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A Brief Introduction to the Zulu Choirs

by Doug Seroff, Greenbrier, Tennessee

Black American four-part vocal harmony has roots which predate the Civil War. Although African traditional music is rich in polyphonic singing and its own peculiar harmonies, the simple triad is practically never found. The triad is a fundamental substructure of Western quartet harmony, and perhaps for this reason it has been mistakenly assumed that there are no strong African quartet-singing traditions. In fact, an expansive parallel heritage of four-part vocal music exists in South Africa, its origins dating back to the nineteenth century.

Missionaries and white troupes were no doubt the first to introduce four-part vocal harmony on the African continent. During the 1890s, an illustrious black musical company, Orpheus M. McAdoo's Virginia Jubilee Singers, spent a great deal of time performing in the country of South Africa. They sang not only for the white colonists but also for the indigenous black population, touching off an outbreak of chorus and quartet groups among black South Africans. At the same time, male quartets were being trained to sing American spirituals, in English, in mission schools and black universities. The same precepts of good harmony singing practiced at American universities, the same refinement of four even, balanced, and blended voices were being taught to educated Zulus and other South African peoples.

An impressive variety of vocal harmony styles are reasonably well represented on South African phonograph records. Literally hundreds of vocal groups have been commercially recorded there since about 1930. The earliest recordings yet uncovered come from a Columbia Record Company session by the Wilberforce Institute Singers of South Africa under the direction of Dr. Herman Gow, a black American educator living in Africa. His group recorded American spirituals in English, sung in the "straight spiritual" style of contemporaneous American university quartets.

In 1930 HMV Record Company brought to London the Zulu musician and composer Reuben T. Caluza and his double quartet, consisting of four men and four women. One hundred and fifty selections were recorded, featuring a fine mixed chorus with piano accompaniment and Zulu folk songs rendered by an excellent a cappella male quartet. In 1931 Caluza traveled to Virginia to attend Hampton Institute. While a student there, he formed a quartet of West Africans and taught them Zulu songs. This troupe toured the eastern United States with the Hampton Institute Quartette.

The popularity and prestige of mission-school trained quartets inspired a similar movement among the black laboring class. "Ingoma ebusuku choirs," like community-based quartets in Alabama and Virginia, first appeared among Zulu industrial workers at the close of World War I. Their music was a distinctive hybrid, a conglomerate of traditional Zulu and Western elements. Recordings made by numerous male, a cappella vocal groups during the 1930s and 1940s (quartets to choruses all categorized as "choirs") feature strong bass singing and full, deep-pitched, close harmony. The character and quality of the harmony heard on these recordings has much in common with American community-based quartets recorded during the immediate "pre-gospel" period (1926-1931).

Around 1940 Solomon Linda's Evening Birds, the greatest ingoma ebusuku choir of its day, recorded the song "Mbube" (translation: "Lion"). The song was successfully adapted by the Weavers as "Wimoweh" and later by the Tokens as "The Lion Sleeps Tonight." Linda's song was so popular in South Africa that the ingoma ebusuku style became commonly known as "mbube," a term still in usage today.

Extensive interaction between ingoma ebusuku choirs and hot jazz instrumentalists from the working class nightclubs took place in the recordings of Mseleku's Merrymakers, M. Masoleng & Company, and others.

By the 1940s phonograph records from America had become an overwhelming influence on black South African music. Harmony groups patterned after the Ink Spots and other American rhythm & blues pioneers became popular. They sang '40s jive

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tunes in Zulu and English. The most widely recorded of these groups was the Manhattan Brothers.

The profoundly "Zulu" elements in ingoma ebusuku singing cannot be overlooked. To begin with, these groups sing primarily in the Zulu language. Many of the background chants used are clearly non-Western. Percussive "clicks," glides, trills executed with the tongue, slide whistle imitations, and other unexpected delights are strictly African in origin. In a deeper sense, after nearly one hundred years of intermixture, it is impossible to separate the Western and Zulu elements in this conglomerate music form.

"Gospel quartet" was one movement that did not happen among the Zulu choirs. One does not hear the "pumping bass," the "switch lead," and other characteristics of the gospel quartet style. Because the Zulu choirs did not take the gospel path, the older spiritual harmony influence remained pronounced. The influence is preserved in the music of the present day descendants of the ingoma ebusuku and mbube choirs, known as "isicathamiya" groups. The repertoire of these groups is rather evenly divided between sacred and secular songs. Singing contests have always been an important aspect of this tradition and a common element of life in black South African townships and labor hostels. Synchronized dance steps are a prominent adjunct to the vocal performances, and uniform dress is another item of critical importance, just as it has always been among American gospel quartets.

Isicathamiya singing is presently flourishing in South Africa, inspired by the unprecedented success of the greatest of all Zulu choirs, the incomparable Ladysmith Black Mambazo, originally of Ladysmith, South Africa. The group is among the most popular groups on the African continent. Organized in the late 1960s by their brilliant lead singer/song writer/arranger Joseph Shabalala, the group began recording in 1973 for Motella, one of the Gallo group of South African labels. To date they have recorded at least nineteen albums which have sold more than four million copies. Their 1984 album "Ibhayibheli Liyindela" (Ezomdabu BL 472) is a crowning effort, representing a new plateau in mbube singing. Ladysmith Black Mambazo has appeared in documentary films and twice performed in Germany to enthusiastic audiences. Only one of their albums, "Induku Zethu" (Earthworks 2006), has been released in the West; and it is, unfortunately, among the least satisfying of their recordings.

When heard at its best, despite the strangeness of the language, all the pleasures of the classic American harmony masters are present in the music of Ladysmith Black Mambazo; the fascinating, complex song arrangements; the expressive lead vocals of Joseph Shabalala; the booming, resonant bass; and the rich, enveloping quality of distinct, yet thoroughly blended voices in velvet harmony.

As distinctive black quartet harmony approaches the point of extinction here in the United States, it is comforting to find the form alive and thriving among the black South African people.

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Caluza's Double Quartette. *Kwela Wetu/Umgobo U Sehawini.* HMV GU 70.

Manhattan Brothers. *Hey ba-ba-re-bob/Patience and fortitute.* Singer GE 947.

Manhattan Brothers. *Wami Wami/Amazw'amnandi.* Gallotone GB 1277.

Motsieloa Masoleng & Company. *Serontabule/Selina.* Singer GE 150.

Mseleuku & His Merrymakers. *Amabadi/Isikhonyani.* HMV SP 17.

Solomon Linda's Original Evening Birds. *Mbube/Ngi Hambile.* Gallotone GB 829.

Wilberforce Institute Singers of South Africa. *Oh Mary, don't you weep/Shout all over God's heaven.* Columbia GR 7.

Beethoven As a Black Composer[1]

by Dominique-René de Lerma, Morgan State University

Perhaps it was late in the 1960s when Charlie Brown's diminutive pianist, on hearing unequivocally that Beethoven was black, exclaimed, "I've been playing soul music all my life and didn't know it!" The question of Beethoven's African ancestry has been raised at various times. If the story reached the comic strips, where did it begin?

I've no idea when I first heard the story, but I knew that Beethoven's forebears were Flemish and that that region had become Spanish when Joan "The Mad" married the Hapsburg Philip I. During the sixteenth century, Spain carried its inquisition into the area, where neither the protestant nor catholic inhabitants really wanted to benefit from Spain's church-state union. But perhaps an ancestor of Beethoven's was Spanish. That would open the door for African background.

Africa was firmly entrenched in Spain well before 711 A.D., when the Islamic chapter of Spanish history begins. There was no wall separating Africa from Spain, such as the 11,000-foot Pyrennes mountain range which defines the Franco-Spanish border. The Strait of Gibralter is only a few miles wide and, in much earlier times, there was not even water separating the areas. A few instances of relationships follow: About 250 B.C., Spain was the site for Carthaginian trade in the Mediterranean and the source for much of the Carthaginian armies until 201 B.C., when the second Punic War put Spain under Roman control. The Vandal king, Gaiseric, accepted an invitation to establish a Vandal kingdom at Carthage in 428 A.D., which was accomplished by his 80,000 subjects. During the time of the Moslems (politically until 1492, although the culture and the language were of permanent influence in Spain), there were some Arabs and Syrians in Spain, but most of the new citizens were Berbers from Africa. Between times of political and religious conflict, there was trade, as well as intermarriage between the Spanish and Moors. These relationships are confirmed by the celebrated cantigas of Alfonso X "el Sabio" (king of Castile and Leon from 1250 to 1284) and the slave-singers in the Moslem courts of Abd-er-Rahman III (912-961) and Almanzor (978-1002). And when the Moors were gone, we find *negritos*, *negros*, and *quineos* in Spain, Portugal, and Mexico; these were sixteenth-century songs in the language of the country, but on black themes and with African accents, witnessing the continued presence of Africa in Spain.

An iconographic study that relates to this question is *The Image of the Black in Western Art* (1979). On page 193 of the second part of volume 2 ("From the Early Christian Era to the Age of Discovery"), plate 193 offers a detail from a 1520 painting, held by Lisbon's Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga. The panel, called the Santa Auta Altarpiece and taken from the Monastery Madre de Deus in Lisbon, shows a sextet of black musicians performing on trombone and shawms for the wedding of St. Ursula. This work and its many companions document African presence in Europe's earlier days, particularly in Iberia and Italy.

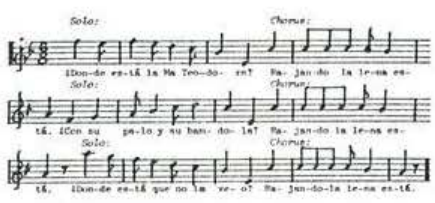
Ernst Bornemann (1969) has advanced the belief that Caribbean traditions and the evolution of jazz in the United States is based partly on the Africanization of music in Spain, before Columbus, despite Schuller's objections (1968, 59). This is further suggested by "¿Donde esta la Ma Teodora?" by Teodora Ginés, a *son* from 16th century Cuba, and any number of works from Renaissance Spain.[2] These ideas alone open the possibility that, if Beethoven had Spanish ancestry, the African might have been there, no matter how remote.

It has been thought the story of Beethoven's alleged black ancestry began with J. A. Rogers (1944), but Berwick Sayers (1969, 203) reports on an interview conducted with Coleridge-Taylor by Raymond Blathwayt (not further identified, unfortunately) no later than 1907 in which the matter is brought up. Berwick Sayers was asked by the composer to review the transcribed interview. "In it he returned to the theory that Beethoven had coloured blood in his veins. The supposition, he thought, was supported by the great composer's type of features and many little points in his character, as well as by his friendship for Bridgetower, the mulatto violinist. And he could not avoid a sarcasm: 'I think that if the greatest of all musicians were alive today, he would find it somewhat difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to obtain hotel accomodation in certain American cities.'" It really must be said that Beethoven's friendship with Bridgetower cannot be considered as evidence. We have no reason to think, for example, that Bartélémon, Attwood, or Giornovichi were "coloured" because they had accepted Bridgetower as a student. But we are well aware that Beethoven was dark complexioned and had features which were noted by his contemporaries.

J. A. Rogers treats the subject in *Sex and Race* (1944, vol. 3, 306-309), basing his argument initially on these rather provocative observations; but he comes to the conclusion that "In short, there is no evidence whatever to show that Beethoven was white." And the darkened reproduction of Letronne's portrait of Beethoven (Rogers 1944, vol. 1, 8) is compared with a photograph of Clarence Cameron White. No matter how circumstantial or speculative Rogers's arguments might be, they are certainly ardently posed and are most provocative for those who still think of a

[1] This is a revision of an article by the same name that appeared in *Music Rap;* the newsletter of the Morgan State University Music Department, February 1985.

[2] For commentary on the Ginés sisters, see "A glimpse of Afro-Caribbean music in the early 17th century," *Black Music Research Newsletter* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1980): 2-3. To this may now be added the following musical example:



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black/white dichotomy. They deserve notice.

Someone relatively new to musicology might wonder why there is literature on a composer's physicians or family. Nettl's study (1956), for example, tells us of Beethoven's favorite taverns and foods, how his morning coffee was prepared, what books he read, and how he felt about bathing, although he does not stop with these points. Small wonder then that a composer's ancestry is traced. During the time of the Nazis, studies identified those who were not Aryan (African or Jewish blood would have caused Beethoven to fail the test, but he passed). Flemish scholars took pride in finding so solidly a Flemish background with Beethoven. Donald W. MacArdle (1897-1964) sought to prove nothing *da capo* with his serious genealogical studies, which culminated with his 1949 article in *Musical quarterly*, and his resume in *Beethoven abstracts* (1973, 346-347). He shows that the Beethoven family appeared before 1500 and, continuing to 1917, was populated totally by the Flemish—no Spanish, no Belgians, no Dutch, no Africans.

In New Orleans a few years back, I joined John Henrik Clarke and Josephine Wright for a panel on black contributions to eighteenth-century Europe at a meeting of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History. One of the auditors, a school teacher, looked as if his entire career and reputation had crashed from under him when Dr. Wright and I agreed that Beethoven lacked African ancestry. I have twice been questioned about the matter on radio broadcasts; and then, as I served as a guest speaker on a college campus, a member of the audience wanted to know by what authority I had disenfranchised Beethoven. A partial listing of the authorities is included below, not one of whom, as noted by my college campus questioner, was a geneologist. Myths die hard.

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Composers Corner

William L. Dawson at 85

by Lucius R. Wyatt, Prairie View A&M University
An Interview Conducted on May 15, 1985

L.W.: You once told me that a famous conductor declared that nationalism in music is dead. Do you think he was right?

W.L.D.: No, he was wrong.

Why do you think he was wrong?

When he said that, I said to him, "You are wrong." As long as there is a family, you will have nationalism. The basis of nationalism comes from [the concept of] the family or a group. When a member of a family puts forth his best foot, or when a member of a tribe is doing his best, or a member of a society does his best, that's nationalism. That's all it is. We still have nationalism. When we had the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s, that was nationalism.

The notion of nationalism in music often implies the use of folk materials in composition. Do you think that there is still a case to be made for the use of folk materials in music?

Yes, I do. They are still using folk materials in music. Agnes DeMille [the famous choreographer] once said, "The Negro has given us our music and our dance." That's true. When I was a kid, the thing was buck dancing. I learned how to buck dance. In my hometown we had [two great dancers,] T. King and Dick Lewis. We learned that they had been to 81 Decatur [to dance]. That was a theater in Atlanta. This theater was tops just like the Apollo in New York. So, we made up dances. We had dances about the Titanic and about Jack Johnson, the boxing champion. That's true in the West Indies and it's true in Africa. So, people are still doing what they grew up with. We are truly fortunate in America. We have colored this country and we have had a great influence on its cultural life.

Tell me about your early experiences in music in Anniston.

My first band teacher was Mr. S. W. Gresham. I later found out that he taught at Tuskegee Institute. I had a trombone. A man by the name of Mr. Fleming could play that instrument. He said to me one day, "William, let me have your trombone and I will get an alto horn for you. When you go home, you can tell your father that it belongs to Mr. Gresham." You see, my father did not want me to be in music. So, I played the mellophone. I practiced that instrument so much until my lips were swollen. Some of my buddies wanted me to come outside and play marbles, but they would say, "He ain't go' come out, he's blowing that horn." So, finally Mr. Gresham said, "You know William is making so much progress, I think I will give him special attention."

Later you came to Tuskegee Institute to study. When you arrived on campus, were you immediately assigned to the band?

No, not immediately. Well, everyone had heard about the Tuskegee Band. The band played for drills and it marched to dinner every day. I wanted to be in that band. I knew a few fellows who were in the band: Manassah Gray, Stanely Williams, and a fellow whose last name was Barnes, from Indianapolis. These fellows had played and toured with the band under N. Clark Smith, and they were much older than I. I was about fifteen or sixteen years old at the time.

Well, Stanley Williams was rehearsing the band one day while I watched. He had Barnes playing the euphonium. I could hear Barnes playing. Then he stopped and said to Barnes, "Who told you that you could play?" Man, I got

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out of there through the window. They were not going to get me.

So, after dinner one day I went back to the band cottage to try out for the Tuskegee Band. All I wanted was just a chance. They wanted me to play the march, *Our Director*. You won't believe this. The rhythm that I had the greatest trouble with was ♪♩ ♪ in $\frac{2}{4}$ time. I just couldn't play it. I was so despondent, I cried. I didn't even go to supper. So I purchased the self-instruction book *Music Steps* by J. W. Pepper. I went up to my room and worked in the Pepper book. Soon, I was ready for another tryout. The next time, I qualified on trombone and Anthony Taylor, a trombone player, was transferred to the euphonium section. Eventually, I became the first trombonist in the band.

I became Captain Frank Drye's office boy. He had a set of encyclopedias on his desk. When he would go fishing, I would read all of his books because I wanted to know about music.

I read a few years ago to my surprise that you were quite active as a professional jazz musician in Chicago. How did you get involved in jazz bands?

In Kansas City I went to Erskine Tate who had the Vendome orchestra and I played for him. He wouldn't hire me. So, I went to Charlie Cook who was the head arranger for Remick. He had a good band. I played for him and he hired me as one of his two trombones. Freddie Keppard was one of the trumpet players in the band. We recorded a tune called *Cookies and Ginger Snaps*. This was around 1927-1928. I also played with such musicians as Johnny St. Cyr, Jimmy Noone, and Earl Hines. We were featured in the *Equire Magazine*'s 1946 issue of Jazz all-stars. My experiences as a performer in these groups came before I joined the faculty at Tuskegee.

You also organized and conducted a special band for the Chicago World's Fair Band Contest in 1929.

Yes. The union first recommended Charlie Cook. Charlie didn't want to do it and he referred them to me. The band was composed of professional musicians who played in the cabarets. It took me a half day to get them in tune. I finally got them in tune on the night we gave the concert. The band performed quite well. As the result, I was selected as one of the band conductors and a judge for the World's Fair.

Mr. Dawson, I would like to ask you about several personalities and how you remember them. How do you remember John Work, Jr.?

John conducted the Fisk Jubilee Singers. I conducted the Fisk University Choir. John and I got along very well. John had wonderful opportunities. His father, John Work, Sr., had a good tenor voice. You see, all of the Dawsons in my family went to Fisk except me. I didn't have any money. This includes my cousin, Congressman William L. Dawson from Chicago, who attended Fisk. I went up there for one year [after Tuskegee] and John and I got along beautifully.

How do you remember Leopold Stokowski?

He was one of the greatest men I have met. He was very kind to me.

How did Leopold Stokowski become interested in performing your Negro Folk Symphony?

Well, I played in the Chicago Civic Symphony. I let Mr. Frederick Stock see the score to the *Symphony*. At that time they were saying that the time was not right for us. Mr. Stock never did do anything with it. Although I played in the orchestra, the musicians in that orchestra didn't speak to me. However, I composed a piece for chorus and orchestra, *Break, Break, Break*, based on Tennyson's poem, and I had the orchestra to go through it one day.

Later, S. L. (Roxy) Rothafel [of Radio City Music Hall fame] came through Tuskegee one day from Atlanta in route to Montgomery. While Roxy was visiting, he saw the score, and he sent it to Stokowski in Philadelphia. Later, while I was attending a football game with Captain Frank Drye in Savannah, Georgia, I received a telegram from Stokowski to send the score and the parts to the *Symphony* immediately. I went to Chicago and got the parts from Frederick Stock. He pleaded with me, "We will play it on Thursday." I replied, "No, Mr. Stock, I must take it to Philadelphia." Stokowski put it on the program of the Philadelphia Orchestra. I went to Philadelphia and they rehearsed my *Symphony* every morning for a week. Then, Mr. Stokowski would have me to come in and sit with him after every rehearsal. I went upstairs as far away as I could [to listen]. I was just flabbergasted. So, I said, "Mr. Stokowski, it doesn't sound like a thing, and I am not going back to Alabama." He smiled and said "Come on, have a drink of vodka." The next morning [it sounded] a little brighter. I came a little closer. About the third or fourth morning, I was sitting closer right down with him.

The orchestra first performed it on a Wednesday night for the youth. On Friday night it was broadcast to the country on radio. They told me that on Friday night not to expect much of a reception because the audience would be made up of principally old Quaker women. Well, they applauded after the first movement and Mr. Stokowski turned around and chastised them for applauding [inappropriately]. When they performed it in New York, the audience applauded after each movement.

Did you meet Scott Joplin?

No, I never saw him, but they were playing his *Maple Leaf Rag* when I came to Tuskegee. It was a hit! I read about Scott Joplin, and I learned that his wife was living in New York City on 139th Street. I was living on 138th Street, so I went over and introduced myself to her. I even purchased a score to *Treemonisha* from her.

How do you remember Roland Hayes?

He was king of kings and lord of lords with his voice. I talked with him once after he joined the faculty at Boston University.

Tell me about Ralph Ellison.

We have been good friends for a long time. Ellison rode freight trains to come here to Tuskegee. He didn't finish here because he didn't have enough money. Here is an autographed copy of his *Invisible Man* which he sent me.

Did you meet James Reese Europe?

Yes, I met him. He came here and I

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played under him in the band. He came here before he took the Regiment Band to Paris. He had the Clef Club [Orchestra], and he wrote music for the Castles.

How do you remember your teacher, Alice Carter Simmons?

She was my first piano teacher. She was Booker T. Washington's niece. She was Roscoe Simmons's sister. She taught piano at Tuskegee before she went to Fisk. I asked her one day if she would teach me harmony because I had learned that the study of harmony was essential to the musician. So, she taught me.

What about your teachers, Carl Busch and Regina G. Hall?

I had some wonderful experiences studying with them. Mr. Busch would give me a counterpoint assignment of five musical examples. I would bring him thirty examples. Mrs. Hall suggested that I study with Adolph Weidig at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. She felt that Mr. Weidig would give me what I needed. So, I did, and Weidig drew out the best from me.

In concluding this interview, I am going to ask you to reflect on Booker T. Washington.

He was the greatest. He was a giant. I marched in the Tuskegee Band in his funeral procession behind his coffin here. I have even saved a flower from his funeral. You see, after the funeral they placed all of the flowers received in the form of a pyramid, and I have kept this flower in my scrapbook all these years.

Booker Washington loved music and he wanted every student to have the opportunity to study music. He assembled some of the finest minds here on the faculty. Not only did he bring George Washington Carver here, but others such as R. R. Taylor, a graduate in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Three American presidents—William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and William H. Taft—called on Booker Washington during his lifetime.

Mr. Dawson, I want to thank you for a most inspiring interview.

Before you leave, I want to whistle a tune that I bet you cannot pat your foot to. *(Mr. Dawson whistles a tune consisting of changing meters and shifting accents to which the writer has difficulty patting his foot.)*

The Music Department at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center

by Deborra Richardson, Howard University

The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, located in Howard University's Founders Library, was established in 1914 as the Moorland Foundation. It began with Dr. Jesse Moorland's donation of his sizeable collection of materials on black people in Africa and America—a substantial core resource for a "Negro-Americana Museum and Library" that could become central to "a center for research and instruction."[1]

In 1930 a new era of expansion was begun with the appointment of Dorothy B. Porter as librarian of the Moorland Foundation. She devoted forty-three years to the development of its collections. It was through her efforts that the core of the music collections at MSRC were acquired. In 1939 the Foundation was able to expand due to the opening of Founders Library. Then, in 1946, "the unique library of Arthur B. Spingarn" was purchased and added to the Foundation. With this addition, the Foundation became the Moorland-Spingarn Collection. Significant additions were made in 1958 with the acquisition of the Arthur B. Spingarn music materials, and in 1961 when the Washington Conservatory of Music Collection was acquired.

In 1973 the Moorland-Spingarn Collection was reorganized and renamed the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. Dr. Michael R. Winston became the Director, and the Center was separated from the Howard University Library system. It was during this time that the Center's Music Department was established, becoming operational in 1980 with the addition of a music librarian and the transfer of the music from the Alain Locke Papers to the Music Department. The Department had begun as a sheet music collection, initiated in conjunction with the original Foundation's intention to acquire every type of resource material related to the black American. The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center now consists of a Library Division, a Manuscript Division (of which the Music Department is a unit), a Support Division, Howard University Archives, and the Howard University Museum.

The Arthur B. Spingarn Music Collection consists of approximately 2400 items, including printed music and music manuscripts. All of the music in the Spingarn collection was written by black artists. As in the rest of the Spingarn donation, the music collection boasts works of early black Americans such as Samuel Lucas Milady's "Listen to the Mocking Bird" and music by Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian composers such as Amadeo Roldán and A. Carlos Gomes.

The Washington Conservatory of Music Collection is primarily a teaching one. The larger part of it consists of instructional or concert materials for voice and/or piano. There are approximately three hundred compositions of some one hundred twenty composers. The most well-represented personality in the collection is W. C. Handy, with about forty works.

The Alain L. Locke Collection contains primarily popular songs and spiritual arrangements—some loose, many in song book albums.

The Jesse E. Moorland Collection,

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[1]Michael R. Winston. *New Directions* (Summer, 1974).

Introducing . . .
Members of the National Advisory Board of the Center for Black Music Research

by Bruce Tucker, New Brunswick, New Jersey

Quincy Jones

"Check your ego at the door," said the sign **Quincy Jones** posted in the studio for the "We Are the World" recording session. Perhaps no figure in American music was more qualified to take the distinctive styles of the forty-one musical luminaries who participated in the project and mold them into a stirring, unified anthem, raising, in the process, millions of dollars for the victims of Ethiopian famine.

For four decades, as a composer, producer, artist, arranger, conductor, instrumentalist, and record company executive, he has mastered many musical styles and pioneered many more. As a member of the National Advisory Board of the Center for Black Music Research, he is supporting the preservation, study, and promotion of one of the many musics at which he has excelled.

As a teenager, he formed a band with Ray Charles and played trumpet for Billie Holiday and Billy Eckstine. After a semester at Seattle University, he accepted a scholarship at the prestigious Berklee College of Music in Boston where his trumpet playing in local clubs attracted the attention of Oscar Pettiford, who asked him to write two arrangements for an album. Soon the eighteen-year-old prodigy was meeting his idols in the jazz world. He left Berklee and went on the road with Lionel Hampton's band as trumpeter, arranger, and sometime

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Georgia A. Ryder

Georgia A. Ryder, music scholar, educator, and Dean of the School of Arts and Letters at Norfolk State University, recalls an earlier effort to promote black music—the Institute for Black American Music, which flourished briefly in Chicago in the late '60s and early '70s. She also recalls meetings of that pioneering organization attended by, among others, Quincy Jones. Today she serves along with him on the National Advisory Board of the Center for Black Music Research.

Among her many scholarly publications are articles on spirituals, sociocultural images of black women in song, American cantatas, Billie Holiday, and Abbie Mitchell. From 1969 to 1979, she served as head of the Norfolk State University music department. She has been a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. She is active as a voice teacher, ensemble director, and lecturer. She serves on numerous arts organizations at the national, state, and local levels and, as a founding member of the Virginia Arts Commission, she is currently engaged in arts advocacy and in aiding promising black artists.

In her scholarship she concentrates on black folk music, especially spirituals, and on black composers. Neither is an acquired taste; rather, she says, both interests spring directly

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Nat Lehrman

Another enthusiastic member of the National Advisory Board is **Nat Lehrman,** president of the publishing division of Playboy Enterprises, Inc. and associate publisher of *Playboy* magazine. Through its annual jazz and pop polls, its musical Hall of Fame awards, and numerous musically

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Lehrman, *continued*

oriented articles, the magazine, almost since its inception, has been deeply involved in bringing musical awareness to a wide audience. In addition, Lehrman has a strong personal interest in music, espcially black music.

He joined the company in 1963 as associate editor of *Playboy* and became senior editor in 1967. He was promoted to assistant managing editor in 1970 and then to editor in 1972. In 1973, he became editor of *Oui* magazine and in early 1976 was appointed vice president and associate publisher. Later that year, he was named senior vice president and associate publisher of *Playboy*. Then in 1977, he became group executive in charge of *Playboy* and *Oui*. From 1978 until his promotion to president in 1982, he served as senior vice president and director of the magazine division.

Born in Brooklyn, he graduated from Brooklyn College in 1953 with a bachelor or arts degree in English and French. In 1961 he received his master of arts degree in English and linguistics from New York University.

After serving in the Army, he became a travel writer and editor for the international travel department of the American Automobile Association. From 1957 to 1963 he worked for West Park Publications, a magazine publisher in New York.

He is the author of "Masters and Johnson Explained" and the editor of *Playboy* interviews with Germaine Greer, Masters and Johnson, Mary Calderone, and Mort Sahl. In 1980 he received Brandeis University's distinguished community service award, and in 1982 he received the human relations award from the American Jewish Community.

In addition to serving on the National Advisory Board of the Center for Black Music Research, he serves on the board of directors of the Playboy Foundation, *Essence* magazine, Pine Mountain Cablevision, Inc., and Publishers Information Bureau, Inc. and on the special advisory board of the Masters and Johnson Institute. He has taught creative writing courses at Columbia College, and he is a member of the Midwest Classical Guitar Society..

Jones, *continued*

pianist. Between tours he did session work and arranging in New York for a variety of jazz and r&b artists.

In 1957, Mercury records signed him as artist. Meanwhile, he studied with Nadia Boulanger, the legendary Parisian tutor to such composers as Leonard Bernstein and Aaron Copland. Returning to the United States in 1958, he arranged Ray Charles's landmark album *The Genius of Ray Charles.*

He took a job as A&R director for Mercury and soon rose to vice-president. He also distinguished himself as an artist, recording numerous albums for the label. In 1963, as arranger for Count Basie's "I Can't Stop Loving You," he won the first of his fifteen Grammy awards. The same year he scored Sidney Lumet's *The Pawnbroker,* the first of his thirty-three major motion picture scores. Films occupied most of his time for the rest of the decade. But in 1969, he returned to recording, signing with A&M records and subsequently making a long string of groundbreaking records.

He also found time to produce numerous other artists, to score *Roots,* to compose "A Black Requiem," which was performed by the Houston Symphony Orchestra, and to adapt the music of *The Wiz* to the screen. He later produced Michael Jackson's *Off the Wall* and *Thriller.* Today, he continues to record and produce and is currently planning a Broadway musical that will explore four decades of black musical styles. In addition, he is entering film production for the first time, helping produce Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* for Warner Brothers.

Reflecting on the changes in pop music over the years, he says, "If there are any common denominators, they are spirit and musicality. I've heard the rhythm section change many times. But looking at it more broadly, you find the same things coming back in different forms. Life is about patterns. With Basie, you had four-to-the-floor beat, and then it came round again with disco. Sooner or later it all comes back—then I go for the music that gives me goosebumps—and that'll be the truth."

Ryder, *continued*

from her personal experiences.

"The spirituals are a part of my own tradition," she says. "I grew up in the center of that tradition, first encountering them at home as a child and continuing with them thereafter."

She grew up in Newport News, Virginia, at a time when R. Nathaniel Dett and Clarence Cameron White were teaching at nearby Hampton Institute. With older siblings at Hampton, she already felt as a child some connection to a larger world of music.

Her interest in black composers began when a high school music teacher introduced her to the piano music of William Grant Still, with whom she was to work closely some years later when she was completing her doctoral dissertation at New York University.

As an undergraduate at Hampton, she had her interest in black composers spurred on by one her professors, the arranger-composer Noah Ryder, whose work was being published by W.C. Handy and whom she would later marry. Through him she came in contact with black composers throughout the United States.

"Gradually," she says, "I was enveloped by the whole world of black music."

"But," she adds, "I had no idea what I was letting myself in for when I went into formal research. As with any field, I soon learned that how much I didn't know was overwhelming."

She became committed to promoting black music as a field of study and to making it more accessible to everyone—scholars, musicians, and the public. That's why she joined the advisory board.

"My enthusiasm was rekindled by the Center for Black Music Research, which I knew was going to be run by people who knew what needed to be done and could do it."

Music Department at Moorland-Spingarn, *continued*

the Department's general collection, is composed of donations made to the Center by musicians, music educators, and/or music enthusiasts. Like the A. B. Spingarn collection, it is also rather varied. The collection consists of more than eight hundred compositions in both manuscript and printed form. Among the more than two hundred composers are Will Marion Cook, William L. Dawson (represented by, among other items, an autographed copy of his *Negro Folk Symphony*), R. Nathaniel Dett, W. C. Handy, and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

Thus, each collection has a particular strength. The Spingarn collection is noted for its rarities, the Moorland collection for its autographs and donations by music personalities; the Locke collection is composed of music that centers on its black origins, while the Washington Conservatory of Music collection concentrates on well-known black composers and concert/recital compositions. The Music Department's sheet music collections, then, consist of some four thousand varied titles by some 350 to 400 composers.

The collection can be accessed by composer, title and, in most cases, by added entry, the latter including additional composers, lyricists, performers, show titles, etc. Access is obtained through an in-house card catalog, which at present is open only to staff. Researchers are requested to make appointments so that staff can be prepared to fulfill patrons' needs to the fullest extent.

The Music Department is open for research Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM and again from 2:00 PM to 4:30 PM. A *Guide to the Collections at the Music Department of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center* is in preparation.

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS
to be delivered at
The 1985
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at the
John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Terrace Theater
Free Admission

Black Music Biography

Richard A. Long, Atlanta University

For the biographer's craft and art there are general criteria which must be met, considered, and understood if we are to set a meaningful agenda for black music biography. Beyond these there are the particularities of black life and of black music which must also be fully assessed. Building on these two areas of understanding, prescriptive and critical strategies should be proposed.

Up to the present, much work considered as black music biography is essentially pre- or proto-biographical, consisting either of connected fragments of source material or of a loose chronicle of a subject's life. Biography in the full sense takes account of the milieu in which a subject moves and functions, explores relationships and influences, and adjudges accomplishment and impact. A biography should have a sense of purpose, focus on an intended audience, and be mindful of values. Few black music figures have been the subject of full biographies. Such pioneers as Harry T. Burleigh and Will Marion Cook offer excellent challenges to the biographer.

Black American Music in Pictures
Some Themes and Opportunities

Frederick Crane, University of Iowa

For all periods, from prehistory to the present, pictures are among the most important sources of information for the history of music. Interpretations of pictorial data are most successful when there are verbal sources that complement them, but the pictures can be very telling even without words. Very often the pictures have information that simply cannot be found elsewhere.

A picture or a collection of pictures may tell a lot right on the surface, especially if subjects, places, and dates are well identified. It is in interpreting the images that the real challenge lies, and often the real reward as well.

A stereograph of about 1870 shows a young black man playing a string instrument. The photo doesn't lie—that's the way he looked at the moment. But what a strong burden of attitudes and

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convention the picture carries! The subject has been molded to fit the stereotypes held by the photographer and by the potential white purchasers of his card. The minstrel-show comedian and the Zip Coon-type black dandy are the models. In many other cases, the image is undoubtedly much closer to real life, though there is invariably an element of posing, selection, and artistic convention at work. To date, not much critical interpretation of historical images of black musicians has been published—or of American music in general, for that matter.

Three kinds of iconographical images provide samples of types of sources and of problems of interpretation: nineteenth-century depictions of musical life on the plantation, photos as evidence of integration in musical groups; and the many jubilee singers groups that were active in the early twentieth century.

The pictorial record of the history of jazz has been presented more fully in publication than any other aspect of American music, but there are many opportunities for study and publication. Great quantities of pictures exist as holdings in museums and archives and as illustrations scattered through magazines, newspapers, sheet music, and advertising fliers from the early nineteenth century to the present. These public photographs will always be there for the researcher, but the resources in private hands may not. Interview all the old-timers and copy their photos and other memorabilia. Get the full identification of the subjects of each picture, and try to secure the deposit of the original material in some archive.

A Question of Value
Black American Music and Criticism

Orin Moe, Nashville, Tennessee

In music, the word criticism is usually taken to mean daily or weekly reporting of concerts. Criticism in the more important sense—a consideration of the meaning and value of a work of art—is virtually nonexistent. Scholars have been more concerned with the documentable and the quantifiable (chronology, place of composition, establishment of an authentic text) or with a work's place in an evolutionary scheme of development. The more difficult and more "subjective" task of evaluation has been avoided. The study of black American concert music may very well lead to the establishment of criticism in American musical scholarship, since without criticism the value of this music will never be known.

The positivism of traditional musical scholarship has made and will continue to make valuable contributions to the study of black American music. After all, criticism cannot take place if the music has not been discovered, the circumstances of composition remain unknown, and a reliable text does not exist. This approach, however, tends to be allied with an attitude that assigns importance to a work based on its place in an assumed pattern of development. The more it anticipates later compositions, the greater its value. Since black American concert music tends to be conservative—probably because artists generally like to work within a tradition and usually do not value innovation for its own sake—it has received little attention from mainstream scholars. Consider William Grant Still's *Afro-American Symphony*. There is nothing advanced about its musical techniques, although its historical place in the Americanist movement of the 1930s deserves more attention than it has been given. Judged critically, however, it is a valuable and significant work of art. How do we arrive at this judgment? One of the principal means is analysis.

Present analytical techniques are exceptionally sophisticated, although a certain dogmatism prevails with most practitioners. The analyst of black music must pay close attention to characteristics of the black musical tradition as it has been practiced in Africa and in this country. Although localized instances of such characteristics have been frequently observed, more significant is their effect on the larger structure of a work. Viewed in this way, the *Afro-American Symphony* presents a fascinating interplay between the structural impulses resulting from its use of a blues theme and those coming from the history and tradition of the symphony.

Criticism, however, takes in more than analysis. General history, musical history, black American musical history, and the composer's biography are some of the other things that need to be incorporated.

Theory and Method in Black Music Oral History

Ron Welburn, Albany, New York

Successful oral history projects benefit from sensitive interviewers who know their subject-interviewees' careers well and who can guide, not dictate, the flow of discussion and monologue. Jazz and ethnomusical oral histories are rich fields of study full of insights and obsure details about cultural and social history. Musical histories that come directly from those who created a particular style are essential to scholars and the lay public to have a clear understanding of a musical culture and the individuals who comprise it. Oral history is yet a young field without a fixed method. The fundamental approach to conducting the oral history interview must allow flexibility to the one giving the history.

The simple interview is the main procedure familiar to the oral history interviewer, but oral history demands less the focus of the journalist than the ear and patience of a sympathetic

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listener who is a cultural or other historian. Oral histories, then must differ in form from the press release or magazine feature. Oral histories in the ultimate state of the transcribed manuscript reflect as much—sometimes more—about the person conducting the oral history as they present the thoughts and memories of the subject-interviewees. Manner and flexibility reflect interpersonal courtesies, and the fixed opinions and dogmatism that some jazz and ethnomusical critics and historians may hold are on trial and in view. Preparation for an oral history project is essential. In music this includes studying the discographies, being aware of routes of travel, of fellow musicians, of valets, promoters, and managers. Jazz, for example, numbers among its staunch devotees individuals possessing an encyclopedic knowledge of performance dates and personnel. Sometimes oral history can clarify the obscure and correct errors "written in stone."

Finally, oral history procedures demand the use of high quality sound recording equipment. Despite there having been enormous improvements in cassette recorders and tapes in the 1980s, some well-meaning and even internationally acclaimed writers and musicians have used low-quality tape for oral histories and have then sloppily labeled the tapes and their boxes. Here, most of all, the significance of the *history* contained in these interviews must continually be emphasized. Oral history is not merely biography and anecdote, but is also a source of history. The preservation of such historical raw data is important to the continuing documentation of black music history.

A Preliminary Investigation Into the Preparation of a Black Music Dictionary

John Goldman, New World Dictionaries

In the preparation of any dictionary the first questions that need to be answered are based on practical considerations which will determine the character and specifications of the book. How long should it be? For whom is it being prepared? Is it to be self-sustaining or subsidized? The answers to these and other questions will shape the suggested plan for a Black Music Dictionary that is the subject of this paper.

While a subsidized multi-volume dictionary/encyclopedia would allow for a widely varied staff and group of contributors and could include material relating to a wide range of sources, a one-volume dictionary would be limited to a listing of terms with definitions, pronunciations, perhaps etymologies, and examples. Certainly some terms would require lengthy definitions, amounting in some cases to small essays. If the book is aimed at a commercial market, the work could be done by a small staff of lexicographers with some degree of musical expertise, whereas a larger work would require an additional group of experts and specialists.

Whether some biographical entries for composers, arrangers, instrumentalists, or vocalists would be appropriate would also be determined by the scope of the dictionary. The feasibility of including such items as illustrations, musical examples, photographs, and citational evidence is another issue relating to format and the potential for commercial sales. Would the dictionary have a cut-off date to enable the editors to restrict their research to a manageable level? This question too will be considered.

There are other practical considerations which must also be explored, such as the proximity of the staff office to available archives, access to computers, the size of the staff budget, the method of collecting citational evidence, etc. The scope of the word stock and subject areas to be included will be determined by the musical genres that are selected for the book, e.g., blues, jazz, gospel, popular, rhythm and blues. To what extent will black composers in the European tradition (symphonic, chamber, and others) be included? There is also a question of geographical limit. Will the dictionary be confined to American forms or will black African, Caribbean, and Latin terms be included, and to what degree? Finally how is the term "black music" to be understood for this dictionary?

NEWS AND NOTES FROM . . . the Center for Black Music Research

by Josephine Wright, The College of Wooster

Author **Verna Arvey** has announced the publication of her biography of composer William Grant Still, entitled *In One Lifetime* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press, 1984). Other commemorative offerings that have been issued within the past year to honor the late composer include a recording, made by the North Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, which contains Still's Symphony No. 3 *(The Sunday Symphony)* and selected choral-chamber pieces, and a documentary film, entitled "William Grant Still: Trailblazer of the South," which was produced by the Arkansas Educational Television Network. The records may be obtained from The Symphony Society (P.O. Box 1724, Fayetteville, AR 72701).

Composer **Leslie Adams** has announced two in-progress performances of his new four-act opera, *Blake* (based on the novel of Martin R. Delany), at Oberlin College Conservatory on April 11 and the Cleveland Playhouse on June 20. The cast of performers included tenors Paul Adkins and Irwin Reese,

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baritones Mark Doss and Stephen Szaraz, sopranos Gurcell Henry and Kathleen Orr, mezzo-soprano Jane Gunter-McCoy, the William Appling Singers and Orchestra, narrator Rick Young of Channel TV 8 (Cleveland), and William Appling, musical director.

Eileen Southern (Harvard University) received an honorary degree of Doctor of Arts at Columbia College on June 7. She was presented for the degree by Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., with the following citation:

> As author of the definitive work in the field of black music history and as editor of a scholarly journal, you have been the leading contributor to and recorder of missing pages in American social history. As author of works on European Renaissance music, you have demonstrated your intellectual versatility and broad background. As a graduate of the University of Chicago and of New York University, you embody the best aspirations of liberal education and have executed these with courage and integrity.
>
> As a result of your thorough and impeccable scholarship, writers of the historical record must take into account your work; thus, it has changed the presentation of American music history. Your book, *The Music of Black Americans*, and your journal, *The Black Perspective in Music*, have filled great voids in the scholarly literature, reaching a national public and a constituency beyond these American shores. Your dictionary celebrates 1500 previously unsung American musicians, documenting their achievements and giving them a long-awaited place in the annals of American social history. Institutions of many lands seek your counsel and laud your accomplishments.
>
> We celebrate you: master researcher, recorder of history, exemplar of the best and highest ideals of scholarship.
>
> Your consummate scholarship has recorded a permanent testament to the comprehensive richness of the music of black America. Therefore, it is my privilege to present for the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Arts, Eileen Jackson Southern.

Lynnette Geary has advised us of her current research on the biography of concert singer Jules Bledsoe, who was active professionally from 1924 to 1943 and is best remembered for his role of Joe in Florenz Ziegfeld's 1927 production of *Showboat*. She requests information about Bledsoe's residence in Chicago between the years 1920 and 1924. Kindly address all correspondences directly to her at 716 Camp Drive, Waco, Texas 76710.

The New York Times has recently reviewed a new album by composer **George Russell**, entitled "The African Game" (Blue Note), the first of his recordings released on an American label in the last thirteen years. The album contains nine movements, which Russell calls "events . . . [that] portray the evolution of life on earth from the first unicellular organisms to the development and growth of human consciousness." The work was recorded in Boston at Emmanuel Church by Russell and his twenty-five-piece Living Time Orchestra.

Opera Ebony presented performances of two new operas in New York at Aaron Davis Hall of City University on February 24: Valerie Caper's *Sojourner*, featuring Loretta Holkman in the title role, and Howard Roberts's *Movin'*, choreographed by Kevin Jeff.

Roland Braithwaite (Talladega College) reports that he has spent a research leave investigating the Richard Allen 1801 hymnals with assistance from an NEH Fellowship for College Teachers.

Samuel Floyd conducted an NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers at Columbia College from June 17 to August 9. Entitled "Black Music in the United States," the seminar examined black music in the United States since 1800, focusing upon selected aspects of the music's history. Participants began their investigation through research of various sources and bibliographical materials, and applied traditional historical and analytical methodologies to the study of a variety of traditions and styles. The participants and their topics were: Daniel A. Binder, Lewis University, Romeoville, IL, "A Comparative Study of the Music of Florence Price and Margaret Bonds"; Norman B. Chapman, Rust College, Holly Springs, MS, "Tempo in the Works of Scott Joplin"; Ralph M. Eastman, Mt. San Antonio College, Walnut, CA, "Black Music and Contemporary Society"; Clark D. Halker, Albion College, Albion, MI, "Black Music, Black Culture, and Black Consciousness"; Ellistine P. Holly, Jackson State University, Jackson, MS, "Emma Azalia Hackley, 1867-1922: The Chicago Years"; William R. Hullfish, State University College, Brockport, NY, "James Bland: An Analysis of His Music and Contribution to American Music"; Carol L. Quin, Lane College, Jackson, TN, "William Grant Still's Role in the Expression of American Nationalism in Music"; William R. Rogers, Jr., Hampton University, Hampton, VA, "Dorothy Maynor: Artist, Academician, Altruist"; Paul W. Schmidt, Wartburg College, Waverly, IA, "The Roles of the Guitar in Black American Music"; Marion D. Schrock, Western Oregon State College, Monmouth, OR, "Olly Wilson: Compositional Process and Black Music Characteristics in Selected Works"; Gordon A. Solie, Portland State University, Portland, OR, "Latin American-U.S. Musical Connections: The Syncretic Process"; Richard A. Wang, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, "Chicago Jazz: An Analytical Study."

The Sonneck Society has scheduled its annual meeting for 1986 at the University of Colorado (Boulder) on April 17-20. A call has gone out for proposals for papers, workshops, panels, and performers. Topics dealing with music and musical activities in the Great Plains, Southwest, and West are encouraged, but proposals on all aspects of American music are invited. Performances of American music are also solicited, preferably accompanied with a cassette tape. Copies of proposals should be sent, in six copies, by October 1, 1985 to: John Graziano, 1986 Sonneck Society Program Chair, Department of Music, City College of CUNY, Covent Avenue & 138th Street, New York, New York 10031.

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Soprano **Martina Arroyo** has been appointed Professor of Voice at Louisiana State University. She will accept twelve students for the 1985-1986 academic year.

Thomas Riis (University of Georgia at Athens) reports that he has received funding to pursue research on the Morgan Theatre and the Theatre Owners Booking Agency (T.O.B.A.). His investigation will focus upon the Morgan Theatre as a representative example of southern stage entertainment during the 1920s.

The University of Michigan School of Music (Ann Arbor) hosted a national symposium on black American music August 9-15, where participants explored various aspects of the Afro-American musical experience with panels of established scholars and performers. Topics ranged from discussions of black church music, jazz, and music education, to black women in music, the art song, and classical instrumental music. Among the participants were musicologist Eileen Southern, pianist Billy Taylor, and composers Kermit Moore and Hale Smith. A series of workshops for performers were held in conjunction with the symposium, and several pre-professional (ages 16-30) performers, composers, scholars, and educators, attended the conference on scholarship.

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.

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