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Black Music Research Newsletter

Fisk University



Volume 2

Number 2

Fall, 1978

FROM THE EDITOR

*BLACK MUSIC RESEARCH NEWSLETTER is now the official publication of Fisk University's new INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN BLACK AMERICAN MUSIC. The Newsletter will retain its original purpose, format, and publication schedule. The Fisk Institute will encourage, sponsor, coordinate, and support research efforts in the area of Afro-American music, disseminating the results in the form of research tools, books, monographs, and live musical performances. The Institute will also serve as a resource center for scholars interested in research holdings at Fisk. The activities of the Institute will be restricted to the development of important research collections and research efforts, and the dissemination of research findings, together with related seminars, short courses, conferences, and cultural activities. Its products will reflect its dedication to vigorous scholarship and high academic standards. The Institute's research thrust will be focused toward primary-source research, providing established and aspiring scholars of black American music with opportunities not readily available in most universities. The cultural activities, seminars, and conferences sponsored by the Institute will emerge primarily as by-products of its research program. BMR NEWSLETTER readers will receive more detailed information in the near future.

*Since it is the purpose of this Newsletter to serve as a forum for the exchange and communication of information and ideas among scholars in the field of black American music, it is important that we periodically determine the extent to which such communication is taking place and the degree to which the scholarly community is being served. In order that this determination be made, readers who have been helped to locate material and personal resources, or whose research efforts have been facilitated in any way through BMR NEWSLETTER, are asked to notify this editor as soon as possible. Details regarding the nature of such help will be very much appreciated. The continuation of your Newsletter depends upon our awareness of the degree to which it succeeds in carrying out its mission.

RESEARCH NEWS; QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Kip Lornell, 350C Blair Avenue, Newport News, Virginia 23607, would like to correspond with anyone conducting field or archival research on travelling medicine shows.

*Tony Quagliano is planning a study on the connections between jazz and Hawaii, focusing on individual musicians (such as Kid Ory, who spent his last years there) and relationships between jazz and the local music of the

Islands. Mr. Quagliano would appreciate receiving any information and suggestions relating to any aspects of the story of jazz in Hawaii. His address is: Department of American Studies, Moore Hall 324, University of Hawaii, Honolulu 96822.

*John Kirby Abraham, 5 Ave Rodin, Paris, France 75016 (telephone: 504 59 85), is researching the life of Josephine Baker. He would appreciate receiving pertinent documentary source material of any kind, particularly information regarding her 1952 tour of the Southern United States. Mr. Abraham will gladly pay for photocopies of any material sent to him. (Mr. Abraham is a radio producer and journalist for Radio France International. He helped to promote Miss Baker's last appearance in "Josephine" at the Bobinn Theatre in Paris in 1975.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION

*A new long-playing record released by the Library of Congress focuses on the traditional black music of northwestern Mississippi -- an area celebrated as William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County. The album, entitled Afro-American Folk Music from Tate and Panola Counties, Mississippi, contains fourteen vocal and instrumental selections recorded over a period of thirty years. Folklorist and ethnomusicologist David Evans edited the volume.

Although several songs on the album are of white origin, the overwhelming stylistic influence is Afro-American. According to Evans, black music may exhibit more African traits in Tate and Panola Counties than anywhere else in the country. These traits include an emphasis on percussion, especially evident in fife and drum music; rhythmic and vocal features such as polyrhythm, syncopation, "blue notes," and antiphony; and the use of instruments of African origin, such as the banjo.

A 23-page illustrated brochure accompanies the album. The preface provides a general introduction to the region and to its musical traditions. The selection notes contain information on the performers, the context of performances, and the roles of various musical genres in the life of the community. A list of related publications, recordings, and films is included.

Afro-American Folk Music from Tate and Panola Counties, Mississippi is available for \$6.50 in person from the Information Counter, Library of Congress Building, or for \$7.00 by mail (postage and handling are included) from the Library of Congress, Recording Laboratory, Washington, D.C. 20540.

*Ferrum College has just released two documentary albums: Non-Blues Secular Black Music in Virginia (BRI-001) and Western Piedmont Blues (BRI-003). Accompanying the albums are booklets which include photographs, essays, headnotes for each selection, an annotated bibliography, and a discography, also annotated. The albums are available at \$7.00 each from BRI Records, Blue Ridge Institute, Ferrum College, Ferrum, Virginia 24088.

*Morgan State University's Graduate Music Division announces the appointment of Veronica Tyler, distinguished soprano, to its faculty. In addition to providing private lessons to selected voice majors, she is planning a workshop for the summer of 1979 which will culminate in the production of two operas. Persons wishing information on the workshop or on Morgan's recently expanded graduate music programs (performance, choral conducting,

instrumental conducting, music theory, musicology, and music education) should communicate with Dr. Dominique-René de Lerma, Graduate Music Coordinator, Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland 21239. Financial aid and teaching assistantships are available to students with high academic standing, and tuition-free scholarships are provided to non-black Maryland residents as part of the legislature's desegregation plans.

*Books on black music, rare and out-of-print, may be purchased by mail. Among the titles available from the supplier are:

American Missionary Association. Jubilee Songs: Complete--As Sung by the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University. New York: Biblow & Main, 1872. 64 pp. \$25.00.

Coleridge-Taylor, J. F. A Memory Sketch or Personal Reminiscences of My Husband: Genius and Musician, S. Coleridge-Taylor. 1875-1912. 76 pp. \$35.00.

Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel. Twenty-four Negro Melodies Transcribed for the Piano by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Boston: Ditson, 1905 (The Musicians Library). 127 pp. \$50.00.

Dett, R. Nathaniel, ed. Religious Folk Songs of the Negro as Sung at Hampton Institute. Hampton Institute Press, 1927. Index, appendix. 249 pp. Signed copy. \$40.00.

Fisk University (publisher). James Weldon Johnson: A Biographical Sketch. n.d. 2 photos tipped in. 35 pp. Includes sketches by Arthur Spingarn, Carl Van Vechten, and Sterling A. Brown. \$20.00.

Hayes, Roland. My Songs: Aframerican Religious Folk Songs Arranged and Interpreted by Roland Hayes. Little. 1948, 1st ed. 128 pp. \$30.00.

These are among the titles which can be secured from Gladys M. Sturgis, 208 Park Dale Drive, Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401.

*The Archive of Folk Song in the Library of Congress has available at all times of the year a limited number of informal internships through which students and others may assist in the work of the Archive. Although these positions carry no stipend, many persons have found their work here of great help in planning a career, or obtaining the experience requisite to entering an academic or other profession. Students often arrange with their own institutions to obtain scholastic credit for their internships; previous student interns have earned as much as sixteen hours credit for their work in the Archive.

Interns spend at least half of their time assisting in the day-to-day activities of the Archive, including bibliographic and reference work, reader service, cataloging, photocopying, accessioning, filing, and the like. The remaining time may be spent on specific bibliographic or discographic projects of special interest to the intern and of specific use to the Archive. All the above tasks are in the areas of folksong, folklore, and ethnomusicology.

The period of internship may range from one month to more than a year. Part-time internships are available, although more than one day per week is preferred. The requirements are minimal -- an interest in the subject and, preferably, some modicum of experience with folksong or folklore materials.

Persons interested in this program should write Joseph C. Hickerson, Head of the Archive of Folk Song, at the above address, or telephone 202/426-5510. [From the Music Division, Library of Congress.]

*Dominique-René de Lerma's edition of excerpts from Ernestine, an opera by Joseph Boulogne Chevalier de St. George, was recently released. The work, Scena From Ernestine, for soprano voice and piano, is available from Peer International Corporation and Peer Musikverlag G.M.B.H. The price is \$6.00 in the U.S.A.

*Free, prompt reference service on concert music by black composers is available on request from: Dominique-René de Lerma, Music Department, Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland 21239.

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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 musical activities in universities and research centers.

BMR NEWSLETTER is published quarterly by the Fisk University Institute for Research in Black American Music. Information submitted for inclusion should be mailed to the editor at the Institute for Research in Black American Music, Box 3, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.