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### Black Music Research Newsletter, Summer 1979

Samuel Floyd

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# Black Music Research

# Newsletter

Fisk University



Volume 3

Number 1

Summer, 1979

## FROM THE EDITOR

\*Aside from the general histories, the great majority of books relating to black American music have been written by white Americans. The fact that the writers of the most important of these works could have achieved success in other areas of scholarship, or had already done so, is an indication of the importance and fascination of black music research. We applaud the contributions of these writers; their work is appreciated by all scholars who necessarily depend, to some extent, upon the prior work of others for the efficiency of their own productivity. At the same time, it is lamentable that few truly important books on the music of black Americans have been written by black scholars; it is unfortunate that so few black music students are encouraged to include in their college work some preparation for scholarly inquiry in this important field of study. The absence of such encouragement is reflected in the paucity of qualified black graduate students who are interested in advanced research work in black music.

There appear to be three primary reasons for this state of affairs:

(1) some black students naturally have interests in other areas of music, (2) some capable students feel that black music research is a low-prestige endeavor, and (3) in our colleges and universities, emphasis is placed on the development of music performance skills at the expense of scholarship, resulting in narrow and one-sided training which inhibits--even prohibits--the development of the research skills and interests necessary for the pursuit of alternative means of self-fulfillment.

For the sake of preserving and fully documenting the musical history of black Americans, it is important, even indispensable, to encourage and to prepare students for research in this field. Active scholars are acutely aware of the large amount of work to be done; potential black scholars should be encouraged to do it. Early familiarity with research techniques, sources, tools, and procedures special to black music research is indispensable to the development of young scholars. The preparation of black youth for research productivity can have a significant impact on the field; it is unfortunate that such students generally are not motivated to pursue the specific training necessary for the efficient discovery and production of knowledge. But the situation will improve in the near future. The fact that several black scholars are preparing significant works for future publication means that this area of scholarship will become more attractive to potential black scholars.

RESEARCH NEWS; QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- \*Paul Garon, of Chicago, is compiling an annotated bibliography of books on blues, and needs titles of obscure monographs and foreign books on the subject. He would also appreciate receiving titles of blues novels, discographies, booklets, and pamphlets. Mr. Garon's address is 2615 North Wilton, Chicago, Illinois 60614.
- \*Jeffrey P. Green, of West Sussex, England, would like to receive information about Benjamin Brawley, the author of The Negro Genius. Mr. Green is particularly interested in Brawley's activities between 1908 and 1927. Mr. Green may be contacted at 18 Batemans Court, Forestfield, Furnace Green, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6PS, England.
- \*Willie Scott, of Carbondale, Illinois, is seeking information concerning music which was published in the United States, prior to 1860, by any black person or organization. Mr. Scott may be reached at Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois 62901.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION

- \*The John F. Kennedy Center and its National Black Commission are sponsoring the National Black Music Colloquium and Competition. This new project is designed to find talented young pianists and string players across the U. S. and provide them with a unique opportunity to gain national recognition. Prizes total \$10,000 and regional auditions are scheduled for September in Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York and St. Louis. Two national winners--a pianist and a string player--will receive \$2,000 each and be featured in a joint concert at the Center's new Terrace Theater. Regional winners will receive \$500 each.

To be eligible, artists must not have reached their 36th birthday by application deadline date, August 1, 1979, and must be prepared to present a solo recital drawn from standard repertory and music of black composers. For further information about the National Black Music Colloquium and Competition, entry forms and guidelines, contact Project Coordinator, Mrs. Doris O'Connell, National Music Council, 250 West 57th Street, New York, New York 10019.

- \*Duke Ellington In Person, by Mercer Ellington and Stanley Dance, this year received ASCAP's Deems Taylor Award.
- \*Blues and the Poetic Spirit: A Psycho/Poetic Study, by Paul Garon, soon will be released in a trade paper edition by Da Capo Press.
- \*David Chertok's film, A Capsule History of Black Music, is available for showing. Consisting of approximately 300 hours of jazz performances, it ostensibly includes footage on almost every jazz musician who has ever appeared on film or television. Mr. Chertok's July showings are: July 8-12--Montreux, July 13-15--North Sea Festival at The Hague, Holland, and July 17-25--Antibes, Juan Les Pins. To arrange showings contact Mr. Chertok through Sherman Ginsberg Film Libraries, Inc., 630 9th Avenue, New York, New York 10036.

\*Recently, Alton Augustus Adams and Marian Anderson were awarded the degrees Doctor of Humane Letters by Fisk University. Both honorees were present at Fisk's 105th commencement exercises on May 7, 1979.

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This bibliography has been compiled with the cooperation of the scholars who responded to our request in the last issue of BMR NEWSLETTER. The means by which the list was developed precludes completeness and a fine degree of accuracy; it is only meant to be representative of the type of research activity which is current in the field of black American music.

Because of space and format considerations, submitted items such as book reviews, titles of compositions, arrangements, and sound-recordings are not included. Also excluded are items for which bibliographic data was not provided, and publications whose relationship to black music is not apparent. Some of these items, however, have been mentioned elsewhere in this issue. In some cases, submitted lists contained more items than we could include, so that we found it necessary to select representative items. This compilation represents only a sample of the available contemporary output. Dominique-René de Lerma's forthcoming book, The Legacy of Black Music; A Bibliography, will be a comprehensive work which will well meet the need for a research tool of this type. We are looking forward to it.

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