, I thought, "Oh, he's in Mississippi, but which one?" Because the gentleman who runs one of the other big programs down there, University of Mississippi, is a classmate of mine at Westminster Choir College.
- HZ: Don Trott?
- LS: Don Trott.
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: Yeah. And so I thought, "oh, maybe he's studying with Don." But anyway, yeah, I'm a Westminster alum.
- HZ: Okay.
- LS: And I went back for a reunion back in the nineties, I guess, I think it must have been '98. Yeah, it was '98. And the Westminster Jubilee Singers, which was a relatively new ensemble in the campus and quite outside what Westminster historically has done, directed by a really wonderful conductor named Donald Dumpson. He's based in Philadelphia.
- HZ: Okay.
- LS: But he was adjunct faculty and came up to run the Jubilee Singers. So, during alumni weekend they presented a performance of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* with piano. And I think he had maybe thirty singers equally divided between African Americans and whites. And I was just absolutely overwhelmed by the piece. I just thought it was extraordinary, and I thought, "you know what, I really...I think there's..." You know, I'm sitting here in the Triangle, and it felt like there really should be...we should be able to do this. This would be a good opportunity.

And the more I thought about it, the more I thought, “you know, the easy way out to do this would be to call Shaw University or NC Central, get a historically African American college to provide the choir and we would provide the other half of the choir. And we would fly the flag of diversity and do the right thing,” but they would go right back to their normal lives and the impact would be minimal.

HZ: Right.

LS: At that time my membership in the Concert Singers of Cary was about 125, and we had ten or eleven, as I recall, African Americans in the group. And I thought, “you know, it would make a whole lot more sense to build an African American group with our members as the core.” And then with a relatively equal number of white singers in the other group, people that already know each other and will continue to interact with each other after the fact.

And so the first step I took was I called Donald Dumpson in Philadelphia, and I said, “I’m Caucasian.” So I was a little concerned about whether rethinking it, it’s like, “Am I really the right person to do this or not?” And so I called him on the phone and he encouraged me very, very strongly, and he loved the idea of using existing people as opposed to just bringing another organization. And you probably know the Triangle well enough to know that Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill and Cary, kind of in the middle, these communities are very close together. But they are all very, very separate entities that really don’t interact with each other a lot. They really have their individual cultural differences. And that’s why it felt like, yeah, you know, I don’t want to make a show of this if this is to be meaningful.

So, I called Donald Dumpson, and he said to me... what he did, and I thought this was really a brilliant way to approach it. What he did was he rehearsed the choir separately for like three weeks. He didn’t allow them to have any interaction with each other at all. He literally segregated the process. And in addition to rehearsing the music, he said, allow time for discussion because you’ll get interesting feedback from the vantage point of both groups.

And so I then decided to write to my African American singers. Back then I included a cassette and a sheet with the words of the piece, so they had a recording. They had a libretto. And I said, “I’d like to do this. I think it’s a good idea but I’m not sure it’s a good idea. What do you think? Can we have a meeting to discuss? And do you think you can find some other singers?,” because I was really looking for twenty in each group for the most part.

So, we had the meeting. And the feedback was very positive. There were one or a couple people that said, “No, from my own personal experiences, that’s a little too hot for me to handle.” And I respected that. But we had, I think, nine who said, “You know, we’d really like to do this. We think that this is something that would

be meaningful. And, yes, we can recruit some other people.” And at that time I was teaching at Cary Academy, and there were a couple in the administration, a faculty member and an administration member, African American people who were singers. And I told them what we were doing and they jumped in. They were very interested in the project.

So, by the time we got it together, we had eighteen different singers who’d like to build the African American group. And then I handpicked some other folks from the ranks of our Caucasian people to round up the other side. Because I was teaching at Cary Academy, I could use the Fine Arts Center after hours for rehearsal. So, we actually put a sign up that said Caucasian choir in this room, African American choir in this room. Because the piece isn’t that long, so we had some other things that we’re going to do in the same program. So, I had someone else...I made sure that whenever we rehearsed the William Grant Still piece that I was at the helm and that I had another person rehearsed the other things, simultaneously. And we did that for three consecutive weeks. And the reaction was...we’ve done some wonderful things in the Concert Singers of Cary over the years, and I’m really, really proud of them, but there has never been a program that has been more meaningful to me and the people that were involved than when we did this.

And so the first week I met with the African American choir, and I said, since they’ve already been contacted and they had more advance notice of what we were going to do than the other group. And we discussed the aspect of it and race relations in the United States, it was interesting to hear their perspective from the things that you ultimately can predict about: “Gee, you know, I’d really like to go into Belk and not have security follow me everywhere.” Or, “I’d really like to drive at night and not have to worry about being pulled over.” And, of course, this was long enough ago, you know, that all the things that have been in the news was a couple of years.

And I expressed in a subtle way what my concern was: should I be the one leading this? And one of the women said to me, she said, “You know, I get the sense that you’re insecure about your being a white person leading this.” And she said, “Our experience has been we’re always happy to talk about race. We’re always happy to talk about these issues because we live them from day to day. It’s the other side that is less willing to do that or gets tired quickly.”

So we did that and ran through all of the music. I had a really good productive first rehearsal. One of my basses, who’d been with us since the beginning, he said, “You know, when I walked in and saw that sign about two separate rooms,” he said, “if I didn’t know that you were in charge of this, I would have walked out.” I explained to him why we were doing this, and this is what was worth having. We would talk a bit and then rehearse. But what was interesting about that discussion is hearing them...well, for instance, one of the basses was career military, and he had spent three years working in a submarine, and he said, “over

that time I had two different captains. I had one for two and a half years. The other one was for a year and a half.” And he said, “For the first captain our crew contention was about one quarter African American and a lot of long-term serving on that particular ship.” And he said that, “that captain turned over and we had another one who was there for a year and a half.” He said, “You know, within eight months, the whole crew was like white.” And he couldn’t speak specifically to that, but he said, “What are the odds of that being just something that happens?”

One of the altos said, “I work for the State of North Carolina and I’m supervisor and I hire people. And I hired a new person and I was called on the carpet for hiring an African American.” And everybody looked at her like, “what century is this?”

So, it was a really interesting kind of experience for them to talk about what they’ve seen. And essentially they saw the same thing, which was not what I expected, but they all had that story. “Oh, yeah, we see this all the time.”

Then what was really disappointing was when they started rehearsal. And we sing that opening line that the white choir sings. And what is so disturbing about that...and that was one of those we discussed...what was so disturbing about that was the ease that it was almost like this is something we just do routinely like we stop at the store, pick up a loaf of bread, “oh, by the way, yeah, we want something.” And the fact that this was at that time was written in modern day, not something that had happened in the 1800s.

So, they really struggled with having to play this role. And then by the fourth week we put both groups together, and oh my goodness, you can just feel the tension in the room from both sides. And we had a productive rehearsal as we got more and more into it and the act of singing took over and people sort of got focused on their work, as a project that we’re doing.

So, they all left, and I thought, “Good. Success.” And I probably spent ten or fifteen minutes cleaning up the room and shutting everything down and I went down and got into my car. And as I was pulling around to exit the Cary Academy campus, I happened to look to my right at the main parking lot, and there was the entire African American choir standing in a circle talking. My reaction was like, “Oh, my God. What have I done?”

And so I just pulled the car around and went right over to where the circle was, and I can see them all looked frightened that someone had, you know, “uh-oh, this is going to be trouble.” And I rolled the windows down and I just smiled and said, “You know if you really want to keep singing, we can go back in and sing a little while longer.” And they laughed and I got out of the car. And they said, “We were talking and we just want to say thank you for doing this piece. We think this is really important.”

The pain in my chest went away and, of course, my board of directors. I mean, we're a nonprofit group. When I brought this up, they looked at me like I'd lost my mind. And the executive director said to me, "How am I supposed to market this? How do we publicize attendance for this program?" And by doing it with the piano, you know, it takes a lot of the cost issues away. If you're in the university situation where you had an orchestra sitting right there, definitely. But we would have to go hire like a sixty piece group to do it. It simply wasn't in the cards.

So I explained my motivations and I can tell this thing is really teetering when I first brought it up, so I said to them, I said, "Well, if you feel this is too hot to handle, I understand that. If you think it's too risky, I understand that. But I want you to know that if you decide that we shouldn't do this program, I'm going to do this program on my own." I would produce it myself apart from the chorus. We won't use the chorus name. We'll just simply do the project. And once I said that, then they were afraid they would look silly.

So they went along with it, but then they also kind of made a very clear message to me. "I don't know what you're doing," because there's always the fear of violence. And I just don't...one of the things Donald Dumpson did that I think is almost required if you perform the piece is for the final chorus...you know, since you have double chorus, have them virtually segregated from left to right. But for the final chorus, we let everybody move around and unify them in one group. And I think if you do that, I don't think it comprises the piece in any way. And if you do that, then the symbolism of that is everybody on an uplift.

Are you familiar with Barry Saunders, the columnist?

HZ: Yes.

LS: Based at The News and Observer. I think he's the only African American regular columnist who still has a gig with the newspaper, certainly in the south. I don't know of any other place in the country. And I've gotten to know Barry since then, but I didn't know him then. We got a note that he was coming. And I thought my executive director was going to pee his pants, because Barry has the brightest work. He has a wonderful style of writing, and he takes on all kinds of topics in a rather humorous way.

And he did. He came to the performance. It's interesting he didn't write about it. He talked to me about it afterwards. But he decided not to put anything in the paper about it. By the way, our narrator for that performance was William Henry Curry who is the associate conductor of the North Carolina Symphony.

So we found it to be a wonderful experience for us, one of the most artistically meaningful things. I mean, to this day people just talked about that; "Wow, we did that. What a powerful work that was, and what a revealing work that was.



The postscript to do this, and I found this interesting as well, is because it was so well received, we got a request. We were sort of given a request to perform it again locally. And I thought, “hmmm.” So, I contacted everybody involved in the performance, the choirs, and almost three quarters of them said, “You know, if we just sort of run it out there, it’s going to lose some meaning to this.” They just decided that it would cheapen the experience for them to let it become something that any organization with any political agenda could use in any way that was meaningful to them, but maybe not meaningful to us.

So, we haven’t performed it since. Just so you know, we still have the scores. I probably have fifty copies of the scores. You are welcome to use them if you organize a performance where you need that resource.

HZ: Once I started my research, when I did my lecture recital, I was given the chance to finally do it. When we did it, I was terrified. I remember Fuller telling me, we were on tour, and he said, “Well, it’s time for your lecture recital. What are you thinking about doing?” I said, “Well, I’m pretty sure I’m going to write my dissertation on this piece, and I’d like to perform it. I’ll have a little bit more insight preparing it.” And he said, “Well, let’s go ahead and do it.”

So he contacted the dean and the pastor at this local church that we do a lot of our concerts. And he said...the pastor emailed me and he said, “I’m glad to hear that you’re doing this piece. I sang it when I was in Philadelphia.” I said, “Wow. I didn’t know that anybody else would know about it.” He said, “I welcome you to come here and perform it. I think we need to do it.” But through the rehearsals and everything, when it came the time, the night before, I remember not sleeping at all, not because I had performance anxiety, but because of what would happen.

LS: Like “what’s the response going to be?”

HZ: Right. Here in Mississippi. And it was overwhelmingly positive. We didn’t have the luxury of...well, I didn’t have the luxury of finding an African American choir. We had about five African Americans in the chorale that I performed with, and they were all, you know, gung ho about doing it. Everybody was so excited. But...

LS: Yeah.

HZ: We only had a four-week rehearsal period and then the concert. And so I...

LS: Yeah.

HZ: had to work with what I had. So we just divided the choir evenly. I just went down each section and, you know, just kind of divided them, and we had a chorus. And it went really well. I had hoped to do it with orchestra, and now there is a reduced instrumentation for a wind quintet. But...

- LS: I did not know that
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: I did not know that. What's the sextet...which instrumentation? So just strings or...
- HZ: It's for flute, oboe, horn, bassoon and clarinet
- LS: Oh. Okay. Okay, I assume you still need piano?
- HZ: With piano, yes.
- LS: With piano.
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: Yeah. Okay. And Judith fronts the parts to that or did someone else produce it?
- HZ: Yeah, Judith has...I can't remember the man's name who...David McCoy. He arranged it for a performance he did in Michigan.
- LS: Yes. What was the name of the person?
- HZ: David McCoy.
- LS: David McCoy. Okay. All right. Yeah, because we're planning our 25th anniversary season next, you know, next year, and I'm the founding director of this group, and I've been looking for some things to do. And I'm not a big believer in say, doing all past works.
- HZ: Mm-hmm.
- LS: But it'd be nice to do something we'd done before, and, you know, maybe it was just sort of the universe telling me it's time to work on this.
- HZ: Yeah. Yeah.
- LS: Because it's been, you know, seventeen, eighteen years since I've done it. But, you know, and in light of everything that's happened in the last couple of years, maybe the timing is right...
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: You know? I think that might be the case. But...and the instrumentation would really make it much more along the lines of, you know, yeah, what we'd like to do and...like doing it with just piano leaves it short to a certain extent. But having that level of instrumentation is certainly affordable.
- HZ: Right.
- LS: So it's all woodwinds?
- HZ: Yes.
- LS: Okay. Yeah.

- HZ: And...
- LS: And I can get that through Judith?
- HZ: Yes, you can. You can.
- LS: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Well, that's...you know, like I said, it's really a transformative experience for everybody involved. And since we did do this with people who knew each other, the relationships deepened after that, and it was really, really wonderful to see. And, if we do it again, then I think we would structure it the same way rather...
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: than just finding another choir. But, yeah. So, you're working on your dissertation now?
- HZ: Yes. Yes. I'm doing -- I've done chapter one and I've done chapter two. I'm working on the third chapter, which is the real meat about the reception history, where it's been performed...
- LS: Yeah.
- HZ: and every time I talk with someone new I find out about another performance. Like, for example...
- LS: Yeah.
- HZ: I had Brandon Waddles at Westminster who directs the Jubilee Singers now. I contacted him. I haven't heard back from him yet, but I suspected that he was not the one who conducted it. And so I found out from you that it was Donald Dumpson.
- LS: Yeah, Donald Dumpson.
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: Yeah. Yeah. Mm-hmm.
- HZ: And...
- LS: And...
- HZ: Go ahead. Go ahead.
- LS: I think he has a church position in Philadelphia.
- HZ: Okay.
- LS: That might be the way to...you know, just Google him up. I'm sure...got to...you know, tracking this information down today and in 1998 is...
- HZ: Right.
- LS: You know what I'm saying? Right. And that...

- HZ: Right.
- LS: But, yeah, he's around and I'm sure you'd...I found him very compelling
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: He's a great guy. My nephew attended Westminster and sang in Jubilee Singers. He was there. That was one of his favorite ensembles to sing in.
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: So, he knows him and has stayed in touch with him and really...and... He would be a real good resource.
- HZ: Okay.
- LS: Track him down.
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: I'm sure he will spend time with you.
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: And, you know, there's nobody like Judith. You know, we...
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: When we were talking about doing *From a Lost Continent* back in the fall, we spent probably two separate one-hour conversations on the phone.
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: I just really enjoyed her insights into various things. She sent me a couple of his books.
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: There are a couple of books on him, which I'm sure at this point [inaudible].
- HZ: She's completely phenomenal. I love Judith.
- LS: Yeah. Yeah. If I ever find myself, you know, going through Flagstaff, then I will look her up.
- HZ: Right.
- LS: And finally meet her but... You know, I first got to know her back in... somewhat back in the nineties with this performance and then reconnected again last year.
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: So...
- HZ: She was on our, the UNC-Greensboro, advisory board. Then I met her a couple of times when she came to campus for their meetings and she spoke with us, and I just never knew that I would meet her as much as I have in the past couple of

years. And she's a wonderful lady. Well, let me ask you a question. When did you all perform the piece? I'm trying to compile a...as complete a list as possible of all the performances of the piece. And...

LS: You want an exact date? Or...

HZ: If you had it.

LS: I know it was in 1999.

HZ: Okay.

LS: But I can get you the exact date.

HZ: Great.

LS: We have it buried in one of our archives somewhere.

HZ: Okay. All right. Yeah.

LS: And...so, let me track that down and...of course I need your email address so I can just send that to you.

HZ: Okay.

LS: And I might...I don't remember if we have any programs leftover for that. Are you collecting any of that material?

HZ: Yes. That will be awesome.

LS: Okay. Let me -- that's a little sketchier. If...

HZ: Okay.

LS: we have it, I know where it would be. We have an archive file cabinet with that.

HZ: All right.

LS: So, I'll either find it quickly or I won't. But yeah, let me look around for that and see...

HZ: Okay.

LS: what I can come up with.

HZ: Great.

LS: But definitely I'll...we have an old, you know, website for these archives.

HZ: Okay.

LS: So we've kind of upgraded our website over the years. We haven't deleted anything from the first, but I'm not sure what the address is to access the archive.

HZ: Okay. Okay.

LS: So, I'll take care of that.

HZ: All right. Great. Great. And...

LS: So...

HZ: Let me see. You touched on it briefly, and it's amazing, I thank you, because all the questions I had, you touched on it, every single one of them. So that's great. But the...when you performed the piece, the location of the performance, did you have any kind of problem or ease of performing the piece there? Did anybody have any objection to your performing that?

LS: No. We performed it at Meredith College...

HZ: Okay.

LS: in Raleigh, in their chapel.

HZ: All right.

LS: And the choral director at that time, you know, we had to have their sponsorship with their blessings of course, to use the facility

HZ: Yeah.

LS: And the choral director at the time approved that.

HZ: Okay.

LS: So yeah. That was the...that's all I recall.

HZ: Oh, great.

LS: Again, I might be able to find out some more. So yeah, and if you think of anything else, just drop me a note.

HZ: Okay. Great. Definitely. Oh, there's...

LS: Okay.

HZ: another question I have for you.

LS: Yeah.

HZ: At the end of the piece...

LS: Yeah.

HZ: "and clear the shadow that falls across your land" is what's published in the piano-vocal score, but there's a different set of words that were originally intended. And they changed those words for the first performance and they just got published that way. Do you remember...

LS: I see.

HZ: Which version did you all...

LS: We used...we didn't use "clear the shadow." We used the other version.

- HZ: Okay.
- LS: Yeah.
- HZ: Okay.
- LS: Which makes even more sense if...when you mix the choirs together.
- HZ: Right. Right.
- LS: Yeah. Yeah. But I think...I think...you know, I had with...trouble with "the long dark shadow" because...
- HZ: Mm-hmm.
- LS: you know, it's spot on. Right?
- HZ: Right. It is.
- LS: In a sense, it's more relevant today than it's ever been.
- HZ: Mm-hmm.
- LS: Yeah. From our perspective, my wife and I, you know, we have our morning coffee and read the newspapers online and what not and she shakes her head. It's like...
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: "When are we ever going to get it?" You know, "When are we going to get this?" And...so, yeah, I think it's relevant. More relevant now than it's ever been.
- HZ: Yeah. Yeah. Truly. Truly. Well, that's all the questions I have. Okay.
- LS: Okay.
- HZ: I'm quite sure I could sit here and think of a million more to ask, but you've given me a lot to go on.
- LS: If it's something really important, don't hesitate to call back.
- HZ: Okay.
- LS: And if it's just a tidbit of information here and there or whatever, just let me know.
- HZ: Okay.
- LS: And I'll have to get you a copy and help any way I can.
- HZ: Great.
- LS: Hey, it's great you're doing this. Has anyone else ever done a dissertation on this work?
- HZ: No.

- LS: No?
- HZ: There was a guy that I've been talking with in Indiana. He went to Indiana University and he did a project on ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* but not a dissertation.
- LS: I see.
- HZ: There's a big article written on it back in 1997 in the...
- LS: Yeah.
- HZ: Choral Journal.
- LS: The Choral Journal?
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: Yeah. Mm-hmm.
- HZ: But no one's actually written a dissertation on it.
- LS: I understand. Well, definitely having a composer's daughter there as a resource, so...
- HZ: Right. Right.
- LS: He really is such an overlooked composer.
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: And had he been in a different era, I really think he would have been up there with Copland.
- HZ: Oh, yeah.
- LS: Or Bernstein.
- HZ: Yeah.
- LS: You know, people of that nature...
- HZ: Mm-hmm.
- LS: What, he was relevantly self-taught...
- HZ: Mm-hmm.
- LS: in a sense, compared to those that were fortunate enough to be part of the best conservatories and universities that...
- HZ: Right.
- LS: the country has to offer.
- HZ: Right. Right.



LS: So...but...well, again, I'm happy to help. Glad to have this discussion.

HZ: All right. Great. Thank you so much.

LS: You're welcome.

HZ: All right.

LS: Bye-bye.

HZ: Bye-bye.

## DON TROTT (THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI)

- SQ: In 2007, the Mississippi Symphony proposed a series of concerts dedicated to William Grant Still's music. ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* was among the pieces to be performed. That piece was removed from the program because several universities were apprehensive about performing the piece. What were the feelings of your constituents regarding a performance of this piece? (Students, administration, performance hall management, yourself)
- DT: Unfortunately, time has erased much of the memory of conversations regarding this event and most if not all of the administration involved in the decision not to participate in the work have departed from the university. But, I do remember that it simply was the title that caused the administration to not desire to program this work in the Ford Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Mississippi. In prior years, the university had celebrated the fortieth anniversary of James Meredith's entrance into the university. Diversity was and is an important focus of the university. It was deemed better to not take a chance on such a title creating an issue with the forward momentum of the continued efforts toward civility and diversity.
- SQ: What elements about the piece or proposed performance were preventative to a performance with your students?
- DT: Same comments as above.
- SQ: What elements about the piece, or proposed performance were conducive to a performance with your students?
- DT: If memory serves me, the work was accessible for the chorus and would be performed with the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, so performing forces were quite fine.
- SQ: How did you first become familiar with ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?
- DT: I first became aware of it when it was proposed for this event.
- SQ: I would like your permission to use your responses within the text of my dissertation.
- DT: Feel free to share my responses.

## BRANDON WILLIAMS (MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY)

- SQ: How did you come to know about the work, ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?
- BW: My advising professor mentioned the work to me.
- SQ: Why did you choose to program ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?
- BW: It is the focus of my doctoral document, so I programmed it on my conducting recital.
- SQ: When did you perform ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?
- BW: Saturday, October 10, 2015 (the year of it's 75th anniversary)
- SQ: Where did you perform...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*? Please include city, state and venue, if possible.
- BW: Michigan State University East Lansing, MI
- SQ: In what hall/venue did you perform ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?
- BW: Fairchild Theatre
- SQ: Who was the soloist for this performance? Who was the narrator?
- BW: Rosetta Sellers-Varela, mezzo-soprano Kevin McBeth, narrator
- SQ: What performing ensemble(s) were used for this performance?
- BW: Choral graduate students and other music majors throughout the College of Music
- SQ: Were the choirs racially divided for this performance?
- BW: No
- SQ: Were there any special markers used to define race/differences? (i.e., lights, masks, clothing, manipulation of physical space, etc.)
- BW: Yes, images projected behind the ensemble
- SQ: What accompaniment was used for this performance? (piano, orchestra, wind quintet and piano)
- BW: Full Orchestra
- SQ: Did you use the text as printed in the choral score, or the original text as printed in the conductor score?
- BW: Conductor score
- SQ: What was the audience/public reaction to this performance?
- BW: I received praise for the power and timeliness of the performance...some even cried

- SQ: What was the reaction of the singer's to the prospect of performing/rehearsing this work?
- BW: The singers were excited at the prospect of being a part of this rarely performed work.
- SQ: How receptive was the performance venue to a performance of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?
- BW: N/A
- SQ: How did you introduce this piece to the chorus?
- BW: I gave a brief background on lynching and the Reconstruction, then made some ties to current events.
- SQ: How did you market/advertise this performance to the community?
- BW: Social media, posters, word of mouth
- SQ: Does a recording of this performance exist? If so, may I secure a copy?
- BW: Yes and yes
- SQ: May I get a copy of the printed program to include in my dissertation?
- BW: Yes
- SQ: Do you know of any other conductors who have performed this work? If so, will you give their name and organization, if known.
- BW: Cailin Marcel Manson, The Putney School
- SQ: Did you use the sound effects as indicated in the score?
- BW: No
- SQ: Did you use the "staging" as indicated in the score (i.e., the movement of the choirs on and off stage)?
- BW: No
- SQ: May I use your responses to this survey in the scope of my dissertation.
- BW: Yes, you may use my responses

## SCOTT YOUNGS (ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH)

- SQ: How did you come to know about the work, ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?
- SY: I received a packet of info from the WGS family during the year before.
- SQ: Why did you choose to program ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?
- SY: This was a series of three "social justice" concerts
- SQ: When did you perform ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?
- SY: March 2001
- SQ: Where did you perform ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*? Please include city, state and venue, if possible.
- SY: All Saints' Episcopal Church, Phoenix, AZ
- SQ: Who was the soloist for this performance? Who was the narrator?
- SY: This question was not answered by the respondent.
- SQ: What performing ensemble(s) were used for this performance?
- SY: The Choir of First Institutional Baptist Church and The Choir of All Saints' Episcopal Church
- SQ: Were the choirs racially divided for this performance?
- SY: The Baptist Choir is a gospel choir and comes from a largely African American congregation. The Episcopal Choir at that point was entirely Caucasian. That was the great appeal.
- SQ: Were there any special markers used to define race/differences? (i.e., lights, masks, clothing, manipulation of physical space, etc.)
- SY: None needed
- SQ: What accompaniment was used for this performance? (piano, orchestra, wind quintet and piano)
- SY: Piano
- SQ: Did you use the text as printed in the choral score, or the original text as printed in the conductor score?
- SY: As printed in the score
- SQ: What was the audience/public reaction to this performance?
- SY: Very well received
- SQ: What was the reaction of the singer's to the prospect of performing/rehearsing this work?

- SY: Singers loved the work, and putting it together with an entirely different tradition made it even more interesting.
- SQ: How receptive was the performance venue to a performance of ...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree*?
- SY: Great
- SQ: How did you introduce this piece to the chorus?
- SY: I was fairly new in this job, so these concerts were a new kind of endeavor for this choir. They were thrilled with the chance to stretch their musical horizons. The social context needed very little introduction. The music from WGS was accessible and familiar, so little intro was needed.
- SQ: How did you market/advertise this performance to the community?
- SY: There were flyers and radio ads
- SQ: Does a recording of this performance exist? If so, may I secure a copy?
- SY: I'm sorry, no recording.
- SQ: May I get a copy of the printed program to include in my dissertation?
- SY: I'm sorry, too long ago to have saved programs.
- SQ: Do you know of any other conductors who have performed this work? If so, will you give their name and organization, if known.
- SY: This question was not answered by the respondent.
- SQ: May I use your responses to this survey in the scope of my dissertation.
- SY: Yes, you may use my responses

## APPENDIX D

## CONCERT PROGRAMS

THE METROPOLITAN MUSIC SCHOOL  
presents a concert celebrating

# NEGRO HISTORY WEEK




**CAROL BRICE**  
"Miss Brice has one of those rarely rich voices that seemed to be sheathed in radiance."  
—CLAUDIA CASSIDY,  
*Chicago Daily Tribune*  
"Her voice is like a cello."  
—SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY

**LEONID HAMBRO**  
"A rare and exciting talent. The unusual combination of great artistic maturity and youthful spirit. To hear Mr. Hambro play is a beautiful experience."  
—WALTER DAMROSCH

**Carol Brice**  
*contralto*

**Jonathan Brice**  
*pianist and accompanist*

**Leonid Hambro**  
*pianist*

WESTCHESTER INTERRACIAL FELLOWSHIP CHOIR  
**David Katz**  
*conductor*

**Saturday, February 23, 1957, at 8:30 p.m.**  
**TOWN HALL**

Westminster Interracial Fellowship Choir, Concert Program Cover  
February 23, 1957

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Box 8  
Used by permission, Judith Anne Still

*Program*

**1** I've Known Rivers . . . . . MARGARET BOND  
 Deliverance . . . . . CLARENCE CAMERON WHITE  
 Songs to a Dark Virgin . . . . . FLORENCE PRICE  
 In Memoriam (Dedicated to Miss Brice) . . . . . THOMAS KERR  
 Life and Death . . . . . SAMUEL COLERIDGE TAYLOR  
 CAROL BRICE, contralto  
 JONATHAN BRICE, piano

**2** The Banjo . . . . . LOUIS MOREAU GOTTSCHALK  
 Blues . . . . . AARON COPLAND  
 The Cuckoo . . . . . HOWARD SWANSON  
 LEONID HAMBRO, piano

**3** On My Journey . . . . . Arr. by EDWARD BOATNER  
 This Little Light O'Mine . . . . . Arr. by JOHN WORK  
 Hard Trials . . . . . Arr. by HARRY T. BURLEIGH  
 Litl' Boy . . . . . Arr. by ROLAND HAYES  
 He Ain't Comin' Here to Die No More . . . . . Arr. by NOAH RYDER  
 Ride On, King Jesus . . . . . Arr. by HALL JOHNSON  
 CAROL BRICE, contralto  
 JOHATHAN BRICE, piano

INTERMISSION

**4** Juba Dance . . . . . R. NATHANIEL DETT  
 The Creative Jazz of Thomas "Fats" Waller, Earl Hines, Teddy Wilson,  
 Edward Kennedy Ellington, Art Tatum, William "Count" Basie  
 LEONID HAMBRO, piano

**5** "And They Lynched Him On a Tree" . . . . . WILLIAM GRANT STILL  
 WESTCHESTER INTERRACIAL FELLOWSHIP CHORUS  
 CAROL BRICE, contralto soloist  
 JOHATHAN BRICE, piano  
 DAVID ALLEN, narrator  
 DAVID KATZ, conductor

Tickets—tax exempt. Proceeds for Scholarship Fund of the Metropolitan Music School  
 Orchestra: \$3.25, \$2.75; Balcony: \$2.25, \$1.75; Loges seating six, \$24.00. Student  
 Section of Orchestra: \$1.25.

METROPOLITAN MUSIC SCHOOL  
 18 West 74th St., New York 23, N. Y. • Telephone: TR 3-2761

March 22


Westminster Interracial Fellowship Choir, Concert Program  
 February 23, 1957  
 William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Box 8  
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ALL CONCERTS IN CHORAL ROOM OF THE MUSIC BUILDING (KS-108) AT NOON TUESDAY UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED  
 \*MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND BENEFIT: ADMISSION - \$1  
 FACULTY MEMBER IN CHARGE OF CONCERT HOUR: DR. TRUETT HOLLIS

**CONCERT HOUR SPRING-1974**

**THE CONCERT HOUR**  
**TUESDAYS AT NOON**



EAST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE  
 MUSIC DEPARTMENT

MAY 24, 25, 31 - ELAC-LACC OPERA WORKSHOP: "CARMEN" (BIZET) AT 8 P.M. IN INGALLS JUNE 1 (MATINEE AT 2:30)  
 MAY 30 - (THURSDAY) ELAC STUDENT RECITAL #2  
 MAY 28 - MUSIC OF INDIA: HARIHAR RAO, SITAR & TABLA  
 MAY 21 - MIYAKO WATANABE, VIOLIN  
 MAY 17 - \*FRIDAY AT 8 P.M.) NICK CURINGA, PIANO; WALTER CARP, CLARINET; VERNON OVERMYER, PIANO  
 MAY 14 - PAUL HARMS, TENDR  
 MAY 7 - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WIND QUINTET  
 APRIL 30 - \*ELAC MUSIC FACULTY RECITAL - WILLIAM KLING, VIOLIN; WILLIAM PEARSON, TENDR; DOROTHY WELD, HENRY COBBS, TRUETT HOLLIS & VERNON OVERMYER, PIANO  
 APRIL 28 - (SUNDAY AT 3) ELAC CHOIR & LA JUBILEE SINGERS IN INGALLS AUDITORIUM  
 APRIL 23 - - ELAC JAZZ BAND  
 APRIL 16 - ELAC-LACC OPERA WORKSHOP: "TROUBLE IN TAHITI" (BERNSTEIN)  
 APRIL 7 - (SUNDAY AT 3) LA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, NEVILLE MARINER, CONDUCTOR, IN INGALLS-ADMISSION: \$2  
 APRIL 5 - (FRIDAY 9-11) LA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA: OPEN REHEARSAL IN INGALLS AUDITORIUM  
 APRIL 2 - THE COMPOSER SPEAKS: DR. FRANK CAMPB  
 MARCH 26 - ELAC STUDENT RECITAL #1  
 MARCH 19 - NEIL ROBERTS, HARPISCHORD & TONY BRAZIER, FLUTE  
 MARCH 12 - DIANA LETIZIA, SOPRANO  
 MARCH 5 - FRANCOISE REGNAT, PIANO  
 FEBRUARY 26 - OPERA A LA CARTE

East Los Angeles College Music Department, Concert Program Cover  
 April 28, 1974  
 William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Box 8  
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CHORAL CONCERT

Sunday, April 28, 1974 3 p.m. Ingalls Auditorium

<p><u>Los Angeles Jubilee Singers</u>          Albert J. McNeil, Director          Sandra Hall, Accompanist</p>	<p><u>East Los Angeles College Concert Choir</u>          William P. Pearson, Director          Dorothy Weld, Accompanist</p>
---	---

Laudate Jehovah, omnes gentes . . . . . Telermann  
 Flutes: Jim Ercdie and Andy Ward

Blessed They (from the German Requiem) . . . . . Brahms

Choose Something Like a Star . . . . . Randall Thompson

EAST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE CONCERT CHOIR

Go down, Moses . . . . . Traditional  
 Shannon Goodwin, Baritone

Witness for my Lord . . . . . Traditional  
 Victor Graham, Bass

Sunday Man . . . . . Arthur Cunningham  
 Paul Smith, Accompanist

World goin' down . . . . . Traditional  
 Virginia White, Contralto  
 Yvonne Dowd, Soprano

LOS ANGELES JUBILEE SINGERS  
 . . . . .

I N T E R M I S S I O N  
 . . . . .

. . . And They Lynched Him on a Tree. . . . . William Grant Still  
 Poem by Katherine Garrison Chapin  
 Virginia White, Contralto  
 Elmer Bush, Narrator

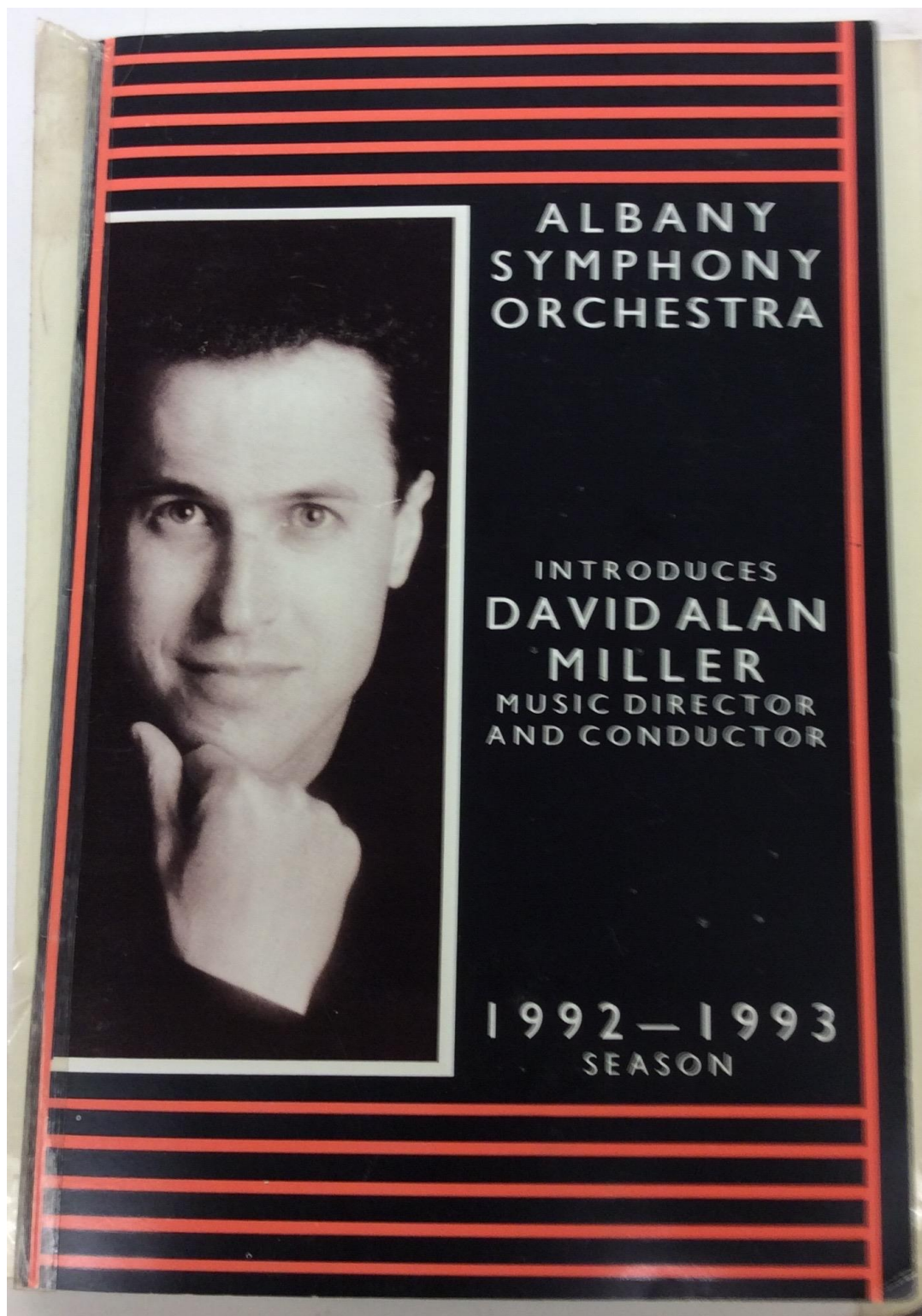
THE COMBINED CHORUSES  
 Albert McNeil, Conductor

"The work, first published in the early 1940's, depicts the poignant and emotional scene of a lynching in the deep south and requires two choirs, each representing the ingredients in the despicable act. Emerging, triumphant, however, is the plea for understanding, hope, and brotherhood."

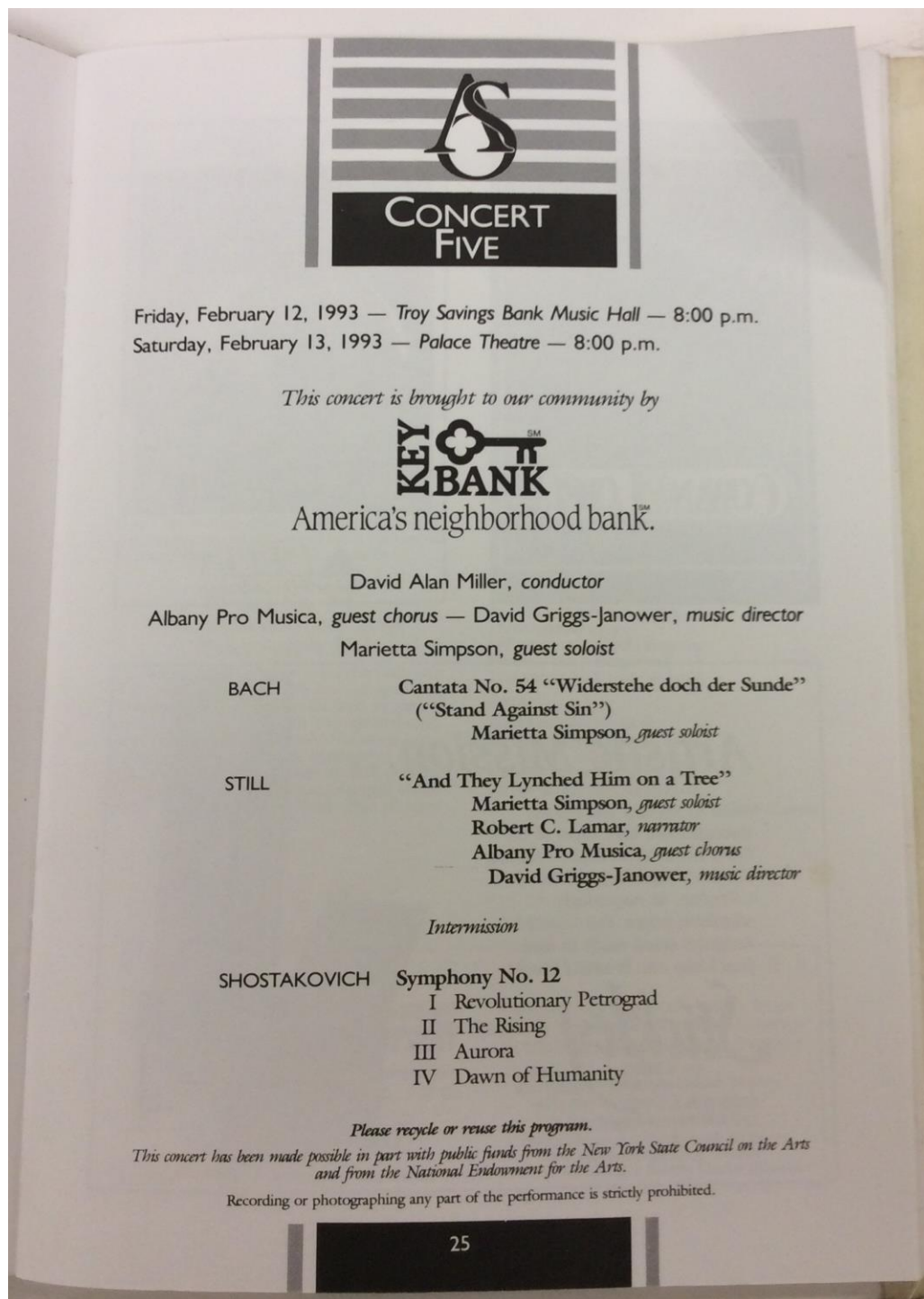
This Concert is made possible through the East Los Angeles College Community Services.

East Los Angeles College Music Department, Concert Program  
 April 28, 1974

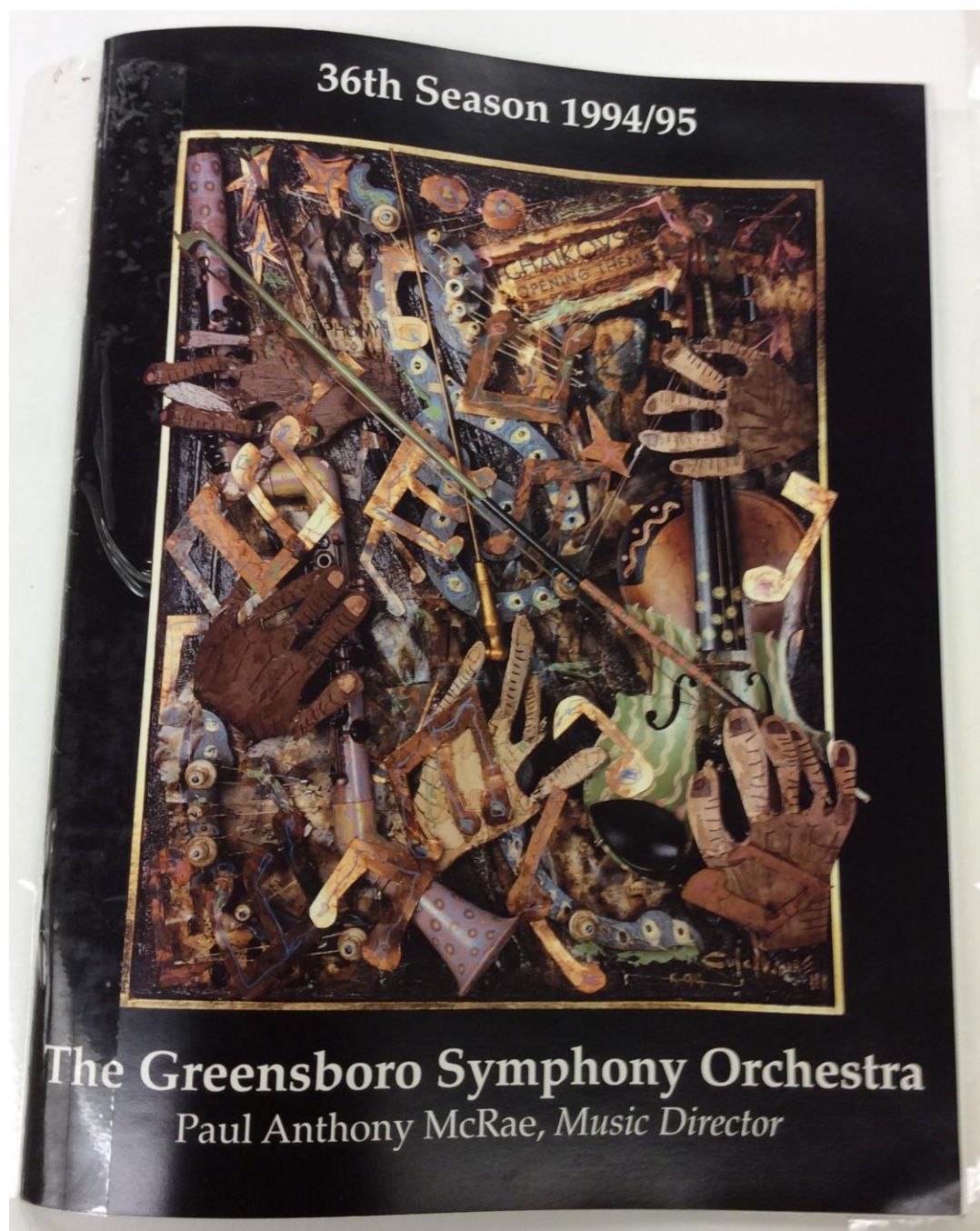
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Albany Symphony Orchestra, Concert Program Cover  
February 12 & 13, 1993  
William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 92, Part 1  
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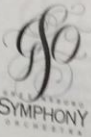


Albany Symphony Orchestra, Concert Program  
 February 12 & 13, 1993  
 William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 92, Part 1  
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Greensboro Symphony Orchestra, Concert Program Cover  
January 14 & 16, 1995  
William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 93, Part 2  
Used by Permission, Judith Anne Still

**GREENSBORO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

PAUL ANTHONY MCRAE  MUSIC DIRECTOR

**36TH SEASON 1994/95**  
WAR MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM

Saturday, January 14, 8:15 p.m.  
Monday, January 16, 8:15 p.m.

A Birthday Tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr.

Paul Anthony McRae, *Conductor*  
The Bel Canto Company, David Pegg, *Music Director*  
N.C. A&T State University Choir, Eric Poole, *Director*  
Bennett College Chorus, Karla Scott, *Director*

Still "And They Lynched Him on a Tree"  
The Bel Canto Company  
N.C. A&T State University & Bennett College choirs  
Elvira Green, *mezzo-soprano*

*This performance honors the 100th anniversary of the composer's birth.*

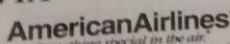
**INTERMISSION**

R. Strauss *Also Sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30*  
"Thus Spake Zarathustra"

J. Strauss, Jr. *On the Beautiful Blue Danube*

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WEEKEND CONCERT SPONSORS:  
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*Something special in the air.*  
American Airlines is the official airline of the  
Greensboro Symphony

The Sheraton Greensboro  
HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER

PRINT MEDIA SPONSOR: THE NEWS & RECORD

*Flowers are presented by: William Virden Nutt, III (Saturday) and James Boyd Wolfe, IV (Monday)*

  
STEINWAY & SONS  
Steinway is the official piano of The Greensboro Symphony
 

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

*"I accept this award today with an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind. I refuse to accept the idea that the 'sins' of man's present nature makes him morally incapable of reaching up for the eternal 'oughtness' that forever confronts him. I refuse to accept the idea that man is more sotsam and jetsam in the river of life, unable to influence the unfolding of events which surround him. I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality."*

*"I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of a thermonuclear destruction. I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant."*

From Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Acceptance Speech, The Nobel Peace Prize, 1964  
Reprinted with the Permission of The King Center, Atlanta, Georgia

Martin Luther King Jr. was born at noon on Tuesday, January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. He was the first son born to the Rev. Martin Luther King Sr. and Alberta Williams King. In 1953, he married the former Coretta Scott. They had four children: Yolanda Denise, Martin Luther III, Dexter Scott and Bernice Albertine.

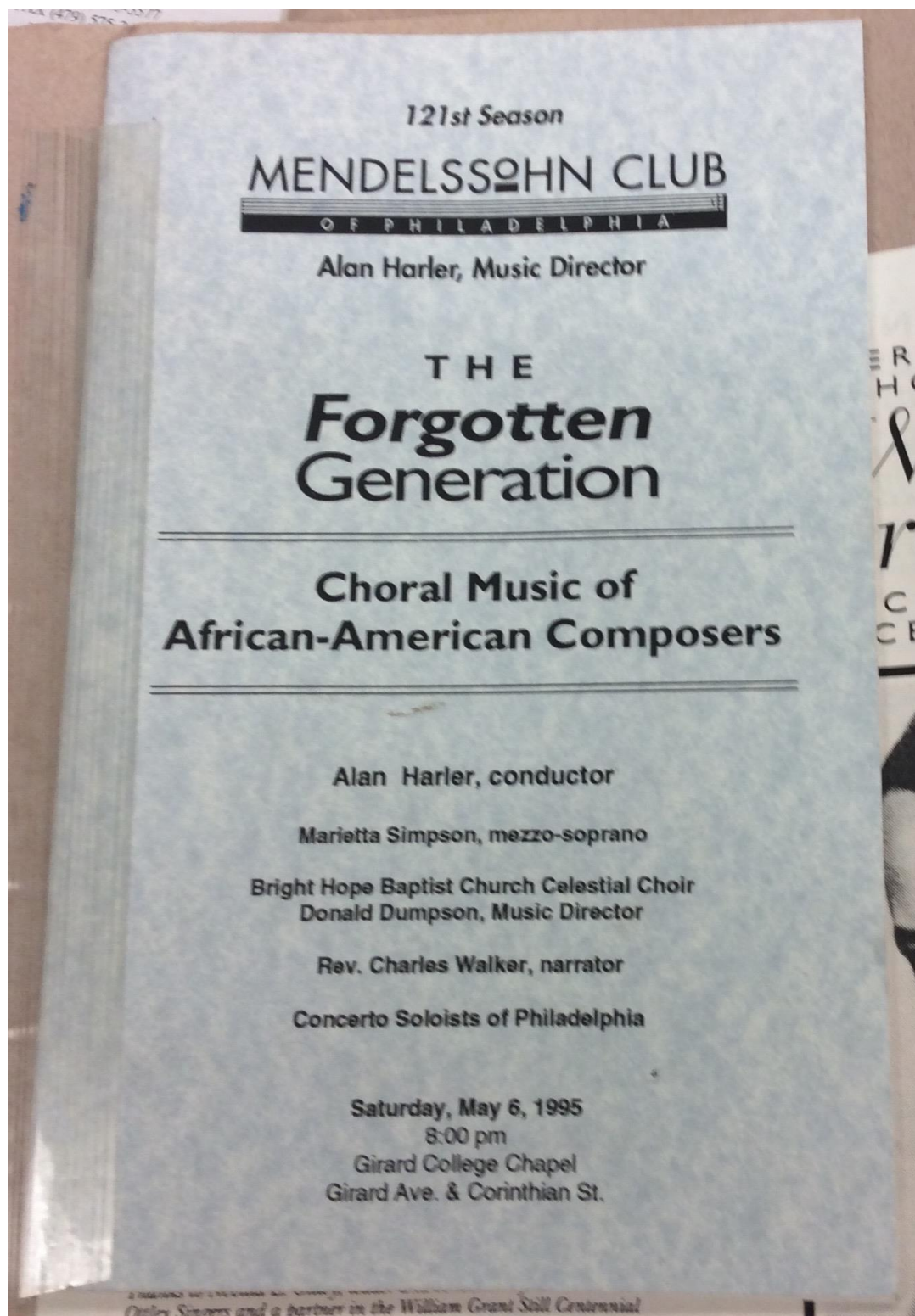
Dr. King, who entered the Christian ministry and was ordained in 1948 at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, was a pivotal figure in the Civil Rights Movement. He was elected President of the Montgomery Improvement Association (responsible for the Montgomery Bus Boycott from 1955 to 1956) and was arrested 30 times for civil rights activities. Dr. King, who received a bachelor of arts degree in sociology, and bachelor's and doctoral degrees of divinity, received numerous awards (including the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize) for his leadership in the Civil Rights Movement.

Dr. King was shot and killed while standing on the balcony of Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, April 4, 1968, by James Earl Ray.

-27-

Greensboro Symphony Orchestra, Concert Program  
January 14 & 16, 1995

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 93, Part 2  
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Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, Concert Program Cover  
May 6, 1995

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 94, Part 1  
Used by Permission, Judith Anne Still

# MENDELSSOHN CLUB

O F P H I L A D E L P H I A

Alan Harler, Music Director

## Program

### *Traditional South African Songs*

*Thuma mina*

Jean Sugars, alto

*Siyahamba*

Michelle Collier, soprano

*Ipharadisi*

Mark Panuccio, tenor

*Seven Songs of the Rubaiyat* ..... Adolphus Hailstork

I. *Come fill the cup*

II. *The wordly hope men set their hearts upon*

III. *Ah! My beloved*

IV. *Ah! Make the most of what we yet may spend*

V. *Oh threats of hell and hopes of paradise*

VI. *The revelation of devout and learn'd*

VII. *I sent my soul into the invisible*

James Kirk, baritone

*Listen to the Lambs* ..... R. Nathaniel Dett

Nell Stoddard, soprano

*Symphony (of Light)* ..... Jonathan B. Holland

*world premiere*

*Psalm 112* ..... Donald Dillard

*The Lord's Prayer* ..... Edward K. Ellington

Alan Harler, conductor

Don St. Pierre, piano

John French, organ

*Intermission*

Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, Concert Program

May 6, 1995

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 94, Part 1

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*African-American Folk Songs*

- Soon-a Will Be Done* ..... arr. William Dawson  
*I've Been 'Buked* ..... arr. Hall Johnson  
*Ride On, King Jesus* ..... arr. L. L. Flemming  
 Renee Robinson, soprano  
*Precious Lord, Take My Hand* ..... Thomas Dorsey  
 (arr. Donald Dumpson)  
 Mamie Brooks, soprano  
 Jerome Bell, baritone  
*Motherless Child* ..... arr. Donald Dumpson  
 Renee Robinson, soprano  
 Clevell Harris, tenor  
*God Bless America* ..... Irving Berlin (arr. Donald Dumpson)  
 Deborah Ford, soprano

## Bright Hope Baptist Church Celestial Choir

Donald Dumpson, conductor and piano

§ § §

...*And They Lynched Him on a Tree* ..... William Grant Still

Marietta Simpson, mezzo-soprano

Rev. Charles Walker, narrator

## Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia

Bright Hope Baptist Church Celestial Choir

Alan Harler, conductor

John French, organ

Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia

§ § §

*Beams of Heaven – I Have a Dream* ..... Charles A. Tindley

(arr. Donald Dumpson)

Marietta Simpson, mezzo-soprano

Gary Giles, orator

## Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia

Bright Hope Baptist Church Celestial Choir

Donald Dumpson, conductor and piano

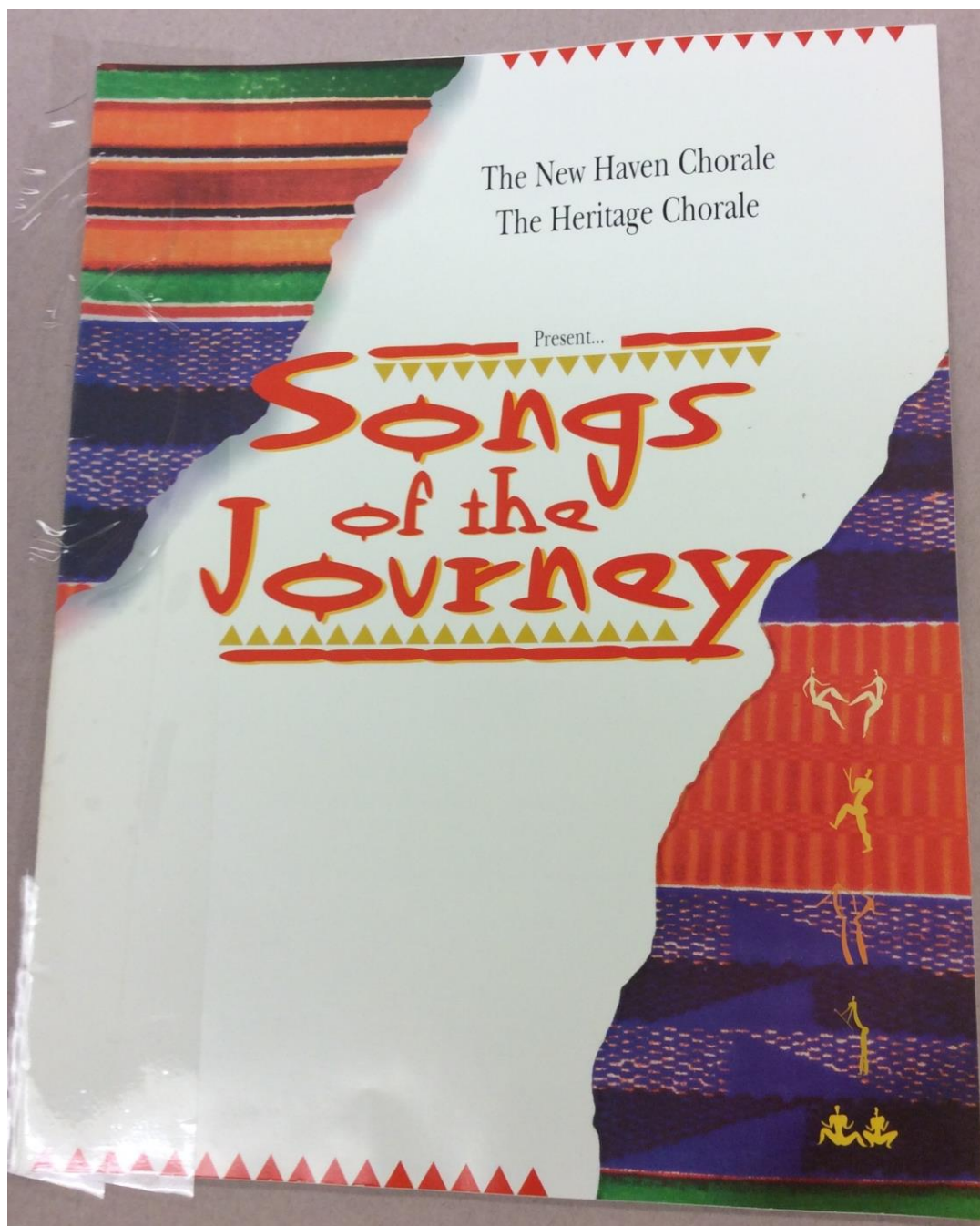
*Steinway piano selected from Jacobs Music Company.  
 The use of recording or photographic devices during the concert  
 is strictly prohibited.*

Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, Concert Program

May 6, 1995

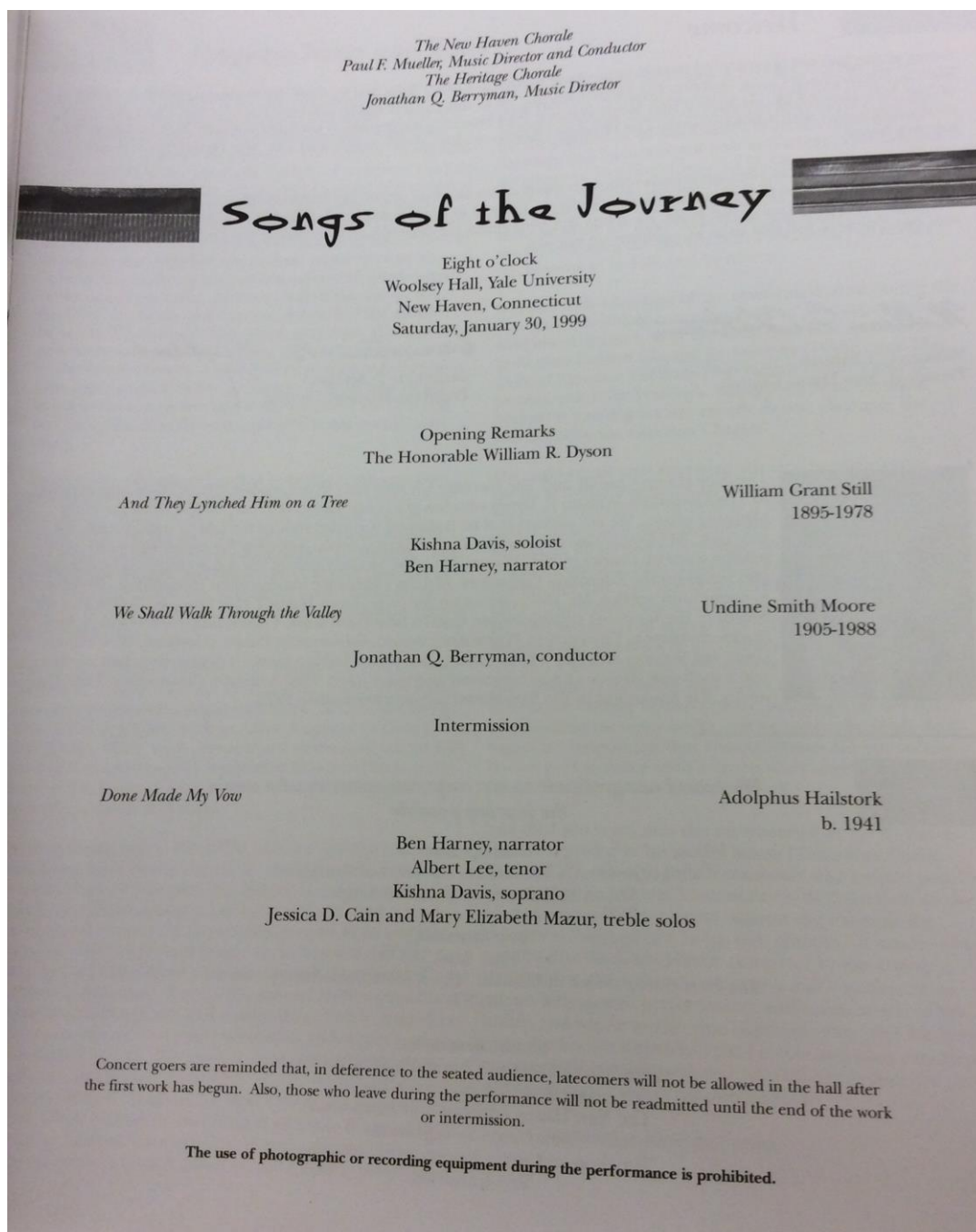
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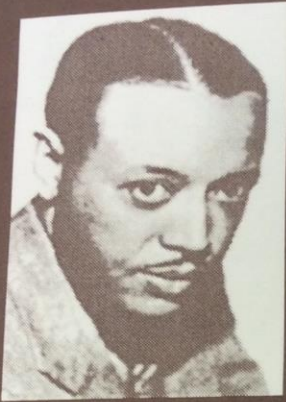
The New Haven Chorale/The Heritage Chorale, Concert Program Cover  
January 30, 1999

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 98  
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The New Haven Chorale/The Heritage Chorale, Concert Program  
January 30, 1999  
William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 98  
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**CORO ALLEGRO**  
 David Hodgkins, *Artistic Director*



Music of  
**William Grant Still**  
 "The Dean of  
 African-American Composers"

with special guests  
**Marietta Simpson, mezzo-soprano,**  
**Paul Parks Jr., Narrator**  
 &  
**Darryl Hollister, piano**

**Sunday, February 21, 8 PM**  
*New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall*  
*30 Gainsborough Street, Boston*

- ◆ *A Psalm for the Living*
- ◆ *Three Spirituals*
- ◆ *And They Lynched Him on a Tree*  
 Marietta Simpson, mezzo-soprano
- ◆ *Three Visions*  
 Darryl Hollister
- ◆ *"Here's One"*  
 Marietta Simpson, mezzo-soprano
- ◆ *Christmas in the Western World*

*Boston's chorus for  
 members and friends of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual communities*

Coro Allegro, Concert Program Cover  
 February 21, 1999

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 98  
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PROGRAM

IN MEMORIAM:

*James Byrd, Jr.*

*Matthew Shephard*

Coro Allegro Presents

*Music of*

William Grant Still

A Psalm for the Living

*Dedicated to Dr. Bessie Arvey*

Verna Arvey, Text

Lord, I Looked Down the Road

The Blind Man

I'm Gonna Tell What My Lord

Has Done for Me

*from the ballet "Lenox Ave"*

Traditional

Traditional

Verna Arvey, Text

And They Lynched Him on a Tree

*Marietta Simpson, Mezzo-soprano*

*Paul Parks, Jr., Narrator*

*The New Haven Heritage Chorale*

Poem by Katherine

Garrison Chapin

*Argument:* "It is night. In a clearing by the roadside among the turpentine pines, lit by the headlights from parked cars, a Negro has just been lynched. The white crowd who hung him, and those who watched, are breaking up now, going home. They sing together, get into their cars and drive away. Darkness falls on the road and the woods. Then slowly the Negroes come out from hiding to find the body of their friend. Among them is the mother of the man who was hung. In darkness they grope for the tree; when they find it the mother sings her dirge. The Negro chorus joins her and they retell the story of the man's life and rehearse the tragedy. She is humble and broken but as they all sing together, the white voices joining the Negroes', the song becomes strong in its impartial protest against mob lawlessness and pleads for a new tolerance to wipe this shadow of injustice off the land."

INTERMISSION

Coro Allegro, Concert Program

February 21, 1999

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 98

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## Three Visions

*Darryl Hollister, piano*

Bayou Home

Here's One

*Marietta Simpson, Mezzo-soprano*

Verna Arvey, Text

Traditional

*Selections from Christmas in the Western World:*

A Maiden was Adoring God, the Lord

*(Argentina)*

Arr. Still

De Virgin Mary Had A Baby Boy

*(Trinidad)*

Arr. Still

Jesous Ahathonhia

*(Canadian Indian)*

Arr. Still

Tell Me Shepherdess

*(French Canadian)*

Arr. Still; Text adapted by

Verna Arvey

Sing! Shout! Tell the Story!

*(In the Style of a Spiritual)*

Still/Arvey



This program is supported, in part, by the Boston Cultural Council, a municipal agency, supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Coro Allegro would like to extend a special thank you to Gibb Travel and the Eliot Hotel for their efforts in making this concert possible.

WANT TO SING WITH CORO ALLEGRO?

WE'RE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS.

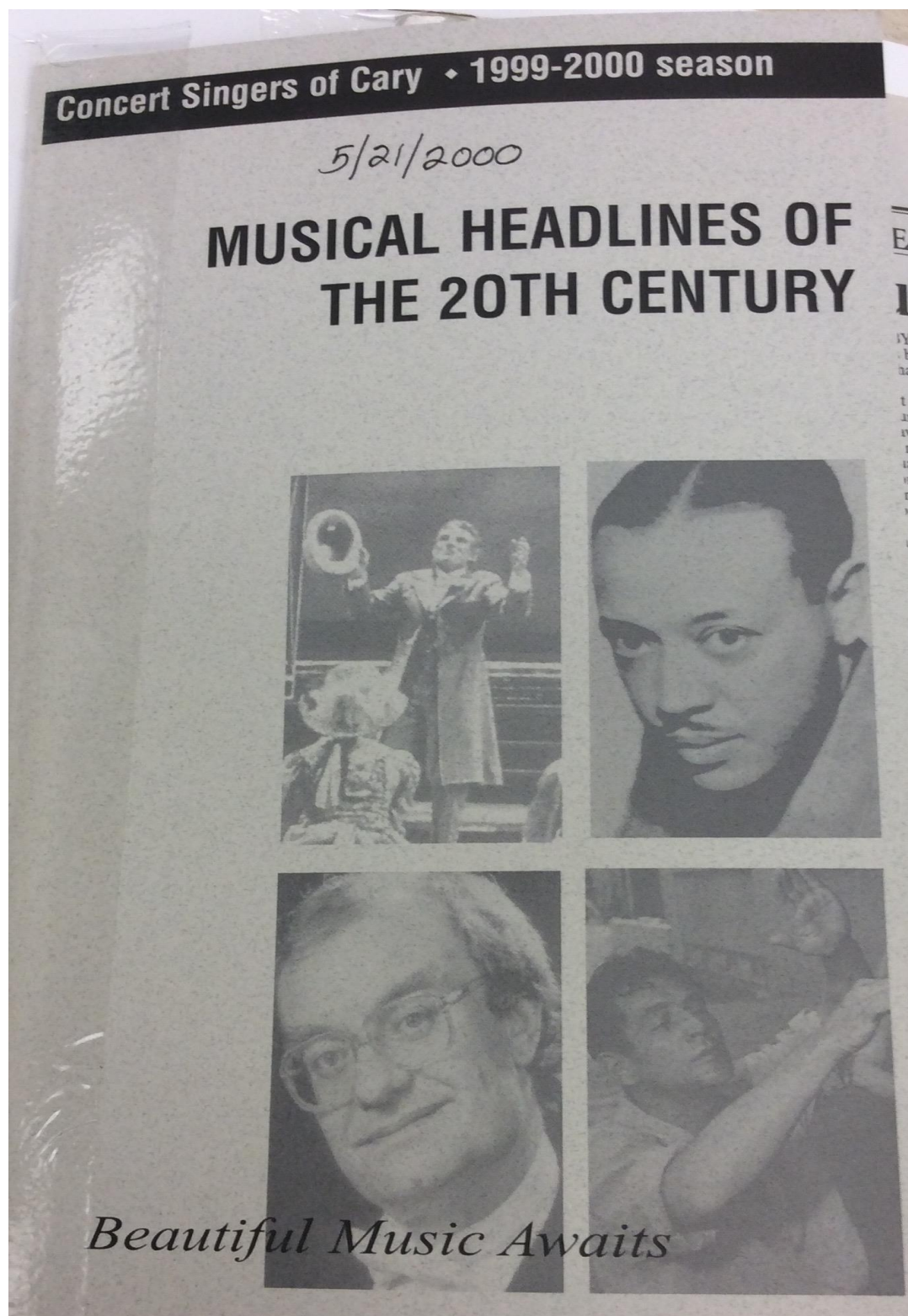
☞ CALL US AT 617-499-4868 ☞

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT AUDITIONING.

*Please turn the page quietly...*

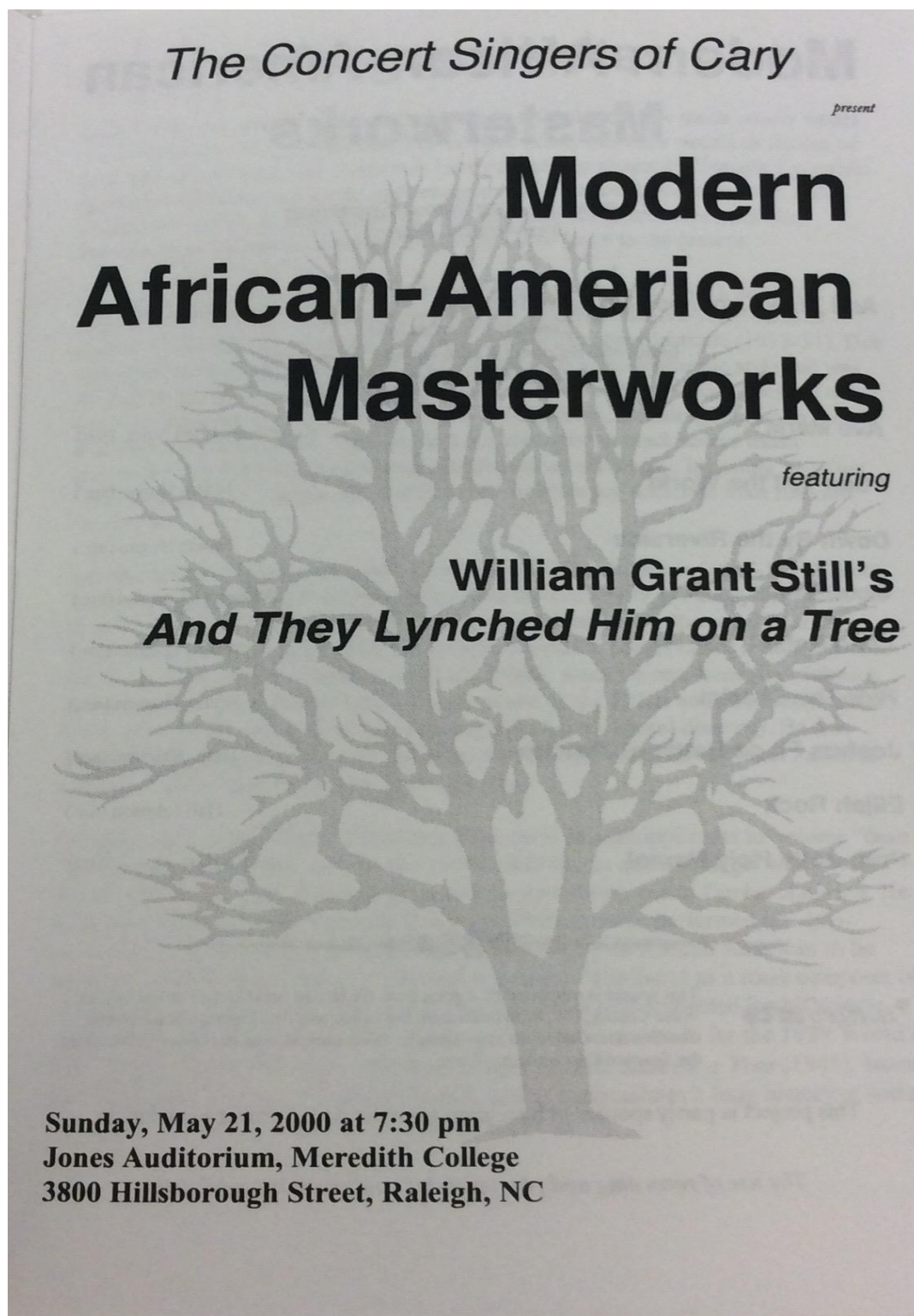
9

Coro Allegro, Concert Program  
 February 21, 1999  
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Concert Singers of Cary, Concert Program Cover  
May 21, 2000

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 99  
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Concert Singers of Cary, Concert Program Cover  
May 21, 2000


William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 99  
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# Modern African-American Masterworks

*Directed by Lawrence J. Speakman  
Jodi Adams, Pianist*

<b>And They Lynched Him on a Tree</b>	William Grant Still, 1941 Contralto: Sharyn Stith Incidental Soloists: Karen Bender, John Rowe Narrator: William Henry Curry
<b>Ave Maria</b>	R. Nathaniel Dett (arr.), 1930
<b>I Can Tell the World</b>	Moses Hogan (arr.)
<b>Down By the Riverside</b>	Moses Hogan (arr.)
<b>Good News</b>	William L. Dawson (arr.)
<b>I'm-a Rollin'</b>	Andre Thomas (arr.)
<b>Ride the Chariot</b>	Andre Thomas (arr.)
<b>Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho</b>	Jester Hairston (arr.)
<b>Elijah Rock</b>	Hall Johnson (arr.)
<b>Praise His Holy Name!</b>	Keith Hampton, 1988

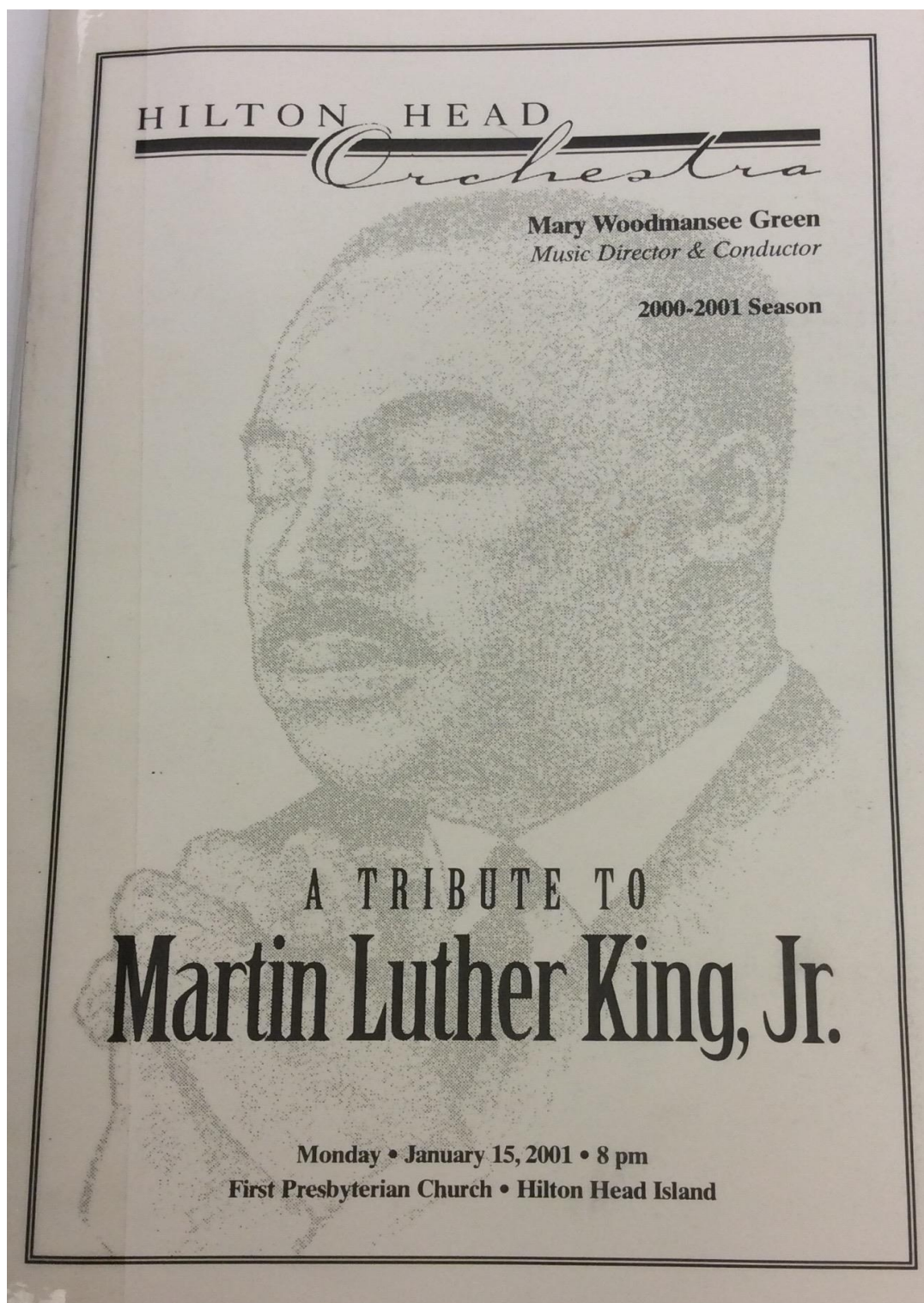
  
\*unitedarts

This project is supported by a grant from the United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County, Inc., with funds from the Grassroots Arts Program of the North Carolina Arts Council, a state agency. Additional funding has been received from the Town of Cary and Lazy Daze.

This project is partly sponsored by a grant from the A. J. Fletcher Foundation.

*The use of recording and photographic equipment is prohibited.*

Concert Singers of Cary, Concert Program  
May 21, 2000  
William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 99  
Used by Permission, Judith Anne Still



Hilton Head Orchestra, Concert Program Cover  
January 15, 2001

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 101, Part 1  
Used by Permission, Judith Anne Still

HILTON HEAD  
*Orchestra*  
 Mary Woodmansee Green, *Music Director & Conductor*  
 William Warfield, *Narrator*  
 Marietta Simpson, *Mezzo Soprano*  
 South Carolina State University Concert Choir  
 Arthur Evans, *Director*  
 Temple University Concert Choir  
 Alan Harler, *Director*  
 Monday, January 15, 2001 • 8 pm • First Presbyterian Church

A TRIBUTE TO  
**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

**PROGRAM**

WILSON      Fanfare

STILL        And They Lynched Him on a Tree  
 William Warfield, *Narrator*  
 Marietta Simpson, *Mezzo Soprano*  
 South Carolina State University and  
 Temple University Concert Choirs

BRAHMS     Alto Rhapsody  
 Marietta Simpson, *Mezzo Soprano*  
 Men of the  
 South Carolina State University and  
 Temple University Concert Choirs

12

Hilton Head Orchestra 2000-2001

Hilton Head Orchestra, Concert Program

January 15, 2001

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 101, Part 1

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## INTERMISSION

KAY Heralds II

MILHAUD *La Création du Monde*

HAILSTORK My Lord What a Mourning

Spirituals

South Carolina State University and

Temple University Concert Choirs

Arthur Evans and Alan Harler, *Directors*

Arr. RINGWALD We Shall Overcome  
Choirs and Audience

*Tonight's concert has been sponsored in part by...*

**FIRST  
UNION**<sup>®</sup>

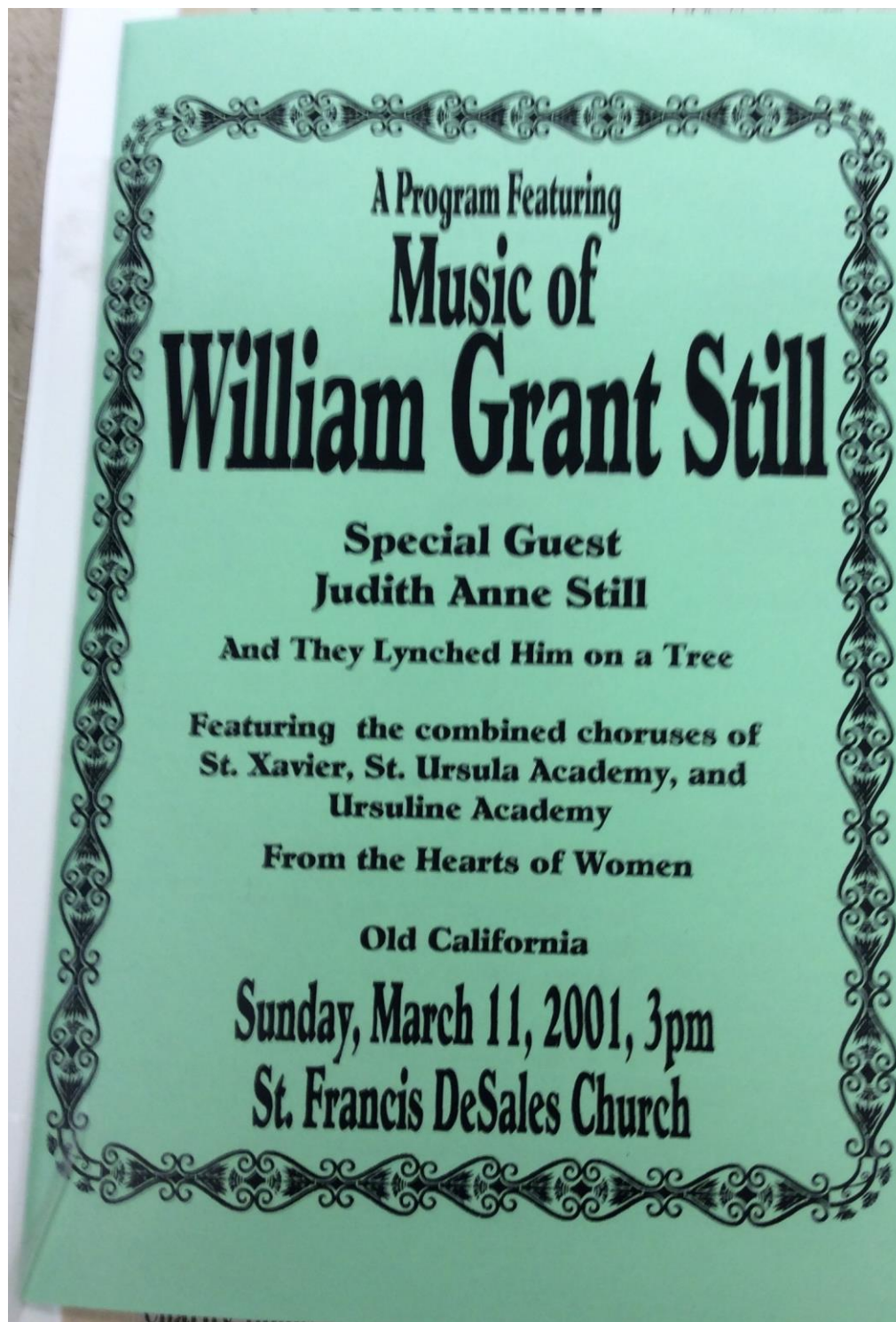
**THE ISLAND  
FUNERAL HOME  
AND CREMATORY**

Hilton Head Orchestra, Concert Program

January 15, 2001

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 101, Part 1

Used by Permission, Judith Anne Still



St. Frances DeSales Church, Concert Program Cover  
March 11, 2001

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 101, Part 2  
Used by Permission, Judith Anne Still

## **PROGRAM**

Sunday, March 11, 2001  
 St. Francis DeSales Church, Cincinnati, Ohio  
 Featuring works of  
 William Grant Still (1895-1978)  
 Special guest, Judith Anne Still

### ***Old California*** **(1941)**

**To honor the 160<sup>th</sup> Birthday of  
 the city of Las Angeles**  
 Members of the Orchestra

### ***From the Hearts of Women*** **(1959)**

#### **Poems by Verna Avery.**

1. Little Playmate
2. Midtide
3. Coquette
4. Bereft

Anne Simerlink, soprano  
 Orchestra  
 Paul Zappa, conductor

### ***And They Lynched Him on a Tree*** **(1941)**

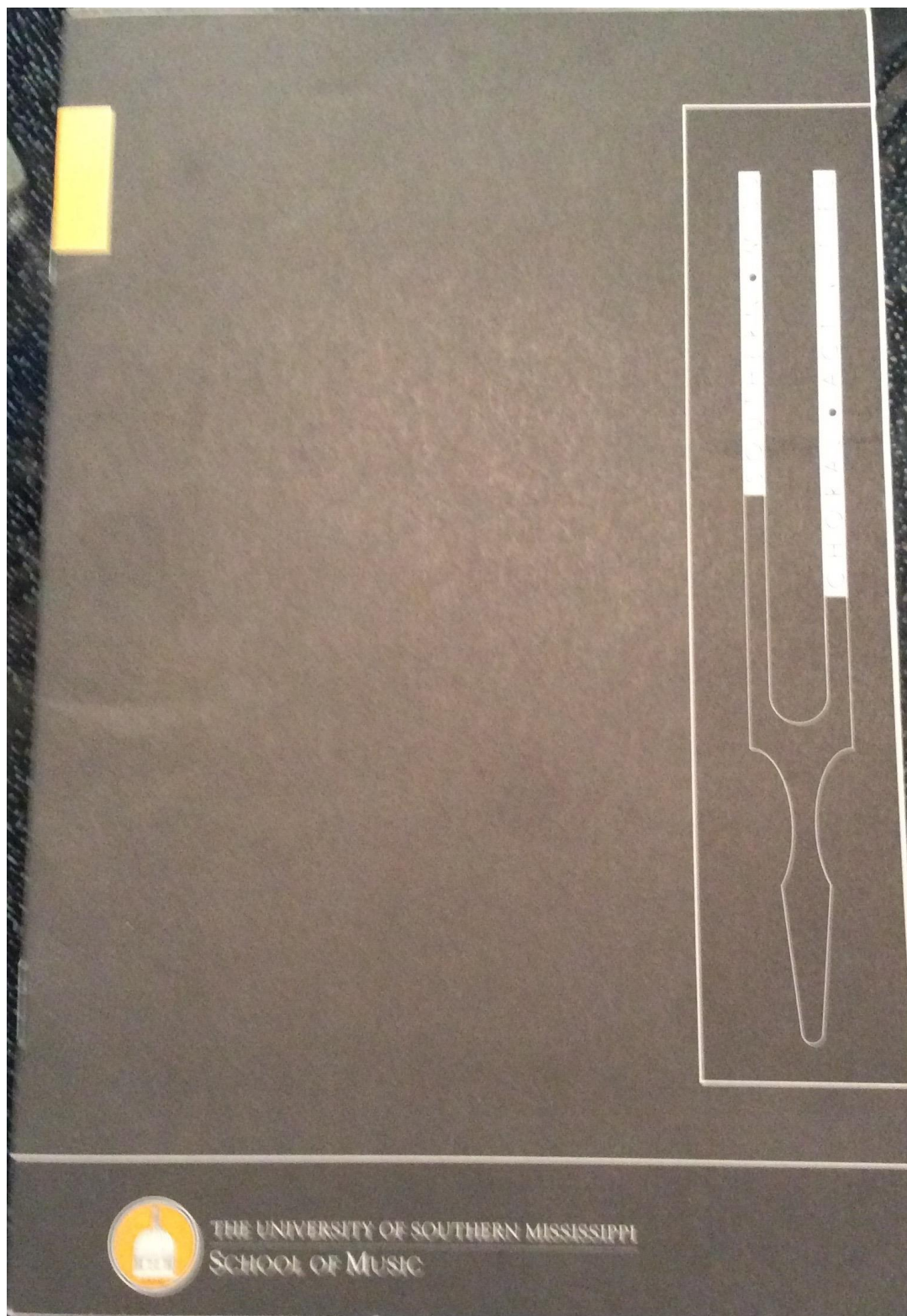
#### **Text by Katherine Garrison Chapin**

Mr. Edward, Rigaud, narrator  
 Mary Henderson Stucky, contralto  
 Sara Smithson, soprano  
 Brandon Hollihan, tenor

Ursuline Academy Select Choir,  
 Cheryl Raine, director;  
 St. Ursula Academy Freshman Chorus  
 Kathy Backherms, director  
 St. Xavier High School Men's Chorus  
 Paul Zappa director;

Frances DeSales Church, Concert Program  
 March 11, 2001

William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers MC 1125 Volume 101, Part 2  
 Used by Permission, Judith Anne Still



University of Southern Mississippi, Concert Program Cover  
April 14, 2009  
Personal file of the author

The University of Southern Mississippi  
College of Arts and Letters  
School of Music  
Choral Activities

present

## SOUTHERN CHAMBER SINGERS

Tracy Carter, David Dawson, Daniel Vernon  
and Harlan Zackery, Jr., conductors

## THE SOUTHERN CHORALE

Gregory Fuller, Conductor  
Assisted by  
Patricia Ramirez-Hacker, Daniel Vernon  
and Harlan Zackery, Jr.

and

## SPIRIT OF SOUTHERN

John Flanery, Director  
Assisted by  
Phillip McKibbin

Tuesday, April 14, 2009  
7:30 PM  
Bay Street Presbyterian Church

University of Southern Mississippi, Concert Program Cover  
April 14, 2009  
Personal file of the author



## PROGRAM

Magnificat

Antonio Vivaldi  
(1678-1741)

Lori Birrer, Trevor Smith, Ruben Vilchez, Jessica West,  
and Melissa Wozniak, soloists  
Harlan Zackery, Jr., organ  
Daniel Vernon, conductor

Magnificat

*My soul doth magnify the Lord.*

Et Exultavit

*And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.*

Et Misericordia

*And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.*

Fecit Potentiam

*He hath showed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.*

Deposuit

*He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek.*

Esurientes

*He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.*

Suscepit Israel

*He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel:*

Sicut Locutus

*As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for ever.*

Gloria

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

University of Southern Mississippi, Concert Program

April 14, 2009

Personal file of the author

From All-Night Vigil

Sergei Rachmaninoff  
(1873-1943)

IV. Svete tihy

Trevor Smith, soloist  
Daniel Vernon, conductor

*Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the Immortal One – the Heavenly Father, holy and blessed – O Jesus Christ! Now that we have come to the setting of the sun, and behold the light of evening, we praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – God. Thou art worthy at every moment to be praised in hymns by reverent voices. O Son of God, Thou are the Giver of Life; therefore all the world glorifies Thee.*

I. Priidite, poklofimsia

Patricia Ramirez-Hacker, conductor

*Come, let us worship God, our King. Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God. Come, let us worship and fall down before the very Christ, our King and our God. Come, let us worship and fall down before Him.*

From 3 Mottetti Latini (1982)

Niels la Cour

Hodie Christus natus est

David Dawson, conductor

*Today Christ is born: Today the Savior appeared:  
Today on Earth the Angels sing, Archangels rejoice:  
Today the righteous rejoice, saying: Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia.*

Psalm 23 (1999)

Ross C. Bernhardt

Tracy Carter, conductor

Salmo 23 (2009)

Ross C. Bernhardt

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul:  
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name sake.  
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil; for You are with me.  
Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies:  
You anoint my head with oil; my cup is overflowing,  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:  
And in the house of the Lord I will dwell forever. Amen.*

University of Southern Mississippi, Concert Program

April 14, 2009

Personal file of the author

Sabiá, coração de uma viola (1971) Aylton Escobar

Swing Down Chariot arranged by André Thomas

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing arranged Clif Duren

Brown Eyed-Girl arranged by Deke Sharon

Spirit of Southern

Here's One William Grant Still  
(1895-1978)

Courtney Rowe and Amanda Thomas, soloists  
Daniel Vernon, piano

And They Lynched Him on a Tree William Grant Still  
(1895-1978)

Ashley Henry, Chris Jennings, and Jessica West, soloists  
Mary Chung, piano  
Harlan Zackery, Jr. conductor

O Magnum Mysterium (1995) Morten Lauridsen

*O great mystery, and wondrous sacrament, that animals should see the newborn  
Lord, lying in their manger! Blessed is the virgin whose womb was worthy to bear  
the Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia!*

Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit Traditional Spiritual  
arranged by Moses Hogan  
(1957-2003)

Jennifer Hart, Frantz Salomon, and Trevor Smith, soloists

THIS RECITAL IS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF GRADUATE DEGREES IN CHORAL  
CONDUCTING FOR TRACY CARTER, DAVID DAWSON, PATRICIA RAMIREZ-HACKER,  
DANIEL VERNON, AND HARLAN ZACKERY, JR. ALL GRADUATE CONDUCTORS ARE IN THE  
STUDIO OF DR. GREGORY FULLER.

University of Southern Mississippi, Concert Program

April 14, 2009

Personal file of the author

## APPENDIX E

PERFORMANCES OF *...And They Lynched Him on a Tree*

June 25, 1940	New York, NY Artur Rodzinski, Conductor Schola Cantorum/Wen Talbot Negro Choir Abner Dorsey, Narrator Louise Burge, Contralto New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra
December, 1940	Howard University, Washington, DC. Exact date and performance details not known
June 23, 1941	New York, NY Hugh Ross, Conductor Abner Dorsey and George Headley, Narrators Louise Burge, Contralto Schola Cantorum/Eva Jessye Choir New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra
April 14, 1942	New York, NY Leopold Stokowski, conductor Lawrence Whisonant, narrator Louise Burge, contralto Collegiate Choir/Eva Jessye Choir NBC Symphony Orchestra
1944	Mexico City, Mexico Carlos Chavez, Conductor Exact date and performance details not known
1952	Los Angeles, CA Albert McNeil, Conductor Exact date and performance details not known
February 23, 1957	New York, NY David Katz, Conductor David Allen, Narrator Carol Brice, Contralto Westminster Interracial Fellowship Chorus Jonathan Brice, Piano
March 25, 1967	Beverly Hills, CA Albert J. McNeil, Conductor

- April 28, 1974      Los Angeles, CA  
Albert J. McNeil, Conductor  
Elmer Bush, Narrator  
Virginia White, Contralto  
East Los Angeles College Concert Choir/Los Angeles Jubilee  
Singers  
Pianist not known
- February 12/13, 1993      Albany, NY  
David Alan Miller, Conductor  
Robert C. Lamar, Narrator  
Marietta Simpson, Contralto  
Albany Pro Musica  
Albany Symphony Orchestra
- February 5/6, 1994      Princeton, NJ  
Frances Slade, Conductor  
Princeton Pro Musica
- January 14/16, 1995      Greensboro, NC  
Paul Anthony McRae, Conductor  
Howard Allen Chubbs, Narrator  
Elvira Green, Contralto  
The Bel Canto Company/Bennett College Choir and The North  
Carolina A & T State University Choir  
Greensboro Symphony Orchestra
- May 6, 1995      Philadelphia, PA  
Alan Harler, Conductor  
Charles Walker, Narrator  
Marietta Simpson, Contralto  
Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia/Bright Hope Baptist Church  
Celestial Choir  
Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia and John French, Organ
- January 23, 1996      Collins Classics  
Phillip Brunelle, Conductor  
William Warfield, Narrator  
Hilda Harris, Contralto  
Plymouth Music Singers/Leigh Morris Chorale  
Plymouth Music Players

- January 30, 1999      New Haven, CT  
Paul Mueller, Conductor  
Ben Harney, Narrator  
Kishna Davis, Contralto  
The New Haven Chorale/The Heritage Chorale  
For-Hire Orchestra
- February 21, 1999      Boston, MA  
David Hodgkins, Conductor  
Paul Parks, Jr., Narrator  
Marietta Simpson, Contralto  
Coro Allegro/The Heritage Chorale  
Darryl Hollister, Piano
- May 21, 2000          Raleigh, NC  
Lawrence J. Speakman, Conductor  
William Henry Curry, Narrator  
Sharyn Stith, Contralto  
Concert Singers of Cary/Additional Singers from the Community  
Jodi Adams, Piano
- January 15, 2001      Hilton Head Island, SC  
Mary Woodmansee Green, Conductor  
William Warfield, Narrator  
Marietta Simpson, Contralto  
Hilton Head Orchestra
- March 11, 2001        Cincinnati, OH  
Paul Zappa, Conductor  
Edwin Rigaud, Narrator  
Mary Henderson-Stucky, Contralto  
St. Ursula Academy Freshmen Chorus, St. Xavier High School  
Men's Chorus and Ursuline Academy Select Choir  
Orchestra, not known
- March 21, 2001        Phoenix, AZ  
Scott Youngs, Conductor  
Soloist and Narrator, not known  
All Saints' Episcopal Church Choir/First Institutional Baptist  
Church Choir  
Pianist, not known

April 4/5, 2008	Bloomington, IN Mark Brennan Doerries Soloist and Narrator, not known Ensemble, not known Accompaniment, not known
April 14/24, 2009	Hattiesburg, MS Harlan Zackery, Jr., Conductor Chris Jennings, Narrator Ashley N. Henry, Contralto The Southern Chorale Mary Chung Feller, Piano
February 11/12, 2011	Boulder, CO Fred Peterbark, Conductor Soloist and Narrator, not known Ensemble, not known Pianist, not known
January 19, 2015	Putney, VT Cailin Marcel Manson, Conductor Soloist and Narrator, not known The Putney School Madrigals/Germantown Concert Chorus Putney Community Orchestra
October 10, 2015	East Lansing, MA Brandon Williams, Conductor Kevin McBeth, Narrator Rosetta Sellers-Varela, Contralto Selected music students of Michigan State University For-Hire Orchestra
Date Unknown	Grand Rapids, MI Conductor, not known Narrator and Soloist, not known East Congregational United Church of Christ Choir West Wind Quintet Pianist, not known
Date unknown	Ann Arbor, MI Conductor, not known Narrator, not known Marietta Simpson, Contralto Ensemble, not known Accompaniment, not known

Date unknown      Princeton, NJ  
Donald Dumpson, Conductor  
Samar Newsome, Narrator  
Kimberley King Harley, Contralto  
Westminster Jubilee Singers  
Pianist, not known



## APPENDIX F

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | [www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board](http://www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board)**NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.  
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 15072701

PROJECT TITLE: A Reception History of and Conductor's Guide to William Grants Still's...*And they Lynched Him on a Tree*

PROJECT TYPE: New Project

RESEARCHER(S): Harlan Zackery, Jr.

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Arts and Letters

DEPARTMENT: Music

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 07/28/2015 to 07/27/2016

**Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.****Institutional Review Board**

## APPENDIX G

## PERMISSION TO USE IMAGES

Jackson State University - Employees Mail - Permission to use images

3/6/16, 8:24 PM



Harlan Zackery &lt;j00382534@jsums.edu&gt;

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**Permission to use images**

**Headlee, Lisa** <LHeadlee@swog.org>  
To: "harlan.zackery@jsums.edu" <harlan.zackery@jsums.edu>

Thu, Oct 1, 2015 at 9:40 AM

Harlan,

Thanks for sending these images. Judith Anne Still has granted you permission to use the images for your dissertation. Also, if you have any other images of the music typewriter, that show all of the typewriter, we would like to have them for our archives. We don't have any recent photos of the music typewriter.

Lisa Headlee

---

**From:** harlan.zackery [mailto:harlan.zackery@jsums.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2015 11:11 AM  
**To:** Headlee, Lisa <LHeadlee@swog.org>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Permission to use images

[Quoted text hidden]

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