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Black Music Research Newsletter, Fall 1983

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BLACK MUSIC RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO/FISK UNIVERSITY

Vol. 6, No. 1

ISSN Number 0271-3799

Fall 1983

News and Notes From...

The Institute for Research in Black American Music at Fisk University

by William T. Dargan, Fisk University

Samuel A. Floyd, Jr. has resigned as Institute Director to accept a position at Columbia College in Chicago as Director of its Center for Black Music Research. Through his work in founding the *Black Music Research Newsletter* at Southern Illinois, and his work as founding Director of the Institute for Research in Black American Music (IRBAM) at Fisk, his contributions to research in this field are well-documented. We at Fisk are indebted to him for the excellent standard that has been established. He has agreed to continue his association with the Institute as a member of the Advisory Board. Dr. Floyd will also continue to edit the *Journal* and the *Newsletter*, which will be continued as joint publications of Columbia College and Fisk University.

As of September 26, 1983, I have formally accepted the position of Institute Director. By way of introduction, I received the doctorate in ethnomusicology from Wesleyan University in 1983 for a dissertation entitled, "Congregational Gospel Songs in a Black Holiness Church: a Musical and Textual Analysis." This is my second year as Assistant Professor of Music and Director of the Jazz Ensemble at Fisk. My hope is that the Institute will continue its scholarly publications and annual conferences as means by which scholars and educators can exchange and debate ideas and information. In addition,

there should be some movement toward establishing an archive of black folk music and culture that will enhance the already significant holdings of the Fisk University Library.

Several recent musical events and developments come to mind that should be mentioned, including the world premiere of an opera by T.J. Anderson, the release of a very important documentary film on black gospel music, and the induction of William Christopher Handy, immortalized as the "father of the blues", into the Nashville Songwriters Association International's Hall of Fame.

Commissioned by the Indiana University Foundation in conjunction with the School of Music and Office of Afro-American Affairs, *Soldier Boy*, *Soldier*, an opera in two acts, received its world premiere performance at the Indiana University Opera Theater in October, 1982.

The opera tells the story of the Vietnam War's effect on members of an inner-city black community—Clarence Cratwell, a black Vietnam War veteran (William Brown); Priscilla Jones, Cratwell's ex-girlfriend (Alteouise DeVaughn); Delores-Sue Tobias, Cratwell's fiancée (Robert Gumbel); Rev. thuston Norwood, Pastor of the Rock of the Redeemed Heart Baptist Church (Kevin Maynor); and jazz bass player/street-wise hip talker, Main Man Crutchfield (William Johnson).

More than a decade ago in the aftermath of M.L. King's assassination, the Indiana University community made a commitment to the greater utilization of blacks in all facets of IU opera productions, and to the commissioning of works by black composers. The production of *Porgy and Bess* several years ago, and the world premiere of Dr. Anderson's opera based on a libretto by poet and novelist, Leon Forrest, are noteworthy beginnings. The hope is that other commissions and performances will follow.

While the reviews of *Soldier Boy*, *Soldier* have been mixed, the composer has indicated that he was "very pleased" with the conception of the work and its performance. Sources in a major American city have reportedly expressed interest in producing a second performance of the opera.

Dr. Anderson is continuing his work with music in multi-media contexts through a collaboration with Chicago sculptor, Richard Hunt, Stan Madeja, Dean of Performing Arts at Northern Illinois, and Michael Harper, distinguished poet on the faculty at Brown. Entitled "Thomas Jefferson's Orbiting Minstrels and Contraband," this work is targeted for a 1984 performance in Chicago, and follows upon an earlier work "Thomas

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Jefferson's Minstrels," scored for black interlocutor and white glee club and premiered at Tufts. According to the composer, the earlier work deals with minstrelsy in the 19th century, while the more recent effort considers minstrelsy in the world of the 21st century. Bruce Thompson is writing a biography on the life and work of Dr. Anderson.

The movie "Say Amen, Somebody" has opened in several art theatres around the country to rave reviews.

Produced and directed by George Nierenberg and his wife, Karen, who is Co-Producer, with technical advice from Pearl Williams-Jones, Jeff T. Titon, and John Szwed, the film features Thomas A. Dorsey, the renowned "father of gospel music" on whom Fisk University conferred an honorary doctorate in 1982, and Mother Willie Mae Ford Smith, the legendary gospel singer from St. Louis who is known for her use of distinctively Afro-American vocal elements in gospel song performances.

Produced with major funding from NEH and NEA, this film gives witness to the possibility that documentary film can constitute high entertainment as well as surpassing creativity.

Dr. Pearl Williams-Jones, the movie's chief technical advisor, was also featured in the leading role of "Mahalia's Song," a play on the life of Mahalia Jackson. Directed by Michael Malone, this work was presented in early September as the first production of the 1983-84 season at the Howard University Theatre.

On October 9, 1983, the Nashville Songwriters Association International inducted William Christopher Handy into its Hall of Fame. On hand to accept the posthumous award was Mrs. W.C. (Irma Louise) Handy. As the climax of the awards ceremony, Bobby Jones and the New Life Singers performed a medley of secular and sacred compositions and arrangements

by Mr. Handy. Reflecting on the occasion, Moses Dillard, the first and only black on the NSAI's Board, noted that the "Manny Award" to Mr. Handy follows upon the Songwriters' induction of other legendary black composer-performers into their Hall of Fame in recent years, such as Leadbelly, Thomas A. Dorsey, and Chuck Berry.

IRBAM recently received a planning grant from the Tennessee Committee for the Humanities to develop the concept of a radio program series on the religious music of Black America. This project would address the relationship between music/musicians and the communities/contexts in which they function through broadcast interviews, commentary, and full-length musical examples.

Finally, IRBAM is planning a conference to be held in Nashville during the fall of 1984. A call for papers and further details will be announced at a later date.

News and Notes From...

The Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago

by Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., Columbia College

Columbia College is proceeding with plans to establish and develop an international Center for the study of black music and black music history. Such a Center, because of its resources, would emerge as the place for substantial research in any branch of the discipline of black music, including concert music, jazz, blues, ragtime, gospel, and other genres.

The city of Chicago is an excellent location for such a Center because of its distinction as perhaps the only city in the world where all black music genres have actually flourished, with a high level of quality and visibility, at one time or another. Black music in all its forms has always been important in the city at-large. Important national and international influences and movements have emerged from the city's creative cauldron—witness, for example, the modern blues movement, and the Association for the

Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) with its members and former members spreading a new music around the world and influencing untold numbers of their contemporaries.

Columbia College, with its central location in the city, with its programs that will effectively compliment the activities of the Center, and with the vision of its leadership, is a perfect home for the concept. There is not in existence anywhere a Center such as the one proposed here.

A Research Library

The Columbia College Center will be based upon and will function around a resource library that will include the following:

- A collection of all the important books and sound recordings pertinent to black music research.

- A computerized reference system tied to and based on the indexes and tables of contents of all the books, the liner notes of all the recordings, and

the vertical file materials held by the Center.

- A vertical file of materials on, of, and by black composers and performers, to include sheet music, scores, lead sheets, news clippings, promotional flyers, and other suitable materials.

A Research Institute

It is expected that the Center, with its material resources, will also be a research institute for scholars. To facilitate this aspect of the program, a Research Fellows program will be established to provide encouragement and sustenance for black music scholarship, and to attract scholars to the Center.

A Publishing Program

The results of Center-sponsored scholars will be published in Center

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publications. The Center is co-publishing, with Fisk University, *Black Music Research Journal* and *Black Music Research Newsletter*, two organs which have already established themselves as important publications among black music scholars. Other publications, to be released occasionally, will emerge.

A Teaching Program

Semester courses, a graduate program, and summer seminars will be developed for Columbia's full-time students and for students from other schools who wish to take advantage of

Columbia's unique position in black music studies, and for high school and college teachers who wish to take basic and advanced work in black music.

Additional information about the Center and its development will be announced in future editions of *Newsletter*.

Composers Corner

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

Alvin Singleton, Composer

One of the most unique composers to appear on the music horizon in recent years is Alvin Singleton (b. 1940). He is unique not only because of his musical style, but also because he has spent more than ten years living and composing in Europe. His association with the Austrian Radio has afforded him commissioned works and radio broadcasts of his music in major countries throughout the world. His music has continually been performed in the prestigious music festivals in Europe such as the Darmstadt New Music Festival, the Styrian Autumn Festival, the Flanders Festival (Belgium), the Brasov Chamber Music Festival (Romania), the ISCM 1981 World Music Days (Brussels), and the Vienna Summer Music Festival. His many prizes include the Composition Prize "Musikprotokoll 1981" from the Austrian Radio, the "Kranichsteiner Musikpreis," 1974 from the City of Darmstadt (West Germany), the Woods Chandler Memorial Prize for the best composition in a larger form at Yale University, 1970-71, the Rena Greenwald Memorial Prize for the best composition for piano at Yale University, 1969-70, and the ASCAP Standard Award.

Singleton lives in Graz, Austria, which is vastly different from Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant Community where he grew up. If Graz is the extreme opposite of Brooklyn, it has offered him a productive setting in which to compose music. In his early life he was a member of his church choir and the pianist in a jazz group made up of his musical friends in Brooklyn. It was the experience of performing as a jazz pianist and writing for the jazz group that

provided the impetus for further involvement in music. On the other hand, there was a period in Singleton's life in which he studied and worked in accounting. However, the desire to pursue music as a career was so strong that he left accounting and enrolled in the New York College of Music, and subsequently New York University where he completed the Bachelor's degree in music. He was graduated from Yale University with the degree Master of Musical Arts in Composition. In his musical studies he has been associated with several leading practitioners of the art, notably, Hall Overton, Gunther Schuller, Charles Wuorinen, Mel Powell, Yehudi Wyner, and Goffredo Petrassi, with whom he studied on a Fulbright Scholarship in Rome.

Surveying Singleton's creative output, one notes that he has written works which combine music with drama. His highly successful *Dream Sequence '76*, commissioned by the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz for the U.S. Bi-Centennial celebration, portrays characteristic aspects of life and thought in the United States. *Necessity is a Mother*, a work performed in 1982 in a concert devoted to his musical works at The Kitchen: Center for Video, Music, Dance and Performance in New York City, explores human reactions to various psychological stimuli in life situations. Singleton's concern for social justice is expressed in compositions such as *Extension of a Dream*, written as a memorial to Steve Biko, the slain leader in South Africa. His interest in experimentation is seen

in *Calm Sea*, a work which requires audience participation, a conductor, and eleven or more treble instruments. Singleton also exhibits a definite inclination towards improvisation, a trait which remains an integral part of his music.

Singleton considers foremost in the compositional process the ability to conceive the main musical idea and the development of that idea. In this regard he ably demonstrates his craft of composition in *A Yellow Rose Petal*, a work commissioned and premiered by the Houston Symphony Orchestra in May of 1982. In listening to this musical work one is able to decipher the main musical materials stated at the beginning, and observe the consistency of their use throughout the composition. The composer's use of melody is an important accomplishment in *A Yellow Rose Petal*. In fact, Singleton injects a special melody played by the celesta which is heard intermittently at various points in the piece. One is amazed at the composer's generation of arresting sounds and his controlled use of dissonance. He cleverly organizes his rhythmic figures and makes use of them throughout the piece. Another striking feature is the composer's use of orchestral color. The timbral interaction between the forces of stringed instruments, woodwinds, brasses and mallet percussion instruments (marimba and xylophone) sustains the listener from the beginning of the piece to its end. Carl Cunningham, the Music Critic of the *Houston Post* wrote following the premiere performance of this work: "Singleton's *A Yellow Rose Petal* can be saluted as one of the finest

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commissioned works in the legacy of the Stokowski Series (of the Houston Symphony Orchestra)."

The Music of Alvin Singleton

Orchestra

Moment, 1968.

Mestizo II, 1970.

A Yellow Rose Petal, 1982.

Chamber Works

String Quartet, 1967.

Still Love Suite, 1967, fl., cl.

Woodwind Quintet, 1968-69.

A Seasoning, 1971, voice, fl., al., sax., trb., bass, per.

Kwitana, 1974, piano, bass, per.

Extension of a Dream, 1977, 2 percussionists

Again for 14 instruments, 1975-79.

Such a Nice Lady, 1979, cl., vln., vla., cello, and piano.

Et Nunc, 1980, alto fl., bass cl., and bass.

Choral Works

Epitaph for double chorus, 1966.

Messa, 1975, in Italian language, fl., 2 guitars, soprano, mixed chorus, cello and bass.

Keyboard Works

Clinque for piano, 1969.

Argoru for piano, 1970.

Le tombeau du petit prince for harpsichord, 1978.

Music for Solo Instruments

Argoru II for cello, 1970.

Argoru III for flute, 1971.

Argoru IV for viola, 1978.

Theatre Music

Dream Sequence, for 8 singers, 2 actors, chamber orchestra and tape, 1976.

Necessity is a Mother...., for 3 actresses and double bass, 1981.

Other Musical Works

Mestizo I, for stage band, 1968-69.

Calm Sea, for 11 to an unspecified number of treble pitched instruments, conductor and audience, 1975.

The music of Alvin Singleton is represented by:

European American Music Corporation, 11 West End Road, Totowa, NJ 07512.

A Note On Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

by Jeffrey P. Green¹, 18 Batemans Court, Crawley, Sussex RH 10 6 PS, England

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's secure position in history is evidenced by four hard-back biographies (five, if the 1927 revised edition of Berwick Sayer's 1915 volume is regarded as separate), which places him in a special rank of black musicians (along with Armstrong, Ellington, Robeson and Waller). This note merely examines the facts about his father, which are not to be found in the biographies.

Gwendolen ('Avril') Coleridge-Taylor's 1979 account of her father noted that Daniel Pater Hughes Taylor's name appeared on the membership roll of the Royal College of Surgeons until 1904; but she made no mention of the composer's mother marrying Evans, the "working man" reported by Berwick Sayers. Dr. Taylor died in Banjul (colonial Bathurst), Gambia (west Africa) on August 25, 1904. Dr. Taylor had been appointed coroner in this tiny colony in 1894 and his name appears in the colony's annual *Blue Books* until 1904 when that year's *Blue Book*, page 46, notes his death on August 25. Christopher Fyfe, whose *Sierra Leone Inheritance* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964) page 299 noted that there were over twenty Sierra Leone creoles (Europeanized Africans) who, like Dr. Taylor, had qualified in medicine in Britain by the turn of the century, in his *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford

University Press, 1962) had referenced the issue of the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* which reported Dr. Taylor's death (August 27, 1904)—the issue that is not dated by Berwick Sayers, who quotes from it. Fyfe advised me in June 1982 that Dr. Taylor's tombstone in Banjul cemetery repeats the August 25, 1904 date and states that the stone was erected by the daughter.

Dr. Taylor lived for nearly thirty years after his composer son's birth in London; his presence in Africa suggests that the woman who married Evans (whose ability to pay for his colored stepson's music lessons seems unusual) was not the composer's uterine mother. The British Victorian stigma of color (and illegitimacy?) was sufficient for Mrs. Evans to avoid the crime of bigamy, surely?

A possible family contact with Africa is suggested in a report of a London wedding of one of those score of creole medical men, Dr. B.W. Quartey-Papafio, in the London monthly *The African Times* (November 2, 1896, p. 171) which mentions the presence of "S.C. Taylor." The Easmon creole medical family's contacts with the composer is one African element in the biographies, for Kathleen Easmon's

friendship is acknowledged in Berwick Sayers's preface; and in the widow's 1940s study *Genius and Musicians*. This latter work also records that his "mother, a West African friend, two nurses and myself" were at the 1912 death bed.

If we accept the inaccuracy (if not conspiracy) of the biographers, can we accept the reasons given for Dr. Taylor's return to Africa—racism? Taylor had studied at the Wesleyan Queen's College, Taunton, and then in London's hospitals, a broad experience of Britain and the British. Whilst racism did exist, it seems too convenient to explain the doctor's return to—for the biographer—a conveniently early death in darkest Africa.

This writer will be investigating the newspaper accounts of the composer's death and funeral in the belief that members of Britain's black community will be found in attendance. The music survives—but some of the black influences on his early life seem to be overlooked due to the inaccuracy of all biographies.

¹Author of *Edmond Thornton Jenkins: The Life and Times of An American Black Composer, 1894-1926* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982).

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'Roland Hayes in London, 1921,' *Black Perspective in Music*, Spring 1982 (Vol. 10, No. 1);
 'In Dahomey in London in 1903,' *Black Perspective in Music*, Spring 1983 (Vol. 11, No. 1);

Under Publication:
 Outline biography of Dr. John Alcindor (1873-1924) in Robert A. Hill (ed.) *Pan-African Biography and African History* (Los Angeles: Africa Studies Center, U.C.L.A., 1983);

'Caribbean Students in London and Their International Connections Through The Student Movement House, 32 Russell Square London, 1917-1920,' *Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 4, October 1983.

Piano Music by Black Composers: A Selective List

by Dominique-René de Lerma, Morgan State University

This list was prepared for distribution by the Institute for Research in Black American Music (Box 3, Fisk University, Nashville TN 37203), based on works which are both commercially published and recorded. The selection was made by Dominique-René de Lerma (Morgan State University).

Bonds, Margaret Allison, 1913-1972
Troubled waters (1967). New York: Sam Fox Publishing Co., 1967. Recorded by Ruth Norman on Opus One 39.

Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel, 1875-1912
24 Negro melodies, op. 59 (1905). New York: Da Capo, 1980. Recorded by Frances Walker on Orion ORS 78305/306.

Cordero, Roque, 1917-
Duo 1954, for 2 pianos. New York: Peer International Corporation, 1965. Recorded by Nelly Ingram and Jaime Ingram on Inter-American Musical Editions OAS-003.

Cunningham, Arthur, 1928-
Engrams (1969). Bryn Mawr: Theodore Presser. Recorded by Natalie Hinderas on Desto DC-7102/3.

Dett, Robert Nathaniel, 1882-1943
In the bottoms (1913). Evanston: Summy-Brichard, 1973, in the anthology "The collected piano works of R. Nathaniel Dett". Recorded by Natalie Hinderas on Desto DC-7102/3.

Hakim, Talib Rasul, 1940-
Sound gone (1967). Berlin: Bote und Bock, 1976. Recorded by Natalie Hinderas on Desto DC-7102/3 [where

composer's name is cited as Stephen Chambers]

Kay, Ulysses, 1917-
4 inventions (1964). New York: Duchess Music, MCA Music, 1964. Recorded by Felipe Hall on Da Camera Magna SM-93144.

Saint-Georges, Chevalier de, 1739-1977
Adagio in F minor. Bryn Mawr: Merion Music, 1981. Recorded by Natalie Hinderas on Orion ORS-78300.

Smith, Hale, 1925-
Evocation (1965). New York: C.F. Peters, 1966. Recorded by Natalie Hinderas on Desto DC-7102/3.

Still, William Grant, 1895-1978
7 Traceries (1939). New York: J. Fischer & Bro., 1940. Recorded by Frances Walker on Orion ORS-78305/306.
3 Visions (1936). New York: J. Fischer & Bro., 1936. Recorded by Felipe Hall on Da Camera Magna SM-93144, and by Natalie Hinderas on Desto RD-7102/3.

Swanson, Howard, 1909-1978
The cuckoo. New York: Weintraub Music Co., 1949. Recorded by Felipe Hall on Da Camera Magna SM-93144.

Walker, George, 1922-
Sonata no. 1 (1953). Hastings-on-Hudson: General Music Publishing Co., 1972. Recorded by Natalie Hinderas on Desto DC-7102/3 and by George Walker on Serenus SRS-12077.
Sonata no. 2 (1957). New York: Galaxy Music Corporation, 1966. Recorded by George Walker on CRI SD-270.
Sonata no. 3 (1975). Hastings-on-Hudson: General Music Publishing Co., 1976. Recorded by Leon Bates on Orion ORS-76237.
Spatials (1961). Hastings-on-Hudson: General Music Publishing Co., 1972. Recorded by Felipe Hall on Da Camera Magna SM-93144, and by George Walker on CRI SD-270.
Spektra (1971). Hastings-on-Hudson: General Music Publishing Co., 1972. Recorded by George Walker on CRI SD-270.

Work, John Wesley, 1901-1967
Scuppernong. Providence: Axelrod Publications, 1951. Recorded by Natalie Hinderas on Desto DC-7102/3.

Black Music in the United States: An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Reference and Research Materials

In the complex evolution of music in America, it is black music, more than any other musical form, which has the greatest influence on American composers and their work. Spanning more than such musical styles as spirituals, jazz, blues, soul, and folk

songs, black influence is also seen in genres ranging from vaudeville and stage musicals to classical music and opera.

Black Music in the United States: An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Reference and Research Materials, by Samuel A. Floyd, Jr. and Marsha J. Reisser, is the first comprehensive, annotated bibliography on the black

musical heritage in America. This one-volume research tool contains more than 400 bibliographical and archival entries dealing with all phases of black music.

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Materials are classified under subject divisions, which include guides and directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, catalogues, bibliographies, discographies, histories, photo histories, periodicals, anthologies, topical studies, biographies, and repositories and archives. Two useful features are the section on research tools for access to sheet music collections, and the chapter dealing with black music archives and collections, organized by state.

Subjects treated within each major division include blues, jazz, minstrelsy, gospel, classical composers, black military songs, black composers for films, opera companies, orchestras, vaudeville, popular music, performers and performance practices, jazz terms, and many others. Also listed are books on the science and appreciation of jazz.

Every entry contains full bibliographic information, a description of the work's contents and merits, and citations of all reviews published on that work. All entries are indexed by author, title and subject. Designed for

layman, student or scholar, *Black Music in the United States* is a unique reference tool which will serve as an invaluable aid for the study of black music and its impact on the history of music in America. 234 pp. cloth \$30.00

LC 82-49044

ISBN 0-527-30164-7

Order from:

Kraus International Publications
Route 100
Millwood, New York 10546

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

BMR NEWSLETTER is published jointly by the Columbia College Center for Black Music Research and the Fisk University Institute for Research in Black American Music. Information submitted for inclusion should be mailed to: Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., editor, Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois 60605.

Inquiries regarding subscription, as well as subscription payments, should be sent to:

Publications, Institute for Research in Black American Music, Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.

Black Music Research Newsletter
Columbia College Chicago
600 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60605