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Samuel Floyd
Columbia College Chicago

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On Soldier Boy, Soldier
The Development of an Opera

by T.J. Anderson

When I received a letter from Dean Charles H. Webb of the School of Music, Indiana University in 1979 offering a commission for a new opera, I was very surprised. Opera has not been a major involvement for composers of my generation. I remembered that two of the greatest composers of our century each wrote only one opera—Bela Bartok, *Bluebeard's Castle*, and Igor Stravinsky, *The Rake's Progress*. Although both composed a significant body of works for voice, the dramatic forum had seemingly not been of importance to them. I had observed the resemblance of style between Gounod, Meyerbeer, and Bizet. What musician has not heard Wagner's *Ring* cycle? Who has not been impressed by Berg's opera, *Wozzeck*, with its rich organic dramatic ideas; read books on the operas of Mozart; seen Boris Goldovsky's traveling production of *Rigoletto;* listened to arias by Luciano Pavarotti; or admired the divas Price, Horne, Caballé, Scotto, and von Stade? It was not my familiarity with the scope of operatic history that was of major concern, but the fact that I had not contemplated opera as an outlet for my compositional skills.

In his letter, Dean Webb suggested that perhaps the opera might be based on works such as *Black Thunder* by Arna Bontemps, *Song of Solomon* by Tony Morrison, *Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry, or *Brian's Song*, a popular T.V. show about the personal friendship of the late Brian Piccolo and Gale Sayers, two professional football players. He also suggested that I might build the opera around such historic figures as Crispus Attucks, Cinque, Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King, Mary McLeod Bethune, Paul Robeson, Harriet Tubman, or others. These ideas were not without appeal. In fact, in 1966, I had been commissioned by Fisk University to write a work in celebration of its 100th anniversary. The result was *Personals*, a cantata for chorus, brass septet, and narrator based on a text by Arna Bontemps. Therefore, Bontemps *Black Thunder* was indeed tempting. Also, since I have always had a picture of Paul Robeson in my home, the idea of this noble man as the subject of an opera seemed most appealing. Yet there was an idea far removed from such topics that had for me a greater concern—the plight of black Vietnam veterans in the United States. Those young men seemed to have been forgotten, ignored, and sometimes despised (as had white veterans of that conflict) for their participation in a war that is still debated. But there was the matter of a libretto, and that question moved toward solution when in 1978 I had a fiftieth-birthday concert in Chicago at the studio of my friend, the distinguished sculptor Richard Hunt. Richard, thinking it would be nice to close that concert with a new piece, commissioned me to write one. The result was *Re-Creation*, a work for three speakers, dancer, and a small group of mixed instruments based on a text by Leon Forrest. At that time I became very impressed by the intellect and sense of truth that one finds in Leon's writings, and so, in thinking of a librettist for my projected opera, Forrest became the most likely choice.

During this period I began to have additional thoughts on the concept of opera. For most American composers opera has been a dead medium. William Hazlitt, the British music historian, wrote in 1835 that "opera is a fine thing. The only question is, whether it is not too fine." I believe it has become "too fine," separated to some degree from contemporary life, selective in its appeal, and lacking in its concern for innovation. Opera companies have been in the business of recycling the few established works for years. American opera-goers are fed a constant diet of Verdi, Mozart, Puccini, and Wagner, with an occasional Mascagni, Smetana, Janacek, and Tchaikovsky thrown in. Not that the works of these composers are not great and important. The issue is that of diversity. How can we expand our horizons?

In French composer Arthur Honegger's book, *I Am a Composer*, he states:

> In fifty years the repertoire of the Opéra and Opéra-Comique have hardly changed. Let some new director appear and

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announce to the press "I am firmly resolved to introduce all the newest things into this theater, etc." and revitalize the repertory.

The situation in America is no different from that in France, notwithstanding the achievements in opera by Gian-Carlo Menotti and Samuel Barber. Needless to say, of course, two composers do not make a cultural base. It might also be worth remembering that Menotti did not come to this country until he was about sixteen years old, and by that time the roots of Italian opera had been firmly planted into his psyche. It would be safe to say that Samuel Barber had extensive exposure to the Met through his aunt, the contralto Louise Homer. I see both composers as exceptions rather than the rule.

These considerations brought me to the question: "What is American opera?" When I use the term "American opera," I do not mean works of European opera by American composers. I would define an American opera as a work that combines the grand tradition of European opera with the indigenous expressions of America. I would like to think that American opera should not be "arty," that it should be devoid of snobbery and rooted in our concept of equality. Its goals should be theatrical and not dramatic; more Broadway than Met; opera without pretention. When I was growing up in Washington, D.C. the stage of the Howard theater was my second home. Stage shows featured the big bands of Earl Hines, Erskine Hawkins, Duke Ellington, Jimmy Lunceford, Count Basie, Louis Armstrong, and many others. I am sure other composers of my generation found the Earl Theater in Philadelphia, the Paradise in Detroit, or the Paramount in New York City just as enjoyable, and the bands of Benny Goodman, the Dorsey Brothers, and Glenn Gray just as entertaining. It therefore seems apparent that any theatrical work should be reflective of this experience. I have always been fascinated by the importance of blacks to American opera. In addition to the operas of both Gershwin and Scott Jopin, there are Gertrude Stein's and Virgil Thomson's opera, *Four Saints in Three Acts*, and the very successful Louis Gruenberg work, *Emperor Jones*, which had eleven performances at the Metropolitan Opera House. Then there are English composers Frederick Delius and Sir Michael Tippett, both of whom came under the influence of black Americans in their operas *Koanga* and *The Ice Break*. One reason that black life is so attractive to creative persons is that, musically, our oppression has produced a large and palpable body of potent cultural expressions—spirituals, blues, ragtime, jazz, and gospel. These expressive forms serve as stimuli not only to black Americans but also to others, and they allow composers to engage in their own creative fantasies.

Is it possible for an opera not to have just three acts? Can opera be diverse rather than repetitive, a record of continuous enculturation which transforms the same listening audience from one generation to another? Can the concept of dramatic music be expanded from that represented in the twentieth century by Alban Berg and Luigi Dallapiccola? Can an opera not have the many promenades while the audience is waiting for the big scene to occur? My answer to each of these questions was "Yes," and I proceeded with my commission accordingly.

When *Jet* Magazine (April, 1980) carried an announcement of the commission of my opera by Indiana University, it elicited a letter from Clarence Davis of the Veterans Administration's Outreach program. It read in part:

> "Please be advised that the endeavor is greatly appreciated by all African-American veterans and that I have recently informed veterans outreach specialists across the country regarding your impending effort. Additionally, I have enclosed materials which you may find beneficial for the success of your project."

By now, Leon Forrest had agreed to write the libretto for my opera, and I shared with him the materials which contained information that was to some degree already familiar to us, such as the disproportionate numbers of black soldiers from our society used throughout this war, and their problems with reentry into their homeland.

The story *Soldier Boy, Soldier* takes place in a black lower class section of a city. The action takes place within a single day. After the orchestral introduction we see on stage a Baptist church, Rock of the Redeemed Heart, pastored by the Rev. Thurston Norwood, our idealist. We also view the White Lightning Saloon which is frequented by Main Man Crutchfield, a jazz bassist who is street wise and always foolish. Main Man is slated to be the best man in the wedding of Clarence Cratwell, our Vietnam returnee, and Delores-Sue Tobias, his fiancée. There is one other major character in the opera, Priscilla Jones, Clarence's former lady friend. A chorus is used to represent the community of friends.

As can be seen, Mr. Forrest is essentially involved with the problem of a soldier's private and public readjustment to the values promoted by this country upon his return from Vietnam. The ever-growing problem between realism and the idealism of all war heroes is always present. The embattled values prompted by the concerns promoted by the larger society are also reflective of recognized warring values seen overseas.

Working with Leon Forrest in the creation of this opera was one of the most enjoyable experiences of the whole project. My correspondence with him was minimal. (Leon and I had collaborated on the work *Re-Creation*, referred to earlier. That experience provided the basis for my selection of him as my librettist.) Leon Forrest writes in the black life style. His experiences as a reporter; as an interviewer of people as diverse as Ralph Ellison, Elgin Baylor, and Richard Hatcher; as the managing editor of *Muhammed Speaks;* and as a person involved with both Catholicism and store front gospel churches all

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make him a unique personality. On the written page he has soul. He is interested in the black community and its constant rediscovering of the American dream. His creative writing has been influenced by Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Richard Wright's *Native Son*, William Faulkner's *Light in August;* by the works of writers as diverse as James Baldwin, Dostoyevsky, Toni Morrison, Lorraine Hansberry, Scott Momaday, Achebe, and Albert Murray; and by the Afro-American oral tradition.

Bruce Alfred Thompson wrote in his dissertation, *Musical Style and Compositional Techniques in Selected Works of T. J. Anderson.* (Indiana University, 1978):

> Anderson's eclecticism embraces many influences, from ethnic and popular music to post-Webern and avant-garde regimens. The "special effects" of certain bowing, tonguing, and singing modes are an integral part of his music and should not be viewed as contrivance or novelty. His style embraces freedom as well as order and reflects a secure understanding of those influences which find their way into his music. The voice and the standard instruments are his medium, and his handling of them is imaginative and effective. Although influenced by avant-garde and, perhaps, experimental phenomena, his work exhibits a consistency of style and technique not usually found in those quarters. While comparisons with others are inevitable, none can be more than tangentially relevant. Anderson's music reflects a set of personal experiences and a store of creative practice that are uniquely his own.

I find the statement to be an accurate account of what I do as a composer. Too often, people think of these processes as being original. For me, originality represents the linking of new ideas with orders that have previously existed in nature or in the human experience. No artist, regardless of how original or radical, can afford to view himself or herself as existing outside the chain of universal existence. Since new compositions are summations of a composer's previous work, the earlier works become a reference; therefore, we see in *Soldier Boy, Soldier* not a new work but a recreation of existing orders.

From time to time people have told me that they thought parts of my *Variations on a Theme by M. B. Tolson* were improvised. I considered such remarks as compliments, for at certain points in this work, I tried to create the free spirit of jazz. So, in *Re-Creation* I began to move towards more freedom for the performing musicians, and there I did use improvisation. In *Spirituals* (which I scored for orchestra, jazz quartet, chorus, children's choir, tenor, narrator, and visuals) I used improvised solos even more extensively, with the orchestra backing up the jazz quartet with riffs.

I exploited these devices in the opera. I made use of three forms of improvisation that are based respectively on chord progressions, modes, and free ad lib.[1] For me, the central core of Act I is the orchestra as it functions as what one could call an exploration—non-thematic material introduced with the exposition of an idea. The music is influenced by the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM).[2] Musical gestures begin to comment on relationships between persons who possess humane qualities. I have always understood why Wagner, in his later works, placed more importance on his instrumental parts. One might say that they, not the vocal lines, become the central point of the musical effort. Act I of *Soldier Boy, Soldier* has an instrumental focus, primarily.

At the end of Act I, a new dimension is added—the child born out of wedlock to Priscilla and Clarence. After a threefold "Amen" the orchestra begins what I feel is one of the most important musical statements of the opera—the Epilogue to Act I ("The Blues"). The weight of an emotional letting has been deferred to this moment, not dissipated by several instrumental interludes as usually happens throughout most operatic works.

In Act II, Scene II, I make use of a technique I describe as the generative note. To understand how it might function, let me first go back to improvisation by modes, a common experience for jazz performers since the mid-1960s. When setting up environments for improvisations using modes or whole tone scales, a composer can be trapped by the limited number of possibilities within the melodic line. For some, the answer has been to construct synthetic scales. But such artificial constructs result in a lack of focus for the performers. (How does one bring any meaning to a group of unrelated notes?) In modes there are characteristic tones, such as the lowered second degree of the phrygian or the raised fourth of the lydian scale. These tones give the music a characteristic over-all sound. When these modes are expanded with generative notes, different possibilities become available. (An example used is a whole tone scale on Db--Db Eb F G A--plus the added generative note Ab.)

I also employ motifs throughout the work. One is associated with the helicopter—our instant mobility in Southeast Asia. It first appears as the repeated notes in the Prologue.[3] A motive is used again in Act II ("The Confrontations"). Here one can anticipate the death march by the use of the drum (♩ 𝅘𝅥𝅯𝅘𝅥𝅯 ♩ ♩).

The idea of variation has been critical to my concept of music. My *Variations on a Theme by M. B. Tolson* (1969), *Variations on a Theme by Alban Berg* (1977), and *Horizons '76*, a work that was commissioned for our Bicentennial by the National Endowment for the Arts, are concrete manifestations of this concept. This latter work, for soprano and orchestra, is based on a text by Milton Kessler. Here I use a chaconne, which I employ again in the opera when Clarence is shot. What better way to describe the recurring pattern of violent death than the repetition of chord progressions after the theme, which is in strict notation? The music moves into twenty-four variations. It is at this point that I make use of a technique that is historically very important—heterophony. This chance elaboration on a melodic line in less structured music is the opposite to

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what all symphony orchestras strive to produce—total conformity, or ensemble. When musical ideas break away from the core, the texture becomes interesting. I have deliberately striven to produce, alternately, feelings of 1) total organization and 2) moods of diverse freedom within a textural fabric.

In the opera, another form of variation is used. In Delores-Sue's aria in Scene II, "The Loving," I employ a ground bass theme, or passacaglia, based on major and minor thirds. The text is a love song that speaks of "The pitching hour" or "Oh sweet sea-rider." These last words reminded me of a blues text "See, See rider, see what you done done." The pitching of a ship, as metaphor, represents both movement and stability. The rudder of a ship is ground to its course, while at the same time the waves (metaphorically, the instability of major and minor thirds) cause the ship's movement.

After an opera has been written, the composer then has to withdraw temporarily and allow a production team to apply its creative energies to the composition. The conductor and the stage-set designer are important in this process. I have always felt that great conductors interpret scores beyond the given details of composers' instructions. Some years ago my *Squares* was performed by three different orchestras—the National, Atlanta, and Minneapolis Symphony Orchestras—each led by a different conductor. If asked which performance I preferred, I would have to admit that I enjoyed all three. I do not have a perfect image of any of my works. The music is a joint enterprise, and the sharing of the creative experience with performers of different personalities becomes an extra dimension of the creative process. In working with future conductors of *Soldier Boy, Soldier*, my thoughts will always be open to ideas which lie beyond the notated manuscript.

Notes

1. I have always felt that the failure of the effective use of jazz in classical music could be traced to the inability of composers to integrate improvised vitality with composed sections in a work. For me, the standard has and continues to be my former teacher's classic *Le Creation du Monde* (1923). In that work, Darius Milhaud brings together all forces into a coexistence that is most impressive.

2. This significant collective was a very important development in Chicago jazz about two decades ago and remains so today.

3. This use is not related to the leitmotif in Wagner's music.

Provocative Opinion
The Death of Jazz?

by Larry Kart
Reprinted by courtesy of the Chicago Tribune,
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"The old ones are going, and the young ones aren't growing." Fenced in by a few qualifications, that little rhyme pretty much sums up the state of jazz today.

The most important body of music yet produced in America, jazz is a child of this century—an art whose component parts began to come together around 1900 and an art that grew with such remarkable speed that in only 20 years it had produced at least three major figures [Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet and Jelly Roll Morton] and a number of undeniable masterworks.

But as we near the end of the century that gave birth to jazz, there are signs that this glorious music is about to pass away from us—not for lack of popularity [at the moment, jazz is doing better in the marketplace than it has for some time] but because the music's artistic vitality is more and more in doubt.

Always able until now to renew itself from within, jazz seems to be circling back on itself, forgoing its history of near-ceaseless invention in the name of various kinds of re-creation and revivalism. Also in the air is the related notion of a jazz fusion or blending—not so much with rock anymore [the original idea] but with Western concert music and/or musics from other cultures, with the result being a so-called "world music."

In any case, quite a few observers believe jazz has entered its "neoclassic" phase, an era in which the music will devote itself, in the words of critic Sam Freedman, to producing "personally stamped recombinations of existing knowledge."

There is nothing new about the neoclassic impulse, which first surfaced in jazz in the early 1940s, when Lu Watters and Turk Murphy tried to re-create the music of such '20s masters as King Oliver and Kid Ory. And one can see the logic in these and other attempts to revive the past, for the evolution of jazz has been so swift that all sorts of fruitful positions were abandoned long before they were played out.

What is new, though, is the nature and extent of the neoclassicism that runs through so much of jazz today.

The first generation of revivalists were few in number and confined themselves to early jazz styles. Now, however, almost the entire jazz past has been colonized by re-creators of one sort or another, including many who try to emulate and, in some cases, tame the music of such radical players of the 1960s as John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman and Albert Ayler.

No one would deny that these developments have produced some attractive music. But one wonders about the well-being of an art that has so totally devoted itself to re-examining its past, especially when this trend coincides with a series of

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events that may have had much to do with inspiring it—the passing from the scene of more and more of the first-, second- and third-generation creators who were, in effect, the music's living tradition.

"I think a lot about my buddies that left," said drummer Roy Haynes a few years ago, and the litany of loss he was referring to has indeed become overwhelming.

In the bebop era, when the use of drugs was widespread, one came to expect the early deaths that robbed us of Charlie Parker, Fats Navarro and so many others, long before their time.

Then there were further shocks, as such young and middle-aged masters as Clifford Brown, Booker Little, Lee Morgan, Scott LaFaro, John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy and Albert Ayler died when their creativity still was in full flower.

But time itself has taken over now, and in recent years we have [to name only a few] said farewell to Count Basie, Thelonious Monk, Earl Hines, Erroll Garner, Charles Mingus, Vic Dickenson, Art Pepper, Sonny Stitt, Al Haig, Wilbur Ware, Kenny Clarke, Blue Mitchell, Kenny Dorham, Bobby Hackett, Lennie Tristano, Grant Green, Russell Procope, Cozy Cole, Budd Johnson, Ray Nance, Bill Coleman, Shelly Manne, Hampton Hawes, Bill Evans, Don Ellis, Larry Young, Paul Desmond, Red Garland, Joe Venuti, Mary Lou Williams and Barney Bigard.

But why can't jazz continue as it always has, generating vital new artists to take the place of those who are gone? And why should there be any doubts about this neoclassic phase, since paying homage to its past would seem to be one of the healthiest things any art can do?

To answer those questions [or at the very least to speculate about them] some historical background has to be sketched in.

In its earliest days, jazz was three kinds of music in one—a folk music, an entertainment [or popular] music and an art music.

It was a folk music because it was invented by a "folk" [i.e. black Americans] and met that particular group's social needs. It was an entertainment music because it had the power to delight large numbers of people who did not belong to its original folk audience.

And it was an art music because—unlike a folk or entertainment music but very much like the music of the Western classical tradition—jazz had an inherent need to transform itself, building on its own discoveries and producing works that could withstand and reward contemplation.

Almost without precedent in the history of art, this harmonious, three-way blend gave jazz a great deal of its initial thrust. Imagine, for instance, how exhilarating it must have been to work at the limits of one's artistic capacities while one also fulfilled the needs of those closest to you and gave pleasure to the world at large.

But this balance, epitomized by the early career of Louis Armstrong, soon began to break down.

An "art for art's sake" approach first cropped up among some white jazz musicians in the 1920s. While the relationship between black jazz artists and the black audience was mutually gratifying for at least another decade, that came to end in the mid-1940s with the advent of bebop—a music of undeniable power but one whose aura of emotional tension and extreme rhythmic and harmonic virtuosity made it very difficult to take as entertainment.

From that point on, then, the audience for jazz has consisted of "fans" of one sort or another, groups that expanded or contracted as a particular style of the music met or failed to meet their social and artistic needs.

While it was still possible for jazz musicians of major stature to be popular, too, the time when that was the norm was over. And with the advent of rock, which transformed the music industry into more of a bottom-line affair than it had ever been before, it became increasingly difficult for jazz artists of any sort to make their music available to those segments of the public that might want to hear it.

So jazz, which always had been an art music in the most positive sense, now became an art music in another sense, too. Able to address the human condition with a unique intensity and depth, jazz found itself, for that very reason, ill-equipped to survive in a marketplace that was geared toward the needs of adolescents.

[Of course, the same could be said of the symphony, the opera or the ballet, but the audience for those arts has the social standing and economic clout to subsidize its tastes.]

Meanwhile, on the creative front, jazz was passing through its most tumultuous upheaval to date with the advent in the early 1960s of "free jazz," which dispensed with many of the music's most familiar harmonic and rhythmic signposts and often ventured into realms that were as abstract and sonically violent as the more extreme products of the classical avant garde.

Hailed by some and dismissed by others, free jazz split the jazz community as never before, and almost everything that has happened since can be seen as a response to that event.

On one hand there was what might be called the "pastoral reaction," the harmonically suave, impressionistic approach that was pioneered by pianist Bill Evans and that led to Gary Burton, Keith Jarrett and George Winston.

Embraced by a host of players who were put off by free jazz, this music allowed its practitioners to feel they were still moving forward. In one sense they were, conquering in the name of jazz the territory that previously had been explored by Debussy and Ravel.

The implicit dreaminess of this music is a problem, though. Before this, jazz had always been an art of emotional realism—a music whose most intoxicatingly joyful artists [say, Armstrong or Erroll Garner] did not

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take their audiences away from the actual world but instead spoke of those things in life about which one could, indeed, be joyful.

By contrast, today's neoclassicism is anything but dreamy, as it seeks to revive the values of warmth, soul and forthright swing that once were the hallmarks of jazz. In the process, it tries to reach out to a wide audience in the same uncompromising way that Armstrong, Basie and Ellington were able to do.

Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and saxophonist-composers David Murray and Arthur Blythe are among the key figures in this trend, and listening to them one finds much to admire. Marsalis, in particular, is an artist of great technical and intellectual gifts, capable of realizing any idea that comes to mind. And one also has no doubt that his heart is in the right place.

Lurking behind the neoclassical enterprise, though, there is a lingering sense that it is more a willed event than a natural one, despite its eagerness to restore to jazz those qualities that were natural to the music before free jazz came along.

Warmth, soul and swing certainly are among the hallmarks of a Ben Webster or a Dexter Gordon, but for them these things seem not to be sought after in themselves. Instead they are an inevitable byproduct of the act of playing jazz, virtues that arise as a matter of course when one makes musical and emotional contact with the material at hand.

It is this sense of contact with the material that seems to be lacking in so many of today's neoclassicists, perhaps because the medium of line-against-harmony that their predecessors found so usefully resistant no longer provides them with the same kind of challenge.

In David Murray's case, it is logical that this should be so, for he once was a fervent disciple of the most radical free-jazz saxophonist, Albert Ayler. As critic J.B. Figi said of another young neoclassicist, Murray "fills roles rather than playing from self," and one can hear the difference on the version of "Body and Soul" that appears on Murray's most recent album, "Morning Song" [Black Saint].

Sticking to the harmonic pattern of the tune until he ends his warm-toned solo with an Ayler-like squeal, Murray leaves one with the feeling that his relative orthodoxy is very much a matter of conscious choice and that his decision to play "Body and Soul" in this way ought to be a cause for congratulations.

In fact, to the degree that the solo has any emotional content, it lies in that sense of choice, in Murray's eagerness to gratify his and his audience's desires to experience in the present a way of playing jazz that a short while ago seemed to belong only to the past.

But aside from his need to please us in this manner, who David Murray is remains a mystery. This is odd, because the style Murray seeks to emulate was one that called upon the soloist to declare and explore his identity in every note and phrase.

Besides, back in 1940, Ben Webster was playing all that he knew, testing himself and his chosen style to the very limits. But when today's recreators pay homage to an older style, they must try to ignore or forget some of what *they* know—namely the harmonic and rhythmic vocabulary of modern jazz—which is why their music often has an aura of caricature or hollow theatricality.

And even when re-creation does work, the player's actual situation is quite different from that of the artists he is trying to emulate—for, again, there used to be no conflict between playing within the jazz tradition and fully expressing one's own artistic personality and point of view. As poet Robert Creeley once said: "A tradition becomes inept when it blocks the necessary conclusion, [when] it says 'others have felt more, we have felt less.'"

Some neoclassicists are very aware of these problems and have come up with intriguing solutions. In particular, there are the slyly ironic Henry Threadgill and Chicagoan Edward Wilkerson, a genuine romantic whose involvement with the materials at hand is never in doubt.

But Threadgill and Wilkerson may only be neoclassicists in disguise, artists whose jousts with the music's past really have more to do with the issues that were raised by free jazz and that still need to be dealt with if the music is going to become something more than a museum that mounts a series of jazz-tinged puppet shows.

I am afraid, though, that this is what jazz may have in store for it, as the creators for whom the making of the music is not a self-conscious act continue to pass away and the younger generation keeps trying to evoke the spirit of the past by trying on its outward forms.

In the words of Igor Stravinsky, who certainly knew what neoclassicism was all about: "The borrowing of a method has nothing to do with observing a tradition. A method is replaced; a tradition is carried forward in order to produce something new. It appears as an heirloom, a heritage that one receives on condition of making it bear fruit."

The Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago Announces a National Conference on Black Music Research

To be held September 27, 1985 at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., the conference will focus on critical and emerging issues in black music scholarship which are essential to the continued growth and development of the field. The presentation of papers

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treating those important areas will provide the basis, impetus, and incentive for further research. Five topics will be addressed.

1. Biographical studies of black musicians provide insight into subjects' personalities, accomplishments, personal motivations, musical influences, and education, as well as information about the impact of their musical contributions. Consequently, they are important sources of information and documentation about black music and its makers.

2. Musico-iconographical studies in the field of black music would provide access to previously uncharted categories, creating cross- and inter-disciplinary perspective and insights that would significantly enhance our work and our knowledge of performance practice and cultural ambiance.

3. Critical studies of music and black composers are needed to document the presence and activity of black composers of concert and recital music and to reveal to the public and the scholarly community the effective and powerful nature of this body of literature.

4. Oral history studies are often the basis for other types of documentation and studies; their effectiveness depends upon the development of sound techniques and procedures and upon the competence of the investigator. For studies treating older subjects, the rich resource that consists of living musicians and their contemporaries is gradually dying.

5. Lexicographical studies become more and more critical with the passage of time. The defining of the terminology and concepts of the field remains critical to precise, accurate, and meaningful research, as well as to the production of sound knowledge.

These topics will each be addressed by a major paper presented by a leading scholar, expert in his field. Each paper will be followed by comments from a respondent and by a brief question period in which the audience will participate. The sessions will conclude with a general discussion by all participants.

The Sessions

Black Music Biography

Richard Long, presenter; professor of English/Afro-American Studies at Atlanta University and noted author

Geneva Southall, respondent; author of *Blind Tom: The Post-Civil War Enslavement of a Black Musical Genius* and *The Continuing Enslavement of Blind Tom*

Black Music Iconography

Frederick Crane, presenter; author of *Extant Medieval Musical Instruments* and numerous articles treating iconography

Edmund Barry Gaither, respondent; director of The Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists, Inc.

Criticism, Analysis, and Performance

Orin Moe, presenter; author of articles examining songs of William Grant Still and Howard Swanson

Olly Wilson, respondent; noted composer of concert and recital music, and author of articles treating black music analysis and performance

Oral History

Ron Welburn, presenter; writer, scholar, and former coordinator of the Jazz Oral History Project of the Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University

Harriet Milnes, respondent; director of the Duke Ellington Oral History Project at Yale University

Black Music Lexicography

Jon Goldman, presenter; editor and lexicographer of Webster's New World Dictionary

Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., respondent; director of the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago

This event is supported with funds provided by the following organizations:

The National Committee on Cultural Diversity of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; The National Endowment for the Humanities; Columbia College Chicago.

Evening Concert

Featuring:

William Brown, powerful interpreter of the black music song tradition; featured in the Columbia Records Black Composers Series; prominent recitalist

Peabody Conservatory Chamber Group, five students of the fine Baltimore music school

Delois Barrett Campbell and the Barrett Sisters, the famed traditional gospel group lately featured in the film *Say Amen, Somebody;* appeared throughout the world at major music festivals and concerts

Sparky Rucker, folk-blues singer and bottleneck guitarist from Tennessee, playing music from the black American ballad tradition; a historically important, unique, and powerfully impressive repertoire of songs in authentic, but personal, interpretations; highly polished but "down-home"

Ben Holt, singer of songs in the classical tradition; fine and impressive recitalist

The sessions and the concert will be open to the public at no admission charge. They will be held in the Terrace Theater of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. For more information contact:

National Conference on Black Music Research
Center for Black Music Research
Columbia College Chicago
600 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60605-1996
312/663-9462

The following hotels are within walking distance of the Kennedy Center:

The River Inn
924 Twenty-fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20037
800/424-2741

Howard Johnsons Motor Lodge
2601 Virginia Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20037
800/654-2000

The Watergate Hotel
2650 Virginia Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20037
800/424-2736

Teaching Jazz
An Institute for Secondary and Middle School Teachers

Dr. Lewis Porter, Assistant Professor of Music at Tufts University, has designed this institute to address issues of concern to music teachers and jazz ensemble directors: the place of jazz in society, jazz history, racism and jazz; teaching improvisation and directing ensembles; recruiting students, especially women; bibliography, discography, filmography. Guest artists: Alan Dawson, drummer; Herb Pomeroy, big band conductor. July 8-12, 1985. For more information, contact Edie Wieder, Office of Continuing Education, 11 Miner Hall, Tufts University, Medford, Mass., 02155, 617/381-3562.

"News & Notes"

Black Music Research Newsletter will include a new column titled "News & Notes" beginning with its next issue.

Items on or pertaining to research in progress, new studies, new releases, information wanted by readers, and other miscellaneous items will be included. Send all information and inquiries to the column editor:

Dr. Josephine Wright
Music Department
College of Wooster
Wooster, Ohio 44691

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