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BLACK MUSIC RESEARCH

NEWSLETTER



COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO

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Chicago's Jazz Trail: 1893-1950

by Dempsey J. Travis, Chicago, Illinois

Chicago's 1893 World Columbian Exposition was the magnet that attracted hundreds of black itinerant musicians, entertainers, intellectuals, and hustlers to its doorsteps. They all came to Abraham Lincoln's city by the lake in search of opportunities to display their talents. Talented individuals, such as W. C. Handy, the father of the blues, Scott Joplin, the king of ragtime, Frederick Douglass, the abolitionist and author, Bert Williams, the master comic, Ida B. Wells, the freedom fighter, James Weldon Johnson, author and musician, W. E. B. DuBois, author and black liberation leader, Paul Laurence Dunbar, the poet, and Jesse Binga, Chicago's first black banker, left their footprints on the steps of the Haitian Pavilion, the center of black entertainment on the Columbian Exposition grounds—what today is Jackson Park.

The Haitian Pavilion was an incubator for jazz music; it was there that Scott Joplin and others discovered that many of their fellow black musicians had developed musical skills in isolation from each other in various sections of the country and had created an original art form that had common elements endemic to black life styles.

Scott Joplin was overwhelmed when he first heard the W. C. Handy Orchestra, at the Haitian Pavilion, play arrangements that incorporated elements of both Memphis and Mississippi ragtime. In addition, he marveled at the piano technique and style of such musicians as Arthur Marshall and Louis Chauvin, two of Chicago's best-known bawdy house piano players. Joplin was inspired by Chicago's awesome musical environment. As a matter of fact, whenever he felt physically

or mentally drained while working in Sedalia or St. Louis, he would return to Chicago to be rejuvenated by the beauty of Lake Michigan, the smell of the stockyards, and the sounds of the honky tonks in the red-light district.

Scott Joplin's last-known Chicago address in 1899 was 2840 Armour Avenue (now named Dearborn Street). Armour Avenue was one block west of State Street, the street that inspired Shelton Brooks to write "Darktown Strutters' Ball." In 1917 Joplin frequently strolled from his small apartment over to State Street, where he heard strains of his "Maple Leaf Rag" floating out of the windows of the houses of joy on hot summer evenings as it was being played on the pianolas.

Scott Joplin was the undisputed

Continued on page 2

Announcing . . .

In 1988 the Center's publications program will see several changes. *Black Music Research Journal*, which has been an annual publication, will now appear twice yearly, in spring and fall.

Black Music Research Newsletter has grown in length and changed in character so that it is no longer really a newsletter. Beginning with the next issue—Vol. 10, No. 1—*Newsletter* will become *Black Music Research Bulletin*. In addition to the title change, the content will reflect the publication's trend toward more substantive, preliminary research articles and columns. The newsy columns will appear in a new publication, issued free of charge to all of the Center's subscribers and patrons, to be titled *CBMR Digest*. This new publication will also contain more information about the Center for Black Music Research and its activities.

Simultaneously with these increases in the number and frequency of the Center's publications comes a rate increase. The subscription rate for *BMR Journal* in 1988 will be \$15.00 for domestic subscribers and \$20.00 for foreign subscribers; the new rates for *BMR Bulletin* will be \$3.00 for domestic subscribers and \$5.00 for foreign subscribers.

It is our hope that these changes will result in a greater ability to serve the needs of our constituency.

Jazz Trail, *continued*

king of ragtime composers and piano players. However, the bridge between ragtime and jazz was built by one of his young admirers, Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton, who also spent a great deal of time on Chicago's State Street. Joplin, Morton, and Porter King collaborated on a work called "King Porter Stomp." The tune was named in honor of King after the deaths of both Joplin and King. However, "King Porter Stomp" was not immortalized until 1924 when it was recorded in Chicago by King Joe Oliver, Louis Armstrong's mentor. It was recorded again the following year by the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra. However, it was Chicagoan Benny Goodman's 1935 rendition of the Fletcher Henderson arrangement that gave the tune national prominence.

State Street and its environs were training grounds in jazz for white musicians such as Benny Goodman, Bix Beiderbecke, Tommy Dorsey, Paul Whiteman, Red Norvo, and Bunny Berigan. One of State Street's earliest jazz laboratories opened its doors on June 18, 1905. It was Bob Mott's Pekin Temple of Music, which was located at 2700 South State Street. Shelton Brooks was working at the Pekin in 1910 when he created the words and music to his famous song "Some of These Days," which was later adopted by Sophie Tucker as her theme song.

The prototype for high-class black and tan (black and white) cabarets of the 1920s and 1930s was opened in 1912 by Jack Johnson, the world's first black heavyweight boxing champion. Johnson's club was located just four blocks south of the Pekin at 42 West 31st Street. Black and white musicians gathered at Johnson's Cafe De Champion to hear the latest red hot jazz music.

Two main jazz arteries branched off South State Street; they were 31st and 35th streets. Both streets were heavily sprinkled with cabarets and dance halls such as the Royal Garden on 31st near Grand Boulevard (the name was officially changed to South Parkway in 1923 and to Martin Luther King Drive in 1968), where Louis Armstrong initially joined the King Oliver Orchestra in July 1922.

Thirty-fifth Street competed favora-

bly with State Street for the trade of the after-sunset merrymakers. It had the Entertainers' Cafe located at 209 East 35th Street, where Clarence Muse, who later became one of Hollywood's black movie star legends in his lifetime, did shows that featured artists such as the beautiful Marian Harrison, who was supported by a dozen other top-notch acts. Down the street at 315 East 35th Street, on the southwest corner of Calumet Avenue, was the Sunset Cafe, where Carroll Dickerson and his sixteen-piece orchestra played music for an all-star review. Featured was the diminutive and dynamic Frankie "Halfpint" Jackson, who scatted and cavorted across the stage with a rhythmic background support of ten beautiful, "high-yellow" chorus girls.

Diagonally across the street from the Sunset Cafe was the Plantation Cafe at 338 East 35th Street, a popular black and tan cabaret known for its heavy drinkers and all-night dancers. A large number of white students from the universities frequented all of the South Side's black and tan nightclubs. These nightclubs were the musical homes of such stars as Earl Hines, Cab Calloway, Eddie South, Ethel Waters, Blanche Calloway, Alberta Hunter, and the Sammy Stewart Orchestra.

In addition to State Street being the center of the cabaret district, it was also the "Broadway of the Black Belt." There were fifteen vaudeville and movie houses between 31st and 35th on State Street. Even the smallest theater hired at least one pianist or organ player to accompany the silent pictures. As a matter of fact, the late Count Basie worked in Chicago in the early twenties as an organist at one of the State Street theaters. In contrast, the larger houses, like the Vendome Theatre at 3145 South State Street, employed Erskine Tate and his thirteen-piece symphonic jazz orchestra along with such stars as Teddy Weatherford, who was considered the champ of the ivories. Prior to Earl Hines's arrival in Chicago, Fats Waller was also an intermission organist for the Tate band at the Vendome Theatre. Directly across the street was the Grand Theater, which was considered the home of vaudeville acts such as Butterbeans and Susie and such great blues beltors as Mamie Smith, Bessie

Smith, and Clara Smith. Just a couple of blocks south, at 3435 South State Street, was the Monogram Theatre, where Ma Rainey was featured with such acts as Sleepy Harris and Stovepipe Johnson—major stars of that period. On the other hand, the State Theatre at 3509 South State Street was strictly a movie house. The management employed a pianist and a drummer to play mood music to enliven the action of the silent films.

The decision to relocate Chicago's black jazz scene from the 3000 block on South State to 47th and South Parkway (King Drive) was made in the fall of 1926 by a small syndicate of white, New York investors who had reaped huge profits from their newly-built Savoy Ballroom, located in the heart of New York City's Harlem. The Savoy Ballroom, which later became known as "The Home of Happy Feet," was reputed to be the largest ballroom in America, white or black; it covered the entire block between 140th and 141st Street on Lenox Avenue. Since Chicago offered the country's second highest concentration of urban blacks, the New York investors decided to build a Midwest Savoy.

Chicago's beautiful Savoy Ballroom opened on Thanksgiving Day, 1927, with two red-hot musical aggregations: Charles Elgar's eighteen-piece



Erskine Tate

The Negro in Chicago, 1779-1929, vol. 2 (Chicago: Washington Intercollegiate Club of Chicago, [1929]). Courtesy, Vivian Harsh Collection of the Carter G. Woodson Regional Library, Chicago Public Library.

orchestra and Clarence Black's fourteen-piece band with strings. Ethel Waters was the guest soloist on the Saturday evening following the grand opening. On February 4, 1928, the Moorish-architecture-influenced, 3500-red-plush-seat Regal Theater opened right next door at 4719 South Parkway (King Drive) with two large bands—Fess Williams on the stage and Dave Peyton in the orchestra pit.

In the meantime, the brand new Earl Hines Orchestra opened the Al Capone-controlled Grand Terrace Cafe at 39th and South Parkway. By the spring of 1928 Chicago's major jazz scene had shifted from 35th Street to 47th and South Parkway. There were 140 black musicians representing at least ten orchestras working full-time within a radius of 160 feet from the southeast corner of 47th and South Parkway.

Between 1928 and 1948 every "name" jazz orchestra and act in America played the Regal Theater or the Savoy Ballroom and sometimes both. The long list of great talents included the Mills Brothers, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Duke Ellington, Jimmie Lunceford, Nat "King" Cole, Noble Sissle, the Whitman Sisters, Chilton and Thomas, the Nicholas Brothers, Don Redman, Claude Hopkins, Fats Waller, Benny Goodman, Lucky Millinder, Charlie Barnet, Gene Krupa, Lionel Hampton, Count Basie, Sammy Davis, Jr., John Kirby, and thousands of others.

The Garfield Boulevard (55th Street) jazz scene was developing at the same time the Regal and Savoy were moving into high gear on 47th Street. The most famous club on 55th Street was



Walter Barnes' Brunswick Recording Orchestra

Members of the Orchestra (Left to Right): George Thigpen, 1st cornet; Leon Scott, 2nd cornet; Edward Burke, 1st trombone; Wm. Bradley, 2nd trombone; Irby Gage, reeds and flute; Lucius Wilson, reeds and flute; Wilson Underwood, reeds and flute; P. Johnson, piano, organ, accordion; Richard Bates, banjo and violin; Wm. Winsor, drums and xylophone; Lewis Thompson, tuba and bass violin.

The Negro in Chicago, 1779-1929, vol. 2 (Chicago: Washington Intercollegiate Club of Chicago, [1929]). Courtesy, Vivian Harsh Collection of the Carter G. Woodson Regional Library, Chicago Public Library.

the Club DeLisa. The club opened for the World's Fair of 1933 in May of that year and kept its doors open twenty-four hours a day for the next twenty-five years. Visiting Club DeLisa was on the "must" list of every celebrity who came to Chicago. The many stars who could be found seated ringside at Club DeLisa on various occasions included Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Paul Robeson, John Barrymore, George Raft, Pat O'Brien, Sidney Poitier, Louis Armstrong, and hundreds of others. The club's entertainment menu was among the best in town

because it included such stars as Joe Williams, the Stepp Brothers, the Albert Ammons Orchestra, and the Red Saunders Orchestra, just to mention a few. There were other famous clubs on Garfield Boulevard, staffed with great bands and shows, such as the Rhumboogie, the Hurricane, Club 65, the It Club, and White's Emporium, where the great Coleman Hawkins held forth when he returned to Chicago from Europe in 1941.

From 1893 to 1950 there was not a single city in America that could compete with the Chicago jazz scene.

Black Concert Music in Chicago, 1890 to the 1930s

by Ellistine Perkins Holly, Jackson State University

Black concert life in early twentieth-century Chicago was an interesting mix of church Lyceum and Sunday Clubs, jubilee troupes, dramatic and music concert companies, choral clubs, and, occasionally, theater concerts and reci-

tals. Concert-goers could look forward to big events such as concerts by nationally known black "prima donnas," black army bands, and large traveling shows. Churches in Chicago's black community date from the founding in 1847 of Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church, which was active in the underground railroad. Later, the Quinn, Bethel A.M.E., Olivet Baptist, Grace Presbyterian, St. Marks M.E., and Institutional

churches promoted cultural activities and sponsored concerts and recitals by black artists. Olivet had a Choral Study Club as early as 1878 (Trotter 1969, 321-323).

In 1900 Pedro T. Tinsley (1856-1921) organized a Choral Study Club that had its home at Institutional Church, founded by Reverdy Ransom in that

Research for this article was begun during the summer of 1985 when the author participated in an NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers held at the Center for Black Music Research.

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Concert Music, *continued*

Major N. Clark Smith

The Negro in Chicago, 1779-1929, vol. 2 (Chicago: Washington Intercollegiate Club of Chicago, [1929]). Courtesy, Vivian Harsh Collection of the Carter G. Woodson Regional Library, Chicago Public Library.

same year (Ransom 1944, 19). The purpose of Tinsley's club was "to maintain a chorus for the study and performance of modern works, as well as to present the great choral compositions of the best masters, assisted by prominent soloists of the race" ("Art and Music" 1912, 231). The Club sang works by Handel, Coleridge-Taylor, Dubois, Cowan, Gall, and other noted composers. Kemper Harreld (1885-1971) was the first conductor of the Choral Club orchestra, and N. Clark Smith (1877-1933) served as one of its directors (see photograph above). In 1912 the group sponsored local and national artists at Institutional Church, among them tenor Roland Hayes. The *Chicago Defender* covered the activities of the group until it disbanded in 1927, having had on the club roster such names as Robert Abbott (founder of the *Chicago Defender*), Anita Patti Brown, Walter Gossett, and Maude Robert George (Southern 1982, 376).

"The June Rose Concert," one of the earliest of Chicago's black concert events, originated in 1926 at Quinn Chapel. In its first concerts the Society

presented talented artists to raise funds for the purchase of an organ from the German Building at the Columbian Exposition of 1893. Thus began an annual event featuring black artists such as actor Richard B. Harrison, singer Sissieretta Jones, and violinist Felix Weir (King [n.d.]).

Chicago's choirs became synonymous with good choral singing. Some of the early choral directors were: Marion R. Adams, Martha Anderson, George R. Garner (1890-1971), James Mundy (1886-1978), Edward F. Morris, N. Clark Smith, T. Theodore Taylor (1885-1965), and Richard Kelly. The Chicago Umbrian Male Glee Club, founded in 1895 at Bethel A.M.E. Church and still active today as a concert group, is the oldest black group of its kind in the United States. Arthur A. Brown and the group's other founders conceived the Club "to enrich the community through the medium of fine choral music" (Chicago Umbrian Male Glee Club). The literature performed by the Glee Club represented a wide range of styles, including works by J. S. Bach, Handel, Sibelius, Mozart, and Beethoven, as well as Afro-American spirituals arranged by R. Nathaniel Dett (1882-1943), Harry T. Burleigh (1866-1949), Hall Johnson (1888-1970), and William L. Dawson (b. 1899). Lighter repertoire included folk songs and operetta choruses (Chicago Umbrian Male Glee Club; "History of Music in Chicago").

Chicago's Pekin Theater became a center of musical activity in the black community early in the twentieth century. A number of Pekin musicians were college- and university-trained, and others had studied at leading conservatories and with private teachers. For many, the Pekin years, beginning in 1905, provided valuable training and experience for their later accomplishments. Among the musicians who performed there were Will Marion Cook (1869-1944), Shelton Brooks (1886-1975), James "Tim" Brymn (1881-1946), Abbie Mitchell (1884-1960), Flournoy Miller (1887-1971) and Aubrey Lyles (1883-1932), Oliver Perry, William Tyler, Joe Jordan (1882-1971), H. Lawrence Freeman (1869-1954), and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Hart (Southern 1983, 347-348; "The Pekin Theater").

William H. Hackney's All Colored

Composers Concerts of 1913-1916 brought black artists and composers from other cities to Chicago; the aim of the concerts was "to exploit the creative talents of the Negro, so that when the music of this country, known as American Music, has reached a high plane of development, the Negro can show that he has had a part in its making" ("All Colored Composers Concerts" 1916, 9).

Composer DeKoven Thompson (1879-1934) came to Chicago in 1881 from St. Louis, Missouri. His ballads for solo voice were popular during his day and included titles such as "Love Come But Once," "A Heart Disclosed," and "If I Forget." Lyrics for many of his songs were written by Alfred Anderson, who collaborated with the composer to write "Dear Lord Remember Me" ("James DeKoven Thompson" 1913, 6; Woods 1916, 15-16; Hare 1974, 227).

Emma Azalia Hackley (1867-1922), soprano, devoted her later career to organizing and conducting "Black Folk Song Festivals" and promoting black vocal artists (Holly 1978, 43-45). Two of her students, Florence Cole Talbert (1890-1969) and Cleota Collins Lacey (1893-1976), were prominent on Chicago's concert stages. Talbert received the Diamond Medal in 1916 from Chicago Musical College; Collins, a native of Ohio, began teaching at black colleges after her retirement from the concert stage ("Art and Music" 1919, 287; "Florence Cole Talbert" 1916, 9).

Marian Anderson (b. 1902), contralto, appeared in Chicago in 1922 as a soloist with the Umbrian Male Glee Club. While in the city, she received a scholarship from the National Association of Negro Musicians and performed a program of Schubert songs with Cleota Collins. Her next visit was in 1929 at Orchestra Hall (Holt 1922, 5).

Early Chicago singers were not very successful in their efforts to enter the field of opera in the United States, but they did perform opera abroad. Mayne Calloway-Bryon, soprano, took her operatic training abroad and performed with opera companies in Munich and Dresden. Florence Cole Talbert sang the title role of Verdi's *Aida* in Cozenza, Italy, in 1927 (Hare 1974, 369). La Julia Rhea (b. ca. 1908) made her soprano debut in Kimball

Hall in 1929, and eight years later she and William Franklin (b. 1906) made their operatic debuts in *Aida* in Chicago—Rhea in the title role and Franklin as Amonasro (Southern 1983, 407-408; Lucas 1940).

Pedro T. Tinsley, N. Clark Smith, E. Azalia Hackley, and James A. Mundy were all pioneer musicians in Chicago, their careers spanning the period 1880-1978 (Buckner 1985, 36-42; Robb 1927, 47; "The Vocal Teacher" 1916, 6). Tinsley arrived in Chicago sometime during the 1880s and began performing as a cornetist and as baritone soloist on local concerts. He soon became one of the most sought-after voice teachers, according to the *Broad Ax* and the *Chicago Defender*. His vocal manual, *Tone Placing and Voice Development*, was advertised in the *Crisis* ("Of Interest to Vocal Students" 1912, 265).

N. Clark Smith is listed in the *Colored People's Blue Book and Business Directory* (Bethea 1905) as the director of the Chicago Jubilee Choir and Symphony Orchestra, Bethel Choir, Ladies' Mandolin Club, 8th Regimental Band, Quinn Chapel Sunday School, and Ladies' Orchestra (see accompanying photograph). Smith left Chicago in 1907 for a teaching position at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, and

there is no evidence that the Symphony continued thereafter as a group. But extant sources show several orchestras in existence during the next two decades. Kemper Harreld was listed as the orchestra conductor in the "Official Program of the National Half-Century Anniversary Exposition" (1915). Charles Elgar founded the Elgar Orchestra about 1917, and in the 1920s and early 1930s, Harrison Ferrell organized the Ferrell Symphony Orchestra. Smith returned to Chicago in 1916 to organize the band, orchestra, and chorus for the Pullman Company (Handy 1981, 4, 8, 71).

Mme. E. Azalia Hackley had become very familiar to Chicago's black concert community by the time of her "Retiring Song Recital and Vocal Demonstration" at Orchestra Hall in 1911 (Holly 1978). Aware of the musical needs of Chicago's growing black population, Hackley had opened the Normal Vocal Institute in 1914 in Chicago "to teach vocal teachers and train voices for concert work" (Henry 1939b; "Mme. E. Azalia Hackley" 1914, 6). The Institute closed sometime during 1916 or 1917, but Hackley's vision of a music school for aspiring black performers was later realized by one of her students. Pauline James

Lee founded the Chicago University of Music, which had on its faculty N. Clark Smith, Florence Cole Talbert, Clarence Cameron White (1880-1960), Hazel Harrison (1883-1969), and other black musicians. The school was highly respected in the Chicago community and continued instruction into the late twenties (Harrison 1939; Didier 1922, 6).

For almost seventy-five years, James A. Mundy, choral director, composer, and arranger, influenced the high quality of choral singing in Chicago. Mundy organized several semiprofessional singing groups, directed church choirs, and was a founder of early black opera groups. His community choral groups performed oratorios in Chicago's concert halls, often accompanied by members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Mundy's Federal Singers were very active between 1937 and 1939 as a part of the Chicago Federal Arts Project, singing opera selections, traditional choral music, and spirituals on concert programs in the city (Lewis 1940; "Composers Forum Programs"; Southern 1982, 284).

Other Chicago musical pioneers were Albert and Arthur Dunham, father and uncle of dancer Katherine Dunham. Both men were instrumentalists and charter members of the Umbrian Male Glee Club ("Sunday Club Musicale" 1901, 3; Beckford 1979, 12). Violinists Felix Weir (1884-1978), Harrison Emmanuel, Kemper Harreld, and their contemporary N. Clark Smith were young music students in 1900. They studied at the Chicago Musical College and with private teachers and were also involved in the musical activities of the black community.

After a short period of study in Germany, Weir returned and began playing in local string ensembles. He assisted Samuel Coleridge-Taylor in his recitals in the United States in 1906 and performed with Mme. Hackley and with pianist Mary Europe during 1907 in Washington, D.C. Weir moved to Washington about 1911 and had a successful career as a solo violinist; in the 1920s his Negro String Quartet was active on the New York music scene (Southern 1983, 282-283; Woods 1916, 15-16; *The Negro in Chicago* 1927,



Major N. C. Smith's Ladies Orchestra, 1905

The Negro in Chicago, 1779-1929, vol. 2 (Chicago: Washington Intercollegiate Club of Chicago, [1929]). Courtesy, Vivian Harsh Collection of the Carter G. Woodson Regional Library, Chicago Public Library.

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Concert Music, *continued*

123; Bethea 1905, 131).

Harrison Emmanuel, son of Fannie and William Emmanuel, both chiro-podists, studied violin with Leopold Auer. Mme. Hackley encouraged his music studies and sponsored one of his first recitals in St. Louis in 1910; he made his debut recital in 1912 at Kimball Hall, playing works by Wieniawski and Kriesler. Emmanuel remained in Chicago as a violin teacher and continued to perform as a soloist and with local orchestras ("Harrison Emmanuel" 1912, 11+).

One of Chicago's nationally recognized sopranos was Anita Patti Brown, who arrived in Chicago about 1899. Brown received a scholarship to Chicago Musical College, traveled extensively giving concerts, and frequently performed in the Chicago area. Her voice was often described by the critics as "sweet." Brown's programs always included one or two of the famous soprano arias by Verdi, Donizetti, Meyerbeer, and other opera composers (Henry 1939a; Southern 1982, 49-50).

In 1927 Florence Price (1888-1953) came to Chicago, where many of her compositions were published and performed. In 1937 works by Price, and by Clarence Cameron White, were performed by local musicians in a WPA-sponsored series of Composers Forums featuring the music of American composers (see program reproduced at right).

With the influx of Southern migrants into Chicago during the twenties, black professional musicians and black music audiences increased. Hundreds of black music teachers from the South enrolled in Chicago music schools for summer study. For the ambitious and talented, study at the Chicago Musical College was the goal, and for many it meant success on the concert stage and in other musical endeavors. One of the first black graduates of the college was Gertrude J. Washington, wife of actor Richard B. Harrison ("Men of the Month" 1915, 116-117).

Two black concert artists of the years 1925-1935 were pianist Hazel Harrison and tenor George R. Garner. On February 14, 1932, Garner became the first black artist to perform in the Chicago Civic Opera House. His con-

Composers Forum, Federal Music Project
of the
Works Progress Administration Compositions

by
Clarence Cameron White and Florence B. Price
June 15, 1937
Federal Music Project Building
Chicago, Illinois

Program

- I. *Suite for String Quartet* (1919) Clarence Cameron White
Prelude
Dawn
Jubilee
Hallelujah
Forum String Quartet
Royal Johnson, 1st Violin
Lewis Pupillo, 2nd Violin
Harry Schwartzstein, Viola
Jenska Slebos, Cello
- II. *Octet, The Wind and the Sea* (1934) Florence B. Price
(Words by Paul Laurence Dunbar)
Sallie Walker and Orita Wilson, Sopranos
Helen Penn and Marguerite Clarke, Altos
Walter E. Gossette and Alexander Parks, Tenors
Shelby Nichols and S. Wellington Martin, Basses
Florence B. Price, Piano
Forum String Quartet
- III. *FANTASIE NEGRE No. 4*
in B Minor, for Piano (1932) Florence B. Price
(First Performance in Chicago)
Marion Hall, Piano
- IV. *Quintet in E. Minor* (1936) Florence B. Price
Allegro ma non troppo
Andante con moto
Juba
Scherzo
Forum String Quartet
Marion Hall, Piano

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cert appearance was reported in the major Chicago papers, and his picture appeared on the cover of the *Music News* (1932).

The Garner family had come to Chicago from Virginia. George went on to graduate from Chicago Musical College and to study with Charles La

Berge at American Conservatory. Winning a vocal contest sponsored by the Society of American Musicians about 1924 or 1925, Garner appeared as soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under conductor Frederick Stock. Garner and his wife, Netta Pullyyn, a concert pianist, spent three

years in Europe studying and concertizing. Mrs. Garner made her debut in 1928 in London and always performed solo piano selections on her husband's recitals.

After returning to the United States about 1929, the Garners began giving concerts, with newspaper reports describing Garner as a dramatic tenor, "powerful, smooth, and having marvelous vocal control." He received excellent reviews for his singing of German lieder, Italian songs, and Negro spirituals (Barnett, folder 1932-1936; Hare 1974, 379).

The period from 1890 to the 1930s were years of significant musical accomplishments for black musicians in Chicago. It was within the black community that black musicians created their distinctive sounds and established institutions uniquely Afro-American. In 1902 black musicians incorporated Chicago Local 208, the first black unit of the American Federation of Musicians; in 1905 the Pekin Theater, the first black-owned theater in the country, opened in Chicago; in 1919 the National Association of Negro Musicians, made up of teachers, composers, and concert performers, was founded in Chicago and assumed a position of leadership in supporting and encouraging blacks in the field of classical music; by the 1930s Chicago could claim prominence in blues, jazz, and gospel music (Southern 1983, 305-306; *The Negro in Chicago* 1927, 130). In spite of social, economic, and political inequities, concert and recital artists at all levels of achievement attained local and national recognition.

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Black Music at Columbia College Chicago

by Gail Schmoller, Columbia College

When the Center for Black Music Research (CBMR) was established at Columbia College in 1982, it was certainly the College's most cogent demonstration of support for music derived from the black experience. However, long before the CBMR settled at Columbia, the school had supported black music in a variety of ways.

Since President Mike Alexandroff took over the helm of Columbia in 1961, the institution's involvement in the American cultural scene has flourished, and support of black music has naturally followed. Honorary doctorates conferred at graduation ceremonies have celebrated those who have "engaged their great talents in important human services and whose life work and example embody the college's ideal and spirit." Many of the individuals so honored have been musicians and others involved in the field of black music. Among them are poet Langston Hughes (whose works have been set to music by a significant number of black composers) (1967), jazz composer/musician Duke Ellington (1968), civil rights activist/gospel singer Fannie Lou Hamer (1970), blues musician Chester "Howlin' Wolf" Barnett (1972), singer/entertainer Bricktop (1975), record producer John Hammond (1976), jazz musician/composer John Lewis (1984), and music historian Eileen Southern (1985).

Under the guidance of Alexandroff, the goal at Columbia has always been to provide equal educational opportunities for the community and programs that are responsive to the interests of the arts and the social welfare of Chicago. In addition, Alexandroff has built a faculty comprised of creative individuals who can put novel ideas to good use in Columbia's intellectually liberal environment. William Russo and Paul Carter Harrison, for example, two faculty members with a strong interest in black music, have been able to do much in the way of developing Columbia's support for black music over the last two decades.

In 1965 Alexandroff hired Russo, a composer/author/musician with roots in jazz and an ear for the new music,

to develop a music program at Columbia. Russo brought to Columbia a budding interest in pop and rock music and a history with jazz that dates back to the early 1950s, when he was chief composer and arranger for the Stan Kenton Orchestra. He established the Center for New Music, which was later merged with the theater department to become the theater/music department, and offered programs in jazz, rock, and pop at a time when only opera and classical music were considered worth studying. In Russo's second year at Columbia, Duke Ellington made available to the school the material for his second *Concert of Sacred Music*, and members of the Center for New Music performed it in Chicago with Ellington present. It was the first time an orchestra other than Ellington's had played the music, and the event sparked a liaison between Russo and Ellington that continued to the latter's death. Russo staged a second performance of the piece in 1984 at Columbia's Getz Theater.

In the following years Columbia's music and theater students performed several of Russo's works that had been influenced by the black experience. The most famous was *The Civil War*, a rock cantata on which Russo collaborated with singer Irma Routen in 1968; it dealt with the civil rights movement and was dedicated to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In the early 1970s Russo's *Three-Penny Opera* was produced, with the music directed by Henry Threadgill, one of the gifted young members of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) at the time.

While Russo's efforts at Columbia exposed black music to a heterogeneous student population, his outside work brought black-inspired music to traditionally white audiences. His best-known composition, *Three Pieces for Blues Band and Orchestra*, was recorded by Seiji Ozawa and the San Francisco Orchestra in 1973.

In the present decade Russo has continued to bring black music to the college and community through annual high school jazz festivals and performances by well-known person-

alities in the field. In 1983 Winton Marsalis performed at Columbia's Getz Theater at Russo's invitation. Russo organized Chicago's first annual high school jazz festival, a competition among area school bands, in December of 1985. Dizzy Gillespie was the visiting jazz clinician the first year. The 1986 festival featured pianist McCoy Tyner in that role.

Also in 1986 Russo helped revive *Kicks and Co.*, the 1961 musical by Oscar Brown, Jr., about the civil rights movement. For the 1988-89 season, Russo hopes to stage *Echoes of Harlem*, a musical revue he is creating with Columbia theater instructor Catherine Slade. The event will contain music from the Harlem Renaissance period with a connecting theme revealing Harlem at the turn of the century. "It's an attempt to present to contemporary audiences those marvelous sounds heard at the turn of the century," says Slade.

Playwright/director Paul Carter Harrison had a similar objective when he was hired by Alexandroff as chair and artistic producer of the theater/music department in 1976. Having served as a professor of theater and Afro-American studies on several faculties, Harrison had a strong interest in jazz and wanted to bring black music and Columbia students together. His first theater production at Columbia was an epic poem by Martinique poet Amie Césaire, *Return to My Native Land*, with music scored by the AACM's Threadgill and performed by an all-black cast.

"I wanted to provide an opportunity for Chicago musicians to be able to perform at our facility," Harrison says. "I was interested in what the AACM was doing. I went to them and asked if they'd like the opportunity of playing here, because I thought it would be good for them as well as for the students to be in contact with such innovative music."

The result was a series of public performances by AACM artists begun in 1976 at Columbia's former Sheffield Avenue facilities and continued in 1983 at the College's Ferguson Theater. The present-day association between the College and the AACM be-

lies its turbulent beginnings when AACM artists, rebelling against the white "establishment," boycotted an arts convention at Columbia. AACM artists now perform in "an atmosphere of trust and common objectives," according to Harrison.

"To me, the AACM is very exciting," says Harrison. "And those who know about jazz accept that their music is some of the most innovative music around. I think the College should be associated with that kind of innovation and energy. The AACM has produced a very interesting kind of learning situation for our students."

AACM members have both performed and taught at Columbia over the years. Columbia College faculty members have included AACM reedmen Threadgill, Ed Wilkerson, Ernest Dawkins, and Doug Ewart. In 1985 Ewart and Russo were commissioned by the Jazz Institute of Chicago to write a piece for jazz ensemble that was performed by AACM artists; and cellist David Baker has also performed his compositions with a special ensemble of AACM members.

In addition to AACM-related activities, artists such as South African pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, jazz saxophonist Julius Hemphill, and poet Amiri Baraka, whose poetry became the vocal part of a musical trio involving percussionist Steve McCall and saxophonist David Murray, have appeared on the Ferguson stage. The Barrett Sisters gospel group appeared

there during a celebration of Black History Month.

Harrison is committed in his stage work to collaborating with black composers, as is apparent in *The Great MacDaddy*, composed by Coleridge Taylor Perkinson. He is currently working on *Anchorman*, a blues opera featuring Hemphill's music, and his next work will be set to music by Threadgill. "I'm always working with black composers who write in that particular idiom that comes out of the black experience," says Harrison.

In addition to jazz, Harrison would like to see concerts of other black music—such as blues and gospel—at Columbia. He acknowledges that now, "with Sam Floyd around, there's a possibility for a wider variety of black music, from blues to art songs to religious music."

Floyd's strong research orientation has added a new dimension to the kinds of black music that Columbia is supporting and the manner in which it supports them. In addition to its publications, the CBMR has been responsible for establishing a library and computer database and for bringing recordings and information concerning black American music dating from ca. 1800 to Columbia and Chicago. In the spring of 1988 live performances of such historic music will be heard in Chicago, some of it for the first time ever, through the Black Music Repertory Ensemble that Floyd is organizing.

"I wasn't simply attaching a re-

search unit for quarters and rations," says Alexandroff of his move to bring the CMBR to Columbia. "It was meant to be integrated into the whole situation. The library that has been built is an important component of the general library. Sam Floyd has been able to attract a great deal of book, record, and tape material in a range of things from living histories to collections of jazz music and all kinds of things that have to do with providing a resource for the College."

Erwin Salk, a member of the College's board of trustees, says that having the CMBR at Columbia is in keeping with the spirit of the school's philosophy, and adds, "There is a tremendous need for this in the cultural fields of all ethnic minority groups. We were fortunate to be able to give this program to the city of Chicago. It's a major contribution we are making to the metropolitan area."

Alexandroff sees the Center as a way to expand the cultural life of the college and the city. "The field of black music, as all forms of black accomplishment, suffered from minimum publicity and minimum attention even in scholarly communities," he says. "The Center seemed a valuable and surely neglected interest that probably wouldn't have had any immediate support. So we thought it would be valuable evidence of our civic interest and a particularly beneficial contribution to the exhibit of black accomplishment in the arts. The truth of the matter is, I leapt at it."

Composers Corner

Lena Johnson McLin, Composer

by Lucius R. Wyatt, *Prairie View A & M University*

Lena Johnson McLin (b. 1929) has composed and arranged more than two hundred musical works, including operas, cantatas, choral compositions, art songs, orchestral works, and piano pieces. Her cantata *Free at Last*, a portrait of the late Martin Luther King, Jr., has been performed by the Atlanta Symphony and by the New York Philharmonic at Lincoln Center in New York. In 1983 the American Symphony performed her *Oh, Freedom* at Carnegie Hall.

Since 1969 McLin has served as Chair of the Music Department of Kenwood High School in Chicago. She has been recognized widely by some of the leading authorities in music education as an effective and inspiring teacher and has conducted workshops on classroom approaches to teaching music at various colleges and universities across the United States. In 1977 she published *Pulse: A History of Music*, a textbook which is now being used in many high schools.

Other educational materials she has prepared are the films *A Music Generation*, *Origin and Development of the Spirituals*, and *Origin and Development of the Gospel Song*, soon to be re-released by Creative Directions, Inc. of Chicago.

Mrs. McLin is the recipient of numerous awards for her outstanding work, having received the Music Educators National Conference

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Composers Corner, continued

Award for Outstanding Achievement in Music, the National Black Music Caucus Award, the Spelman College Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Music, the Blum-Kovler Foundation Educational Award, and the Chicago Urban Affairs Council Image Award. Other awards have been received from the National Association of Negro Musicians, the NAACP, the National Association of Jazz Educators, and the Music Critics Association. In recognition of her contributions to American music, Virginia Union University awarded her an honorary doctor of humanities degree in 1975.

Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, she attended the city's public schools. During her formative years, she was closely associated with the church: her father, Rev. B. L. Johnson, Sr., was the pastor of the Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, and her mother, Bernice Johnson, was the Church's choir director and music teacher.

After graduating from Spelman College in Atlanta, she moved to Chicago where her uncle, legendary gospel songwriter Thomas A. Dorsey, lived. Subsequently, she studied at the American Conservatory of Music. McLin also pursued further studies in music at Roosevelt University and at Chicago State University.

Lena McLin regards herself as a "functional" composer, since she has written many works for specific occasions and several operas for the McLin Opera Company during the sixties. The opera company was formed to give talented and professional singers (both black and white) opportunities to sing in opera productions in Chicago prior to the formation of the Lyric Opera of Chicago. The performances were held at the Eleventh Street Theater (now the Getz Theater of Columbia College).

Mrs. McLin served as director of music for the Trinity Congregational Church on 95th Street in Chicago for several years. Many of her anthems were composed for church performances. These works were often composed with a specific biblical text appropriate to the particular service in which they were performed.

Other choral works were written for school choirs. Some of the solo voice

pieces were inspired by such singers as Leontyne Price, Aretha Franklin, and Nancy Wilson and by notables such as poet Gwendolyn Brooks (*Gwendolyn Brooks: A Musical Portrait*).

In all of her vocal compositions she devotes great care to the handling of the melodic lines and inner voices. Although most of her pieces incorporate diatonic harmonies similar to the harmonic structures found in the spirituals, some of her compositions are more adventuresome: "Winter" from *Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn; The Torch Has Been Passed*; and *Friendship*. In *All the Earth Sing unto the Lord* the composer makes extensive use of syncopated rhythms and harmonies containing perfect fourths. To be sure, her compositions contain musical elements that are typically Afro-American, such as motives derived from black folksongs or spirituals; harmonic progressions that are often used in black religious song; and some elements of jazz.

Lena J. McLin is truly a gifted and prolific composer who is successful in making music a significant force in the lives of people.

The Music of Lena J. McLin

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- See What Love* (SATB chorus a cappella). 1982. Park Ridge, Ill.: General Words and Music.
- Since He Came into My Life* (SATB chorus). n.d. Park Ridge, Ill.: Kjos Music Company.
- Te Deum Laudamus* (SATB chorus and opt. B♭ trumpet). 1976. Park Ridge, Ill.: General Words and Music.
- The Torch Has Been Passed* (SATB chorus a cappella). 1971. Park Ridge, Ill.: General Words and Music.
- Two Introsits* (SATB chorus and piano). 1978. Park Ridge, Ill.: General Words and Music.
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- Done Made My Vow to the Lord* (baritone solo and SATB chorus a cappella). 1971. Park Ridge, Ill.: Kjos Music Company.
- Down by the River* (SATB chorus a cappella). 1976. Park Ridge, Ill.: Kjos Music Company.
- Give Me That Old Time Religion* (SATB chorus a cappella). 1978. Park Ridge, Ill.: General Words and Music.
- Glory, Glory, Hallelujah* (solo voice, SATB chorus, and opt. piano). 1966. Park Ridge, Ill.: Kjos Music Company.
- I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always* (SATB chorus a cappella). 1974. Park Ridge, Ill.: Kjos Music Company.
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- My God Is So High* (SATB chorus a cappella). 1972. Park Ridge, Ill.: Kjos Music Company.
- Writ'en Down My Name* (baritone solo and SATB chorus a cappella). 1967. Park Ridge, Ill.: Kjos Music Company.

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Introducing . . .

Members of the National Advisory Board of The Center for Black Music Research

by Charles Conte, Nashville, Tennessee

"In a funny way, I think I'm coming back into style," said composer and educator **William Russo** back in 1985. "In America, when you're in your 40s and early 50s, people take you for granted. Then, suddenly, as you're starting to get venerable—or better yet, dead—people start taking you more seriously."

Though not quite "venerable" and certainly not dead, National Advisory Board member Russo is definitely

coming back into style.

A musical prodigy, he worked with Lionel Hampton at the age of sixteen. By 1950, when he was twenty-one, he had begun a five-year tenure writing and arranging for Stan Kenton and playing trombone in Kenton's orchestra. Later he worked with Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Stan Getz, Lee Konitz, and Cannonball Adderley.

Among his more than eighty com-

positions in classical forms are two symphonies (the second, *Titans*, performed by the New York Philharmonic in 1959 under Leonard Bernstein), six operas, four cantatas, three concertos (among them, the *English Concerto* for violin and jazz orchestra, commissioned and performed by Yehudi Menuhin in 1963), five ballets, and numerous works for a variety of in-

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Russo, continued

strumental ensembles.

His *Three Pieces for Blues Band and Orchestra*, recorded by the Chicago-based Siegel-Schwall Band with the San Francisco Symphony orchestra under Seiji Ozawa for Deutsche-Grammophon (1973), has sold over 150,000 copies. And his *Street Music: A Blues Concerto*, also recorded by Ozawa and the San Francisco Symphony for Deutsche-Grammophon (with Corky Siegel, soloist on harmonica and piano), was awarded the *Grand Prix du Disque* in 1978. Both pieces have recently been re-released together on Deutsche-Grammophon's Privilege label.

Russo has written music for films and rock music for the theater, including the rock opera *Aesop's Fables*, which has been given nearly two hundred performances.

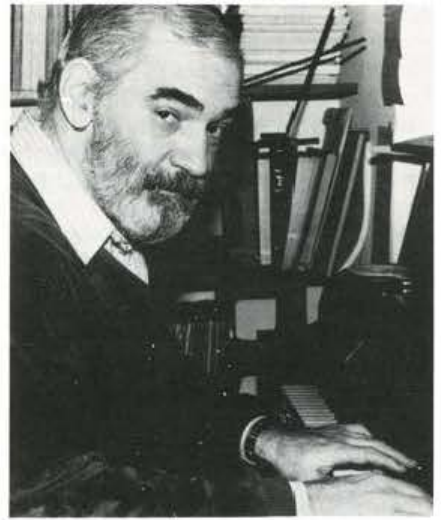
In addition, he has recorded over thirty albums and has written three books on composition and orchestration: *The Jazz Composer* (University

of Chicago Press, 1961 and 1973), *Jazz: Composition and Orchestration* (University of Chicago Press, 1958), and *Composing Music: A New Approach* (Prentice-Hall, 1983).

As Director of the Contemporary American Music Program at Columbia College Chicago since 1979, the Chicago-born composer expresses his admiration for the work of the Center for Black Music Research which, he says, "reflects the highest scholarly and humanitarian aims in searching out music of worth and allowing people to hear it."

With deep roots in the jazz idiom, he has composed for the saxophone throughout his career, though he remembers a time in the late 1960s when his students could not stand to hear the instrument. "My father played it," he says, "and I've always loved it." Recently he was commissioned to write a piece for saxophone and chamber orchestra.

Currently, Russo is completing a full-length opera, *Dubrovsky*, based on the Pushkin short story, with a libretto



William Russo

by Donald Sanders. His aim in this piece, as in all his compositions, is to write, he says, "unencumbered by dogma, dicta, or the constraints of critical opinion, as beautifully and lyrically as possible."



Sandra Howe Royster

Sandra Howe Royster came home to Chicago in 1978 on an impulse. "I didn't come home to a job, or anything," she says. "I just came home."

Fortified with her anthologized publications and her book of poems, *Woman Talk* (Third World Press, 1974), plus seven years of experience as Program Coordinator for the Nashville Public Library, she applied for

only one position. It was for an opening on the programming staff for the municipal performing arts program, at the time administered through the Public Library. She got the position.

Today she is Director of Programs for the Chicago Office of Fine Arts, administering what is, without a doubt, one of the largest municipal arts programs in the country. Her department is responsible for five hundred performances a year at the Cultural Center and three hundred public performances at the Daley Civic Service Center—all free to the public.

Organized thematically into series that run through the year, the performances at the Cultural Center cover the entire range of performing arts. "We've had everything from Bozo the Clown," she says, "to our weekly series of classical music performances."

The Literary Arts program—which includes "Dial-a-Poem-Chicago!" featuring between fifteen and twenty poets a year reading their works for callers—is also administered through the Programs department. Technical assistance to the arts community comes through the Arts Resources

Program—from the basic skill-building workshops to seminars on marketing and a major conference each spring and fall.

The Performing Artists Registry holds the resumes (plus tapes and other materials) of over eight hundred artists, filed according to art form. It serves as a clearinghouse for people in the business community and for other city agencies looking for artists with specific talents.

All these events, workshops, and departments are not administered through some massive bureaucracy. "We have a small, experienced staff," she says, "and a wonderful intern program for students and for people redirecting their careers into arts management or into the arts themselves. But aside from administering programs and grants, I think it's accurate to say that we are probably more involved in presenting performances than most municipal arts programs."

There's a direct and very valuable connection between the hundreds of performances her office organizes and the Center for Black Music Research, she says. "Because we view our performances as educational experiences

Royster, continued

as well as entertainment, we always supplement each performance series at the Cultural Center with lectures. We do extensive research in developing the themes for each series. That gives me the opportunity, using the Center for Black Music Research as a resource, to learn who's involved both

artistically and in scholarly ways in a particular art form."

As an example of the Center's value in her program planning and research, she cites her department's 1985-86 "Classical Black" series. Concentrating on black composers working in classical forms, the series uncovered music rarely heard, either on record or in performance, and

brought it to the public ear.

"Word reached composer William Dawson in Tuskegee that some of his works were being performed during the series," she says. "That encouraged him to come to Chicago a little later and conduct a concert series of his music"—a significant event for black music and in the cultural life of the city.

For **Susan Trevelyan-Syke**, National Advisory Board Member and president of her Chicago-based video and film production company, learning is a lifelong habit.

"I've never stopped," she says, referring specifically to her intense interest in the work of the Center for Black Music Research.

"In part, the Center serves to educate our own people," she says. A one-time resident of Paris, London, and Cairo, she feels that the black influence on the music of our country, and on Western music in general, may be more generally appreciated abroad than here at home. She adds that a personal need to learn more about black music is also behind her involvement with the Center.

Her current participation in the "Great Books" series through the University of Chicago's continuing education program is similarly motivated: "It's an opportunity to put things in perspective, to reacquaint myself with the history of Western thought and culture, to read, think, and question. And it's made an enormous difference in my life."

Trevelyan-Syke began her education in her native Chicago and graduated from the University of Chicago with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. Her interest in international law and politics led her to

study in both Paris and England. Work in journalism and broadcast media at both Northwestern University and Columbia College helped advance her career as a journalist. A graduate of the Coro Foundation Women's Program in public affairs in 1981 and winner of a national competition that afforded her that opportunity, she speaks very highly of the organization and of the experience.

About ten years ago she started her own film and video production company, consulting on others' projects and originating her own. Though she often functions now as executive producer, writer, and sometime director for her own projects, she has at various times been involved in "every single phase of the art form, from developing the concept to marketing."

As Vice Chair for Fund-raising of the Center's National Advisory Board, she is in great part responsible for establishing the Chicago Committee to support the Center for Black Music Research and to underwrite performances of the Center's Black Music Repertory Ensemble. (Plans for the Ensemble include a March 1988 performance in Chicago with all thirteen members and the establishment of a permanent residency for the group at the Center within the next five years.)

Among her other current projects are a completed pilot for a mystery



Susan Trevelyan-Syke

series intended for network television and a series for commercial television which she developed from the works of American writers (Henry James's *Turn of the Screw* among them).

A long-time admirer of the traditional mystery novel, she is at work on one of her own. She expresses deep admiration for the work of Iris Murdoch and praises English director/novelist Bryan Forbes's "intellectual thriller," *The Endless Game*.

Accomplished, active, and intellectually curious, Susan Trevelyan-Syke is proud to admit she's still learning.

On Ragtime

The Ragtime Clubs

by Edward A. Berlin, Queensborough Community College

"I would be interested in corresponding with anyone knowing any details about Eddie Kuhn and acquiring his sheet music and recordings."

So begins a letter in the March 1987 issue of *Remember That Song*, the newsletter of an organization of sheet music collectors. Eddie Kuhn (1884-

1941) was a Kansas City musician who composed several rags (I know of

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On Ragtime, *continued*

four) and songs during his career. He was a minor figure in ragtime and—as of this writing—little is known of him other than what we can gather from his music. But change in this situation seems imminent. The letter quoted above was written by his son, who will undoubtedly be inundated by ragtime researchers seeking information. Certainly, the researchers will tell what they know and are likely to give the son copies of Kuhn's sheet music and recordings. But uppermost in their minds will be to find out what the son of Eddie Kuhn can tell *them*. Did his father ever talk about any of the other Kansas City ragtimers of his day? Of Charles Johnson, E. Harry Kelly, or Mamie Williams? Did he ever speak of saloons, cabarets, dance halls, or theaters where ragtime was featured? Or of ragtime performance practices?

This is a classic example of how clubs, whose members are mostly hobbyists rather than professional scholars, have fostered popular music research. Typically, the activities of the club—perhaps a concert, a music display in a library, a ragtime playing or composing contest—attracts the attention of a local newspaper, which prints a “human interest” story. A local resident reads the article, is amazed to learn that anyone is interested in this old music that he or his parents were involved with, and writes a letter to the organization. The contact is made, and the amateur scholars—“amateurs” in the best sense, since theirs is a genuine labor of love—gather around and ask questions.

The case could not be clearer in regard to ragtime. Long before the ragtime explosion of the 1970s brought the subject to the active attention of professional scholars, club members had collected, distributed, and preserved the sheet music, recordings, and piano rolls; performed the music; sought out survivors of the period; printed newsletters telling of their discoveries and opinions; and attracted such letter writers as Eddie Kuhn's son.

There have been numerous instances of club activities attracting the attention of someone with valuable information. One such occasion un-

covered details regarding publication of Scott Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag* in 1899. *Rag Times*, newsletter of The Maple Leaf Club, had included in its September 1975 issue a copy of the newly discovered, though legendary, *Maple Leaf Rag* contract between Joplin and his publisher, John Stark.

The contract was “legendary” because the usual course taken by black composers of the period was outright sale of a piece of music to a publisher for \$25; the contract for this highly popular piece gave Joplin a degree of financial independence that profoundly affected his career. Aside from finally learning the details of the contract, we discovered that there was a signatory witness: R. A. Higdon. We had no idea who Higdon was, for he is not a part of the Joplin legends. This lacuna was filled when the *Sedalia Democrat* (Joplin and Stark both resided in Sedalia when they made the contract) printed an item about the discovery, and the news clipping reached Lucile Higdon. She then wrote a letter relating her father's association with Joplin and his part, as Joplin's lawyer, in this contract.

The Maple Leaf Club (5560 West 62nd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90056), founded in July 1967, has become the clearinghouse for dissemination of ragtime news. Long before Eubie Blake interviews had become commonplace, the grand old gentleman was discovered by Maple Leaf Club members, made guest of honor at their ragtime festivals, and written up in the newsletter. Looking through the newsletter, one also finds interviews with other prominent figures of the ragtime years. Among these are Joe Jordan (one of the great ragtimers and songwriters of the time and a close associate of Will Marion Cook early in the century), Shelton Brooks (composer of such classics as “Darktown Strutters' Ball” and “Some of These Days”), Ed Garland (a bassist who worked with Jelly Roll Morton), and others who could relate personal experiences of that era.

The Maple Leaf Club is not the only ragtime organization around today; nor is it the oldest. The club with the greatest longevity is The Ragtime Society (begun in 1962), which has its headquarters not in the United States but in Canada (P.O. Box 520, Station A, Weston, Ontario M9M 3N3). At its

annual “Ragtime Bash,” it has also featured some of the great figures of ragtime and survivors of the ragtime era. The Society's newsletter, *The Ragtimer*, used to be a bi-monthly publication containing articles of original research and serious speculation. Unfortunately, its scholarly level has declined considerably, and it is now issued only sporadically. One particularly valuable service the Society continues to provide to its members is access to its vast holdings of out-of-print rags, available in photocopy at reasonable cost.

There are several other ragtime clubs scattered throughout the United States, each with its own ideals and aims. Indianapolis has two organizations: The International Hoosier Ragtime Society (1527 Rogers Road, Indianapolis, IN 46227) and a recent break-away group, espousing a different philosophy as to the meaning of ragtime, The Original Hoosier Ragtime Society (4738 Stratford Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46201). A second California group is the Sacramento Ragtime Club (10458 Joel Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670), and in Wisconsin there is the Superior Ragtime Club (1902 Baxter Avenue, Superior, WI 54880). In Oregon a new group, The Cascades Ragtime Society (Route 1, Box 193, Riddle, OR 97469), named after Joplin's 1904 rag, has been particularly effective in reaching local media and in drawing a favorable response from area music teachers; it is sponsoring a ragtime competition for youngsters.

Most of the ragtime organizations emphasize regular meetings, the collecting and swapping of artifacts, live performances, local public relations, and musical proselytizing. Scholarship is also present, for wherever you find collectors, there will be individuals with an extraordinary amount of information on obscure specialties. Usually these collectors are satisfied with giving informal talks to their groups, and little of this accumulated knowledge reaches publication.

One would think that any professional researcher of ragtime would seek out the members of these organizations for the assistance that they are usually eager to give. Unfortunately, I have seen many cases in which the professionals shun such association. Perhaps professional scholars are put

off by the uneven standards of amateur newsletters; this is, admittedly, not without some cause. The newsletters can contain a great deal of trivia and pseudomusicology of a low order. Along with the chaff, though, there can be much of value; the members may not always observe the niceties expected by the professional, but this shortcoming is more than compensated by the drive to unearth facts.

Such assistance was requested by the editor of *The Collected Works of Scott Joplin* (New York Public Library, 1971). Finding that copies of all the music

could not be located in libraries, the editor enlisted the aid of The Maple Leaf Club and its network of sheet music collectors to fill in the gaps. Ten years later, three additional rags, for which reprint permission had previously been denied, were added to the collection for a new edition, now called "The Complete Works . . ." This time the editor chose not to consult with the club members. It was not until a lavish publication party held at Lincoln Center that those involved with the new edition learned that it was *not* complete; three *additional* pieces—songs arranged by Joplin—

were omitted. They should have known. Discovery of these songs had been announced several years earlier in *Rag Times*, and two of the songs were distributed to members with the newsletter. These two songs were therefore on the Library's own shelves!

This was an embarrassment that could have been avoided. The lesson is clear. The amateur ragtime sleuths are anxious to promote the music they love. They constitute an invaluable resource, and it is foolish to ignore them.

Call for Paper Topics and Statements of Areas of Interest For the 1991 National Conference on Black Music Research

Chicago, Illinois

Exploratory planning is proceeding for the Center's 1991 National Conference, to be held in Chicago in October of that year. So that scholars will have ample time to plan and prepare major papers for the meeting and in order to determine the level and extent of interest for a meeting four years hence, the Center is issuing a call for paper topics and statements of areas of interest.

This unusual call is inspired by the facts that 1) little research has been done on the black music tradition in Chicago and 2) our belief that knowledge of this fact will promote interest and movement among scholars to begin work in this important area.

Chicago is one of the few, perhaps the only city, in the United States where *all* of the black music genres

flourished with a high degree of visibility at one time or another. The importance of Chicago as a critical location in the dissemination of black music has always been recognized, but little serious and extensive work has been published about the activity there. Mike Rowe's *Chicago Breakdown* (Da Capo, 1973; Drake, 1975) and Dempsey Travis's *An Autobiography of Black Jazz* (Urban Research Institute, 1983) being the only books devoted to aspects of Chicago black music. Few articles have been written on any aspect of Afro-American music-making in Chicago.

Significant research about all genres, areas, and topics of black music will be welcomed: South Side jazz, especially activity at the Grand Terrace and Vendome theaters, and

studies on major figures such as Earl Hines; Chicago gospel; ragtime and boogie-woogie piano styles; concert music and concert musicians in Chicago; Chicago's black composers, including Florence Price and Margaret Bonds; the Chicago bluesmen of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s; rhythm and blues in Chicago; and musical connections between New Orleans and Chicago and St. Louis and Chicago.

Interested individuals are asked to send a statement of interest in a particular topic or an area of research to the Center, following receipt of which a dialogue will be established with respondents. Address letters to: Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., Director, Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago, 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605-1996.

News and Notes From . . . The Center for Black Music Research

by Josephine Wright, The College of Wooster

The American Music Center has announced details for the third annual American Music Week, which will be held November 2-8, 1987. For details, contact Monika Morris, Program Manager, American Music Center, 250

West 54th Street, Suite 300, New York, NY 10019.

Ben Bailey has recently published a book entitled *Music in the History of Tougaloo College* (Tougaloo, Miss.,

1986). The publication is available from the author.

David Baker (Indiana University)

Continued on page 16

News and Notes, *continued*

and **Arthur Mitchell** (Dance Theatre of Harlem) have been nominated by President Ronald Reagan to serve a six-year term on the National Council on the Arts of the NEA. Other individuals named to the Council were Nina Brock, Robert Garfias, Robert Johnson, Ardis Krainik, and Harvey Lichtenstein.

A memorial concert for concert singer **Carol Brice** was held at Carnegie Hall on April 14, 1987. Tribute hosts for the concert included Betty Allen, Guion Bluford, Ed Harris, Celeste Holm, Christopher Keene, and Tommie Stewart. Participants in the concert were McHenry Boatright, Cab Calloway, Billie Lynn Daniels, John Dankworth, Gloria Davy, Andrew Frierson, Barbara Hendricks, Ben Holt, Fred Höricke, Ilze Klavins, Janis Klavins, Cleo Laine, Leona Mitchell, Gilberto Munguia, Walter Ponce, Don Shirley, George Shirley, and William Warfield.

The **College Music Society**, in conjunction with the **Center for Black Music Research**, announces the reissue of CBS Records' *Black Composers Series*, which was originally released by Columbia Records between 1974 and 1979. The series contains music written by black composers from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries. Composers represented are T. J. Anderson, David Baker, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Roque Cordero, José Mauricio Nunes-Garcia, Adolphus Hailstork, Talib Rasul Hakim, Ulysses Kay, the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, Hale Smith, Fela Sowande, William Grant Still, George Walker, José White, and Olly Wilson. The series is available to CMS members for \$35 and to institutions and other individuals for \$40. For further information, contact The College Music Society, 1444 Fifteenth Street, Boulder, CO 80302.

Dizzy Gillespie has donated to the Smithsonian Institution his King Silver Flair trumpet with the upward-angled bell, which he used from 1972 to 1975. The trumpet will become part of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History's Jazz Collection and will be on view in the exhibition

"Nation to Nation" on the second floor of the museum.

Dan Morgenstern recently surveyed the state of jazz recordings on compact disks and provided a working discography of available materials in a featured article in Section 2, "Arts and Leisure," of the Sunday *New York Times* (March 22, 1987).

Ira Schwarz (SUNY, Brockport) announced the premier performance of his musical, *Jacob's Ladder: A Music Docu-drama Based on Afro-American Historical, Musical, and Literary Themes*, on February 23-25, 1987, at Brockport. The musical resulted from his research project in the 1986 NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers at Harvard University, conducted by Eileen Southern. The work is dedicated to Southern and the participants in the seminar.

Kay Shelemay (NYU) and **Peter Jeffry** (University of Delaware) have received a NEH grant for research on a two-year project to study oral and written transmission in Ethiopian Christian chant.

Singer **Lena Horne** received the Pied Piper Award from ASCAP at a gala event in Washington, D.C., in March of 1987.

Paul and Elizabeth Garon are working on a biography of blues singer Memphis Minnie. They would be grateful for any information, photographs, interviews, or information regarding recordings that would be relevant to her life and career. They can be contacted at 1533 W. Oakdale, Chicago, IL 60657. Telephone: 312/472-4528.

Editors **Rainer Lotz** and **Ian Pegg** announce the publication of *Under the Imperial Carpet: Essays in Black History, 1780-1950* (Crawley, England: Rabbit Press, 1986). The volume focuses upon black life and cultural history in Great Britain from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries and includes the following articles of interest about music and musicians in Britannia: "Early African Musicians in Britain" by Josephine Wright, "I Remember Coleridge: Recollections of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)"

by Marjorie Evans, "The Fisk Jubilee Singers in Britain" by Doug Seroff, "Will Garland's Negro Operetta Company" by Rainer Lotz, "Three Afro-American Singing Groups [the Four Harmony Kings, the C. and M. A. Gospel Singers, and the Kentucky Singers]" by Ray Funk, "The Southern Syncopated Orchestra" by Howard Ray, and "West Indian Gramophone Recording in Britain, 1927-1950" by John Cowley. This book may be obtained in the United States through Your Heritage House, 110 East Ferry, Detroit, MI 48202.

Editor **Robert Sacré** announces the publication of symposium papers from the international conference on the blues held at the University of Liege in Belgium in 1984. The publication, entitled *The Voice of the Delta: Charley Patton (c. 1887-1934) and the Mississippi Delta Blues Traditions* (Liege: Presses Universitaires de Liege, 1987), contains the following essays: "Black Music U.S.A.: Des mélodées Africaines aux Negro spirituels, à la Devil's music et au jazz" by Robert Sacré, "The Mississippi Blues Traditions and the Origins of the Blues" by Arnold Shaw, "Charley Patton, The Conscience of the Delta" by David Evans, "Blues élémentaire et échelle tonale chez Charley Patton" by Daniel Droixhe, "Louisiana Country Music—A Comparison with the Delta Country Style of Charley Patton and Followers, Musical Influences" by John Broven, "The Influence of the Mississippi Delta Style on Chicago's Post-war Blues" by Mike Rowe, "Chicago—The Post-war Blues Scene and Patton's Heirs: Memories of Howling Wolf and Willie Johnson" by Dick Shurman, "Modern Chicago Blues—Delta Retentions" by Jim O'Neal, "Mississippi Blues Today and Its Future" by David Evans, and "I Was Born in Arkansas and Raised Up in Chicago" by Luther Allison. Orders for the symposium papers may be obtained directly by writing to Robert Sacré, 117 Chaussée de Tongres, B-4420 Liege Rocourt, Belgium. The price for the issue is \$34 for surface delivery and \$41 for air mail.

The **Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture**, a division of the New York Public Library, reminds researchers that the *Schomburg Library*

Clipping File, 1925-1974 has been microfilmed and is now available for purchase. For information about acquiring these materials, write directly to Chadwyck-Healey, Inc., 1021 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Telephone: 703/683-4890.

The **Smithsonian Institution** has purchased Folkways Records, a label that specialized in tribal and folklore materials, including recordings of jazz, gospel, blues, ragtime, and folk songs and ethnic music from around the world. The Smithsonian Institution also received a gift of the Folkways Archives, which contain a repository of taped materials that have never been distributed commercially. The Birch Tree Group of Princeton, New Jersey, will market and distribute the recordings for the Smithsonian.

The **Society for Ethnomusicology** will hold its 1987 annual meeting at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) on November 5-8, 1987. For complete details, write Arnold Ferris, Department of Music, University of Missouri—St. Louis, 8001 Natural Bridge Road, St. Louis, MO 63121-4499.

Folklore enthusiasts will also be interested in learning of **Brett Sutton's** recent edition, *Primitive Baptist Hymns of the Blue Ridge*, which is now available in the American Folklore Series of the University of North Carolina. The recording and the accompanying twenty-page book focus upon black and white folk singers and their sing-

ing styles. To order, contact The University of North Carolina Press, P.O. Box 2288, Chapel Hill, NC 27524.

Willis Patterson (University of Michigan at Ann Arbor) announces that the University of Michigan School of Music is making available several important papers and a number of recordings of performances presented at the Black American Music Symposium held on that campus during August 9-15, 1985. For information, write directly to Willis Patterson, The University of Michigan School of Music, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.

Rawn Spearman is a recipient of the 1987 Black Achievers Award presented by the Greater Boston YMCA. As such, he has been recognized by the University of Lowell for "demonstrating the highest degree of professionalism and expertise in his chosen career."

Dominique-René de Lerma is in the process of preparing a book titled *Black Concert Singers*, which will be published by Dembner Books. He requests information from individuals with pertinent viewpoints, memorabilia, or experiences and would like to make arrangements for appropriate oral history interviews.

New World Records was recently given a special commendation by the Sonneck Society "for its past achievements and continuing efforts to document the full scope of American music and music in America."

Northeastern Records is planning to issue a three-record commemorative set of live recordings and 78s by Roland Hayes. The set will be based on the July, 1955, issue (Vol. 10, No. 2) of *The Record Collector*. Persons with information, particularly about Hayes's Vocalion recordings, that might update this issue are invited to contact Northeastern Records, P.O. Box 116, Boston, MA 02117. Telephone: 617/437-5488.

A symposium on the nature and training of the black voice will be held at **Rust College**, in Holly Springs, Mississippi, during February 24-27, 1988. Supported by grants from the United Negro College Fund and the National Endowment for the Arts, the symposium will seek to arrive at an answer to the question of what constitutes a black voice, treating in the process such questions as: Is the phenomenon of the black voice physical, or is it cultural? Is the black voice a style? Do black voices have inherent characteristics that distinguish them from other voices? And to what extent has the so-called "black voice" influenced classical vocal music? In addition, the conference will focus on the following: (1) instructional approaches and methodologies in training the black voice, and (2) performances that will help music teachers diversify and strengthen their instructional techniques as they apply to the black voice. For additional information write: Mr. Sylvester Oliver, Division of Humanities, Rust College, Holly Springs, MS 38635.

BMR Newsletter is devoted to the encouragement and promotion of scholarship and cultural activity in black American music and is intended to serve as a medium for the sharing of ideas and information regarding current and future research and activities in universities and research centers.

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