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Contents

Looking Toward St. Louis: Installment 1

St. Louis, Missouri, will be the site of the Center's 1989 National Conference on Black Music Research, to be held there during October 12–15, 1989. The following brief essays are part of a preview of the research subjects to be explored at the St. Louis meeting. The spring 1989 issue of *Bulletin* will carry other preliminary essays as well as abstracts by Edward Berlin, Edith Borroff, Tilford Brooks, William Dargan, Aaron Horne, Doris McGinty, Harriet Ottenheimer, Nathan Pearson, Jr., Ann Sears, Warren Swindell, Trebor Jay Tichenor, Bruce Tucker, and William Wiggins, all of whom will present papers at the conference. Participating as members of panels will be Ben E. Bailey, Richard Crawford, Stanley Crouch, Donald Funes, Willis Patterson, and Olly Wilson. In the meantime, the first two articles in this issue of *Bulletin* are samples of our offerings for St. Louis.

Eddie Randle and the St. Louis Blue Devils

by Paul DeMarinis, Webster University, St. Louis

St. Louis was the home of a number of excellent black jazz bands in the 1930s and the 1940s. The Jeter-Pillars Orchestra, Eddie Johnson's Crackerjacks (later called the Original St. Louis Crackerjacks under Chick Finney), the George Hudson Orchestra, and Eddie Randle's St. Louis Blue Devils were among the most respected St. Louis groups of this period. All enjoyed local popularity and featured outstanding sidemen: trumpeter Harry "Sweets" Edison, bassists Walter Page and Jimmy Blanton, and drummers "Big Sid" Catlett and Jo Jones with Jeter-Pillars; trumpeter Harold "Shorty" Baker and saxophonist Tab Smith with the Crackerjacks; and trumpeter Clark Terry and saxophonist "Weasel" Parker with George Hudson. Eddie Randle's Blue Devils, who are the focus of this article, also share with these other bands a certain obscurity typical of many musical groups who recorded infrequently, or not at all, and who did

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not often appear in entertainment capitals like Chicago or New York.

Trumpeter Eddie Randle was born in Villa Ridge, Illinois, near the Ohio River, on May 27, 1907. His early musical experiences were of an informal nature—he was taught how to read music by an uncle, and he sang at home and in a church choir. He moved to St. Louis in 1923 and began to play trumpet in 1924 at the age of seventeen.

Randle's early experience on the trumpet coincided with an exceptionally rich period for jazz trumpeting in St. Louis. Charles Creath frequently appeared at Jazzland on Market Street near Twenty-third Street, as well as on the Streckfus steamer *S. S. Capitol* with bandleader Fate Marable. Trumpeter Dewey Jackson was very active in St. Louis, appearing with both Creath and Marable. Leonard Davis, who later played in New York with the bands of Charlie Johnson, Benny Carter, and Luis Russell, also worked locally with Charles Creath. A strong Louis Armstrong disciple, Oliver Cobb, who recorded for Brunswick and Paramount, was very popular in St. Louis until his untimely death by drowning in 1931. New Orleans trumpeter Henry "Red" Allen was heard locally in the late 1920s with Fate Marable on the Streckfus riverboats. Louis Armstrong, who played in St. Louis with Marable on the boats between 1919 and 1921, was occasionally brought to St. Louis by promoter Jesse Johnson to appear as a single at Jazzland in the late 1920s.

A focal point in Randle's early musical education was the tailor shop and shoeshine parlor his father owned at Garrison and Lucas Avenues, which was a gathering place for the many musicians who often rehearsed at the YWCA skating rink across the street. Randle's early playing experience included sideman work with Jimmy Powell (whose band also included trumpeter Elwood Buchanan, who would later teach Miles Davis) and Warner Long.

Figure 1. Eddie Randle (right of microphone) and the St. Louis Blue Devils

Photograph courtesy of the author

Randle formed his first band in 1932. It included Joe Jarnigan and Theron Slaughter on saxophones, John Arnold on piano, Pete Patterson (who had recorded with Charles Creath) on banjo, and Jesse Brazier on drums. The name subsequently chosen for the group, "Eddie Randle and his Seven Blue Devils," was chosen by Randle in a gesture of admiration for one of his favorite bands, the Oklahoma City Blue Devils led by bassist Walter Page, whose radio broadcasts were regularly heard in St. Louis. Randle's group was among the first of St. Louis's black bands to be heard on local radio, with Tuesday and Thursday noontime broadcasts beginning in the fall of 1932 on station WEW. Randle most often played the first trumpet part in all his bands and left the improvisations to his sidemen.

Randle's bands spent most of the 1930s playing one-nighters at dancehalls either in St. Louis or on the road in Missouri, Illinois, Tennessee, and Kentucky, with extended stays in Stephens Point, Wisconsin, in 1936; Dubuque, Iowa, in 1937; and Sodus Point, New York, on Lake Ontario, in the summers of 1939 and 1941.

A number of personnel changes occurred during the band's first decade. Druie Bess (who had recorded in St. Louis with Jesse Stone's Blues Serenaders in 1927 and who played with Walter Page's Blue Devils from 1929 to 1931) joined the band on trombone in 1935 and stayed until 1938. A succession of trumpeters in the band included Cliff King, Vertna Saunders, Sykes Smith, Willie Moore, Bob Johnson, ex-Jimmy Lunceford sideman "Sleepy" Tomlin, Charles Young, and Irving "Bruz" Woods. New faces among the saxophones included altoists Gene Porter and Clyde Higgins, and tenor saxophonists Ernie Wilkins, Grady Rice, and Cecil Thornton. In 1942 tenor saxophonist Jimmy Forrest (who would later gain fame with Duke Ellington and Count Basie) joined the band for an extended stay at the Club 400 on Grand Avenue. Charles Pillars, the brother of ex-Alphonso Trent saxophonist Hayes Pillars, also played alto and baritone saxophone in the band in this period. Pianists with the Blue Devils during this time included Robert Parker and Tommy Dean. The bass players were George Brazier and Raymond Elridge. Teenage bassist Jimmy Blanton played with the band occasionally before his discovery by Duke Ellington in 1939, and

alto saxophonist Tab Smith also worked as a substitute from time to time.

In 1936 Randle coached student trumpeters at Sumner High School at the invitation of Major N. Clark Smith, the music educator who had previously directed music at Lincoln High in Kansas City and who had given basic musical training to some of that city's finest jazz musicians. In the 1930s Randle also tutored many young musicians who were junior legionnaires of the Tom Powell American Legion Post in St. Louis, including trumpeter Clark Terry.

During World War II, gasoline rationing and transportation shortages kept the Blue Devils off the road, and they began to play extensive engagements at St. Louis nightspots like the Club Rhumboogie at 200 N. Cardinal Avenue and dancehalls like the Castle Ballroom at Ewing Avenue and Olive Street. In late 1942 or early 1943 Eddie Randle hired a high school sophomore from East St. Louis to replace trumpeter Charles Young in his band. The newcomer, Miles Davis, would subsequently become one of the great figures in postwar jazz. Davis played regularly with the band for several years. A sectionmate at this time, trumpeter Bobby Danzy, shared Davis's modern orientation, and both shared a musical admiration for another St. Louis trumpeter, Levi Madison.

While none of Randle's bands ever recorded commercially, a private recording of the 1941, pre-Miles Davis band has survived among a few collectors in St. Louis. It demonstrates a stylistic flexibility that must have contributed to the group's popularity. The band's book was a mixture of original and popular tunes. Among the bandsmen who arranged for Randle were saxophonists Joe Jarnigan, Cecil Thornton, Ernie Wilkins, and Oliver Nelson (in the 1950s); trombonist Buster Scott; and pianists Robert Parker and Tommy Dean. Dean was perhaps the most successful of Randle's arrangers in developing for the group a unique sound that took into consideration the individual musical traits of the various sidemen in the band. One unusual instrumental combination used occasionally in the Blue Devils was that of an alto horn (played by Randle) blending with Charles Pillars's baritone saxophone.

Randle stopped pursuing music as a full-time career in 1943 and eventually became a funeral director, a profession in which he is still involved in this, his eighty-first year. He continued, however, to front bands and to play trumpet until 1964. Among the musicians who played with him after World War II were saxophonists Oliver Nelson and Willie Akins. In addition to his activities as a bandleader, Randle was also the treasurer for the then-segregated St. Louis black musician's union, Local 197, during the late 1930s and early 1940s.

In summary, Eddie Randle has made a significant contribution to the growth of jazz in St. Louis. As a trumpeter and teacher he influenced many aspiring musicians who subsequently established themselves in the field; as a bandleader, he developed his Blue Devils into one of St. Louis's most popular jazz bands of the 1930s and 1940s, featuring as it did a number of musicians who have become influential in jazz in their own right.

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Ragtime in St. Louis

by Trebor Jay Tichenor, St. Louis, Missouri

A 1912 newspaper article in the *Indianapolis Freeman* polled the opinions of leading black entertainers and musicians about where ragtime originated. The general consensus was St. Louis, Missouri. St. Louis was certainly a vital early center, but ragtime was emerging everywhere across the country, especially in the Midwest, by the late 1890s. Black musicians from the South had been coming north in the 1893 black migration, some on their way to the Chicago Exposition (where the ragtime art may have really fermented), but some on their way to settle in St. Louis. A "Black Bohemia" subculture developed which provided a haven for itinerant ragtime pianists, the legendary "professors." Piano rag compositions first appeared in 1897 in Chicago, New Orleans, and Cincinnati, as well as St. Louis.

Some of the earliest syncopations were heard in St. Louis's most lavish brothel, Babe Connors' Castle Club. Local sports would "storm the castle" to hear New Orleans singer Mama Lou entertain with songs that, later expurgated, became nationwide hits. Such songs included "There'll Be a

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Ragtime, *continued*

Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight," "Ta Ra Ra Boom De Ay," and "Bully of the Town." One of the pianists working there was to become the true father of St. Louis ragtime: Thomas Million Turpin, who is listed in the city directories as a musician as early as 1891.

That year Turpin opened his own saloon at No. 9 Targee Street, the heart of the early black sporting district, recalled by both Arna Bontemps and W. C. Handy in their writings (Bontemps 1966; Handy [1941] 1970). In 1897 Turpin's "Harlem Rag" was published by civic leader Robert De Yong; it was the first rag by a black composer to be published in the United States.

Targee Street was the site of the homicide that led a legendary local pianist called Dooley to write "Frankie and Johnnie" (Hagen 1970, 363). Knifings and shootings were commonplace in the district, and Tom himself was involved in a pistol duel as reported in an 1898 *St. Louis Post Dispatch* article ("A Duel to the Death" 1898). A year later Turpin wrote his second rag success, "Bowery Buck."

In 1893 the magnificent new depot, Union Station, opened, and the sporting activity moved west to an area that became known as Chestnut Valley. Saloons, poolhalls, and bordellos mushroomed on Market and Chestnut Streets between Eighteenth Street and Jefferson Avenue; among them were the Pink Coat, the Dollar Bill, the 200 Bar, the Eureka, the Gem, the Owl Saloon, and others. But the music mecca was the Rosebud Bar at the corner of Twenty-second and Market Streets, opened by Turpin in 1900. Advertised in the *St. Louis Palladium* newspaper (November 28, 1903) as "The Headquarters for Colored Professionals," the Rosebud ran night and day (see Fig. 2). Turpin had the piano up on blocks so that the professors had to stand and play—no "hogging the stool" here. By 1902 Turpin had instituted the Rosebud Club Annual Ball, highlighted by a ragtime piano competition, won in 1904 by the legendary Louis Chauvin, "King of the Ragtime Players" (*St. Louis Palladium* October 28, 1905).

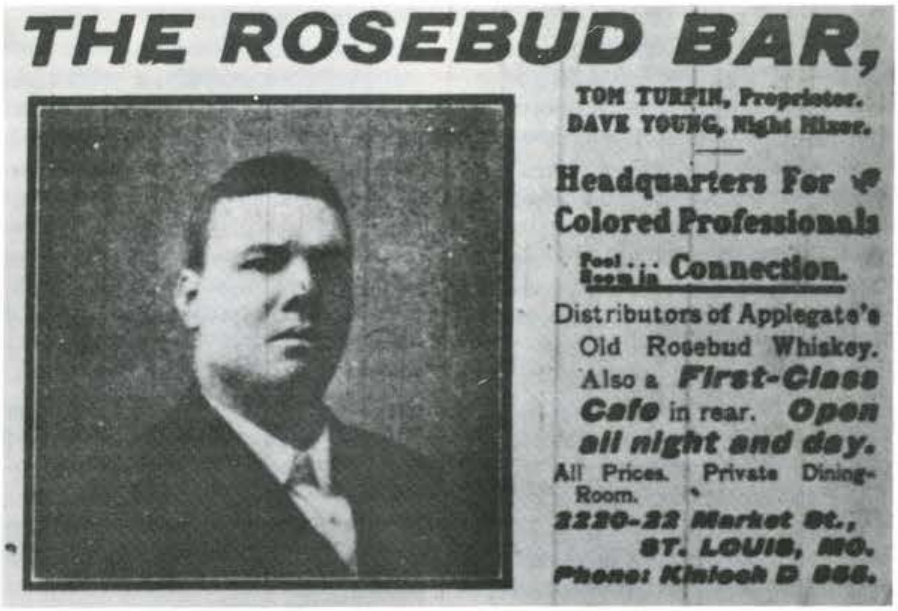

Figure 2. Ad for the Rosebud Bar

Reprinted from "First Street Forum Presents: Ragtime St. Louis, A History of Ragtime, 1897–1916" (St. Louis: First Street Forum, 1982). Permission courtesy of the author.

In 1900 the man soon to be declared the "King of Ragtime Writers," Scott Joplin, moved to St. Louis along with publisher John Stark. "Maple Leaf Rag" (1899) and "Swipesy Cakewalk" (1900) had already been published in Sedalia, Missouri, where Joplin pioneered classic ragtime along with Arthur Marshall and Scott Hayden. In St. Louis Joplin and his wife Belle moved into a flat at 2658A Morgan (now Delmar). Now known as "The Joplin House," this building is on the National Register of Historic Places and is under renovation by the state to be opened as a ragtime museum in the near future. In 1903 Joplin rented larger quarters at 2117 Lucas Avenue. Here he lived quietly as a composer, teacher, and occasional performer until he left in 1907 for Chicago and, later, New York City (Blesh and Janis 1950, 231).

John Stark opened his business originally at 210 Olive Street but later settled permanently farther west at 3818 Laclede Avenue. St. Louis was a logical choice for a serious, legitimate publisher. It had a deeply entrenched German musical culture with such bastions of the classical art as The Kunkel Brothers Publishers. While many serious listeners shunned the most popular ragtime styles, some were a ready audience for classic ragtime of a higher quality.

Support for Joplin appeared as early as 1901 from the most prestigious musician in St. Louis, Alfred Ernst, director of the St. Louis Choral Society. In a 1901 *Post Dispatch* article, Ernst praised Joplin; he may also have taken him to Europe ("To Play Ragtime in Europe" 1901).

St. Louis became the center of world attention with the opening of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904. But ragtime was banned to the Pike, the midway entertainment area of the fairgrounds, because the city fathers were afraid that ragtime might take too much attention away from other official World's Fair concerts. In the various emporiums along the way, however, ragtime lovers could hear such pioneers as Arthur Marshall and Louis Chauvin playing. Joplin celebrated the fair

with his "Cascades" (1904), which Stark promoted as "The Masterpiece of Scott Joplin." (Tom Turpin had been early with his "St. Louis Rag" of 1903, the year the Expo was originally planned to open.)

The Turpin brothers, Tom and Charles, were expanding their entertainment business on Market Street. Early tent shows led to the establishment of the Booker T. Washington Theatre, which became a major enterprise, eclipsing the Douglass Theatorium of earlier years. Bert Williams, Bessie Smith, Eubie Blake, and all the major black entertainers on the circuit played the Booker T. (Blesh and Janis 1950, 58).

The ragtime piano contests continued here into the early 1920s. New players like Charles Thompson were developing a faster, more hectic style leaning towards jazz. After winning a marathon contest, Thompson finally faced Turpin and defeated him in 1916. The old cakewalk and two-step were being replaced by the one-step and the fox trot. Jazz dancing became popular.

Moving with the times, Turpin opened Jazzland one block west of the old Rosebud. It was here that entertainer Josephine Baker, raised in Chestnut Valley, got her start. In 1918 Turpin wrote and published a World War I song that became a local hit, "When Sambo Goes to France." The lyrics of the verse are a reminder of black military involvement in United States history. With the war, the ragtime era came to an end.

By 1922 both Turpin and Joplin were gone, and the Stark press was no longer acquiring new compositions, though the indomitable John Stark kept the business open until his death in 1927.

In the 1930s Market Street was renovated. Kiel Auditorium was built on what was once Targee Street. And with the Mill Creek Redevelopment Project of the 1960s, the original buildings in the old Chestnut Valley were demolished, as had been the case with New Orleans's Storyville district.

Today ragtime is alive and well-established as a vital St. Louis musical heritage. Another national landmark, the Goldenrod Showboat has hosted an annual ragtime festival for twenty-four years. There have been concert series at Washington University's Edison Theater and at the newly renovated Union Station in the heart of what was once the old district. Young Audiences, Inc., features the St. Louis Ragtime Trio in school concerts, and the St. Louis Ragtimers have helped keep ragtime alive since 1961. Ragtime history is taught at Washington University. And Fontbonne College and the St. Louis Ragtime Center hold an annual ragtime piano competition for youngsters. Local nighteries such as the Lt. Robert E. Lee riverboat feature ragtime on a regular basis. Once known as the "Capital of Ragtime," St. Louis has rediscovered her rich ragtime past.

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James Reese Europe and His Impact on the New York Scene

by Leonard Goines, Manhattan Community College and New York University and Mikki Shepard, Brooklyn Academy of Music

With the turn of the century came the spirit of social rebellion. And no black musician was better suited to the mood of the times than James Reese Europe. Bandleader, composer, businessman, and organizer, he was truly the black musician's man of the hour. Though he was born in 1881 in Mobile, Alabama, and raised in Washington, D.C., Jim Europe was a New Yorker through and through. Classically trained on piano and violin, he arrived in New York in 1904 with familiar thoughts of taking the big city by storm. Little did he know at the time, however, that his presence would ultimately have a lasting impact far exceeding his wildest expectations. Becoming a part of both the symphonic orchestra phenomenon and the popular dance craze sweeping New York, Europe towered over the second decade of this century with such intensity that his impact was felt directly and indirectly for years to follow. In many ways he synthesized the artistic moods and attitudes of the turn of the century and pointed them in the direction of the jazz age of the 1920s (Fletcher 1954, 251–263; Welburn 1987).

Though Jim Europe's first employment efforts in New York were disappointing, he melted into the black entertainer's scene and became a member of the Marshall Hotel crowd (Johnson 1930, 120). Marshall's, a small hotel on West Fifty-third Street, was then famous as the New York headquarters for black talent. Shortly thereafter, Ernest Hogan, one of the most popular black entertainers of the time, asked Europe to write music and help rehearse the band for a variety show that he was putting together. This group of about twenty musicians, singers, and dancers became known as "The Memphis Students," though none were students

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James Reese Europe, *continued*

and none were from Memphis. Using an unusual combination of mandolins, banjos, guitars, drums, saxophones, and other wind instruments, they played syncopated music and were given star billing at Hammerstein's Victoria Theater on Broadway. This successful show has been called the first public concert of syncopated music (Johnson 1930, 118–123).

Following this period with the Memphis Students, Jim Europe served, from 1906 to 1908, as musical director of the touring company of Cole and Johnson's *Shoo-Fly Regiment* and of Bert Williams's *Mr. Lode of Kole.* By 1909 he was back in New York leading a small dance band, giving piano lessons, and working as an accompanist.

At the age of twenty-nine, after several lukewarm years in the field, Jim Europe sensed that the black musicians' problem, in part, was an almost complete lack of organization. Due to minstrelsy's decline and the accompanying drop in employment opportunities for black entertainers, only Bert Williams and a few other black celebrities were participating in America's entertainment mainstream. Most other black performers played solely to black audiences.

Jim Europe felt strongly that black musicians and entertainers needed to organize and begin to market themselves and their product more effectively if they were to become successful. In order for this to happen, he concluded, the black impact on American popular entertainment would have to be understood and heralded. He sought more than the popular stereotypes generated by minstrelsy, ragtime, and coon songs. He visualized a medium that would enable him to present black music with dignity.

In 1910, with all these things in mind, Jim Europe gathered black professional musicians into a chartered organization, the Clef Club, which was to supply bands for private society parties. In the spring of 1912 Europe conducted 125 members of the Clef Club orchestra in a concert of the new black music at a concert in Carnegie Hall. The crowded hall went wild with enthusiasm; and the syncopated music that helped touch off a dance craze had arrived in full bloom. In 1913 Europe resigned from the Clef Club and formed the Tempo Club. Both organizations served the combined functions of black musicians' union and contracting office. It was probably as this type of organizer that James Reese Europe served his greatest role (Johnson 1930, 123–124; Fletcher 1954, 252–264).

Though Jim Europe was evidently a capable conductor and composer, we are inclined to believe that serendipity played more than a minor role in his overall success. His ultimate talents or gifts might well have been his business acumen, a flexible outlook, and an uncanny ability for being in the right place at the right time. Europe's pragmatic approach, it seems to us, enabled him to make connections and to see marketing possibilities unseen by many of his race-conscious colleagues. He possessed the ability to sense clearly all of the forces that were converging around him and to use them to the advantage of black music and black musicians. By doing so he inspired many black entertainers to pursue new goals and directions (Fletcher 1954, 255–264).

Eubie Blake, who along with Noble Sissle worked with James Reese Europe, had the following to say in this regard:

> To colored musicians he was as important—he did as much for them as Martin Luther King did for the rest of the Negro people. He set up a way to get them jobs—the Clef Club—and he made them get paid more. He tried to get as much for them as whites, and sometimes he could and sometimes he couldn't. And all the rich white people loved him. He used to get all the jobs for those millionaire parties, and of course we went along (Rose 1979, 57).

The turn of the century, the time of which Jim Europe was a product, was a very exciting period for black music and dance all over the United States. Ragtime was flourishing, minstrelsy was waning, black musicals were popular, jazz was just emerging, modern gospel music was incubating, and Tin Pan Alley was in full flower. In addition, the music and dance of the country and the city, of white and black, of sacred and secular, on all levels, were in mutual influence (Wish 1962, 296–298). Educationally, a well-prepared group of black college graduates was waiting to make their imprint. And politically, it was the time of the Atlanta Compromise, which touched off the Booker T. Washington–W.E.B. Du Bois dialogue. This was the setting that James Reese Europe inherited—the palette with which he had to work.

To quote Eubie Blake again:

> Jim Europe was the biggest influence in my musical career. He was just something that had to happen in America. He was at a point in time at which all the roots and forces of Negro music merged and gained its widest expression. And he furnished something that was needed in time (Carter 1979, 88).

In several ways this period could be viewed as the beginning of our country's entry into the modern age. One of the most fertile periods in America's cultural history, it was defined by a breaking away from long-cherished Victorian customs and traditions and by a freshly honed willingness to experiment with the new in everything from art forms to human relations. Historians of painting, of dance, of social science, of popular music, and of almost every other field have presented the second decade of this century as a time of drastic innovation (May 1959, xi).

By the year 1911 New York City was already a sprawling metropolis and major cultural center with a population of almost four million.

The increasing tempo of life in a mechanized and industrial society was manifesting itself in the music

and dance of the time, and more relaxed social standards were just becoming fashionable.

After 1910 black music and black dance began, more and more, to be absorbed into the mainstream of American life. In 1911, for example, Irving Berlin's "Alexander's Ragtime Band" with its infectious beat was so successful that a cry went out to Tin Pan Alley for similar tunes in the same tempo. At the same time a succession of new dances became popular.

"By the fall of 1913," says Irene Castle, "America had gone absolutely dance-mad." She continues:

> The whole nation seemed to be divided into two equal forces, those who were for it and those who were against it, and even the champions of the cause had to compromise to stay in business. When "ragtime" swept the country the one-step came right along with it, killing off the waltz and the two-step. A list of the popular dances of the time reads like a table of contents for a zoo, with the Turkey-Trot, the Grizzly Bear, the Bunny Hug, the Camel Walk and the Lame Duck (Castle 1980, 85).

Irene and Vernon Castle were a young, white, clean-cut, married, completely acceptable couple who shared Jim Europe's ambition and penchant for filling a demonstrated need. Together this trio was responsible for a near revolution in American dance and popular music. Though the Castles were not innovators in the true sense of the word, they served a catalytic function and, with the help of Jim Europe as their musical director, made social dancing popular on all levels of society (Morris 1951, 321).

The Castles had good reasons for wanting Europe's orchestra to provide the music for their performances. Not only was it the most famous orchestra of its kind, it was composed of skilled musicians who could both read music and swing. Compared to the polite dance music that preceeded it, Jim Europe's music was raw, captivating, and relentlessly rhythmic. Vernon Castle once said that James Reese Europe's orchestra was the only group that could play the music for some of his dances. Consequently, when Europe's orchestra was not available, those dances had to be omitted ("Europe and the Castles" 1914, 1).

James Reese Europe had the following to say about his orchestra and its members:

> The members of the orchestra are all members of my staff of dance musicians who play at most of the principal hotels and at private dances in this city and out of town. I also furnish the dance music for the resorts at Aiken, Palm Beach, and other places, and frequently send men to play at weekend parties and special dances in country houses. . . . I receive requests for dance musicians from all over, even from Europe, because our men are well trained and instinctively good musicians. The negro plays ragtime as if it was a second nature to him—as it is ("Negro's Place in Music" 1973, 61).

Jim Europe's star ascended with that of the Castles. By April 1914 the Castles, along with Europe's eleven-piece society orchestra, were ready for a tour of thirty-two major American and Canadian cities. In November of that same year, Europe said, "I myself have written probably more of these new dances than any other composer, and one of my compositions, 'The Castle Lame Duck Waltz,' is perhaps the most widely known of any dance now before the public" ("Negro Composer on Race's Music" 1914, 7).

When America entered World War I, Jim Europe was commissioned a lieutenant and appointed bandmaster of the 369th Infantry Band. His tour of duty with this black regiment brought him even greater fame as he introduced America's new syncopated music to European audiences. James Reese Europe and his "Hellfighters" band returned to the United States as national heroes after the war.

On a mid-February morning in 1919, a crowd of approximately a million people lined the streets of New York to hear the emergent jazz and to catch a glimpse of Lieutenant Jim Europe's 369th "Hellfighters" band. The parade was just one more conquest in a fantastic series of events that were busily making Jim Europe and his musicians internationally famous. Forever the champion of black music and black musicians, Jim Europe stated:

> "I have come back from France more firmly convinced than ever that negroes should write negro music. We have our own racial feeling and if we try to copy whites we will make bad copies. . . . We won France by playing music which was ours and not a pale imitation of others, and if we are to develop in America we must develop along our own lines ("A Negro Explains Jazz" 1919, 28).

One month after their triumphant return to the United States, the "Hellfighters" band embarked on a worldwide tour. A few days after the two opening concerts at the Manhattan Opera House, Pathé Records made the following announcement:

> Another big scoop for Pathé! Lt. Jim Europe, "The Jazz King," and his famous 369th U.S. Infantry "Hellfighters Band" are now recording exclusively for Pathé records. The famous overseas band is now making a triumphant tour of the country from Maine to California. Everybody is wild about the lively jazzing and syncopated rhythm. . . . The first records will be released about April 20, 1919 (quoted in Charters and Kunstadt 1962, 70).

During the fifteen-year period from the time of his arrival in New York to the time of his death in 1919, Jim Europe had completely changed the musical climate of the city. In the process he brought new prestige and employment opportunities to black entertainers and a new respect for the black American music and dance forms that were busily transforming American culture.

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James Reese Europe, *continued*

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The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s

by Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago

The race-conscious artistic and cultural movement that took place in Harlem and elsewhere during the period from about 1917 to 1934 is described variously as "Harlem Renaissance," "Negro Renaissance," and "New Negro Movement." The phenomenon flourished several decades after emancipation when Afro-Americans sought to build a culture. Most of the thought of the movement stressed the merging of Western European artistic values with those of the Afro-American heritage. Thinkers such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Alain Locke, and others encouraged musicians of the period to attend and present concerts of European music, to compose extended compositions based on Afro-American blues, spirituals, and other folk themes, and generally to exploit Afro-American music for the purpose of building musical "high culture."

Although there had been much creative activity among black musicians in New York throughout the 1800s, the migration of many southern musicians to the city in the first decades of the new century to join those who had already established themselves there brought new vitality to the music. This infusion of new musical perspectives suggested possibilities that were quickly exploited by creative black musicians who were not bound by the conventions of European culture. Traditional European musical conventions were put to the service of Afro-American musical expression to create new forms—notably jazz piano, as it emerged from the eastern ragtime style, and a true American musical nationalism, as it would appear in the works of William Grant Still, Florence Price, William Dawson, and others.

Although black musicians had been performing music since their arrival in the New World, it was the freeing of Afro-Americans from slavery in 1865 that made it possible for large numbers of them to use their talents as professionals. With Emancipation, a large number of black minstrel companies developed, numbering among their casts musicians as well as actors. In some southern cities, particularly in New Orleans, large numbers of brass bands were formed, many of them connected with lodges and other social and benevolent organizations. Street musicians multiplied, some as sellers of wares, others as straight entertainers. Many musicians became itinerants, moving among and between towns, logging camps, and turpentine camps. The pianists played in honky-tonks, barrelhouses, and other venues in which boogie woogie and ragtime piano styles would ferment and develop. The singers moaned and belted the blues—sometimes accompanied, sometimes not. A few were fortunate enough to attend school and be trained as concert musicians, as were Will Marion Cook, William Grant Still, and Harry Lawrence Freeman, for example. All, or at least the best of these, constituted a cadre of highly talented musicians who would virtually change the world's musical tastes.

In the popular arena works were produced that had a terrific impact on American culture, in spite of the fact that many of them were frowned upon by polite society. Among these works were Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag"; Jelly Roll Morton's ragtime/jazz piano; King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band; Louis Armstrong's phenomenal improvisations; James Reese Europe's various "syncopated" orchestras and his Clef Club organization; Will Marion Cook's New York Syncopated Orchestra; Ford Dabney's and Will Tyer's composing, arranging, and conducting for the Ziegfeld enterprises; the traveling shows of the Rabbit Foot Minstrels, Silas Green from New Orleans, and other minstrel groups; and the black Broadway productions of the late 1800s, including Will Marion Cook's *Clorindy, or The Origin of the Cakewalk* (1898). Such activity laid the foundation for the music of the Harlem Renaissance.

Traditionally, the Renaissance has been considered primarily as a literary movement, since nearly all of the writing about it has focused on the poets and other writers of the period. But music provided much of the movement's ambiance, it had an influence on many of the literary artists of the time, and it even helped to define the period. Interactions among the musicians and the literary and visual artists of the period were more intense and productive than is usually assumed, as evidenced, for example, by the writings of Langston Hughes (especially his "blues poems"), Zora Neal Hurston, James Weldon Johnson, and other poets, and the images of painters Archibald Motley and Aaron Douglas and sculptress May Howard Jackson.

These literary and visual artists derived inspiration and mood from the feverish musical activity that marked the Renaissance period in New York. Jazz was continuing to develop and was being performed everywhere. In the jazz world the Fletcher Henderson and Duke Ellington orchestras were entertaining Harlemites and other New Yorkers, creating a new music and setting the stage for the swing era. There were the Harlem pianists—Luckey Roberts, James P. Johnson, Willie "The Lion" Smith, Fats Waller, and others—sharpening their skills on the rent-party circuit and virtually creating jazz piano.

Spirituals were being sung on the recital programs of concert artists such as Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson, Marian Anderson, and Jules Bledsoe, and by choirs such as those led by Hall Johnson, Eva Jessye, and Cecil Mack. Gospel music was in the storefront churches of northern cities, with songs such as "Take My Hand, Precious Lord," "Peace in the Valley," and other works by Thomas A. Dorsey taking hold in black Baptist churches.

Black musicals were presented on Broadway for the entire decade of the twenties, beginning with *Shuffle Along* in 1921 and including *Runnin' Wild* (1924), *Keep Shufflin'* (1928), and *Hot Chocolates* (1929). These and other musicals of the period produced hits such as Eubie Blake's "Love Will Find a Way" and "I'm Just Wild About Harry," Fat's Waller's "Ain't Misbehavin'," and James P. Johnson's "Charleston," among others. In addition, the musical activities and contributions of musicians Will Marion Cook, Will Vodery, Luckey Roberts, Henry Creamer, Cecil Mack, Ethel Waters, Louis Armstrong, and Bessie Smith, of showmen such as the team of Flournoy Miller and Aubrey Lyles, of dancers such as Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, the team of Buck and Bubbles, and of a host of other musicians and entertainers all demonstrated that the worlds of the concert hall, cabaret society, Broadway, and the Harlem community interacted in a milieu of creativity and high productivity.

Composers wrote extended works in the European tradition. There was *Charlestonia* by Edmund Jenkins, *Darker America* and other works by William Grant Still, *The Chariot Jubilee* by Robert Nathaniel Dett, the operas of Harry Lawrence Freeman, compositions by Clarence Cameron White, Harry T. Burleigh, and a host of other works, many of which won the composition prizes of the day.

The Harlem Symphony Orchestra, the Negro String Quartet, and pianists such as Hazel Harrison played to Harlem concert audiences. There were also collaborations such as that

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1925 SEASON 1926

Harlem Symphony Orchestra

E. GILBERT ANDERSON, Conductor
ALLIE ROSS, Associate Conductor
Solist: FELIX F. WEIR, Violinist

Third Symphony Concert

Sunday Afternoon, December 27, 1925

Programme

1. OVERTURE, "Der Freischutz" — Carl Maria von Weber

2. SYMPHONY No. 1, in C Major, Op. 21 — Ludwig van Beethoven
   1. Adagio molto, Allegro con brio
   2. Andante Cantabile
   3. Menuetto, Allegro vivace
   4. Adagio, Allegro molto

Intermission

3. SCENES FROM AN "IMAGINARY BALLET" — Samuel Coleridge Taylor
   1. Molto vivace
   2. Allegretto
   3. Minuetto
   4. Andantino

4. VIOLIN SOLO, Concerto in E Minor — Felix Mendelssohn
   (For Violin and Orchestra)
   Andante
   Allegro

Felix F. Weir

5. OVERTURE, "Merry Wives of Windsor" — Otto Nicolai

These Concerts begin at 3:30

NEXT SYMPHONY CONCERT: SUNDAY AFTERNOON, FEBRUARY 14, 1926

Harlem Renaissance, *continued*

which resulted in the presentation of the 1927 Carnegie Hall premiere of James P. Johnson's *Yamakraw,* a rhapsody for orchestra and piano. Johnson composed the work, William Grant Still orchestrated it, Fats Waller played the piano solo, and William Grant Still conducted the Harlem Symphony Orchestra in the performance.

The importance of the Harlem Renaissance in American culture has been underestimated by some scholars and ignored by others. Some say that there was no Harlem Renaissance. Whatever one's position on the value or the existence of such a movement, it is certain that the art and the aesthetic philosophy of the period have been sources of inspiration and also a nurturing cauldron for the creative power of many musical, literary, and visual artists in succeeding decades. Additional research about the contribution of music to the movement should yield significant new finds, including some of the manuscripts of the prize-winning musical compositions of the period that have been assumed lost forever.

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Composers Corner
Carman L. Moore

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

Carman L. Moore (b. 1936) is one of several composers who are active in New York City today. Embodying the various musical styles prevalent in contemporary American music, his music has an electricity and energy that will captivate the average listener. Currently, he composes and conducts his group called the Skymusic ensemble, which consists of nine instrumentalists who read from a full score and frequently improvise in the course of Moore's compositions. The players in the ensemble are all well-known and seasoned performers, such as Kenneth Bichel (synthesizer), Gordon Gottlieb (percussion), Leroy Jenkins (violin), Eric Johnson (piano and synthesizer), Katherine Hay (flute), and Sam Rivers (saxophone). Each musician brings to the ensemble unique performing experiences ranging from avant-garde jazz and classical music to electronic, commercial, and contemporary art music. In addition to conducting the ensemble, Moore participates in the improvisation.

His compositions have been performed by some of the leading orchestras in the United States, including the New York Philharmonic, American Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, Kansas City Philharmonic, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. His musical works have been premiered in New York City at the Judson Memorial Church, Alternative Museum, and the Lenox Arts Center. He has received many favorable reviews of his compositions by some of America's leading music critics.

Moore was born in Lorain, Ohio, and he grew up in Elyria, Ohio. An important early musical influence was his mother, who had studied with Beryl Rubinstein. She performed in their home pieces from the nineteenth-century repertory as well as compositions of Duke Ellington. Moore feels that he was naturally attracted to art music because, "I could see the notes in my mind. Because classical music is a written music, I knew that was where I belonged."

During his high school years he worked at a butcher shop to pay for a trumpet. He later took up the French horn. He also became an avid tennis player and a member of the high school tennis team. Later, in New York, he became friends with the actor Robert Redford through his interest in tennis.

In 1958 he completed the baccalaureate degree in music at Ohio State University, where he played the French horn in the marching band, concert band, and symphony orchestra. He occasionally played French horn in the Columbus Symphony. After moving to New York Moore received the master's degree in composition from the Juilliard School of Music (1966). At Juilliard his composition teachers were Hall Overton, Vincent Persichetti, and Luciano Berio. He valued his association with Overton because he was a fine composer as well as a competent jazz pianist. Berio inspired him to take chances in music composition. Score studies and analysis were with Stephen Wolpe.

Moore has held teaching appointments at the Dalton School, Yale University, Queens College, Brooklyn College, New York University, La

Guardia College, the New School for Social Research, and Manhattanville College.

He has served on various arts panels, including the National Endowment for the Arts, the MacDowell Colony, Meet the Composer, American Music Center, American Music Theatre Festival, and the Experimental Intermedia Foundation. His administrative experience includes positions as the Associate Director, with Gian Carlo Mennoti, of the Harlem Opera Theater and Workshop (1968–1969); as the Director of the Lenox Arts Center Chamber Music Festival (1978); and as the Composer and Director of the American Dance Festival Young Composer/Choreographer Program (1986–1987).

Moore's literary pursuits have been as interesting as his musical activities. From 1965 to 1974 he served as music critic for the *Village Voice*. His articles and reviews have appeared in the *New York Times, Saturday Review, Vogue, Essence, Eye, Collier's Encyclopedia Annual* (1969–1972), and *Africa Report*. He has written two books: *Somebody's Angel Child: The Story of Bessie Smith* (Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969) and *Rockit: Music Teaching Method* (Alfred Music Corporation, 1980). One of his best-known writings is his response to two letters that appeared in the *New York Times* in 1969, "Does a Black Mozart—or Stravinsky—Wait in the Wings? (Black Art Music)" (Moore 1971).

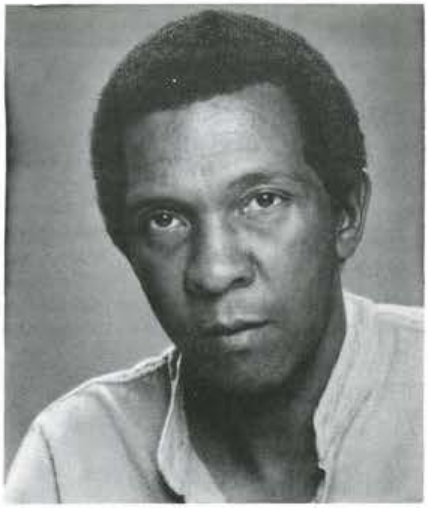
Moore has been associated with pop and rock music for several years. He has written rock lyrics for more than a dozen songs, including *I Can Remember, Light of My Life,* and the title song on the Foghat album *Rock 'n' Roll Outlaws* by Felix Cavalieri. Peter Yarrow, of the singing group Peter, Paul and Mary, studied theory, composition, and arranging privately with Moore in New York.

Because of his success as a composer, La Guardia College honored Moore in a month-long festival of his music in May of 1978 (Rossi 1978). One of the interesting works performed in the course of the festival was his *Dawn of the Solar Age* (1978). The performance began on the East River with trumpets led by Gerard Schwarz and ended at the United Nations esplanade with the American Brass Quintet and Kenneth Bichel on synthesizers. Other works premiered at the festival were his *Saxophone Quartet* (1978) and *Follow Light* (1977), the latter performed by the La Guardia College Choir.

In recent years Moore has been an articulate spokesman on the subject of black American music. He was one of the main speakers at a symposium on African and Afro-American music at the University of Ghana in 1972. He spoke at the National Conference on Black Music Research at Fisk University in 1980. The La Guardia College Festival included a dialogue with Moore as the chief presenter on the subject of "The Role of the Composer in America Today."

Among Moore's compositional output, one finds a broad range of creativity. There are compositions for orchestra, numerous works for instrumental ensemble and chamber groups, vocal compositions, and choral works. Moore has composed music for ballet and the dance as well as incidental music for plays. His interest in multimedia composition is represented by such pieces as *Fixed Do: Moveable Sol,* for instrumental ensemble, dancers, and slides (1980), and *Sky Dance/Sky Music,* for instrumental ensemble, dancers, and sculptor (1984). His *Sonata: Variations for Mandolin and Piano* (1983) is believed to be the first American sonata for the mandolin. His *Concerto for Blues Piano and Orchestra* (1982) was premiered by jazz pianist Jay McShann and the Kansas City Philharmonic Orchestra. There are also works for the piano and several musicals.

The year 1975 was important in Carman Moore's life. He received commissions from Pierre Boulez, of the New York Philharmonic, and Seiji Ozawa, of the San Francisco Symphony, for major orchestral works. The compositions *Gospel Fuse* and *Wildfires and Field Songs* were premiered by the two orchestras on January 22 and 23, 1975, respectively. The *New York Times*'s reaction to Moore's successes is embodied in the title of an article by Donal Henahan (1975): "This Week's Most Wanted Composer: Carman Moore."



Carman L. Moore

Photography courtesy of the composer

Another successful piece for orchestra is *Hit: A Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra,* commissioned by the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra in 1978. The five-player percussion group Nexus participated in the premiere of this work with a large assortment of percussion instruments. *The Sorrow of Love,* for double choir and piano (1984), is an intriguing composition because of the composer's fresh approach to writing for voices. In this piece we hear jazz-like sonorities, dissonant structures and spoken words in a polyphonic texture. Equally as interesting is the striking piece written for the Sky-music ensemble, *Concertos (The Theme Is Freedom)* (1985). This work is written in three parts which are subtitled "Gypsy Mount," "Passacaglia," and "Soweto."

As to his approach to music composition, Moore was quoted in *Newsweek* as follows: "There are several kinds of music screaming in my head, and there must be a way for all of them to come out at the same

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Carman **Moore**, *continued*

time" ("Double Header" 1975). His statement is testimony to his interest in many types of music: jazz, gospel, pop, rock, and Afro- and European-American concert music. Moore comments, "My composing style has evolved drastically over the years, but the basic philosophies (taught by my first teacher, the late Hall Overton) have not. I seek to keep turning up fresh pitches and chords. I like to take the listener with me into the workings of my pieces, so I like to show relatively simple building blocks and procedures early in a piece and then set out to dazzle the ear with how much they can be made to do as the work unfolds. I might work from a basic set-up of pitches but will abandon it or totally alter it when a more vital sound adventure seems to evolve. I like to suggest the known and then slide off into some foreign adventure just as validly implied by the direction the listener may have been expecting. I see shapes, shadows, and light intensities and perceive relative weights as analogs to forms in my pieces. In short, I am a pretty intuitive composer. My basic compositional approach has been to absorb the basics of many styles and forms, classical and vernacular alike, then cross and juxtapose elements of those styles and forms, creating a kind of personal language for the given piece."

Moore continues to teach students privately in his music studio on Manhattan's west side, not far from the Juilliard School. During the summer of 1988 Moore served as master composer in the American Dance Festival in Durham, North Carolina. Recently, in Geneva, Switzerland, he presented his new composition *The Persistence of Green* (1988), a multimedia work for instrumental ensemble with choreography by Angela Verdurmen and slides by Caterina Bertolotto. Alvin Ailey has choreographed one of his compositions which will be performed at La Scala in Milan, Italy, later this year.

The music of Carman Moore is available from Peer-Southern, New York.

The Music of Carman L. Moore

Orchestra

Concerto for Blues Piano and Orchestra (1982).

Concerto for Jazz Violin and Orchestra (1987).

Four Movements for a Fashionable Five-Toed Dragon (1976), for orchestra, jazz quintet, and Chinese instruments.

Gospel Fuse (1974), for gospel quartet (SSSA), soprano, saxophone, piano, electric organ, and orchestra.

Hit: Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra (1978).

Saratoga Festival Overture (1966).

Symfonia [*sic*] (1964), for chamber orchestra.

Wildfires and Field Songs (1974).

Chamber Works

American Themes and Variations (1980), for instrumental ensemble and narrator.

August Harmonies (1988), for flute and organ or piano.

Berenice: Variations on a Theme of G. F. Handel (1984), for violin, clarinet, cello, and piano.

Blue Cubes (1982), for instrumental ensemble.

Broken Suite (1969), for instrumental ensemble.

Classical Dancing (1987), for instrumental ensemble.

Concertos (The Theme Is Freedom) (1985), for instrumental ensemble.

Dawn of the Solar Age (1978), for brass, percussion, and synthesizer.

Deep Night with Tree (1986), for flute and taped flute.

Drum Major (1969), for trumpets, trombone, tuba, percussion, and tape.

Fantasia on "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (1987), for soprano and instrumental ensemble.

Fixed Do: Moveable Sol (1980), for instrumental ensemble, dancers, and slides.

Flight Piece (1969), for flute and piano.

The Illuminated Workingman (1975), for woodwinds, percussion, 4 cellos, tape, film, and 25 dancers.

Images and Bodies Moving (1970), for flute, electric bass, African xylophone, jew's-harps, and assorted percussion instruments.

Journey To: Journey Through (1987), for instrumental ensemble.

Memories (1967), for instrumental ensemble.

A Moveable Feast (1980), for instrumental ensemble.

A Movement for String Quartet (1963).

Museum Piece (1975), for flute, cello, and tape.

Music for Flute Alone (1981), for flute, piano, double bass, and tape.

Nine Fanfares for Brass (1966).

Old Wars (1982), for instrumental ensemble.

Percussion Form for Two Players (1965), for vibraphone, tom-toms, snare drum, bass drum, gong, cymbals, and assorted percussion instruments.

Pipe Dream and Aria (1983), for piccolo and pan pipes.

Quintet for Saxophones and Electronic Echo Device (1978).

Righteous Heroes (1987), for instrumental ensemble.

Sean-Sean (1965), for French horn, 3 cellos, and tape.

Shadows (1982), for flute with echo device.

Sky Dance/Sky Time (1984), for instrumental ensemble, dancers, and sculptor.

Sonata: Variations for Mandolin and Piano (1965).

Sonata for Cello and Piano (1966).

Subtle Jam for Six, Seven, or Eight Players (1973), for instrumental ensemble.

Understudy (1982), for instrumental ensemble.

Variations on a Theme of Abraham Lincoln (1973), for instrumental ensemble and soprano.

Variations on a West African Lament (1987), for instrumental ensemble.

The Wide Seatide Inside Us All (1983–

1984), for instrumental ensemble, with poetry by John Hay.

Concert Band

Blue Drone and Canon (1984).

Chorus

Behold the Lamb of God (1962), for chorus.
Christmas Cycle (1964), for chorus.
Follow Light (1977), for SATB, percussion, and double bass.
The Great American Nebula (1976), a cantata for choirs, orchestra, bands, synthesizer, and narrator.
How Long, O Lord (1962), for chorus.
The Sorrow of Love (1985), for double choir and piano.
Three Kings (1964), for chorus.
Wedding Cantata (1963), for chorus, tenor, and instrumental quartet.

Voice and Piano

Behold the Lamb of God (1962), for contralto and piano.
Five Haikus and Wakas of Grandma Kimi (1986), for soprano and piano.
He Will Not Wrangle (1962), for soprano and piano.
In the Wilderness (1963), for two sopranos and piano.
Oakland Blues (1984), for voice and piano or jazz ensemble.
Of His Lady Among Ladies (1966), for tenor and piano.
Oh Lord, Thou Hast Searched Me (1964), for soprano and piano.
With Thee Conversing (1962), for soprano and piano.

Piano

Cross Fire (1965), for piano with tape.
Double Fugue (1963), for piano.
Points of No Return (1986).
Sonata for Piano (1962).

Music for Ballet and the Dance

Catwalk (1967), ballet for orchestra.
The Illuminated Workingman (1971), for instrumental ensemble and 25 dancers.
Memories (1968), ballet for eleven instruments and bells.
A Musical Offering (1962), ballet.
The Persistence of Green (1988), for instrumental ensemble. Choreography by Angela Verdurmen, slides by Caterina Bertolotto.
The Rehearsal (1987), for dancers, five instruments, and voices.
Rites of Time (1987), for instrumental ensemble.
They Tried to Touch (1986), for instrumental ensemble and dance ensemble.
Tryst (1966), ballet for clarinet, cello, and percussion.
Youth in a Merciful House (1962), ballet for piccolo, 2 bassoons, viola, vibraphone, and percussion.

Incidental Music for the Theater

Funnyhouse of a Negro (1984), by Adrienne Kennedy.
In the First Place (1962).
Jo Anne! (1976), by Ed Bullins, for instrumental ensemble.
Journard (1962), by Derek Walcott.
The Middle Class Blues (1984), lyrics by Ishmael Reed, theater song for baritone and rock band.
The Second Shepherd's Play (1963).
Timon of Athens (1980), by William Shakespeare.

Music Dramas and Musicals

African Tears: Born Again (1970), multimedia, poetry by Kofi Awooner, for 3 actors, dancer, chorus, and instrumental ensemble.
Distraughter, Or the Great Panda Scanda (1985), book and lyrics by OyamO.
The Masque of Saxophone's Voice (1981), opera book and lyrics by Carman Moore.
Paradise Re-Lost (1987), book by OyamO, lyrics by Carman Moore with OyamO.
Wild Gardens of the Loup Garou (1983), book by Carman Moore, poetry by Ishmael Reed and Colleen McElroy.

Miscellaneous Works

Bell Music (1973).
Interplay for Film and Three Instruments (1973).
Music for the State of Washington Pavilion (1985).

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Berenice: Variations on a theme of G. F. Handel. Aeolian Chamber Players. Composers Recordings CRI SD-519.

Four movements for a fashionable five-toed dragon. The American Symphony Orchestra with a jazz quintet composed of Kenneth Bichel, Richard Davis, Elliott Randall, Sam Rivers, and Warren Smith. Vanguard Records HKTDC-A1.

Oakland blues (lyrics by Ishmael Reed). Robert Jasen (baritone), Steve Swallow (bass), Kenny Kirkland (piano), Olu Dara (cornet), and Billy Hart (drums). American Clavé Records 1006.

Youth in a merciful house. Bob Bush (drums), Marcus Thompson (viola), David Friedman (vibraphone), David Shostac (piccolo), and William Scribner (bassoon). Folkways 33902.

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In the Next Issue

The spring issue of *BMR Bulletin* will focus upon black music in Florida and Georgia. Also in that issue, eight leading scholars will present their visions of the needs and imperatives of black music scholarship in the next decade.

A Note on the Death Date of Blind Lemon Jefferson

by E. S. Virgo, Orpington, England

When did Blind Lemon die? This question has emerged several times in my past researches, and it emerged again recently as I was considering some new data on the recording dates of various items in Paramount's L-matrix series.

The general impression, originating from Sam Charters's account in *The Country Blues* (1959), is that Jefferson died before the end of 1929. Charters was unable to establish a date, but made clear that that was his belief. However, there are strange inconsistencies in the data on which Charters founded his belief. For example, he said that Blind Lemon died in a blizzard on his way home from a recording session at Paramount's Chicago studios, at which the last title recorded was "Empty House Blues." But "Empty House Blues" was recorded in about March 1929; it was the third from last title made on Blind Lemon's third from last recording session. Blind Lemon's last recording session was not in Chicago; it was at Richmond, Indiana, on September 24, 1929, during the period when Paramount was using the Gennett studios for their recordings.

Charters went on to say that Paramount paid Will Ezell to take Lemon's body to Dallas for burial. After a service at a church in Wortham (near Mexia, about eighty miles south of Dallas), he was buried in a small county graveyard across the fields from there. Charters traced his grave, and a marker has been placed upon it more recently. In view of the circumstantial evidence, it is surprising that no record of his date of death has been found. Were researchers looking for it at too early a date?

Subsequent writers have inferred from what Charters said that Blind Lemon Jefferson died in December 1929. Issues of his recordings after that date have been called "posthumous," and it has been suggested that Paramount "made no attempt to capitalize on his untimely death for six months" (Calt). The reference to this uncharacteristic behavior on the part of Paramount relates to their Pm. 12945, with laments upon his death by Walter and Byrd on one side and by Emmet Dickenson on the other. That record was released in July 1930, at the same time as Pm. 12946 which carried the last two Paramount recordings by Blind Lemon (one recorded about March 1929, the other in September 1929).

A slightly different account is attributed to Mayo Williams. He had heard that Jefferson collapsed in his car and was abandoned by his chauffeur. A woman who said she was Lemon's widow got Williams (who was no longer working for Paramount but was Lemon's agent) to ship his body to Mexia. No date is attached to that account (Calt).

Arthur Laibley of Paramount is said to have recalled learning from his assistant Aletha Robinson that Blind Lemon had died of a heart attack at a time when he was seeking to arrange a recording session for him (Calt). Both Laibley's and Williams's accounts refer to a blizzard at the time of Lemon's death.

A later date than December 1929 is implied by what Son House told Bernard Klatzko in 1964. He had a vivid recollection of his first recording session, at Grafton, Wisconsin, on or about May 28, 1930. Charley Patton had arranged it, with Willie Brown as third participant, and they had traveled to Grafton with the Delta Four. House recalled that he had made nine recordings at that session, and he recalled the number that Patton and Brown had each made (Klatzko [1964] 1971, 231).

House also recalled that during the session Arthur Laibley, Paramount's producer, told him that Blind Lemon Jefferson had just died and asked him whether he knew any of Lemon's songs. He therefore recorded "Mississippi County Farm Blues" to the tune of Lemon's "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean" (Klatzko 1971).[1]

Evidence is now accumulating that Paramount made no recordings for about six months between November 1929 and some time in May 1930. This may have been because of the onset of the Depression; it may have been because their Grafton studio was not yet ready; or it may have been because the company was in difficulties: their advertising ceased in April 1930, and by June their records were being distributed by the Artophone Corporation of Memphis.

After they ceased using the Gennett studio in October 1929, Paramount appears to have collaborated with Columbia in recording a group of St. Louis artists, and also the Hokum Boys, in November 1929. This collaboration was not new. Rubin Lacy recalled to David Evans that Arthur Laibley was present at his session for Columbia in December 1927 and signed both himself and Rev. Frank Cotton to record for Paramount (Evans [1967] 1971, 241).

The recordings by the St. Louis artists are followed quite closely in matrix sequence by those of Ishman Bracey and his colleagues, including those of the Nehi Boys. Henry Speir, who organized that session, recalled that he, Bracey, Johnson, Taylor, and "Kid Ernest" went to Grafton for the recordings in late April or early May 1930. That coincides with the release date of the first of their recordings, Pm. 12941, in June 1930. (Their session was previously dated to December 1929 because Ernest Michall, who

1. *Blues and Gospel Records* (1982) suggests that House also recorded Lemon's original title, but that may be a misunderstanding. A test-pressing of House's ninth recording, entitled "Walking Blues," has recently come to light (House 1988).

was supposedly clarinetist in the Nehi Boys, died in January 1930. But Karl Gert zur Heide (1983–1984) has proved conclusively that the Nehi Boys' clarinetist was not Michall but "Kid Ernest" Moliere.)

This hiatus in recording may not have been unforeseen by Paramount. During the time that they were using the Gennett studio, between June and October 1929, they devoted unusually long recording sessions to several of their popular artists, including Charley Patton, Blind Blake, Roosevelt Graves, and Blind Lemon himself. The records that resulted were issued at regular intervals during the next ten months or so, and the long sessions can thus be interpreted as deliberate stockpiling.

The two laments for Blind Lemon —by Walter and Byrd and by Emmet Dickenson—were issued in July 1930. In matrix sequence they followed the recordings by Ishman Bracey and his colleagues, and their issue date indicates that they were probably made in May 1930 also, i.e., at about the same time as Authur Laibley was asking Son House to record something to commemorate Lemon's passing.

The question that arises, therefore, is whether Blind Lemon did indeed die early in the winter of 1929–1930 with extraneous circumstances, such as the nonavailability of their Grafton studio, preventing Paramount from making commemorative recordings until May.

There is in fact a further piece of evidence that seems to have been overlooked. Sam Charters said that Paramount's February 1930 Chicago Defender advertisement for the "Hometown Skiffle" record (Pm. 12886), promoting Blind Lemon among other artists, was mistaken because he was already dead, a statement that conflicts with his contention that Paramount helped with Lemon's funeral arrangements. But Charters overlooked an even stranger "mistake." Paramount devoted their advertisement in the *Chicago Defender* of March 29, 1930, to promotion of Blind Lemon Jefferson's "new record," "Southern Women Blues"! There was no suggestion that he had died or that very few more of his recordings would appear. At the time the latter advertisement went to press, Paramount certainly seemed to believe that they were promoting a living artist who would continue to record for them.

Paramount's advertisement on April 26, 1930, announcing issues up to Pm. 12920, was their last, so we do not know what publicity they might have given in the next edition to Blind Lemon's Pm. 12921. It was simply announced as a new issue in their May 1930 Dealers' List—as was his Pm. 12933 in the June list and as were his Pm. 12946 and the laments on Pm. 12945 in the July list.

We can be sure that if Blind Lemon had lived, Paramount would have asked him to record another batch of titles in May 1930 for issue in subsequent months.

Drawing the threads together, it would appear that in March or April 1930 Paramount began lining up artists to record in their Grafton, Wisconsin, studio in May. Blind Lemon was one of those they sought to contact, but they discovered that he had died. If it is true that either they or Mayo Williams did in fact help with his funeral arrangements, then he must only just have died. Since March blizzards have been known to occur in the Midwest, it seems highly probable that Blind Lemon Jefferson died in the latter part of March 1930.

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Canadian Newspapers as Source Material: Further Notes on James Douglass Bohee (1844–1897)

by Neil V. Rosenberg, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland

Several years ago Jeffrey P. Green (1985) published in these pages an account of his research into "The Case of James Douglass Bohee (1844–1897)." In it he showed how British newspapers could be fruitful sources for contemporary information about this important black musician, who, with his brother George Bohee, was much celebrated in Britain during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. One aspect of the Bohee story, however, has remained obscure—their place of birth. As Green noted, the obituary published in Wales (where Bohee died in December 1897) described James as "a Boston man by birth," while Eileen Southern's *Biographical Dictionary* (1982, 40) gives

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Canadian Newspapers, *continued*

his birthplace as Chicago. Recently discovered contemporary periodical sources clarify this aspect of the lives of the two Bohee brothers and indicate that they were natives of Canada.

The American music magazine *Cadenza* carried a report which was copied from the *Dramatic Mirror* for December 25, 1897:

> James Bohee, an American banjoist, who went to England in 1880 with Haverly's Minstrels died in Wales recently. Mr. Bohee was one of the first of the clever banjo players to visit England, and he and his brother helped to make the instrument popular over there. He was a London favorite for many years, and appeared frequently at the London Pavilion ("Banjo Player of the Old Days" 1898, 19).

To this, *Cadenza*'s editor added:

> The foregoing notice omits the fact that Mr. Bohee was a colored man, and one of the very few colored men who ever played the banjo in a creditable manner. He was also one of the few surviving "old time" banjo performers and belonged to the "old school" of players ("Banjo Player of the Old Days" 1898, 19).

In the next issue a response to the obituary was printed:

> Mr. Frank Whetsel, the popular banjoist of St. John, N.B., informs us that the late James Bohee and his brother, the celebrated colored banjoists whose performances entertained the Londoners for years, were both born in St. John ("Passing Notes" 1898, 19).

Further testimony to the Bohees' origins comes from reports published in May 1880, when Haverly's Genuine Colored Minstrels came to Saint John (then usually spelled St. John), New Brunswick, for a week's engagement at the Mechanics' Institute. On May 13 the two local newspapers, the *Daily News* and the *Daily Telegraph*, began running ads for the troupe's appearances, which commenced on Monday the 17th. Reviews of performances were published from the 18th to the 22nd. On Tuesday the 18th the *Telegraph*'s review of the opening night performance devoted considerable space to the Bohees:

> The arrival of Haverly's Colored Minstrels in this city brings out the fact that James Bohee who has become celebrated in this country as a peer among banjo players (and who acts as the drum major of the parade), and his brother George, also of the company, were born in Indiantown, St. John. They went to school here, and in their youth moved with their parents to Boston. James had always been, from youth, partial to string instruments, his particular affection settling upon the banjo. His first banjo was given him by Phil. Logan, well known at that time. Young Bohee took great delight in picking away at this instrument, until he reached a good degree of excellence. He taught himself entirely, without instruction, and though acknowledged the best banjo player in the United States, he can read no note of music. His execution on that very difficult instrument is unlike in character that of the generality of banjo artists. The rough and heavy thumping and strumming is avoided by him. The delicacy of his touch and skillfulness of his fingering brings out the most delicate melodies with a touch that is perfection and a tenderness of treatment that is remarkable. He is an artist of that instrument. Jas. Bohee, before his engagement by Mr. Haverly, appeared at all the principle theatres of note. His brother George, also in the company, has a sweet tenor voice as the audience of last night can testify. He reaches C. with ease and is a banjoist and specialty artist, both brothers appearing in dialogue songs and dances. These, like many other of their features, are said to be entirely original with themselves, at least they have never been produced here before ("Ahead of All Others" 1880, 3).

Subsequent days' editions of the *Telegraph* carried briefer enthusiastic reviews of the troupe's performances. In spite of this journalistic support and the fact that there were two native sons in the cast, it is clear that the Haverly's week-long engagement was not a complete success. On the 22nd a review of the previous evening's show begins by noting poor attendance, states that "The troupe have not been as generously patronized by the St. John public as they should have been," gives a detailed description of the various acts in it, and closes by urging its readers to attend the final shows: "The performers deserve crowded houses this afternoon and evening" ("Haverly's Minstrels" 1880b, 3).

The *Daily News* provides some insight into this lack of success. Like the *Telegraph*, the *News* ran favorable notices at the beginning of their engagement, noting on Monday the 17th that they had received "handsome econimums from the Montreal *Evening Post*" ("Minstrelsy" 1880, 3) and reviewing the opening show by noting that "Mr. James Bohee's very artistic performance on the banjo procured a recall" ("Haverly's Minstrels" 1880, 3). But on the following day, the *News* indicated that the first night had not had a full house, that this afternoon's matinee had been canceled, and went on to reassure its readers of the respectability of the show. Evidently, though, the *News* had some doubts on this account, for on the 22nd it spoke critically of the lightly attended Friday night show, stating that there were "rather more gags than was seemly," and condemning the troupe for "guying an audience" ("Haverly's Colored Minstrels" 1880a, 3). At no time did the *News* mention the Bohees' local connections.

At this point it is not easy to account for the mixed reception received by the Bohees and the other members of the Haverly troupe, but there are a few clues in the *Telegraph*'s enthusiastic reports. On the 20th it noted that "The witticisms were *for the most part* fresh and sparkling" [emphasis added], and assured readers, not for the first time, that a "change of programme" was

due at the next performance ("Haverly's Genuine Colored Minstrels" 1880, 3). For those who liked minstrel shows, such comments might indicate that this troupe was a bit too predictable. But it is obvious from the comments in the *News* that there were some people for whom such entertainment was simply not respectable. The troupe, which had come to Saint John from New York, moved on to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

I do not know if the Bohee brothers subsequently returned to their native New Brunswick, but clearly their careers developed and came to their successful fruition outside of Canada. Nevertheless their proficiency as banjoists reflects the fact that the instrument was popular in New Brunswick and the other Maritime provinces during the last part of the nineteenth century. Among those remembered today as locally influential banjoists are a number of Afro-Canadians from the region. Elsewhere I have written of these individuals (Rosenberg 1988), including George Hector of Grand Bay, New Brunswick, a suburb of Saint John. He has been regionally acclaimed for his work as a country music pioneer with the Maritime Farmers, a group that appeared regularly on Saint John radio and television from the late 1930s to the early 1960s. In him and others the traditions of excellence established by the Bohees live on.

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New Books Received
Preliminary Reviews

Cuscuna, Michael, and Michel Ruppli, comp. *The Blue Note Label: A Discography*. Discographies, No. 29. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988. xxx, 511 pp. photographs. index. $75.00. This is a complete listing of all recordings "made or issued on the Blue Note label" (p. vii). In addition to the usual discographical entries, there is included a history of the label, titled "The Blue Note Story," and a photographic essay.

George, Nelson. *The Death of Rhythm & Blues*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1988. xvi, 222 pp. photographs. index. $17.95. This highly readable, fast-paced narrative comments on what the author refers to as the atrophy of rhythm and blues and suggests dire consequences for the form. The work discusses and puts into its perspective the issue of payola; it examines relationships among black radio, record labels, record retailers, and distributors; it reviews industry and artistic activity in the nation's soul-music centers; and it discusses key figures of black (R & B) radio. The author is a knowledgeable and shrewd observer and interpreter of the contemporary music scene, and his work is important to the field of black music research.

Graham, Ronnie. *The Da Capo Guide to Contemporary African Music*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1988. xii, 315 pp. photographs, maps. bibliography. index. $13.95. This guide is a discography that contains "elements of biography, history, and economic analysis." Primarily concerned with modern popular music, the work catalogs and describes the post-1945 recorded music of leading African musicians, with the music of thirty-six (36) African countries being systematically represented. Photographs and ethnic/linguistic maps supplement the author's country-by-country approach. He discusses highlife dance bands, guitar bands, Swahili bands, liberation music, and other forms of modern popular music, as well as the traditional musics of the countries discussed. The book is basic for new researchers of contemporary African music.

Gray, John, comp. *Blacks in Classical Music: A Bibliographical Guide to Composers, Performers, and Ensembles*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988. x, 280 pp. indexes. $39.95. This excellent bibliography contains more than 4,000 reference citations to writings about black composers, performers, and ensembles,

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including opera singers and opera companies, symphony orchestras, and conductors. The book covers Europe, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States, and spans the period of the mid-1700s to the present day. Although there are some omissions, the work is an indispensable resource for new scholars and extremely valuable for all.

Guralnick, Peter. ***Sweet Soul Music: Rhythm and Blues and the Southern Dream of Freedom.*** **New York: Harper & Row, 1986. ix, 438 pp. photographs. bibliography. discography. index. $14.95.** Concerned with the soul music of the 1960s, this book is a well-researched and well-written chronicle and history of the genre, providing an introduction to and definition of soul music and treating all aspects of the artistic and commerical worlds in which it flourished.

Horn, David, with Richard Jackson. ***The Literature of American Music in Books and Folk Music Collections: A Fully Annotated Bibliography.*** **Supplement I. Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1988. xvi, 570 pp. appendixes. indexes. $32.50.** This book, a supplement to Horn's 1977 work of the same title, contains listings and annotations of 1,300 items published between 1974 and 1980, "plus additional material with earlier publication dates not included in the original bibliography" (flyer), and an appendix of 850 items published between 1981 and 1985.

Lornell, Kip. ***"Happy in the Service of the Lord": Afro-American Gospel Quartets in Memphis.*** **Music in American Life. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988. x, 171 pp. photographs, maps. bibliography. discography. appendixes. index. $32.50; paper, $12.95.** This book fills a long-neglected need in gospel and Afro-American musical scholarship. It treats all of the important quartets, quartet trainers, and disc jockeys who lived and worked in Memphis, Tennessee, over the past sixty years. Many of these musicians are important in the history of American music.

Shaw, Arnold. ***Black Popular Music in America.*** **New York: Schirmer Books, 1986. xi, 386 pp. photographs. bibliography. discography. index. $19.95.** This book attempts to account for the origins and development of black music and to demonstrate the interplay between black and white elements of American black popular music. Beginning with spirituals, the author proceeds to treat minstrelsy, ragtime music, show musicals, blues, dance music of various kinds, swing, rhythm and blues, boogie woogie, soul, reggae, disco, and rap/hip-hop. In each case the author also treats white syntheses of black music in the form of cover records, crossover, and other means of adoption and stylistic exploitation.

Small, Christopher. ***Music of the Common Tongue: Survival and Celebration in Afro-American Music.*** **London: John Calder, 1987. 495 pp. index. $23.95.** A truly humanistic work, this book treats Afro-American music from the standpoint of the culture from which it springs and from that of the culture at-large, outlining "the history of the encounter between the two great musical traditions of Africa and of Europe" (jacket). The author's basic position is that the value of Afro-American music to society at-large lies in its potential use by individuals and groups as a tool for exploring, affirming, and celebrating their identity. The author's occasional factual and interpretive errors (very few, in fact) do not detract from the book's effectiveness as a social, cultural, and aesthetic foundation for the understanding and experiencing of Afro-American music.

—Ed.

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