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### Black Music Research Newsletter, Spring 1982

Samuel Floyd  
*Columbia College Chicago*

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# BLACK MUSIC RESEARCH NEWSLETTER FISK UNIVERSITY



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Spring 1982

## A MUSICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW OF SCOTT JOPLIN'S "TREEMONISHA"

by Dominique-René de Lerma  
Morgan State University

Over ten years ago, when an interest in Black music was being encouraged in new circles, we had a long path to travel in our efforts to understand the essential details and approaches needed to develop a secure perspective about the subject we were urging for consideration. What has taken place since that time is remarkable. I wonder if any area of music history has ever been explored as intensely as this within a period of little more than a decade.

Back then in more innocent times, I wrote "Perhaps we can find a student who wishes to write a term paper or a dissertation on Scott Joplin, but can we find a teacher who would encourage him? Can we find one who can guide the student over the bibliographic and subject complications of such a project?"<sup>1</sup>

During an intermission of the original production of *Treemonisha* in Atlanta in 1973, a young man came up and introduced himself to me—Addison Walker Reed—who at that time was completing his dissertation, *The Life and Works of Scott Joplin*, at the University of North Carolina. He thanked me for providing that stimulus by those words.

It is an ironic circumstance that this study was not available to me for the development of this paper and, while I am confident Dr. Reed's work was excellent, the research has not stopped there. Most recently, Theodore Albrecht has demonstrated

musicological virtuosity in his article, "Julius Weiss: Scott Joplin's first piano teacher", which was published in the *College Music Symposium* in fall 1979.

While it is true that I knew of the existence of *Treemonisha* perhaps ten years before the Atlanta premiere and, in fact, had a copy of the original piano-vocal score, this is not a subject on which I have previously worked, so I approach it with a degree of apprehension and with respect for Dr. Reed, Dr. Caldwell, and the others who, for many years, have considered the music of Joplin in detail. I do remember, nevertheless, visiting T. J. Anderson in Nashville in 1968, when he was on the faculty of Tennessee State University. At that time, he showed me his work on *Treemonisha* and spoke of the opera with enthusiasm. A second experience came about in 1980 when, on an assignment for Fisk University, I visited Judge Nathan Young in St. Louis. This remarkable octogenarian had given much time to speculating about Joplin and the musical scene in St. Louis, and I shall refer to his conjectures in this paper.

Within the five years before Joplin's birth in 1868, the literacy rate for Afro-Americans was only 5%, although there had been established such schools as the Centenary Biblical Institute in Baltimore, now known as Morgan State University, and Fisk University, both in 1866. As we know already, the subject of education was an important one to Joplin. Among his contemporaries were Buddy Bol-

den, George Washington Carver, Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., W. E. B. Du Bois, Harry T. Burleigh, Will Marion Cook, James Weldon Johnson, and Sissieretta Jones. Not everything, however, was promising. Genocide became institutionalized with the organization of the Ku Klux Klan in 1865. Reconstruction was on its way to frustrate the hopes of Black people and to encourage the evolution of the blues.

In such an atmosphere, Joplin was born to laboring parents, both of whom had more than a passing interest in music. His mother played the banjo and sang, and his father was a violinist who had performed as a slave in North Carolina. Joplin knew minstrelsy as well as vaudeville, being active in both for brief periods in his life, and he was certainly acquainted with these repertoires, including the songs of Stephen Foster.

In 1905, two years after the Scott Joplin Ragtime Opera Company had become a minstrel group, it probably had been organized to perform *A Guest of Honor*. Joplin was active with the Texas Medley Quartet, an ensemble of eight or nine singers, whose programs certainly included minstrel-influenced music and barber-shop quartets. The music for the latter, incidentally, is partially characterized by abundant use of diminished-seventh chords which, as we know, was an often essential element of Joplin's harmonic vocabulary.

Joplin was aware of the church and folkloric traditions of his people.

(continued on page 9)

## BLACK INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TRADITIONS IN THE EX-SLAVE NARRATIVES

by Robert B. Winans

In seeking information about black instrumental music in the middle of the nineteenth century, I have gone through thirty-one volumes of the ex-slave narratives collected by the WPA in the 1930's and recently edited by George Rawick under the title, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, and extracted the references to instrumental music. (I have also included the Virginia narratives, edited separately by Charles Purdue as *Weevils in the Wheat*.)

For non-controversial matters of slave life, such as their musical traditions, the narratives are a rich source of quite reliable information. Unfortunately, not all interviewers asked questions that brought out information about instrumental music traditions in the pre-war period. But enough did ask appropriate questions so that there is quite a bit of data on

these traditions, which I will summarize.

These data refer to the 1840's through the 1860's; the ex-slaves interviewed had been born from 1830 to 1860. I have excluded references which deal with the period after the Civil War in order to focus on material clearly meant to refer to the pre-war time, although I have assumed that the few years immediately following the war do not represent much change from the earlier years. The data are quantified in the following table and maps.

The first two columns on the table, those identifying the instruments mentioned in the narratives and the total number of references to each, show that the most common instrument was clearly the fiddle, mentioned twice as often as the next instrument, the banjo. And, while the banjo was noted only half as many times as the fiddle, it still was referred

to much more often than any other instrument. Percussion, as a general category, includes the references to patting (as distinguished from mere clapping), drum-like instruments (usually tin pans and buckets), bones, actual drums, tambourine, and jawbone. The third most-frequently-recalled individual instrument was the quills, a set of reeds of different lengths tied together in a row, which produced different tones when blown into.

For the guitar, I am not positive that all these references are to the pre-war period, but most of them seem to be. The relationship of the guitar to the fiddle and banjo in this list makes it clear that widespread playing of the guitar by blacks was a post-war phenomenon. Most of the guitar references come from Rankin and Simpson Counties in south-central Mississippi as the third map shows.

Notable too, but not surprising, is

References to Musical Instruments in the WPA Ex-Slave Narratives

Instrument	All	Ga	Miss	SC	Tex	Ala	Va	La	NC	Ark	Ky	Tenn	Mo	Fla	Okla	Md
fiddle	205	39	46	23	20	13	10	10	7	8	8	4	6	3	3	3
banjo	106	26	13	7	8	8	14	6	7	4	4	5		1	1	1
percussion	75	19	8	14	2	6	2	7	1	1	3	2	3			
quills	30	13	1	6	3	2	2		1	1		1				
patting	22	4	4	7		3		1			1		1		1	
drum-like	18	10		4	1	1		1				1				
bones	15	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	1		1	1			2	
guitar	15		6		1	1	3	1	1		1		1			
drum	8	1	2	2			1	1		1						
tambourine	8	1	1	1		1	1				1		2			
accordion	6		3		1			2								
jew's harp	6							1		1		3				1
cornet/trumpet/bugle	6	2	1	1					1						1	
fife	3			1						1				1		
piano	3	1		1	1											
hand saw	3	2				1										
beating straws	3	3														
musical bow	2	1										1				
jug	2		1		1											
jawbone	1							1								
harp (?)	1	1														
big fiddle	1		1													
comb	1		1													
flute (of horn)	1							1								
fiddle alone	122	22	25	15	11	11	7	5	4	6	5	1	3	2	1	2
banjo alone	37	9	2	2	1	4	8		2	1	4	2				1
fiddle + banjo	28	9	5	3	4	1		2	2	1		1				
fid, bjo + other	22	3	6		2	1	3	2		2		1		1	1	

Robert B. Winans  
Department of English  
Wayne State University

the absence of many references to piano playing. Widespread black piano playing also seems to have been a post-war development. This is interesting in relation to the relatively short time after the war that ragtime piano came into being as a powerful new black musical form.

The material at the bottom of the table focuses on the two most common instruments, the fiddle and the banjo. The fiddle was apparently used alone (or with another fiddle) in more than half the references in which it was mentioned. The banjo, on the other hand, was played alone (or with another) in only a third of the references, it being found more often in combination with other instruments. While nearly any possible combination of the instruments listed here might be found in the narratives, the most common combination was the fiddle and the banjo, either just the two or supplemented by other instruments. Another way to look at the data is to say that in half of the instances in which the banjo appeared, it was in combination with the fiddle. And in one quarter of the instances in which the fiddle appeared, it was in combination with the banjo.

I was hoping that the data would provide a basis for making some regional or state comparisons of the usage of particular instruments, but there are some problems with this, primarily because the quantity of data varies considerably from state to state. The reasons for this involve the number and length of interviews per state, and the kinds of questions asked by the interviewers, about which each state organization made its own decisions. The latter is the more important issue. North Carolina, for instance, was a great disappointment since, while it had a significant number of interviews, the questions asked rarely elicited the kind of information I wanted. Georgia interviewers, on the other hand, regularly brought out information about instrumental music.

The states are arranged in the table according to how much data each provided, rather than according to geography. Georgia and Mississippi clearly have the best data, that from South Carolina and Texas is moderately good, and the rest of the states have varying degrees of inadequate data. The situation for Louisiana and

Florida should ultimately improve, since their narratives, the bulk of which have been inaccessible and unpublished and therefore not included here, are soon to be published. The great disparity between the quantity and quality of the data from different states makes state-to-state, or regional, comparisons more difficult than I at first thought they would be.

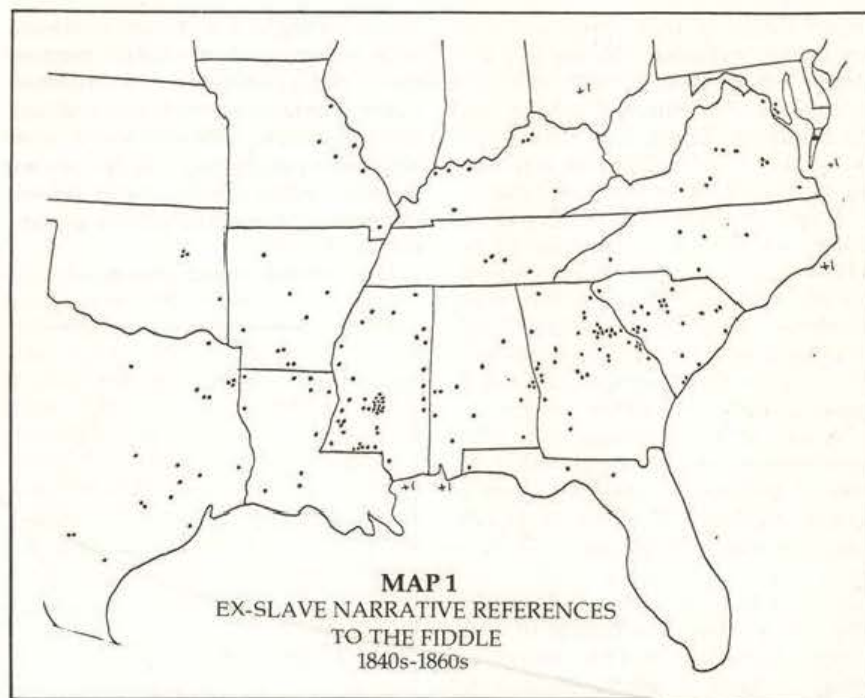
However, I think I have found a partial way around this difficulty, although I have some reservations about how far the method can be pushed. The method involves taking the fiddle references in each state as a standard for comparison. Map 1 shows the location of all of the fiddle references, each represented by a dot placed in the county where an ex-slave said that the fiddle was played before the Civil War.

The first thing that needs to be said about this and the other maps is a caution about interpreting them.

were interviewed, they said nothing about instrumental music.

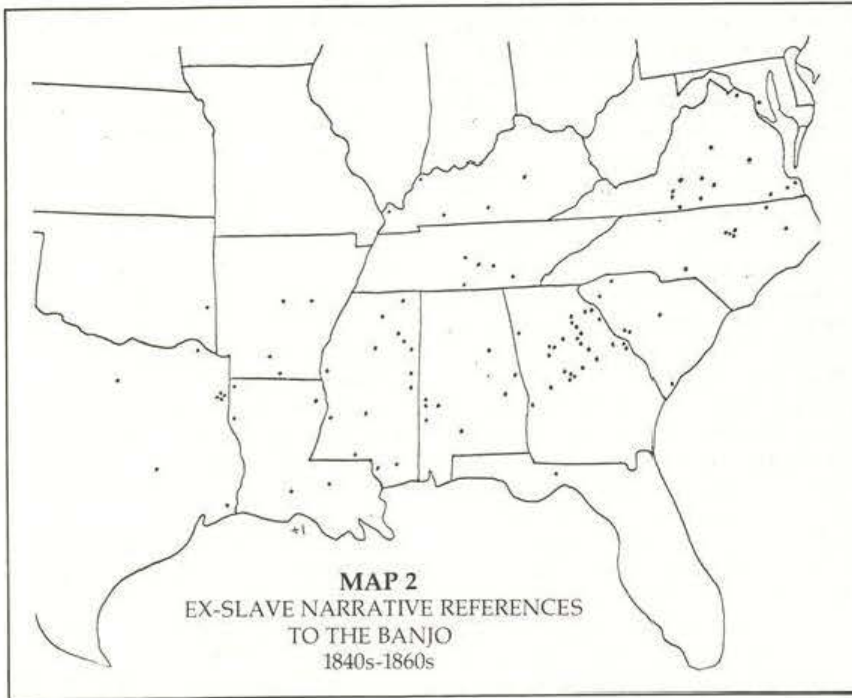
But, looking at the fiddle map, and taking variations of data into account, it seems safe to say that fiddle playing by blacks was extremely widespread throughout the areas in which blacks were to be found. In fact, I would go so far as to say that wherever there were blacks in any number in mid-nineteenth century America, there also was black fiddle playing; it seems to have been that common. And if one can assume that black fiddle playing was common to all areas, then one can interpret the data for other instruments for each state in relation to how many references to fiddle playing were found in that state.

For instance, if one is interested in comparing the relative strength of black banjo playing tradition in various states, comparing the absolute numbers of references to the banjo in each state is not a valid approach. But



The presence of a dot indicates that the instrument was being played by blacks in that area between the 1840's and 1860's. However, the absence of dots in other areas can *not* be taken as an indication that the instrument was *not* played in those areas. All the absence of dots really indicates is a lack of information, either because no ex-slaves who came from that area were interviewed, or, if some from there

the ratio of banjo references to fiddle references for each state, expressed as a percentage, allows for a rough comparison. This percentage is highest for Virginia (14 over 10, or 140%) and North Carolina (100%), suggesting that black banjo playing was especially strong in these states. These are followed by Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana, where the banjo-to-fiddle ratio is in the 60 to 70% range. The



**MAP 2**  
EX-SLAVE NARRATIVE REFERENCES  
TO THE BANJO  
1840s-1860s

banjo tradition was apparently less strong in Arkansas, Kentucky, and Texas, where the ratio is 40-50%, and quite weak in South Carolina and Mississippi, where the ratio is 25-30%. The data for the other states are too sparse to hazard this analysis.

Map 2 shows the distribution of the banjo references in the narratives. Once again, absence of dots means absence of data. The map does seem to show, however, that black banjo playing was to be found over roughly the same wide area as black fiddle playing, only at a lighter density.

A similar ratio approach to other instruments would suggest that the use of percussion was strongest in Louisiana, South Carolina, and Georgia, and that quill playing was more common in Georgia and South Carolina than elsewhere. The third map shows the distribution of quill, guitar, accordion, and fife references, and the fourth shows the distribution of the various percussion instruments.

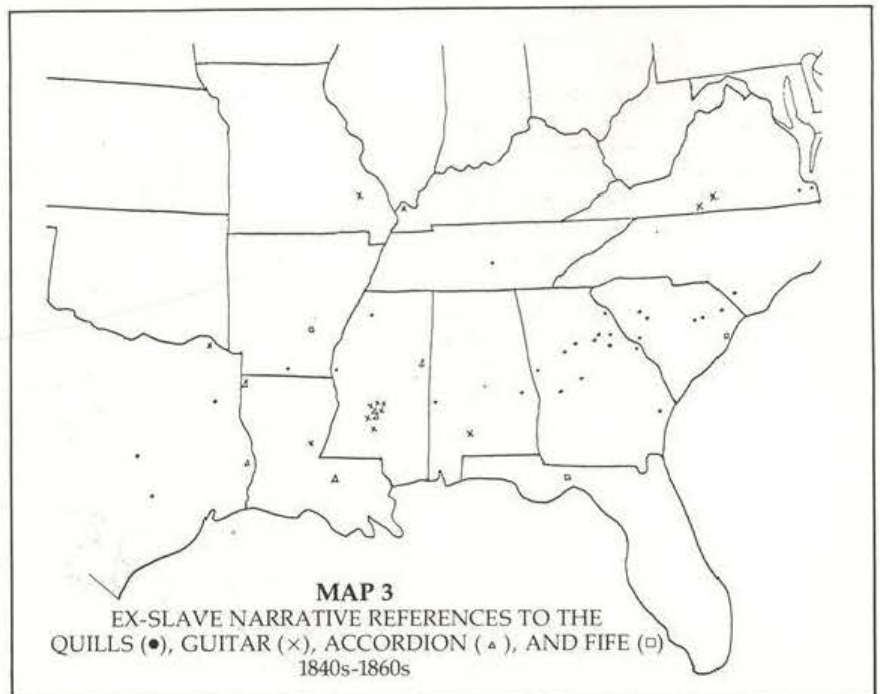
Under what circumstances were these instruments played by blacks on the plantations? Only occasionally are they said to accompany just singing. Almost universally, instrumental music was discussed in the context of dancing, though this might also include singing. The frequency of dancing ranged from none for the slaves on some plantations to just about every

Saturday night for those on others, with no pattern discernible in the way these differences were distributed. Many plantations had their own resident musicians, who in some cases had been purchased strictly for that purpose, while others had to depend on musicians from neighboring plantations.

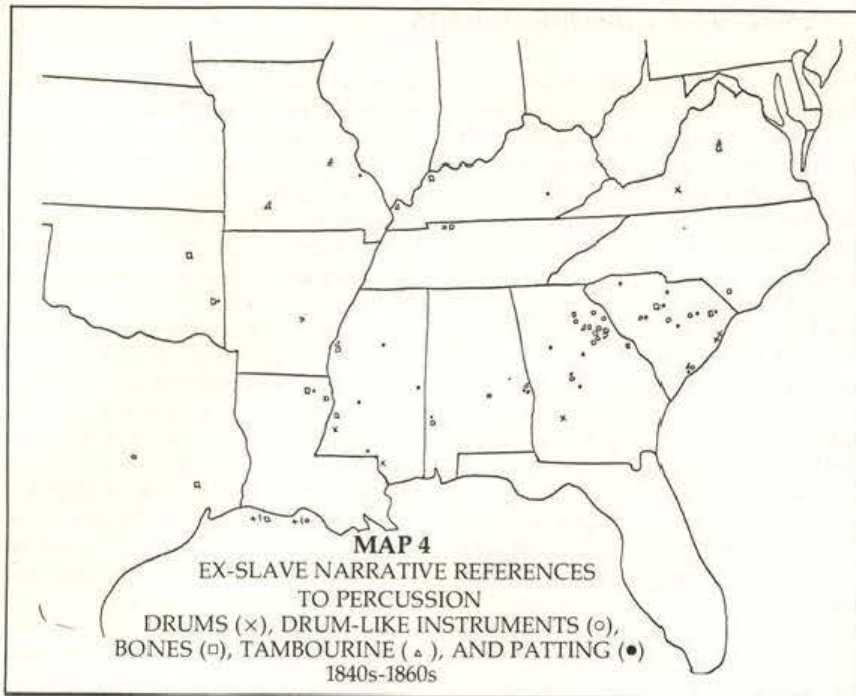
The dances most commonly re-

membered were ones primarily associated with white culture. The vast majority of references, either by name or by description, are to contra-dances or square dances, with those two types appearing in about equal numbers. Other specifically named types of white dances include, especially, the cotillion, and also the waltz and the quadrille. In addition, the informants also referred to a number of fancy step dances which generally seem more Afro than Anglo in origin. The most frequently mentioned was "cutting the pigeon wing," followed by "buck dancing," and then "knocking the back step" and various kinds of "jubas," "shuffles," and "jigs." These might be done as solo dances, sometimes in a contest situation ("cakewalks" were referred to a number of times), or, more commonly, as embellishments indulged in while square or contra-dancing. The emphasis on white dances was summed up in the comment of one ex-slave, who said, "Some of the men clogged and pidgeoned, but when we had dances they were real cotillions, like the white folks had." The kinds of dances, of course, influenced the kinds of music played on the instruments.

The narratives also provide enough data to begin to sketch out a repertoire of songs and tunes played. Here is a



**MAP 3**  
EX-SLAVE NARRATIVE REFERENCES TO THE  
QUILLS (●), GUITAR (x), ACCORDION (▲), AND FIFE (□)  
1840s-1860s



list of the most frequently remembered dance tunes and songs played on instruments.

- 10 Turkey In the Straw
- 6 Run Nigger Run
- 4 Arkansas Traveller
- 4 Molly Put the Kettle On
- 4 Old Dan Tucker
- 3 Dixie
- 3 Hop Light Ladies
- 3 Miss Liza Jane
- 3 Sally Ann
- 2 Swanee River
- 2 Sally Goodin
- 2 Swing Low Sweet Chariot
- 2 Cotton Eyed Joe

The following are a representative selection of those mentioned once.

- Home Sweet Home
  - Cackling Hen
  - Yankee Doodle
  - Devil's Dream
  - Amazing Grace
  - Buffalo Gals
  - Natchez Under the Hill
  - Black Eyed Susan
  - Coffee Grows on White Oak Trees
  - Taint Gonna Rain No More
  - Billy in the Low Ground
  - Eggnog, Sugar and Beer
- These are only the songs mentioned in connection with instruments; the narratives contain many others just for singing.

This list can lead us into a discussion of the relationship between black tradition and the early minstrel show.

The first point of comparison is instrumentation, which for the early minstrel show (1840's and 1850's) was fiddle, banjo, bones, and tambourine. It would seem that this does accurately reflect contemporary black folk tradition, since the top three items on our list were fiddle, banjo, and percussion. Minstrel performers preferred the bones and tambourine over other possible forms of percussion. The accordion, guitar, and jew's harp also were sometimes played on the minstrel stage. In fact, one could say that of the more important instruments in contemporary black tradition, the only one not incorporated into the minstrel show was the quills.

The other point of comparison is repertoire. Most of the songs noted more than once in the narratives as

being played on instruments are also minstrel songs. Most of these, in turn, probably came to the minstrels from black tradition, though a few, notably "Dixie" and "Swanee River," originated in the shows.

Another interesting point is that the narratives provide some evidence for the idea that southern plantations had built-in minstrel shows, in terms of the attitude of the white owners toward the music and dance of their black slaves. Quite a few ex-slaves stated that their masters and mistresses, and sometimes their white guests as well, would come down to the slave quarters to witness and to be entertained by a slave dance, and that the slaves played up to this.

The final topic I want to touch on is black-white musical interaction. In the narratives, one finds references to blacks listening to white music and, as just noted, whites listening to black music. One can also find a few references to whites teaching blacks how to play an instrument, mostly the fiddle. Quite frequently, black musicians are noted as playing for white dances as well as their own. Much less expected are the references to whites playing for black dances, which apparently was not all that rare. The usual situation involved a plantation owner who loved to play the fiddle, and who regularly played it for his own slaves to dance to. All of these interactions, plus the instruments the black musicians most often played, the kinds of dances they played for, and the repertoire noted above, indicate that in the mid-nineteenth century, just before the Civil War, black instrumental music traditions represented a considerable amalgamation of Anglo and Afro elements.

### Third National Conference on Black Music Research April 21-23, 1982

Individuals interested in presenting scholarly papers at the 1983 meeting should submit an abstract of 100-200 words no later than December 1, 1982. Abstracts should be double-spaced on size 8½ × 11 paper. All papers presented at the conference will be considered for publication in BMR Journal.

## RESEARCH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Mother of the Blues: A Study of Ma Rainey.* Sandra R. Lieb, assistant professor of literature and popular culture at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, has written the first substantive biographical study of "Ma" Rainey (Gertrude Pridgett, 1886-1939), America's first major woman blues singer. Recording star, songwriter, actress, dancer, and comedienne, Rainey was one of the greatest blues artists of the 1920's, reaching a wide audience of both blacks and whites through her immensely successful recordings and stage performances. A central if overlooked figure in black culture, she was highly respected by her blues contemporaries and has had great influence on singers and musicians throughout the twentieth century.

Rainey was a pioneer of the Classic Blues, a synthesis of country blues, black minstrelsy, and vaudeville performed almost exclusively by women. Her recorded songs drew heavily on black folk culture for attitudes about men, women, and especially love, articulating a clearly female perspective and showing a stronger affinity to these folk traditions than the work of any other contemporary female blues artist of equal stature.

In addition to biographical material, *Mother of the Blues* contains accurate transcriptions for 74 of Rainey's recorded song lyrics (authenticated at the Copyright Division of the Library of Congress), an examination of her recording style, and a scholarly analysis of women's lives as reflected in blues lyrics. Lieb discusses Rainey's love songs—which show women responding assertively to mistreatment by men—as well as her songs of comedy and cynicism, which place the women narrators in broader social and communal environments.

The University of Massachusetts Press has announced that *Mother of the Blues* is available in hardcover for \$17.50. The book includes a discography and photographs. Write P.O. Box 429, Amherst, Massachusetts 01004; Telephone (413) 545-2217.

\* \* \*

Lawrence Gushee is interested in collecting information on The Creole Band and its members, especially any

recollections from musicians (for example, those who were in the theater orchestras where they appeared), but also reviews in the local papers, theater programs, handbills, posters, photographs, and so on. He will, of course, pay any copying and postal charges.

The Creole Band (1914-1918) was a vaudeville act which toured the United States and Canada from coast to coast between August, 1914 and April, 1918. It usually comprised six musicians and a dancer in a traditional Southern plantation routine called "Uncle Joe's Birthday." The leader was violinist James Palao, and the manager was bassist William Manuel Johnson. Although singing and dancing were featured, the ragtime instrumental music seems to have been the most appreciated feature of the act. This is no wonder, as the players included such eventually famous jazz musicians as Freddy Keppard, Jimmie Noone, and Bill Johnson. Between January and June, 1916, the band left vaudeville to tour with the Shubert brothers' revue *Town Topics* as a featured act and as accompanying band for tap dancer Mabel Elaine.

In three and a half years of touring, The Creole Band played in more than seventy towns and cities. The focus of their activity, however, was Chicago, and Illinois with its adjoining states accounted for over half of their engagements. The band performed in New York on two separate occasions, attracting on neither of which the acclaim they had almost always received elsewhere. Also, for reasons which are not entirely clear, they passed up the chance of making a recording for the Victor Co., which would have made them the first New Orleans jazz band to record. Write to: Professor Lawrence Gushee  
University of Illinois  
School of Music  
2136 Music Building  
1114 West Nevada  
Urbana, IL 61801

\* \* \*

The Johnson Reprint Corporation (757 Third Avenue, New York NY 10017) has issued a facsimile edition of seven works by the Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1739-1799) as the third vol-

ume of its series, *Master of the Violin*, edited by Gabriel Banat.

The contents consist of the Symphonie concertante in E flat major (opus 12), and the violin concertos in G major and D major (both belonging to the opus 2 set), in C major and A major (opus 5) and in A major and B flat major (opus 7).

Included within the boxed materials is a reprint of the orchestral parts, that for the principal violin including a biographical introduction by Dominique-Rene de Lerma and extensive performance notes by Mr. Banat, who finds a relationship between Saint-Georges and Beethoven.

Because the reprints are based on the original editions of the 18th century, no scores are included.

The first violin concerto (opus 2, no. 1, in G major) exists in a modern performance version, edited by Dr. de Lerma, and published in 1975 by Peer International Corporation (1740 Broadway, New York NY 10019).

Of these works, only the Concerto in A major (opus 5, no. 2) has been commercially recorded. Issued on the Arion label in France (ARN 38 253), it is performed by Jean-Jacques Kantorow and the Orchestre de Chambre Bernard Thomas.

\* \* \*

*Soldier Boy, Soldier*, T. J. Anderson's new opera, commissioned by Indiana University, will premiere in Bloomington, Indiana on October 23, 1982.

\* \* \*

Dominique-René de Lerma wants to know if there exists a recording of Kathleen Battle's National Public Radio performance of spirituals with James Levine, aired on July 4, 1981. Dr. de Lerma's address is 711 Stoney Springs Drive, Baltimore, MD 21210.

\* \* \*

Franz Roehmann is seeking "recorded and/or transcribed examples of 17th and 18th Century West African music." Anyone having knowledge of the existence of such materials is asked to contact Professor Roehmann at 45 N. Pine Rd., Golden CO 80401; Telephone (303) 526-1086.

## "COMPOSERS CORNER"

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

The music of Adolphus Hailstork has a striking quality which invokes the attention of the listener from the beginning to the end. Hailstork (b. 1941) is a composer of considerable merit who has composed many successful musical works which have appealed to a very wide listening public. His compositions have been performed by such organizations as the Baltimore Symphony, the Atlanta Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Edward Tarr Brass Ensemble, the Community Chorus of Westerly, Rhode Island, and the Catholic University Wind Symphony.

Because he is interested in "many different approaches to the craft of composing" without subscribing to a single system of musical aesthetics, he is committed to what he calls "pluralism" in music. That is, he continually searches for "diversity" in his music rather than a singleness in musical style.

Hailstork's best known composition is *Celebration!* which was commissioned by the J. C. Penney Company as a Bicentennial gift to the United States. This is a very spirited orchestral overture with some ingenious rhythms and cleverly-written melodic lines which capture the spirit of America. His *Epitaph for a Man Who Dreamed*, a piece composed as a tribute to Martin Luther King, provides a moving listening experience. In this composition the composer's treatment of the strings is indicative of the choral influence upon his writing. Hailstork conducted the Male Chorus at Michigan State University, and, during his student days at Howard, he was Student Assistant Director of the Howard University Chorus presumably under the late Warner Lawson.

Since Adolphus Hailstork enjoys writing for chorus, his creative ability is remarkably evident in his *Psalm 72* for chorus, brass instruments, and organ. In this piece jazz-like lines are heard in the voices as well as some novel sonorities in the brass instruments and the organ. His *Out of the Depths*, a composition for concert

band, was judged in 1977 by the College Band Directors National Association as the first place winner of the Belwin-Mills Max Winkler Award. This composition is an intriguing one because its overall plan of dynamics is one of soft-loud-soft and its tonal structure progresses upwards chromatically. It is a very dramatic piece which holds the attention of the listener.

Adolphus Hailstork is Composer-in-Residence at Norfolk State University in Norfolk, Virginia. He previously served on the faculty of Youngstown State University in Ohio. During his tour of duty with the Armed Forces, he served as Captain in the United States Army.

Hailstork graduated from Howard University where he was a composition student of Mark Fax. Subsequently, he received both the Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Composition from the Manhattan School of Music, where he studied composition with David Diamond and Vittorio Giannini. He has the distinction of having studied with Nadia Boulanger in France. At Michigan State University where he received the Doctorate in Composition, he was a student of H. Owen Reed.

He is the recipient of many commissions and awards. His piece, *Spiritual*, was commissioned by the trumpet virtuoso, Edward Tarr, for his Brass Ensemble in Europe. His choral composition, *Psalm 72*, was commissioned and performed by the Community Chorus of Westerly, Rhode Island on its recent tour of Great Britain. *Mourn Not the Dead* was the co-winner of the 1970-71 Ernest Bloch Award for choral composition.

Adolphus Hailstork has produced a body of successful musical works which deserves attention.

### THE MUSIC OF ADOLPHUS HAILSTORK

#### ORCHESTRA

- Statement, Variations and Fugue*, 1966, 10 min.
- Phaedra* for orchestra, 1965, 10 min.
- Capriccio for a Departed Brother: Scott Joplin (1869-1917)*, 1969, 6 min.
- From the Dark Side of the Sun*, 1971, 8 min.
- Bellevue*, 1974, 3 min.

- Celebration!*, 1975, 3½ min., published: J. C. Penney Company.
- Concerto*, solo horn, solo violin, and orchestra, 1976, 10 min.
- Epitaph for a Man Who Dreamed*, 1979, 8 min.
- Sport of Strings*, 1981, 8 min.

#### CHORUS

- In Memoriam: Langston Hughes*, SATB, 1968, 3 min.
- The Race for Space*, a musical for chorus, 2 solo sopranos, 2 solo tenors, speaking parts, 1963, 2 hours.
- Mourn Not the Dead*, SATB, 1969, 3 min.
- Cease Sorrows Now*, Madrigal for SSATB, 1970, 2 min., published: Piedmont Music.
- The Silver Swan*, Madrigal for SATB, 1968.
- The Battle*, Madrigal for TTBB, 1970, 2 min.
- Spartacus Speaks . . . (If We Must Die)*, TTBB, brass ensemble and percussion, 1970, 5 min.
- Serenade*, SSA, soprano solo, violin solo, and piano, 1971, 10 min.
- My Name is Toil*, SATB, brass, and timpani, 1973, 10 min.
- Set Me As a Seal Upon Thine Heart*, SATB, 1979, 5 min.
- The Cloths of Heaven*, SATB, 1979, 5 min.
- Seven Songs of the Rubaiyat*, chorus, 1981, 10 min.
- Psalm 72*, chorus, brass, and organ,

#### CHAMBER WORKS

- Sonata for Horn and Piano*, 1966, 12 min.
- Elegy and Dance*, clarinet and piano, 1970, 5 min.
- Sextet for Strings*, 2 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, 1971, 10 min.
- Sonata for Violin and Piano*, 1971, 10 min.
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- Bagatelles for Brass*, 2 trps., 2 trbs., 1974, 5 min., published: Fema Music.
- Scherzo*, percussion, 2 fls., 2 cls., 2 trps., 2 trbs., 1974, 7 min.
- Pulse* for percussion ensemble, 1974, 5 min.



*Trapezium*, for viola, 1974, 3 min.  
*Processional and Recessional*, 2 trps.,  
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*Oracle of Tu Fu*, 3 fls., 2 per., women's  
 voices, tenor solo, and tape, 1977, 8  
 min.  
*Spiritual*, 4 trps., 4 trbs., 1975, 9 min.,  
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*American Landscape No. 2*, violin and  
 cello, 1978, 20 min.  
*Canto Carcelera*, flute and guitar,  
 1978, 4 min.  
*Suite for Violin and Piano*, 1979, 10  
 min.  
*A Romeo and Juliet Fantasy*, violin,  
 cello and piano, 1979, 7 min.  
*Elegy*, cello and piano, 1979, 5 min.  
*Easter Music*, cello and piano, 1979, 5  
 min.  
*The Pied Piper of Harlem*, flute solo,  
 1980, 3 min.  
*Variations for Trumpet*, unaccom-  
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**BAND**  
*Out of the Depths*, 1974, 15 min., Ren-  
 tal: Belwin-Mills Music Corp.  
*Celebration!* (transcribed from the  
 orchestral piece), 1976, 3½ min.  
*American Landscape No. 1*, 1977, 9  
 min.  
*Norfolk Pride*, 1980, 4 min.

**JAZZ ENSEMBLE**

*SA-1 for Jazz Ensemble*, 1971, 6 min.

**WORKS FOR SOLO VOICE**

*I have No Life But This*, soprano and  
 piano, 1966, 2 min.  
*A Charm at Parting*, Song Cycle for  
 mezzo soprano and piano, 1969, 10  
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 and piano, 1971, 6 min.  
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 piano, 1977, 5 min.  
*If We Must Die*, baritone and piano,  
 1978, 4 min.

**SOLO PIANO OR ORGAN**

*Prelude for organ*, 1967, 3 min.  
*Pieces of Eight*, for piano, 1967-68, 15  
 min.  
*Piano Fantasy*, 1968, 15 min.  
*Piano Rhapsody*, 1968, 10 min.  
*Suite for Organ*, 1968, 10 min., pub-

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*Ignis Fatuus*, for piano, 1976, 8 min.  
*Five Friends*, suite for piano solo, 1977,  
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**DISCOGRAPHY**

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Orchestra; Paul Freeman, conduc-  
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 band. Crest Records, CBDNA-77-  
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 Free Papers: To Be Selected  
 Concert

Friday, April 22

a.m. Panel: "Mainstreaming Black Music Scholarship"  
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 Banquet

Saturday, April 23

All Day: "The Musical Significance of Duke Ellington"  
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## SCOTT JOPLIN

(continued from page 1)

Texarkana had one church for its Black citizens: Mt. Zion Baptist had been established in 1875, and Mrs. Joplin saw to it that her children attended. Evans<sup>2</sup> states that Joplin had heard the Fisk Jubilee Singers and that he knew about Thomas Bethune.

With respect to formal training and exposure to European musical concepts, Albrecht presents a carefully documented picture of Joplin's early study. It would appear that by the age of 7, Joplin had become attracted to the piano owned by W. G. Cook, in whose home Mrs. Joplin was a cleaning woman. In 1879, when Joplin was eleven, he began the study of piano with Julius Weiss, a Jewish-Saxon who left Europe around 1866 and was engaged while living in St. Louis to come to Texarkana by a former Confederate Colonel, Robert Wooding Rogers, to teach his children. Weiss taught them German, astronomy, mathematics, violin and piano, and stimulated a love for opera in the children. The teacher encouraged Rogers to purchase a new piano, replacing the old one which the colonel owned, and it seems that Giles Joplin, who probably worked in Rogers' lumber mill, secured the older instrument as a birthday gift for young Scott, just about the time the lad began his own study with Weiss. Within two years, Joplin's repertoire included pieces by Mozart, Beethoven and Chopin, and Gammond<sup>3</sup> even speculates on other works he might have learned.

Colonel Rogers died in 1884, after which, the family could no longer afford Weiss' services. The teacher moved on to Texas, becoming first a music salesman and teacher, and later a pianist in a gambling saloon. He died about 1900 at the age of 60, but Joplin never forgot him and sent his former tutor money in later years.

Eighteen-eighty-four was a milestone year for Joplin. Deprived of his teacher and not totally comfortable at home, the sixteen-year-old left Texarkana for new experiences.

In 1901, Joplin had met Alfred Ernst, the conductor since 1894 of the St. Louis Choral-Symphony Society, known today as the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. Ernst stated that he planned to take some of Joplin's music back to Germany with him that sum-

mer and that, on his return, he would accept Joplin as a student. This statement, quoted in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* of 28 February 1901, is the source for the earlier assumptions that Ernst, not Weiss, was the German music teacher to whom Joplin's widow was to refer in later years. We still do not know if Joplin worked under Ernst as was projected. The conductor did mention that Joplin was readily appreciative of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, portions of which Ernst played for him, indicating that Weiss' interest in opera may have been communicated to Joplin a decade earlier. Gammond<sup>4</sup> and Evans<sup>5</sup> both agree that Joplin had met Harry Lawrence Freeman, the figure who appears to have been the first Afro-American opera composer.

Evans<sup>6</sup> states that Joplin heard Paderewski perform. Evans thinks it even likely that Joplin might have played for Paderewski, and Haskins suspects Joplin would have performed some of his works prior to their publication. If this seems suspect, Judge Young told me that the eminent virtuoso had visited Madame Babe Connors' high-class sporting house, at least to hear Tom Turpin play.

There remain yet two other areas to explore as part of Joplin's general music education background. Although his time as cornetist with bands was short, he did play with the Queen City Concert Band, which was conducted by Emmett Cook (who had served as tenor in Joplin's Texas Medley Quartet), and with Ed Gravitt's twelve-member band in Sedalia. This gave Joplin the chance to approach contemporary music performance practices through a different medium, and for him to test his hand as an arranger.

Joplin attended the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago, admittedly a year late. It would seem most likely that he saw the revue *Creole Show* and the performance of W. C. Handy's Mahara's Minstrels. Eileen Southern says<sup>7</sup> "he came in contact with some of the hundreds of Black musicians who had converged on the exposition's Midway seeking employment." Additional information on this event may be available. The musical director for the fair was Theodore Thomas, for example, who was appointed conduc-

tor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at this time. Thomas, who had initiated concerts of light music in New York in 1865 and was musical director of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, was interested in the popular music of the day. The Newberry Library and Library of Congress have material which may stimulate additional research on this Chicago event, when ragtime secured a much larger audience, if not its name.

In 1904, St. Louis offered its Louisiana Purchase Exhibition, attracting formal participation from fifty-five countries. As Judge Young states, St. Louis was a town which respected bands, and it was a city with strong Germanic connections. It is no surprise then to find among the participants the Sousa Band, the Innes Band, the Garde Républicaine, or the Exposition's own band, led by William Weil. But where were the German bands? Judge Young has determined that Kaiser Wilhelm II's band, which did not appear, was then conducted by the Black Sudanese musician Sabat el-Cher, and that furthermore the drum major was an Afro-American, named Wilson.<sup>8</sup>

Given these kinds of exposures to music, we can begin to see the roots of the music to *Treemonisha*, but we are left with only speculations about *A Guest of Honor* (1903). As to the subject of that lost opera, our indefatigable Judge wonders if the work was designed for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, with Sabat el-Cher being the projected guest, or if there might have been some relationship with Frederick Douglass, who died in 1895, soon after the Chicago exposition. At any rate, he feels the person in question could well have been non-fictional.

As for the model for *Treemonisha*, the Judge feels comfortable in the identity of Ida B. Wells Barnett (1869-1931), the distinguished editor who spoke out against lynching, superstition, and ignorance, much like *Treemonisha* herself, although these viewpoints would not have been unpopular with most Black Americans, including Joplin.

The opera had been drafted in St. Louis and had been played for Joseph Lamb in 1908, in New York, by Joplin. The final revision was completed and the piano-vocal score was issued with

the composer's imprint in May of 1911. Benjamin Nibur contemplated a production at Harlem's Lafayette Theater (2227 Seventh Avenue), a theater which he managed and which seated 2,000. It had opened in 1912, available to all persons, but the social climate had changed since the Broadway productions of Will Marion Cook, and the theater failed to attract non-Blacks. Before progress could be made toward the production of *Treemonisha*, the management changed and the interest now moved to musical comedy (to which idiom Joplin planned to contribute with a show called *If*, but he burned these sketches and those of a symphony in the winter of 1916).

The fate of *Treemonisha* during Joplin's life is well known: the orchestral parts did exist, having been copied by Sam Patterson, and the Lincoln Theater on 135th Street had been rented, but the reading aroused no enthusiasm. We can understand why, both socially and musically. Harlem was on the way to its Renaissance. Those who auditioned the opera might have been offended, or at least alienated, by its "country innocence," its absence of sophistication, and its dated treatment of ideas. It would be thought no less modern as a piece of music, with idiom from the past—after all, Joplin claimed he had worked on it for 15 years prior to publication, which suggests it had started to take shape before the publication of *Maple Leaf Rag*—and there was no influence of the new Black idioms or talents: Bert Williams, Lyles and Miller, Ford Dabney, Bob Cole and J. Rosamond Johnson, J. Leubrie Hill, and Andy Razaf. It simply was not a New York show, not for 1915.

To what extent does *Treemonisha* exhibit the wide variety of ideas to which Joplin's education exposed him? We shall see no evidence of his having read a counterpoint book by Jadassohn, as reported by Hebert<sup>9</sup>, and I really feel it is unkind to look for a Wagnerian influence in any regard. This is a remarkably innocent and naive work, lacking even the sophistication of Joplin's piano works.

The composer was an ardent believer in education. The literary style by which, in his libretto, he expresses this sentiment might be called primitive English opera-ese. It seems more influenced by turn-of-the-

century translations published by Schirmer than by Longfellow. It can be readily noticed, however, that the libretto gives such linguistic style to *Treemonisha* and those aspiring for education, while the conjurers speak in dialect.

Had Joplin sought to create a work of much greater drama, *Treemonisha* could have been kidnapped by the Ku Klux Klan, rather than the superstitious conjurers. It would have been a timely turn of plot but perhaps too timely, too painful, and too filled with both internal and external implications. The bear scene and wasps' nest then serve as euphemisms.

If we include additive rhythm within our definition of ragtime, we find very few instances of that idiom within the opera.

Folkloric influence is present in several cases. "We're goin' around" really is a ring play, and Parson Alltalk delivers a mini-sermon, outdoors, with the calls and responses of "Good advice." The finale of the second act, "Aunt Dinah has blowed de horn," is also a show-stopper and like several of the choral numbers, is actually extraneous to the plot. This is no less true of the barbershop tune, "We Will Rest Awhile," which comes shortly before this finale. It should be said, however, that the chorus and some ensembles eliminate the need for recitativo.

Monisha's over-extended first-act aria and "Wrong is never right," set for Remus with chorus, suggest that Joplin was familiar with non-Black musical theater of the day, and this is perhaps the only bow toward East Coast idioms . . . .

#### NOTES

1. *Black Music in Our Culture* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1970) p. 25.
2. p. 23.
3. p. 33.
4. p. 78.
5. p. 70.
6. p. 32.
7. *The Music of Black Americans* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971) p. 319.
8. For additional information, see *Sex and Race* by J. A. Rogers (1940).
9. p. 9.

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by Wayne Shirley

Revised to January 1981

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ML95.W29: 1 tls.  
Damrosch—Tee Van Collection: autograph.
- Waters, Ethel**  
Ethel Waters letters: 93 als.
- White, Clarence Cameron**  
Coolidge Collection: mimeographed form-letter, signed.  
National Negro Opera Co. Collection: 7 als., 1 tls.  
Schwerke Collection: 18 letters, mostly als.  
Music Division Old Correspondence: 3 als.
- Winters, Lawrence**  
Koussevitzky Collection: 1 tls.
- Woodbeck, Wilson**  
National Negro Opera Co. Collection: 1 als., 1 tls., and a series of possible-to-probables.
- James, W. L.**  
A. P. Schmidt Collection: 1 tl., unsigned.
- Johnson, J. C.**  
A. P. Schmidt Collection: 1 tl., unsigned. (This is almost certainly not "the" J. C. Johnson, writer of "Empty Bed Blues," but it seemed better to list him than leave him out.)
- Pappy, M. Consuelo**  
A. P. Schmidt Collection: 2 als.
- The Three Dukes**  
Schwerke Collection: 1 tls.

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