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Cariso!

The Newsletter of the
Alton Augustus Adams
Music Research Institute

SUMMER 2003

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and Summits
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Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute

Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago

THE ALTON AUGUSTUS ADAMS Music Research Institute (AMRI) is a new branch of the Center for Black Music Research that focuses on music of the Caribbean, in general, and the Virgin Islands, in particular. Its principal charge is to facilitate the discovery, study, and documentation of diasporal unities in the musical and extramusical performance elements that unify the array of styles and genres dotting the musical landscape of the circum-Caribbean. The Institute is named after Alton Augustus Adams Sr., the first black bandmaster in the U.S. Navy, and is located on the first floor of his ancestral home, at 1-B Kongens Gade, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. The official ceremonies commemorating the establishment of AMRI took place in a series

of events held in St. Thomas on November 16 and 17, 2001.

Since its establishment, AMRI has presented two "Documenting Living Treasures" workshops, programs that are designed specifically to provide Virgin Islands community members with field research and documentation training as a means of facilitating the documentation of local musical traditions, many of which are rapidly disappearing from contemporary practice and use (see article on page 8). The culminating event for each workshop was a public program titled Summit of Tradition Bearers, which featured on-stage interviews and a lively roundtable discussion with Virgin Islands musical tradition bearers and (*continued on 2*)

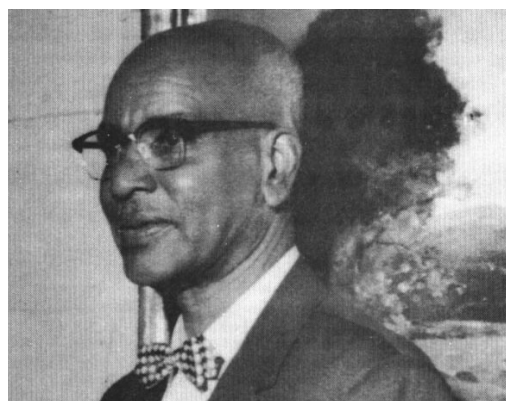
Another Sound of the V.I. Voice: The Music of Cyril F. W. Creque

BY DR. RUBY SIMMONDS-ESANNASON

THE OPENING LYRICS of a once-popular song by former Virgin Islands Calypso King, Glenn "Kwabena" Davis are:

Hear the V.I. voice
As these isles rejoice
With a quelbe spice
And we singing nice, nice, nice.

As this song suggests, thoughts of Virgin Islands music generally resonate with the pulsating rhythms of calypso, soca, quelbe, and bamboula. This is particularly true during carnival and festival celebrations as bands,

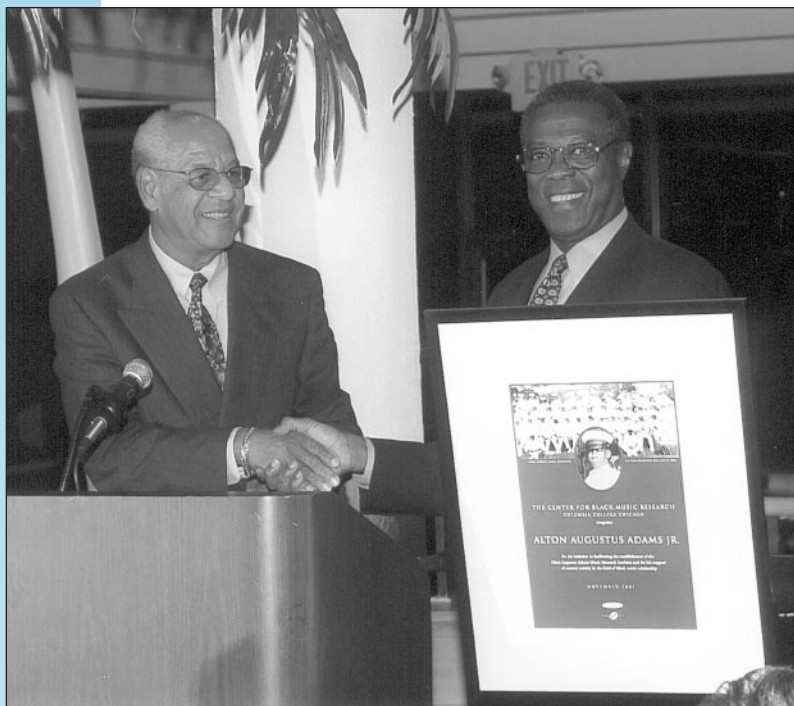


Cyril Creque, poet, organist, composer, and piano teacher was born on St. Thomas in the then Danish West Indies in 1899. Reprinted by permission of Jewel Creque Garrett

troops, and dancers display their mastery of these musical forms in the various performances prevalent during these celebrations. However, the (*continued on 2*)

CENTER FOR
BLACK MUSIC RESEARCH
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BILL PAYNE

Samuel A. Floyd Jr. presents the Alton Augustus Adams Award to Alton Augustus Adams Jr. The award, which is named after Alton Augustus Adams Sr., is awarded to persons who have made distinguished contributions to black music through artistic excellence, scholarship, service, education, and leadership. Alton Augustus Adams Jr. is the first recipient of the award

catalog of the CBMR Library and Archives. While the Resource Center's holdings will focus on the circum-Caribbean, a definitive black music reference collection will be maintained at the site, including such important reference works as the *International Dictionary of Black Composers*, the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: South America, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean*, and *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*. Other resource materials that will be available in the Institute library

include a selection of audio CDs, such as the Caribbean Voyage series and the Africa in America box set.

During the forthcoming academic year, CBMR's Rockefeller Resident Fellows will spend half of their residency in Chicago at the CBMR and half in the Virgin Islands (see related article on page 12).

The Summit of Tradition Bearers featured on-stage interviews and a lively roundtable discussion with Virgin Islands musical tradition bearers.

AMRI *(continued from 1)*

concluded with a reception with entertainment provided by Stanley Jacobs and Six Pack. The workshops and Summits were supported in part by the Virgin Islands Humanities Council. Space for the St. Croix Summit was provided by the Division of Social Sciences, University of Virgin Islands, St. Croix campus, for the St. Thomas workshop by the V.I. Cultural Heritage Institute, and for the St. Croix workshop by the V.I. Department of Education. Once final oral history projects have been submitted by the participants, they will be processed, cataloged, and made available in St. Thomas at the AMRI Resource Center and the Enid M. Baa Library, in St. Croix at the Florence Williams Library, and in Chicago at the Center for Black Music Research Library and Archives.

Beginning September 2003, the Institute will be open to the public on a limited four-day-a-week schedule, with the opening date to be announced. AMRI's facilities will consist of a resource center of noncirculating black music reference works with a particular focus on materials relevant to music of the circum-Caribbean, archives of primary and secondary materials, and a reading room with state-of-the-art computer terminals providing online access to Internet research sites and the online

Cyril Creque *(continued from 1)*

sound of the V.I. voice is also characterized by the patriotic compositions and marches by musicians such as the late naval bandmaster Alton A. Adams, whose works include "The Virgin Islands March" and "The Governor's Own." "The Virgin Islands March" has been adopted as the official anthem of the Virgin Islands and is played at formal ceremonies and at the opening of various activities, including many of those that occur during carnival. Ironically, as patrons attending the annual calypso reviews and competitions stand in reverence to "The Virgin Islands March," it is doubtful that they consider the stately strains of that march a part of the same musical landscape as that of the energizing calypsos they have come to hear.

While Alton Adams is well known for his

marches, there are other composers whose works have been lost in obscurity. One such composer is Cyril Felix Williams Creque, one of the forerunners of the Virgin Islands poetic tradition who was also a noted musician and writer. During his career, he composed three patriotic songs, “The Upward Way: A Patriotic Song of the Virgin Islands”; “The Song of the Virgins,” a patriotic anthem written on the occasion of the granting of citizenship by the United States to the people of the Virgin Islands in 1927; and “From the Mark of the Yoke,” dedicated to the abolition of slavery in the Virgin Islands. His poems were published in two collections, *Trade Winds*, in 1934, and *Panorama*, in 1947.

Creque’s Background

Cyril F. W. Creque, poet, organist, composer, and piano teacher was born on St. Thomas in the then Danish West Indies on May 30, 1899, to prominent St. Thomas merchant Henry O. Creque and Sarah Williams. Although he never lived outside the Virgin Islands, he was well read and well educated. He attended the Moravian Town School and the Boy’s High School on St. Thomas. However, because of the limitations of the school system, Creque and others who desired to advance intellectually completed their education through correspondence courses. Creque took courses in Poetics and Versification as well as Advanced Poetics and Versification from the Home Correspondence School in Springfield, Massachusetts, and he earned a degree in psychology and harmony from the University Extension Conservatory of Chicago.

Creque was part of the educated elite of the Virgin Islands during the early 1900s. His work, like that of his contemporaries, captures the essence of the time, the people, the culture, and the environment. According to Orville Kean, former president of the University of the Virgin Islands, this work epitomizes the romantic, intellectual mindset prevalent at the beginning of the century.

Evident in his work, as in that of his contemporaries, is his formal education, his exposure to the European “masters,” and his desire to demonstrate the polish of a people

isolated between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. His treatment of issues such as the transfer of the islands from Denmark to the United States, amid others’ poems of patriotism and praise to the United States, are illustrative of the paradox that results from efforts to hone a wholesome identity while balancing between the geographic and political realities defining the territory’s existence.

From the Mark of the Yoke

Although Creque’s musical compositions do not manifest the rhythm of today’s jump and wine calypso, they do have one feature in common with the modern music: attention to the political issues of the day. Indeed Creque’s compositions address three significant events in the lives of Virgin Islanders. “From the Mark of the Yoke” is dedicated to the abolition of slavery in the Virgin Islands, an event that took place in 1848. As the song’s title suggests, it addresses the liberation of Virgin Islanders (then Danish West Indians) from the yoke of slavery and from an existence that worked them like beasts of burden. It is interesting to note that carnival celebrations in most Caribbean islands are commemorations of the emancipation of a people from slavery. Indeed, the St. John carnival commemorates the same 1848 emancipation immortalized in Creque’s “From the Mark of the Yoke.”

The Song of the Virgins

“The Song of the Virgins,” written in 1927, celebrates the granting of citizenship by the United States to the people of the Virgin Islands. While this might not seem significant to people who today take their United States citizenship for granted, the event marked a special occasion in the lives of Virgin Islanders. Following the transfer in 1917, Virgin Islanders had been in a state of limbo; U.S. citizenship was not granted until ten years later. In the intervening time, when Virgin Islanders were neither subjects of the Danish King nor U.S. citizens, they were literally a people without a country. Understandably, when citizenship was granted, there was reason to rejoice. Creque does this in “The Song of the Virgins,” a five stanza (*continued on 4*)



Cariso!

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Cyril Creque (*continued from 3*)

lyric with hymn-like qualities. Its absolute reverence of the United States can be characterized as typical of late nineteenth-century Caribbean patriotic verse. This type of verse, according to Paula Burnett (1986), noted Caribbean critic, is designed to strengthen new bonds and allegiances but is also “unremarkable, late-Victorian verse, spongy with sentiment and soft verbiage.”

The third stanza of “The Song of the Virgins” reads:

America, be ours
Until thy shining towers
With dust shall blend.
Thee shall we ever own;
Thine ideals be our throne;
Let what is thine alone
Our paths attend.
(Creque 1934, 70)

The sentiment of this stanza is hauntingly reminiscent of the doxology, an offertory sometimes sung in various churches. During the church service, as offerings are brought forward, the congregation sings the doxology:

We give Thee but Thine own
What ere Thy gift may be
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust O Lord from Thee.

In this context, the congregation returns to God the very gifts that He has initially given. The hymn acknowledges, “All that we have is Thine alone.” These gifts have been entrusted to humans for their earthly use, and in this act of reciprocity, the gifts are offered in return. In a similar manner, Creque’s song suggests the desire of the people for a reciprocal relationship between the United States and the Virgin Islands. The opening line of the stanza, “America, be ours,” suggests a pleading to belong to America. In return for America making the people of the Virgin Islands its own by granting them citizenship, the people offer reverence to the new mother country and state that “Thine ideals be our throne.” The air of reverence and worship continues in the next two lines as the speaker says, “Let what is thine alone / our paths attend.” This suggests a willingness to discard other beliefs and follow

completely the path set by the United States.

Similarities to the doxology are not limited to meaning. Indeed, it appears that Creque intentionally mimics the language and rhythm of this familiar hymn. For example, the first two lines of his song’s third stanza replicate the rhythm of the first two lines of the doxology, with each line having six beats. Additionally Creque uses the archaic “thine” and ends lines with “own” and “alone” in ways that reflect the use of those same words in the doxology. It seems, then that in both form and substance, the poet and composer, speaking on behalf of a grateful people, offers a hymn of praise, reverence, and thanksgiving—an offering to the benevolent country that has granted them the gift of citizenship.

The Upward Way

His final composition, “The Upward Way: A Patriotic Song of the Virgin Islands” penned shortly before his death in 1959, was arranged by Arthur Charles and published by Arch Music of New York. This piece clearly demonstrates his belief that being a part of the United States is an improvement in the lot of Virgin Islanders. The lyrics read:

Verse

Created by God in the most friendly clime
The V.I. press on to a future sublime.
We’ll work and we’ll pray as our
friendship will grow
And yonder goal reach as united we go!

We now lift our eyes to this banner with stars
In a field of deep blue and with red and white bars
In God we do trust so in time we will be
Another proud star in that flag of the free!

Chorus

To the V.I. flag we cling and the V.I. song we sing
To the beat of our feet on the upward way
Let’s go on, on with the gift of citizenship
From the liberal hand of the mighty U.S.A.

Creque was very likely expressing the sentiments of a significant portion of the population who, although ambivalent about the transfer, had hopes that their new status would result in a better life. However, his immortalization of historic events in song mirrors the Romantic penchant for celebrating great events.



CLAUDE D. MALOON

*Cyril Creque (rear)
and his piano students
ca. 1955 at Bethania
Hall, Frederick
Evangelical Lutheran
Church, in St. Thomas.*

Other Musical Activities

In addition to being a composer, Creque gave piano lessons and worked as an organist at both the Memorial Moravian Church and the Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church, of which he was a member. At Frederick, he served as choir director and produced two plays, using members of the congregation as cast members. His first production was *David, the Shepherd Boy* in 1937, and in 1940, he directed and produced *Yokohama Maid*. He demonstrated his avocation for music in a number of other ways. For example, he once extolled the virtue of music in a radio address; and in 1952, he contributed a substantial article about Music Week to *The Daily News of the Virgin Islands*.

For several years, along with his son Neal, he hosted a monthly radio music and poetry program on WSTA, a local St. Thomas radio station. In the program notes for his December show, Creque commended Bluebeards Castle Hotel and its manager for their “endeavor to keep music on a high level and raise the standard of music appreciation locally.”

The high esteem with which Creque and his contemporaries held music is explained by Ruth Moolenaar, Virgin Islands historian, educator, and cultural expert, in an interview

some years ago. According to Moolenaar (1994), during the time that Creque wrote, the intellectual atmosphere was higher than that of today. By “higher” she means more academic and perhaps more European. She tells of writer, musician, and businessman Adolph “Ding” Sixto having introduced classical music to the community, adding that he held concerts in his home and developed in the community a kind of appreciation for music. Because of men like Sixto and Bandmaster Alton Adams, the average person knew about the musical “masters.” Besides, there was nothing else to talk about, so people talked about literature and music. That, she says, was the general atmosphere.

Poetry

Although Creque’s musical compositions are devoid of African rhythms and quelbe spice,¹ some of his poems capture that very rhythm, which is part of the musical (*continued on 6*)

1. Quelbe music and the accompanying quadrille dance have been described as the Africanization of the European contredance. As the enslaved Africans in the then Danish West Indies listened to the music of the enslavers and watched them dance, they “seasoned” the music with a spice which came to be known as quelbe.

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Cyril Creque (continued from 5)

tradition of the Virgin Islands. He pays tribute to the bamboula, the last surviving African dance in the Virgin Islands, and captures the beat of the drums and the movement of the dancers in two poems, "Bamboula Echoes" and "Masquerade Frenzy," both of which appear in *Trade Winds* (1934). Indeed, these poems mirror each other in many ways. The onomatopoeic "slamming," "billowing," and "barrel-rolling" of "Bamboula Echoes" are amplified in the heightened resonance of "tumming," "strumming," "drumming," and "humming" in "Masquerade Frenzy."

Both poems have alternating long and short lines, with the eleven- or twelve-syllable lines being the odd numbered and the one-, two-, or three-syllable lines being the even numbered. These lines from "Masquerade Frenzy" provide an illustration:

They are jigging up their face masks to some gay
 Bamboula tunes,
 And the dust in wanton frolic holds their skirts and
 Pantaloon;
 What a tumming and a strumming and a drumming of
 The ground,
 And a humming of their voices as they tramp the town
 Around!
 (Creque 1934, 84)

The image created by the drastic difference in line length, enhanced by the visual representation of the indented short lines, imitates the movement of the dancers sashaying from one side to the other and pausing to perform some heel and toe step at pre-established intervals. Furthermore, Creque captures the intensity of the music as he describes the movement of the dancers "swelling like a river." The visual image created by these two poems demonstrates the artistry of Creque as a musician and as a theatrical producer.

Legacy

For Creque, who was employed by the Department of Health for over thirty years, music and poetry were hobbies. Nonetheless, these pastimes have helped to etch his name in the annals of Virgin Islands history. His legacy

includes his children, among whom were several musicians. One daughter, Joyce Creque Mathews, once served as Director of Music for the Puerto Rico Department of Education and was an accomplished pianist and organist. His youngest son, Neal, was a nationally recognized jazz pianist, composer, and arranger.

A number of Creque's students have made names for themselves both in the Virgin Islands and in the continental United States on a variety of instruments, and the influence of their stern music teacher shows in the discipline that they demonstrate as musicians. Among these are Rhett Simmonds, a jazz musician who plays the upright bass, and Joe Ramsay, a saxophonist. It is interesting to note that, in addition to jazz, Ramsay regularly plays with the band that accompanies calypsonians at the annual carnival competitions and reviews in St. Thomas. So, in a manner of speaking, Creque's influence is alive, even at carnival.

Although Cyril Creque's contribution to Virgin Islands music beats with a rhythm of its own, it amplifies the sound of the V.I. voice and is sounding nice, nice, nice.

My unpublished doctoral dissertation, "The Words Beneath the Sand: An Examination of the Works of Three Virgin Islands Poets, Cyril Creque, J. P. Gimenez, and J. Antonio Jarvis," submitted to the Faculty of Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia, March 1995, served as the primary source for this article. Lyrics to "The Upward Way: A Patriotic Song of the Virgin Islands" reprinted by permission of Jewel Creque Garrett.

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Ruby Simmonds-Esannason is a former English Professor at the University of the Virgin Islands. She has written book reviews for The Caribbean Writer as well as the Journal of African Children's and Youth Literature (JACYL). She is the former Commissioner of Education in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Virgin Islands Support Is Key to AMRI Success

FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND SUPPORT provided by several Virgin Islands entities and individuals has been critical to the establishment of the Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute (AMRI) and its early successes in public programming. Chief among these supporters are the Alton A. Adams family and the Virgin Islands Humanities Council.

Alton Adams Jr. has worked tirelessly with the Center to plan and implement AMRI, which is housed in a section of the first floor of the Adams ancestral home in St. Thomas. The Adams family has provided remodeled space for the Institute. Mr. Adams has also made personal cash contributions to support public programs.

The Virgin Islands Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, has made three grants in support of the first three years of public programming, including \$2,000 to support the November 2001 opening colloquium, \$10,000 to support the June 2002 preservation and documentation workshop and summit of tradition bearers on St. Thomas, and another \$10,000 to support similar programs held during March 2003 on St. Croix. AMRI and the Center for Black Music Research are thankful for the very significant support that the VIHC has provided for these events.

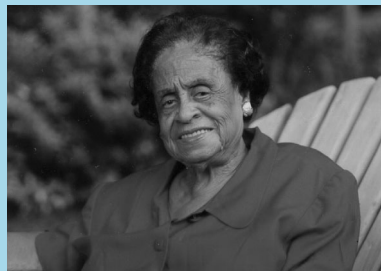
Other grants to support AMRI public programs have been awarded by the West Indian Company, Ltd. (\$7,500), the Virgin Islands Cultural Heritage Institute (\$2,000), and the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts (\$2,000). Space for public programs was provided on St. Thomas by the Virgin Islands Cultural Heritage Institute and on St. Croix by the Virgin Islands Department of Education and the UVI Division of Social Sciences.

Other local in-kind support has been important in establishing the AMRI in St. Thomas, including the provision of temporary

office space by the Virgin Islands Department of Historic Preservation, internet and e-mail access by Atlantic Tele-Network, Inc., and art services provided by Mango Tango Art Gallery of St. Thomas.

Program support has been provided by Columbia College Chicago, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services. American Airlines has assisted with staff travel between Chicago and the Virgin Islands.

The Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute has a local advisory committee formed in 2000, consisting of residents from St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix. The CBMR takes this opportunity to acknowledge these individuals and to thank them for gifts of their time and service as project consultants and as emcees and speakers for AMRI's public programming (see photo on page 12).



Miss Gwendolen Adams

BY DR. ROSITA M. SANDS,
CBMR DIRECTOR

THE STAFF of the Adams Music Research Institute and the Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago were saddened to learn of the passing of Gwendolen Adams. On behalf of the Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute and Dr. Samuel A. Floyd Jr., CBMR Director Emeritus, let me express our deepest sympathies to Alton A. Adams Jr. and the entire Adams family on their loss.

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Gwendolen Adams
St. Thomas



The 2002 St. Thomas workshop. Top stairs: Johann Buis, Janet Mescus, Martin Lamkin, Robert Nicholls. Bottom stairs: Lisanne Turnbull, Suzanne Flandreau, Carla Sewer, Lauren Larsen, Rosita Sands, Elaine Jacobs, Glen Pierre, Wanda Mills, Aben Marrero. Middle row: Vincent Cooper, Whitman Browne, and Cheryl Miller

The First AMRI Workshops and Summits

SMALL GROUPS of Virgin Islands residents attended the first two “Documenting Living Treasures” workshops on St. Thomas in June 2002 and on St. Croix in March 2003. Culminating each workshop was an evening “Summit of Tradition Bearers” to let the public see and hear what needs to be preserved.

The Workshops

Applicants to the workshops were persons interested in capturing on paper, tape recorder, and camera, a bit of history that might otherwise go unrecorded—the fascinating life stories of renowned and lesser-known musicians who are keeping V.I. traditional music alive. The projects created after workshop training will become part of the research libraries at the Alton Augustus Adams Research Institute (AMRI) and the Center for Black Music Research.

The workshops were sponsored by the AMRI, the Caribbean branch of Columbia College Chicago’s Center for Black Music Research (CBMR), and were led by Johann Buis, CBMR Coordinator of International

Initiatives, and Suzanne Flandreau, CBMR Librarian and Archivist. Two local experts, Gilbert Sprauve, University of the Virgin Islands Professor Emeritus of Linguistics, and Lauren Larsen, V.I. Education Department’s Director of Curriculum, Assessment, and Teaching, served as guest lecturers. Carol Wakefield, librarian at Whim Greathouse Library, presented during the St. Croix session.

The workshop attendees represented a cross-section of the communities of St. Thomas and St. John. The group included actors, university professors, an elementary school principal, a steel pan musician, a historic preservation planner, and a local food manufacturing entrepreneur. Despite their diverse backgrounds, they all shared an interest in preserving the stories of Virgin Islanders who are the musical tradition bearers of the culture. The residents who completed the St. Thomas workshop were Whitman Browne, Vincent Cooper, Belinda Gittens, Aben Marrero, Cheryl Miller, Wanda Mills, Robert Nicholls, Glen Pierre, and Carla Sewer.

The eleven residents who attended the St. Croix workshop, held at the Education Department’s Curriculum Center and the Whim Greathouse Library, learned field research and explored ethical issues that may arise when recording the life stories of living musicians. The group included Sharisse Bascombe, Winifred Hardy, Beth Heyliger, Carol Jackson, Emeline Jackson, Marise James, Aretha “Ricki” Marshall, Azalea McBean, John Munro, Veronica Phillips, and Steve Webster.

The St. Thomas Summit

The St. Thomas Summit of Tradition Bearers, which was held at the Frenchman’s Reef Hotel, paid tribute to five musical treasures: Alwyn “Lad” Richards and James “Jamesie” Brewster of St. Thomas, Delita O’Connor of St. John, and Stanley Jacobs and Eldred Christian of St. Croix.

They entertained the audience with performances of spiritual and secular music, including hymns, quelbe, and calypso.

O’Connor is recognized for her spiritual singing at churches and particularly funerals, as well as at hospitals. She warmed up the



STEWART S. SHULTERBRANDT

“Our culture became inclusive, not exclusive. The Virgin Islands is open to the world.”

—Gail Watson-Chiang

audience with “Stay between the White Lines” and then later sang “What Will You Be in a Million Years?” On both songs, her a cappella singing was quickly augmented by her fellow musicians, who joined in by drumming on the table and playing their instruments, creating an impromptu spirit-filled jam session.

Richards, the V.I. dean of saxophone who never leaves home without his instrument, was asked to play one of his favorite songs and played “Danny Boy.” But he quickly returned to his calypso roots with its social commentary and colloquial double entendres and challenged the audience to name the tune after playing a few bars of “Pum Pum in de Air.”

Moderator Gilbert Sprauve told the audience that Stanley Jacobs has dedicated his band, the 10 Sleepless Knights, to the preservation of indigenous music. The band, which includes lead vocalist and original band member Eldred Christian, is the band of choice for quadrille dances and cultural events throughout the Virgin Islands. When the tradition bearers were asked for their views on the changes in music today, particularly with regard to the growing popularity of electronically produced sounds, Richards responded, “Everything has to change, but the music of Stanley and 10 Sleepless Knights will be around for a long, long, time.” Jacobs’s Six Pack band, a smaller band composed of only traditional instruments, provided the musical entertainment and demonstrations for the Summit’s reception.

Jacobs and Christian next played a duet on an old-time favorite, “We Ain’t Start No War,” a song from the 1960s referring to Muhammad Ali’s opposition to the Vietnam War. After the performance, Christian imitated the fancy footwork of famed quadrille dancer Alphonso “Phonsa” Williams. Jacobs and Brewster, without missing a beat, provided back-up music.

Although the tradition bearers had different musical backgrounds and journeys, they all spoke with one voice: they called for the inclusion of the traditional music in the school curriculum and stressed the importance of passing on the tradition to the younger generations. They also expressed a need for a

musicians’ union. But until that happens, Brewster’s commitment to his music typifies the dedication and drive of tradition bearers: “Only time I will stop playing this music is when my two eyes close. I am not giving up this cultural music.”

The St. Croix Summit

The St. Croix community got a taste of the words and sounds that will be preserved by workshop graduates at the Summit of Tradition Bearers at the University of the Virgin Islands’ cafetorium, where some tradition bearers spoke, some sang, some played, and some danced in a demonstration showcasing the important role played by music in the cultural life of the island.

Professor Gene Emanuel, of UVI, was master of ceremonies for the event. The tradition bearers who participated in interviews and a roundtable discussion included Helen I. Joseph, Gail Watson-Chiang, Fred Thomas, and Sylvester “Blinky” McIntosh. The summit also included special tributes to Ethel McIntosh and Leona Brady-Watson, two well-known cariso singers.

Once Emanuel got Fred Thomas going, there was no stopping his reminiscences about early days with bands and what exactly characterizes St. Croix musicians. Sylvester “Blinky” McIntosh (*continued on 10*)



BILL PAYNE

“Only time I will stop playing this music is when my two eyes close. I am not giving up this cultural music.”

—Jamesie Brewster

Participants at the 2003 workshop in St. Croix discuss the preservation of local performance practices



STEWART S. SHULTERBRANDT

STEWART S. SHULTERBRANDT



Left: St. Croix tradition bearers Fred Thomas, Gail Watson-Chiang, Helen I. Joseph, and Blinky McIntosh, with emcee Gene Emanuel

Below left: St. Thomas tradition bearers Lad Richards, Jamesie Brewster, Delita O'Connor, Eldred Christian, and Stanley Jacobs

STEWART S. SHULTERBRANDT



Cariso—derived from the phrase “carry it so”—was “used from slave days to send messages, to curse, to make love, to tell jokes.”

—Gail Watson-Chiang

Workshops (continued from 9)

observed that he used to think the definition of a musician was one who could read music; in time, he learned that St. Croix musicians can get the feeling across without that skill. He later spoke about his lengthy association with bands, starting with his father’s Merry Makers dance band.

Then Joseph and Watson-Chiang got into the discussion, with Joseph noting that St. Croix is the “land of seven flags” and that what she learned of music came from all seven: calypso,

church, Latin, French, quadrille, the southern step from the Danes, Spanish beat, and language from an old-time radio station.

“St. Croix musicians are accomplished musicians” was her characterization; they can play anything. Watson-Chiang, a tradition bearer in her own right and by heredity through her mother, honoree Leona Brady-Watson, was

particularly clear in her opinions. She observed that cariso—derived from the phrase “carry it so”—was “used from slave days to send messages, to curse, to make love, to tell jokes.” Her mother, she said, brought cariso back to life on St. Croix. “Our culture became inclusive, not exclusive,” she said, noting that the Virgin Islands was part of the Harlem renaissance. The Virgin Islands is “open to the world.”

At the reception that followed, the chairs were pushed back and Stanley Jacobs and Six Pack played for dancers and listeners.

Stanley Jacobs and Six Pack perform following the 2002 St. Thomas Summit

STEWART S. SHULTERBRANDT



Torruellas Performs in Chicago

ON JUNE 18, 2003, the Center for Black Music Research cosponsored in Chicago a performance by Angel Luis Torruellas, a Puerto Rican tradition bearer of plena. Plena, an Afro-Puerto Rican musical genre traditionally accompanied by panderetas, a tambourine-like instrument, is an important genre of popular music that often serves as a vehicle for the expression of social commentary and political themes. Torruellas, a 65-year-old singer and composer introduced to the audience as “El Rey de la Plena” (King of the Plena), is recognized as one of the most influential contributors to the development of the plena. During the event, Torruellas was interviewed about his career, which began with his first professional performance at age nine when he was taken to Cuba to be officially introduced by Don Miguel Cueto, Director of the Trio Matamoros. Torruellas informed the audience that one of the highlights of his career was when he had the opportunity to meet Louis Armstrong. Following the interview, Torruellas performed with the



CARLOS FLORES



CARLOS FLORES

Angel Luis Torruellas performs at the Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center in Chicago

accompaniment of singers and instrumentalists from the group Africaribe. Other sponsors of the event included Africaribe, the Puerto Rican Arts Alliance, and the Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center.

Notice to Prospective Contributors

Submissions of articles about the black music of the Virgin Islands, in particular, and of the Caribbean or Latin America, in general, are invited. Of special interest are articles about

local musicians or local musical events in the circum-Caribbean.

The editor plans to include a column featuring letters to the readers of *Cariso!*, commenting on issues related to the newsletter's purpose.

Submissions, typed and entirely double spaced, should not exceed 1200 words. Accompanying photographs or illustrations, preferably in black and white, are also welcome. Authors receive a complimentary one-year subscription to publications produced by the Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago, the parent organization of the Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute.

Send manuscripts to Shirley Lincoln, *Cariso!*, AMRI, P.O. Box 11357, St. Thomas, VI 00801.



Samuel A. Floyd Jr., CBMR founder and Director Emeritus, and Rosita M. Sands, CBMR Director



BILL PAYNE

Members of the Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute Advisory Committee

Back row, left to right: Ira Meyers, Rudy Wells, Clifton Finch, Yvette Finch, Alton Augustus Adams Jr., Gilbert Sprauve, Myron Jackson, Lois Hassell-Habtes, Joseph Ramsay. Front row, left to right: Samuel A. Floyd Jr., Gwendolen Adams, Martin Lamkin

Rockefeller Resident Fellows to Study at AMRI

BEGINNING THIS FALL, the Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute will host two scholars who will be working on research projects focusing on the music of various islands in the Caribbean.

Dr. Dominique Cyrille will be at the Institute from September to early February. Her project is titled "The Politics of French Contredanse and Quadrille Performance in St. Lucia, Dominica, and Haiti." She will spend portions of her time doing fieldwork on the islands with which she is particularly concerned. Dr. Cyrille holds a Ph.D. in Musicology from the Sorbonne and is currently an adjunct assistant professor at Lehman College, City University of New York.

Dr. Kenneth Bilby, whose project is titled "Sounding Out Jonkonnu (Junkanoo) in the Circum-Caribbean: Explorations in Depth and Breadth," will be in residence at AMRI during the spring of 2004. His project focuses on remnants of older variants of the Jonkonnu celebration found in three locations of the circum-Caribbean region: Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Belize. Dr. Bilby holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Johns Hopkins University and is currently a scholar-in-residence at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and a research associate for the Smithsonian Institution.

Both projects will use a "triangular research" approach and are examples of projects that trace the presence of diasporal unities in black music in general and in the musics of the circum-Caribbean in particular. For scholars undertaking research in Caribbean musical styles and genres, the Virgin Islands is rife with opportunities for experiencing many of the older, traditional genres of music as well as more recent styles brought into the region through migration and population exchange with musicians and culture bearers from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and other Latin American island cultures near the Virgin Islands.

Each fellowship was awarded for a nine-month period between September 2003 and May 2004. The portion of their residencies that is not spent in St. Thomas will be spent at the Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago, which is the parent organization of the Adams Music Research Institute.

Public lectures will be presented by the fellows in each location in which they are resident, and they will jointly participate in a research colloquium that will be held at AMRI, tentatively planned for January 2004. Details of the public events will be posted on the AMRI Web site at www.cbmr.org/amri/amri.htm.



Dr. Dominique Cyrille



Dr. Kenneth Bilby