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Turn-of-the-Century Jug Bands in the Southeastern United States

*by Bruce Bastin, Sussex, England
and Jeffrey Green, West Sussex, England*

Sources of information on the musical styles and groups playing within small communities are so scant that researchers have been forced to rely on evidence of commercial phonograph discs, recording company files, recollections of veteran performers, and contemporary newspapers. This is especially true of jug bands, groups that performed popular songs, blues, and jazz on a variety of instruments, including a jug. Blown into or across the mouth to produce an amplified bass-like note, the jug had orthodox companions drawn usually from the string family (violin, banjo, guitar, and mandolin), flute, and harmonica. The origins of this music have been obscure, but Memphis, Tennessee, has loomed large, as a commercially successful group led by Gus Cannon was based in that city from the 1920s and made recordings. Other evidence strongly suggests that jug band music was performed widely in Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida at the beginning of the century.

Hitherto untapped sources have added to the documentation of black grassroots music of the early years of this century. Welfare files and death and prison records inform us of the names, occupations, and other per-

sonal aspects of performers, although they do not add very much to our knowledge of the societies that produced or listened to the music. Should we turn to sources that, on the surface, have no relevance to either music or to black folk? We should be alert to a paradox: the fact that an event produced no apparent comment does not mean that it did not take place. In Arthur Conan Doyle's *Silver Blaze*, fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, investigating a missing horse of that name, drew the attention of police inspector Gregory to "the curious incident of the dog in the night-time." Gregory said that the dog did nothing, and Holmes advised him that "that was the curious incident." The watchdog's silence meant that it knew the intruder. Conan Doyle's Holmes stories appeared in serial form in *Strand Magazine* in the 1880s, and it is to that unlikely London monthly that we turned for evidence of black jug bands in 1890s Georgia.

In its October 1898 issue, *Strand Magazine* published six pages on Georgia barbecues. Barbecues were unknown in Britain, so the English readers could marvel at the details: one hundred sheep were roasted over two trenches, each over one

hundred feet long, the cooking supervised by a black chef ("a man of great ability and popularity") in a style capable of feeding one thousand salesmen at short notice and, during the recent Atlanta Exposition (1895?), operating every day.

The novelty of such gatherings, for Britons, led *Wide World Magazine*, in May 1920, to reprint much of the article and several of its photographs. The photographs show that the guests were white; but a new photograph of "A Barbecue Orchestra at Work" shows four black men, neatly dressed in seemingly matching suits, high collars, and ties, playing a violin, two guitars, and a jug. The photo was taken by Howe of Atlanta, possibly not at the same time as Howe's pictures that were reproduced by the *Strand* in 1898. The 1902 article mentions that six thousand were fed at a barbecue near Augusta, Georgia.

Both articles show that barbecues were an American custom in both North and South, often featuring music when politics were not behind the public feast. The events lasted three hours, which leads us to conclude that the black quartet had a repertoire both extensive and varied and that they had rehearsed and almost certainly played in public before Howe snapped them. That a group of instrumentalists played near Atlanta around 1901 is of considerable interest in itself, but it is enhanced when we see that *Wide World Magazine* in January 1905 published a photograph of five Florida youths playing the unorthodox instruments of jugs, harmonica, and bones.¹ The commentator on the latter remarked that these jug bands were "one of the most familiar sights of Florida, . . . formed in nearly every district by negro boys." The most famous was a sextet called the Palatka Jug Band.

The commentator added that Florida jug bands obtained pennies from tourists by "a kind of musical black-mailing association," but surely they were also aiming at the more ortho-



Figure 1. A Florida Jug Band (*Wide World Magazine* 1905). Courtesy of Jeffrey Green.

dox music-making seen by Howe's barbecue orchestra. Could social events around the St. Johns River and Jacksonville, Florida, have involved music-making in the same manner as Georgia's barbecues?

Mamie Garven Fields's 1983 memoir of life in coastal South Carolina at this time² contains an undated, but circa 1900 photograph of a South Carolina youthful jug band. The six performers appear stiff and posed; but the picture is titled "Children's bands often entertained at community picnics" (Fields 1983, ff. 110).

These photographs give evidence of music-making involving jugs across three states around the year 1900. Why has this gone undetected? The answer must be similar to Sherlock Holmes's conclusion regarding the dog in the night-time, which did not bark because it knew the intruder. Music-making by black jug bands in Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina around 1900 may have been so well-known to the communities that it was not worthy of comment. But readers in distant Britain would be intrigued by the size of the barbecues and the novelty of the unortho-

dox instruments.

A search of the social documents of turn-of-the-century Atlanta, Palatka, and Jacksonville might uncover other evidence of the employment of jug bands in neighborhood affairs. Howe's pictures and those of other local photographers, the diaries and calendars of participants, and the local newspapers seem obvious places to look. Social clubs reported to their members, especially of fundraising activities, and in those annual financial reports there might be evidence of the employment of unorthodox instrumental groups. Prize-givings, picnics, barbecues, excursions to scenic spots, sports days, and fish fries were common among the myriad social groupings, black and white, of contemporary small-town America. Evidence of those activities may well show that jug band music had a wide but local acceptance.

We can hazard a guess at the range of music performed by that barbecue orchestra from the repertoire of the string band of Carl Martin, Ted Bogan, and Howard Armstrong—perhaps the best-known in recent years and the best-documented on long-playing records. Examples on record from the 1920s and

1. More details are given in Bastin 1986, 34–35; photographs after 160 (see Fig. 1).

2. Fields was born in 1888.

1930s of black string and jug bands are common enough, and even there the range is apparent. Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong had a vast range of tunes. Both Martin and Armstrong learned fiddle tunes at an early age; Ted Bogan played in a medicine show. Their albums include such non-blues tunes as "Sweetheart of Sigma Chi," "Mexicali Rag," "You'll Never Find Another Kanaka Like Me," and "Alice Blue Gown." They played for different white ethnic groups in Jewish, Polish, and Italian neighborhoods. Interestingly, they are all musical "illiterates." All one can say, having heard them all perform as individual musicians, is that they epitomized in their "illiteracy" the very essence of the genuine folk performer.

Because the instruments were unorthodox, it seems likely that the players were not music-readers, and that suggests that they would not have performed in mainstream music-making. The curious might have noted their music, but sophisticated may never have known of these social activities and the music performed at them. The fact that the Palatka tourist saw them as a novelty, yet noted that such jug bands were a familiar sight in Florida, shows the bands to have been part of the community. Indeed, so much so that perhaps there was no need for the dog to bark.

Some ninety years later we could intrude into the world of black jug bands in the southeastern U.S.A. without fear of being bitten, but we

should wonder why the "familiar sight" has for so long escaped the attention of those involved in black music research.

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Black Vaudeville and the TOBA in Atlanta

by Thomas L. Riis, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia

As the principal commercial entrepôt for northeast Georgia, a boom town of the Reconstruction South, Atlanta drew to itself significant numbers of newly freed blacks after the Civil War, some sixty thousand by 1910, roughly one-third of the city's population being the consistent statistic through the last decades of the nineteenth century (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1968). Despite the hunger for "Redemption" among Georgia whites and the legal and extralegal barriers thrown up to thwart race mixing and the advancement of blacks, the large active urban population of blacks created thriving neighborhoods. Along with other commercial ventures, parks and centers of amusement were built. Some dozen major parks, theaters, and dance halls were maintained in black neighborhoods between 1890 and 1930 (Foner 1988, 395, 423–424, 430; Porter 1974, 256–263).

By the heyday of black vaudeville around 1920, the two most important

entertainment districts were Decatur Street, a decaying crime-ridden connector to the principal north-south Atlanta thoroughfare, Peachtree Street, and a more progressive "street of pride," Auburn Street, slightly to the north of Decatur and also linking to Peachtree. Both streets were on the east side of the city, which encompassed the largest concentration of Atlanta blacks. The most imposing edifice in the black business district of Auburn Street was the Odd Fellows Building which housed the Royal Theater. This auditorium, also known as the Auditorium Theater, was opened in 1914 and could seat over seven hundred on the main floor and more than five hundred in the balcony. It boasted of "favorable conditions" and "wholesome amusement" and welcomed a string of major black stars: the prima donna known as the Black Patti (Sissieretta Jones), the dignified William's Colored Singers, and later on Ethel Waters and her Jazz Masters (Porter

1974, 257–265; *Atlanta Independent* May 4, 1922, 5; and May 25, 1922, 8). Other popular spots, such as the Majestic, a movie and vaudeville house, and the Palm Garden, a dance hall and restaurant that also occasionally offered vaudeville, added to Auburn's attractiveness (Porter 1974, 261–262; Sampson 1980, 45). Decatur Street, with its bars, gambling houses, and pawnshops, catered to the mass taste in entertainment with the Eighty One and Ninety One Theaters, both owned by white entrepreneur Charles T. Bailey. The atmosphere of these spots was recalled by older Atlantans in 1973:

The Eighty One Theater was located in an ordinary building that had room for seventy-five to eighty people in the balcony. The barnlike structure could get a total of 110 people in there at one time. Acts were performed there all day long, Sunday included, as late as twelve o'clock at night. It was the home of Bessie Smith who got her start there.

The atmosphere of the Eighty One Theater was rather a loud-talking, feet-stomping and booming affair. People did pretty much as they pleased [until police came in response to the noise] (S. C. Usher, quoted in Porter 1974, 259).

Homer Eichelberger, another former patron of the Eighty One, remembered details that suggest the new Eighty One building that Bailey put up in 1918:

It was a two-story building and the building's inside walls were kept slicked up with paint, and the seats were pretty close together. Other than that it was comfortable. It was a place where the high and low, and the saint and sinner went. . . . The majority of the patronage was black.

* * * * *

[Bailey] had a high-yellow . . . woman [who] served as the cashier [wearing] plenty of gold and diamonds on her finger. . . . Ethel Waters used to sing the blues there, . . . that song, "I'm going down to the levy where the water is heavy trying to get my good man back." . . . She created a sensation.

* * * * *

Bessie Smith was another blues singer who appeared at the Eighty One. . . . Her favorite song was "I'm going to change my way of living." . . . Bessie was nice looking, and she was brown skin too. She had a way of showing herself [and] good clothes. She wore this white dress that had several slits on the sides so that every time she shook the dress would ripple apart. And people would just like to see her. All of them had on good clothes (Porter 1974, 260).

The expansion of the black theater business and its consolidation, first in the (S. H.) Dudley Circuit in 1912 and later in the more famous Theater Owners' Booking Association (TOBA) of 1921 fed the public's interest in hearing fresh talent, new popular music, and of course, recording "stars" like Bessie Smith. Dudley, as a prominent black performer himself, enjoyed much support from the black

press for his initiative. But his efforts were at first focused on the theaters immediately north and south of Washington, D.C., Dudley's home base. Farther south, many forces were contending for black business. In 1916 the Royal Theater reportedly joined the Klein Circuit, another pre-TOBA enterprise that supported black entertainers. The next year Klein attempted to form a circuit through the Midwest and South, called the Consolidated Exchange, that was to have included Atlanta theaters. At the same time E. L. Cummings, a booking agent from Pensacola, Florida, was also beginning to assemble the Southern Consolidated Circuit of southern states theaters (*Chicago Defender* March 22, 1916, 6; September 15, 1917, 4).

The shifting loyalties among theater owners to these various circuits in the late teens and early twenties suggest that all parties involved were jockeying for power and profit. There was money to be made in vaudeville, and the performers' welfare was not always uppermost in the businessmen's minds. Theater owners were often suspect in the eyes of performers and were assumed to be the cause of all woes. Charles Bailey of Atlanta seems to have been especially disliked, and he appears patronizing, dictatorial, and greedy in the press accounts of his activities. Having just opened his new Eighty One Theater in May 1918, Bailey was courting "the entire Dudley time" later in the year. But he was feeling less charitable towards Dudley in February 1920 when blocking Dudley's bid for the presidency of what was to have been a grand merger of the Southern Consolidated Circuit (Bailey's affiliate) and Dudley, Klein, and Chattanooga owner Sam Reevin's United Vaudeville Circuit. By May 1920 the *Freeman* was accusing Bailey of "slavonically" stealing acts from the United Circuit for his own theaters (*Chicago Defender* May 18, 1918, 4; August 3, 1918, 6; *Freeman* February 14, 1920, 6; May 29, 1920, 6; Knight 1987, 165, 170).

The political machinations as they

were reported in the press are none too clear, but none of the above-mentioned participants—Bailey, Dudley, Klein, or Cummings—appear in the list of officers or board members announced for the organization that resulted from these maneuvers—the TOBA. When the TOBA was finally formed in late 1920 or early 1921, it was firmly established by cooler heads: Milton Starr, from Chattanooga; C. H. Douglass, a black theater owner from Macon; Chintz Moore of Dallas, who had been linked to the Southern Consolidated Circuit; and Sam Reevin, the former partner of Klein and Dudley whose business acumen—he was the treasurer—seems to have been the grease that allowed the TOBA to work smoothly and grow. Bailey returned to the fold in May 1921 and served on the TOBA board of directors until January 1922, when Dudley again is listed as a local manager for TOBA in Washington (*Billboard* February 12, 1921, 39; *Chicago Defender* May 11, 1921, 6; January 21, 1922, 7).

In early July 1922 Bailey apparently defected to the new rival Managers and Performers Circuit, headed by Cummings and including among its members theaters in Augusta, Savannah, Brunswick, and Columbus. But within the month the Eighty One was back in the TOBA column. After the TOBA was reorganized in December 1922 to include some of Cummings's old territory, the Eighty One and the Douglass Theater in Macon were booked out of the main TOBA office, not the Pensacola office that included all of the other Georgia houses (*Billboard* July 1, 1922, 42; July 15, 1922, 59; December 16, 1922, 86–88). Unfortunately, documentation about the Pensacola-linked theaters appears not to have survived. All of these goings-on were not irrelevant to the entertainment available to Atlanta audiences. Bailey's TOBA link was crucial for obtaining access to a long list of top flight vaudeville performers committed to the organization.

The larger acts that came to Atlanta, usually to the Eighty One, in-

cluded William Harris's Hits and Bits, Bob Mack's Dixie Belles, the James Crescent Players, Jules McGarr's Ragtime Steppers, the Smarter Set, Anita Bush and company, the Ted Pope company, the Whitman Sisters company (an Atlanta family and always well-received at home), the touring company of the 1921 Broadway hit *Shuffle Along*, and the almost equally successful 1924 New York show *Liza*. Bessie Smith and her company reportedly appeared in Macon ten times between 1923 and 1928 and so probably saw Atlanta at least that often during the period. Ma Rainey, a Columbus native, played in Atlanta from time to time with her band and chorus girls (*Chicago Defender* November 6, 1920, 7; March 26, 1921, 4; November 18, 1922, 7; *Billboard* September 1, 1923, 71; March 15, 1924, 49; May 17, 1924, 47; May 24, 1924, 47; October 11, 1924, 49; February 7, 1925, 53; Douglass Theater Collection, introductory folder).

Like the famous blues singers mentioned earlier, many performers first came onto the circuits via "tab shows," that is, traveling companies of perhaps a dozen or more individuals who presented a self-contained show with several acts that lasted anywhere from forty-five minutes to an hour and a half. "Tabs" were generally repeated two or three times an evening (Stearns and Stearns 1968, 79). Most of the acts booked at the Douglass Theater, a house for which extensive records survive, were of three kinds: "singles" (solos), "doubles" (duets), and "tabs." Tabs were the easiest to book because they pro-

vided a lengthy show at a flat fee. (Douglass paid, on the average, \$300 a week for tabs in 1925 and 1926.) Many if not most of Douglass's performers moved next to Bailey's Atlanta houses, the "jump" from Macon to Atlanta being close (Douglass Theater Collection, business ledgers).

Individuals and duo acts were also commonly booked into Atlanta: an eccentric dance and pantomime team, Buzzin' Burton and Vaughan; family acts, such as Curtis and Curtis, Kike and Marion Gresham, and the extremely popular Stringbeans and Sweetie May; the elegant solo dancer who inspired Nipsey Russell to enter show business, Jack Wiggins; and "the one-man circus," Harrison Blackburn (*Billboard* December 27, 1924, 49; *Chicago Defender* March 18, 1916, 6; July 8, 1916, 6; Stearns and Stearns 1968, 223, 239–241, 287). The list could be extended to dozens of individuals and groups.

The Eighty One introduced mid-night shows in 1924 (*Billboard* October 11, 1924, 49), and although "mid-night rambles" quickly became notorious in many cities for turning the corner from blue comedy to risqué burlesque, it is not clear that Bailey's theaters moved in that direction. He also offered whites-only shows by mid-decade and so netted some free publicity in the major white newspaper of Atlanta, the *Constitution* (March 3, 1925, 14A), a rarity for a southern theater catering mostly to blacks. The occasion for the *Constitution's* accolade was actually the appearance of the highly successful husband-and-wife act, Butterbeans and Susie, a team native to Georgia

that, as J. A. Jackson archly noted in *Billboard* (March 14, 1925, 68), could now afford to buy its hometown of Marietta if it pleased.

The decline of vaudeville in general and the TOBA in particular in the late twenties and thirties does not seem to have hurt Bailey's business. His theaters enjoyed continued support for years afterward. In 1931 he even opened a new theater on fashionable Auburn Street advertising both moving pictures and live acts. As late as 1965 there was still a theater in Atlanta called Bailey's Eighty One on Decatur Street (*Atlanta Daily World* December 9, 1931, 5; December 13, 1931, 1; Atlanta City Directories 1930–1965).

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Kemper Harreld and Willis James: Music at Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College

by Rebecca T. Cureau, Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Atlanta has long been known as a mecca of black higher education because of the presence of its cluster of

historically black institutions: Atlanta University (1865), Morehouse College (1867), Clark College (1870), Spelman

College (1881), and Morris Brown College (1885). While each enjoys a rich history and an independent exist-

tence, these institutions were incorporated in 1964, along with the Interdenominational Theological Seminary (ITS), into the Atlanta University Center (Bacote 1969, 394, 396-397).

This brief history will focus on music in the early histories of three of the Center's institutions: Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College. Because of their close proximity to each other, as well as long-standing close relationships, these schools had in 1929 joined together as the Atlanta University Affiliation (Bacote 1969, 268),¹ advantages of which included common use of the library and other physical facilities, a faculty exchange program, and cross-registration. This arrangement was especially advantageous to the areas of music, drama, and art, permitting even closer collaboration in musical performances and dramatic productions.

At Atlanta University the first group bearing any semblance to an orchestra—the Guitar Club—was organized in 1880; mandolins were added in 1890.² The group—to which eventually were added violins, cornets, and piano—played regularly on campus and received many invitations to appear in the city. The orchestra became more established in 1900 and included more string players. Kemper Harreld of Morehouse College reorganized the group in 1913 and served as director for one year. In later years, Atlanta University students and faculty participated in the Morehouse-Spelman Orchestra, directed by Kemper Harreld or Willis James.

Other musical groups established during the University's early history included quartets and choruses. A quartet of 1894, which included James Weldon Johnson, gave ninety-four concerts in New England where they sang "old time songs"—the

Negro spirituals and melodies that made these black groups popular. These tours continued until 1915. Choruses, under conservatory-trained directors, also performed with distinction, and in 1906 an annual concert series was inaugurated. In addition, a strong piano department was developed, and by 1917 "Atlanta University could boast of having a larger number of artists at the piano than any other institution in Georgia" (Bacote 1969, 214-218).

Fletcher H. Henderson, Jr., (1897-1952) became one of the University's best-known graduates of this period. A chemistry major, he was active in music as a student and was tutored by Kemper Harreld. Following graduation in 1920, he enrolled in graduate school in New York, but shortly became involved in music—first as a song-demonstrator with the Pace and Handy Music Company, and later for the Pace Phonograph Corporation as musical director, accompanist, and bandleader for the company's Black Swan Jazz Masters (Southern 1982, 176). Between the 1920s and the 1940s he organized several big bands that were the most widely imitated of all jazz groups, and his style was a catalyst for playing and writing the jazz style that later dominated popular music, laying the foundation for the big band music of the "swing" era (Southern 1983, 377-378; Bacote 1969, 419; Love 1985).

In 1911 Morehouse College President John Hope brought to the faculty an individual who would make a lasting impact on the musical life of Morehouse College and on the cultural life of blacks in Atlanta. Kemper Harreld (1885-1971), a gifted violinist, was trained at the Chicago Musical College, the Sherwood Music School, and the Frederikson Violin School in Chicago. He studied violin privately in Chicago and in Europe and concertized widely in the United States and Europe. Harreld's background, training, and wide experience provided the basis for his initiation of a music program that developed into the musical traditions for which his name became well-known.

He established an orchestra and several quartets, and he developed the Morehouse Glee Club into a nationally known choral ensemble. In 1927 Harreld joined the faculty of Spelman College in a cooperative program between Morehouse and Spelman College. That year he directed the first of the Annual Spelman-Morehouse Christmas Carol Concerts. In 1928 the ensemble was renamed the Atlanta-Morehouse-Spelman Chorus when it performed its first annual spring concert; thereafter the Chorus performed annual spring and Christmas carol concerts—reinforcing the musical cooperation between the three institutions (Cureau 1987, 32).

Kemper Harreld had major influence on black musical life in the city of Atlanta. He performed violin recitals regularly and maintained a large studio of both children and adults to whom he taught violin. He formed music study clubs as a means of encouraging an appreciation of music and became actively involved in the influential Georgia Music Festival Association, an organization which, in the 1920s, made a significant impact on the cultural life of blacks in Atlanta (Love 1985; Love 1986).

Originally organized in 1910 as the Atlanta Colored Music Festival Association by Dr. Henry Hugh Proctor (1868-1933), minister of the First Congregational Church of Atlanta, the purpose of the Georgia Music Festival Association was to bring "to Atlanta the best musical talent of the race," . . . to instill race pride, to present struggling black musicians to the public, and to further appreciation of the black musical heritage" (Johns 1975, 27).

During his tenure at Morehouse College, Harreld trained a number of students who later became successful musicians, concert artists, and music educators. One, Edmund Thornton Jenkins (1894-1926), became a successful performer, composer, and publisher. A product of his father's Jenkins Orphanage Band of Charleston, South Carolina, Jenkins had learned to play all of the band instruments. From 1908 to 1914 he was a

1. Clark College (formerly Clark University), Morris Brown College, and Gammon Theological Seminary (which later merged into ITS) were previously located in distant sections of the city.

2. One of the mandolin players was James Weldon Johnson of the Class of 1894.

student at Morehouse College. (Kemper Harreld later premiered Jenkins's work for violin and piano.) In 1914 Jenkins traveled with the Orphanage Band to London, remaining there to enroll at the Royal Academy of Music, where he won prizes in composition, piano, and clarinet, and subsequently taught (Hillmon 1986, 145). In 1922 he settled in Paris, where he composed, performed, and conducted. Two compositions of 1925, *African War Dance* for full orchestra and *Sonata in A Minor* for violoncello, won Holstein prizes in New York (Hillmon 1986, 146). His *Charlestonia*, a rhapsody for orchestra on Negro themes, was performed in Belgium, and his *Negro Symphony* was performed in London (Hillmon 1986, 150–151).

At Spelman College, founded in 1881, singing ensembles were an established tradition. Groups known as Spelman Glee Clubs had been organized in the early 1920s, though with Harreld's appointment as director (1927–1933) a new era in the Spelman Glee Club began. But it was Willis James who, as director from 1933 to 1966, developed the Spelman College Glee Club to a high level of choral artistry.

Willis Laurence James (1900–1966) is one of two of Harreld's former students who, with Harreld, provided unbroken musical leadership to the Atlanta University Affiliate institutions for a period of almost seven decades.³ In 1916 James entered the Academy of Morehouse College in the tenth grade, becoming Harreld's protégé. He performed as a high school student in the College orchestra and held the position of first chair violin through his college years. With a fine tenor voice, James was a frequent tenor soloist for the Morehouse

Glee Club and sang second tenor in the quartet (Hall 1982; Cureau 1987, 18–19, 34–36, 38). While still a student, he began arranging Negro folk songs and composing original songs. Following completion of his studies at Morehouse College, he continued private study of the violin at the Chicago Musical College, and he also studied composition privately. He then taught at several colleges where he established music departments and organized and conducted choirs and orchestras. In 1933 he began his long and productive tenure at Spelman College.

James began his serious study of folk music as a young man while in Louisiana in the early 1920s, ultimately achieving a national reputation as a leading authority on Negro folk music. He collected folksongs in Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. In 1941 he co-founded with John Work III the Fort Valley College Folk Music Festival, which continued into the mid-1950s. He and Work recorded some of these festivals for the Library of Congress (James 1945, 107–108, 228–231; Cureau 1987, 190–199). James arranged many of his collected folksongs and spirituals for performances by the Spelman and Morehouse Glee Clubs and the Atlanta-Morehouse-Spelman Choruses, which helped to establish his reputation as a sensitive interpreter of Negro folk music. Many of his arrangements and compositions for solo voice became widely known through performances by his former voice students and by concert artists, including Roland Hayes. His field collections of "rare and heretofore unknown songs" and his writings on Negro folksong and folk culture are anthologized in an unpublished manuscript entitled "Stars in de Elements: A Study of Negro Folk Music," which he completed in 1945 (Cureau 1987, 165–180).

The Atlanta University Affiliate institutions loom large in the history of music and culture for blacks in Atlanta and in this area of the Southeast from the period of Emancipation

through the period of staunch segregation. These campuses were—in addition to some black churches, notably the First Congregational Church—the only places in Atlanta and the area where blacks could enjoy the arts. To be sure, each institution maintained its identity through its own musical and cultural activities. But musically they derived great strength from their close cooperation during these early decades—a "golden era" of music and culture in this city in the Deep South.

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3. Also taught by Willis James, Wendell P. Whalum (1931–1987) succeeded Kemper Harreld in 1955 as director of the Morehouse Glee Club, becoming only the second director in its history. An organist, he gained distinction as a composer, arranger, and ethnomusicologist. This brief history, however, covers the period prior to his student and faculty tenures at Morehouse College.

Key Issues, Areas, and Topics in Black Music Scholarship, Teaching, and Performance, 1988-1999

With only ten years ahead of us as we approach the new century, it is advisable that we take stock of our needs and desires for the future of black music scholarship, teaching, and performance. To that end, statements by nine well-positioned and accomplished individuals have been solicited and are published here for

review, consideration, and deliberation. It is my hope that the statements will prove valuable as they attempt to accomplish the following: (1) provide direction to researchers and students in determining topics on which to focus, (2) provide information for publishers as they seek and commission manuscripts for publication, (3)

provide food for thought for scholars in the field as they research and write in the field, (4) provide a tacit or assumptive evaluation of the current state of knowledge in the field, and (5) help define our collective mission as we move toward the new century.

—ED.

Edith Borroff
SUNY Binghamton

As scholars define American music, historically and in the present, research on nineteenth-century music in many American centers will become more important. It is already clear that black musicians contributed wonderfully to this literature and that the literature as a whole is much larger and more splendid than any of us had imagined. The problem of American music in the nineteenth century is basically that American musicians never became Romantics in the European sense. American music continued to hold onto Classical ideals of rhythmic interest, clarity, and purity (that is, depending upon the musical elements themselves and not upon story elements or programmatic associations). Those who embraced the European Romantic ideals sought music that was harmonically rather than rhythmically based, valued largeness over clarity of sound, and considered music in terms of its story content. Judging American music on this standard is like entering American dogs in European cat shows: by definition, it couldn't compete, couldn't rate very high. Of course, European music, judged by American standards, would not rate very high either, but the European Romantics were the judges, so the outcome was one-sided. Rectifying this will be in large degree a two-fold



Edith Borroff

job: unearthing the music and restating the standards. Black music will come off very well indeed.

Richard Crawford
University of Michigan

In 1969 Ralph Ellison spoke to the cadets at the United States Military Academy in West Point about his own experience as a writer. "I wanted to tell a story," he said.

I felt that there was a great deal about the nature of American experience which was not understood by most Americans. I felt also that the diversity of the total experience rendered much of it mysterious. And I felt that because so much of it which appeared unrelated was actually most intimately intertwined, it needed exploring. In fact, I believed that unless we continually explored the network of complex relationships which bind us together, we would

continue being the victims of various inadequate conceptions of ourselves, both as individuals and as citizens of a nation of diverse peoples (*Going to the Territory*, Random House, 1986, 42).

Ellison's statement is a marvel of compression. In the context of the speech in which it appears, it is also a powerful description of the opportunities and difficulties of writing about American cultural experience, including Afro-American music. Ellison's four sentences illuminate three particularly thorny issues of Afro-American musical study. First, they locate the field squarely within American culture, which Ellison sees as itself a branch of western culture. Second, they recognize the complexity of studying Afro-American music seriously (such a "mysterious" subject, Ellison notes, will yield its secrets only to careful "exploring"). And finally, in language so calm and dispassionate that its edge of necessity lies almost hidden, they justify the enterprise by diagnosing and analyzing the present condition of our knowledge.

American cultural awareness, Ellison says, is meager not because we are uncaring, or immoral, or wedded to flawed ideology, but because we don't know enough. We sometimes allow ourselves to believe that race and social class are the great dividers, more powerful even than the ideals expressed in the U.S. Constitution,

the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence. (Ellison notes elsewhere that in these documents Americans "put ourselves on the books as to what we were and would become, and we were stuck with it" [p. 46].) But, he explains, to dwell on the obvious conditions that divide Americans from each other—to accept the view that much of the experience of the citizens of this "nation of diverse peoples" is "unrelated"—makes our national diversity look like a series of barriers, leading us to "continue being the victims of various inadequate conceptions of ourselves, both as individuals and as citizens." If we are to reach a deeper understanding of "the nature of American experience," he writes, we must instead "continually explore the network of complex relationships which bind us together."

I believe that in the remaining years of the twentieth century, black American music will make its way into the mainstream academic curriculum—that courses on "the history of music" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will routinely take up Afro-American composers and traditions, that the performance of Afro-American music in academic settings will increase greatly, and that a growing number of academically-trained musicologists will begin to study this music—not to be trendy but because they perceive the importance and high adventure of doing so. The ingredients are in place: a music of undisputed artistic excellence, relatively little studied so far by mainstream scholars, but offering the tough intellectual challenge of cultural and artistic complexity, and distilling the diversity that lies at the heart of American experience. That diversity is not mere co-existence—"Everything only connected by 'and' and 'and,'" as Elizabeth Bishop put it (*The Complete Poems 1927-1979*, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1983, 58)—but interconnectedness. And, as Ellison shows, it would be hard to find a more challenging, intriguing, socially beneficial focus than that for one's scholarly work.

Dominique-René de Lerma Morgan State University

By the start of the new century, American schools, colleges, and universities will have had to address proper intellectual concerns vis-à-vis black culture. The undergraduate students with potential for genuine contributions to the various areas demanding black insight simply must retain their love of performance if for no other reason than to maintain a proper perspective on all future musical activities, but they will have to be liberated from the view that performance is an overnight escape from social worries for untutored talents and from that venomous attitude perpetuated by the industries that are defining their culture for them only for financial exploitation.

Sometime before the turn of the century, the symphony orchestras of our country will realize that as tax-supported institutions it is their responsibility to serve all segments of our society, not just the small, elite group that they have served in the past. When there are appropriate black citizens speaking in behalf of and representing their constituents at the concerts and on the boards of these orchestras, the latter will begin to respond appropriately to this state of affairs. When the quality of black contributions is exhibited by performances, recordings, and publications, the artistic merits and distinctly humanistic insights of these works will speak to the more basic issue of programming.

In higher-education circles, as far as the recognition of black contributions to American culture is concerned, already the climate has changed for the better. While previously we found it necessary to fight constantly to convince many of our institutions that acknowledgment of black music as a valid art was not a fad, the supporters for this acknowledgment have increased. The most surprising of these supporters have been the newly licensed scholars, too few of whom have been black, who have surfaced so proudly since Dr.



Dominique-René de Lerma

King's death (and because of it) and since the celebration year of the American Bicentennial. In this regard there is nothing more dramatically telling than the work and strength of the Committee on the Publication of American Music (COPAM) of the American Musicological Society.

However, the fact that most black undergraduates I have seen cannot or will not accept the challenge now being addressed by the new, current scholars suggests that the informational and evaluational future of the area will not be in their hands, which fact will add all the more responsibility to those non-black investigators who now do not deny that art and sociology are united. If the culture is incorrectly represented or improperly explored in the future, the fault rests first on today's black students and only secondly on their teachers. But it would be a sad state were black musicians to continue to remain inactive in informed verbal interpretations and studies or to work only on intuition (assumed to be valid by virtue of skin color), continuing to complain that they were being musicologically ripped off.

But my concern is not limited to the orchestras, opera houses, and academic institutions of America, although the extent to which black representation and participation in these is present is a litmus test. An even more accurate measurement of success will come when statistics will reveal nothing in particular about the black community in areas of incarceration, illness, or income.

D. Antoinette Handy
National Endowment for the Arts

If my memory serves me correctly, it was in the late 1960s that the label "black music" came into being. I was immediately convinced that my reaction to the label varied somewhat from that of my colleagues as well as that of the masses, the interpretation of the media, and the designated connotation of the publishing industry, who appeared willing to release anything that included in its title the word "black." The conflict centered around the designation of only that which sprang from black oral traditions and the spontaneously created versus *all* musics that sprang from black Americans—all styles, in all genres; folk and art music; the academic as well as the non-academic—no one any more or less a work of art.

With a strong personal leaning toward the inclusiveness of *all* musical creations of black Americans, I speculated that the label "black music" was in need of clarification. Many proponents of the slogan were simply "mouthing" traditional white attitudes. Some de-education and re-education were warranted among black musicians themselves. Interdisciplinary enlightenment of music's inclusiveness in the total struggle, for more than entertainment purposes, was warranted. Finally, the music industry was not "colorblind" and, hence, exempted from Black Power participation.

Personal concern led to my first efforts at survey analysis (1970-1971). With responses from 445 persons—255 black and 190 white, of which 50 were performing musicians, 344 academicians, and 51 non-academicians, ranging in age from 26 to "50 and above," from 32 states—I was led to conclude the following: (1) "Black Power" and "Black Awareness" emphases had only a slight impact on black musicians and their music and (2) the label "black music" meant little operationally (see "The Concept of Black Music: A Survey Analysis," *The*



D. Antoinette Handy

Western Journal of Black Studies, Spring 1978, 44-53).

Having observed few changes during the last eighteen years, I am compelled to suggest that the "first order of business" for the years 1989-1999, with respect to black music, must be the arrival at answers to such questions as the following: What is the difference in black music and music created by black people? How can one embrace the label "black music" without embracing all black musicians? Is a William Grant Still, an Olly Wilson, or a George Walker any less black than a John Coltrane, a Besie Smith, or a Thomas Dorsey?

Black performing musicians, music educators, and music historians must have a clear definition about what is meant by the label "black music." They must find ways of communicating this definition to the media and professional organizations (e.g., the Music Educators National Conference, the National Association of Jazz Educators, the American Musicological and College Music Societies). They must recognize that the time for "Black Caucuses" within these organizations (those currently existing and those under consideration) may have expired. Certainly we recognize that black music is not a separate discipline. Music educators, researchers, theorists, and historians must assist in determining full acceptance of the idea that there is nothing in the music curriculum that cannot be taught through black music (see "Black Music in the Undergraduate Curriculum" in *Reflections on Afro-*

American Music, The Kent State University Press, 1973).

One would hope that by the end of the century, the rhetoric of the 1960s and 1970s (and to a lesser extent, the 1980s) will be a thing of the past. Black leadership, including black elected officials, will have come to understand the "black music" label (as well as the broader label "black art"), since black musicians' visibility at the seats of political, social, and economic power will have become routine. Empowerment will have become all-inclusive; no one part of black Americans will be isolated from the other.

Portia K. Maulsby
Indiana University

Scholarly publications on black music have increased significantly over the past two decades. Many of these works explore topics ignored by earlier scholars, while others bring new interpretations to historical data. Although many strides have been taken in filling gaps that exist in the scholarship on black music, increased attention is needed in the area of urban traditions, especially popular music.

The artistic value and cultural significance of popular music often has been severely underestimated by scholars. This attitude, in part, can be attributed to several factors: (1) it is a music produced and marketed as an economic commodity; (2) its life-span is limited to approximately six months; and (3) the aesthetic princi-



Portia K. Maulsby

ples which govern popular music are often polar opposites of European aesthetic values. These factors are important to studies that examine the role of black music in the development of a multi-billion dollar commercial music industry. However, all but the last item are irrelevant to an assessment of the artistic merit and cultural significance of black popular music within the context of black communities. The validity of this tradition can be understood only if analyzed within the framework of urban black cultures.

Black popular music is a by-product of post-World War II black culture. During and after the war years, approximately two million southern rural blacks migrated to urban centers in search of new economic opportunities and improved social conditions. Each generation responded differently to the realities of life in the metropolis. The broad range of lyric themes that comprise the popular music tradition represents the varying experiences and responses of black people to the circumstances that impact on their lives. The complex of styles that make up this tradition illustrates the diversity of musical expression that exists within and among various generations of blacks. An analysis of these styles reveals that they embody basic qualities distinctive to all black music and cultural forms.

Black popular music exists within a network of cultural traditions, all of which share a core of common qualities. In rap music, for example, the structure, rhythm, and vocal inflections are grounded in the principles of black speech. Its lyric themes are derived from various verbal folklore genres, and its delivery style is patterned after that of black preachers. In-depth analyses of song lyrics, musical structures, and aesthetics can reveal qualities that distinguish various popular music styles and those that link black musical genres and cultural traditions to each other.

The study of black popular music within its sociocultural and historical contexts can enhance our under-

standing of many issues not yet fully explored by scholars, including: (1) the music-making process in black America; (2) the meaning, use, and function of music in black communities; (3) the cultural values and traditions that define the vocabulary, structures, and aesthetics associated with the black music tradition; (4) the social and cultural forces that induce change in the black music tradition; (5) the ways in which technology impacts on the function, use, and meaning of black music within and outside of black communities; and (6) the role black performers have played in defining and redefining directions in American popular music. In essence, scholarly studies on popular music can bring new perspectives to our understanding of black music as a unique and dynamic dimension of the American cultural landscape.

**Eileen Southern
Professor Emerita
Harvard University**

In recent years our understanding of Afro-American music has been advanced by new research into the history of this music, as well as by the reprinting of old classics (if we may use that term). Certainly the historical surveys of Roach and Southern, among others, along with the reprints of Trotter and Cuney-Hare, have helped to lay a solid base for further investigation into the history, which now may take the form of in-depth studies of musical practices in specific places. Models for this kind of research are offered at the biennial conferences sponsored by the Center for Black Music Research, where discussion is focused on local history—such as New Orleans at the 1987 conference—and the most important papers are later published in the *Black Music Research Journal*. More and more frequently, other journals too are publishing articles in the field of local, Afro-American music history.

The picture is even brighter in the area of biography. The kind of sloppiness, generalized, sentimentalized, and frequently erroneous writing that has



Eileen Southern

passed for scholarly comment on black music biography in the past is inexcusable now that we have *The New Grove Dictionary of Music* (1980) and *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* (1986), along with the *Southern Biographical Dictionary of Afro-American and African Musicians* (1982). Moreover, new resources for the researcher continue to pour from the presses, such as the frequent Da Capo reprints (often with new introductions) of old standards and the recent publications of the Oxford and University of Illinois Presses, which set high standards for quality as well as quantity in biographical writing.

Despite impressive progress made in the field of black-music historiography in the past decade or so, the job has scarcely begun. We have the general overview; now we need the particulars, which will contribute to a deeper understanding of what is at issue. The literature, for example, lacks a sophisticated methodology for use in discussing black musicians and their music, one that employs musical analysis and criticism as well as narrative. In addition to local histories, there is a need for more exploration in the fields of musical theater and opera, the concert stage, and oral traditions, among other fields. Significantly, great strides are taking place in the field of black sacred music, which now boasts its own scholarly journal, Jon Michael Spencer's *The Journal of Black Sacred Music* (which began publication in 1987), and is well represented in other journals, such as *Rejoice! The Gospel Music Mag-*

azine, published by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi. Finally, with a few exceptions—most recently Gilbert Chase's new, third and revised edition of *America's Music* (1987)—black-music history has not yet been admitted into the mainstream of American music history. There the black musician is still largely invisible, except for a Duke Ellington or a Louis Armstrong.

Researchers, the challenge is still there, and it is imperative.

Martin Williams
Smithsonian Institution

The Congress of our country has recently resolved that jazz is a National Treasure, and whereas such a declaration expresses an implied faith in the music's future, it must surely have been made on the basis of an illustrious past. One might therefore ask where that treasure exists and how one might better acquaint our countrymen, including our future generations, with its accomplishments.

One way it exists is on recordings, of course. Another is (or can be) in written form, and that fact, as the growing jazz repertory movement shows us clearly and regularly, is a valid and vital source for preserving that past, keeping it alive, and bringing it to audiences.

Still, one might imagine that, at the very moment that Congress gave the music its official approval and implied faith, a group of jazz musicians and their avid followers might have been complaining, with considerable justification, that jazz was a misunderstood pursuit, a neglected art without nearly the prestige and support that its "classical" counterpart has in our nation.

Under the circumstances, one might ask where that evident prestige, respect, and support for Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Debussy come from? Do our tax-supported arts centers exist because we believe that Handel and Haydn, Verdi and Wagner are great composers and that

their works are a part of a cultural heritage we have legitimately chosen to adopt and perform?

I think not—or not exactly. Our symphonies, our opera companies, and our chamber ensembles are there not so much because any of the previously-named men were great musical artists as they are because everyone *knows* that they were great musical artists. I can go to almost any college, take a music appreciation course from any music instructor, and learn something substantial about those artists and the musical tradition that they built. And that, in turn, is because the work on them has been done: the work of critical evaluation, musical analysis, biography, music history, and the careful preservation, editing, and publication of scores. In short, all the important work of criticism and musicology has been done on those composers. That kind of intellectual support makes performance possible, makes it wanted, and ultimately gives it the respect and prestige it must have to survive and prosper.

Scholarship helps three hundred years of European concert music thrive as a body of living art for present and future generations. And the urgent if obvious job of American music scholarship, surely, is to bring its disciplines to bear on the survival and performance of American music.

In jazz such needs have so far been met by *amateurs* (to use that valuable word in its original French sense) who have done the basic work of musical sorting and criticism, of dis-

cography, and of basic biography. But to point out that we do not yet have a really *major* biography of a single major jazz artist is to point out something that should be obvious to us all. To point out that there is no authentic body of scores available for performance—of Ellington, say—is to point out something that ought to be well-known among our music scholars and researchers. However, suppose I were to suggest that a detailed examination of Ellington's strikingly original harmonic language would take its place as a major study of some of the best and most important music of this century. And that it could also save our future composers of all persuasions years of study and analysis on their own. Would I then be pointing out the obvious?

Such work would also give every future jazz musician a stabilizing and confident sense of his own heritage and its high accomplishments and of his own position in that heritage—something which few jazz musicians have ever had—and that all of us as citizens ought to have as well.

Our jazz men and women have done diligently, often brilliantly, by their tasks. Should our intellectuals and academics not now do as well?

Josephine Wright
The College of Wooster

The history of black musicians in Europe dates from the seventeenth century (or earlier) with the introduction of African trumpeters and drummers in European armies, and it continues today in the twentieth century with celebrated concert performers, composers, and conductors who have made appreciable contributions to the concert life of Europe. Undoubtedly, the most promising area of inquiry in this field presently is the study of pioneers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who made incursions into the concert life across the Atlantic Ocean and laid foundations there for the favorable reception of black artists of our own generation. Evidence suggests that between 1800 and 1900 the bulk of these classically



Martin Williams



Josephine Wright

trained musicians were active principally in England, France, and Austro-Germany, and that some later flourished in Italy and eastern Europe in the pre-World War I era. These musicians were highly skilled, talented concert performers, composers, conductors, and educators, and they were drawn primarily from Cuba, the United States, and the European continent itself.

Most intriguing are the Afro-Cuban musicians who flourished in

France and Germany at the end of the nineteenth century and moved within the mainstream of the musical establishments there, but who have not been fully investigated—notably violinists Joseph White (1835–1911), Claudio José Domingo Brindis de Salas (1852–1911), José Julio Jimenez (d. after 1880); cellist Nicasio Jimenez-Berra (d. 1891); and pianist José Manuel Jimenez-Berra (1855–1917).

Also neglected have been in-depth studies of our own Afro-American prima donna singers in Europe in the late nineteenth century and the opening decades of the twentieth century, e.g., Marie Selika (ca. 1882–1885), Sissieretta Jones (during the 1880s), Rachel Walker (a.k.a. Lucie Lenoir, 1897–1915), Lillian Evanti (ca. 1925–1930), and Caterina Jarboro (ca. 1926–1930), as well as Emma Harris, Coretta Arle-Tilz, and Georgette Harvey, who were known in Russia as performers in the pre-World War I years.

Equally ignored have been the

black American conductors of symphonic orchestras who were forced to work abroad because of racial prejudices against them in the land of their birth (particularly Edmund Dédé and Dean Dixon). Moreover, black composers who flourished in Europe in bygone years generally have been overlooked in the literature—most notably, Joseph White (who composed and published a considerable amount of musical literature for the violin and string ensembles in France), José Manuel Jimenez-Berra, Edmund Dédé, and Amanda Aldridge (a.k.a. Montague Ring, whose collected works need to be located and cataloged).

Scholarly publications of thematic indexes and editions of the music of black composers are also sorely lacking, and concerted efforts should be made by scholars in the next decade to make this neglected source of musical literature available to the public for study, performance, and inclusion in classroom instruction.

1989 National Conference on Black Music Research Abstracts of Papers

The Center's 1989 National Conference on Black Music Research, to be held in St. Louis, Missouri, during October 12–14, will focus on black music in St. Louis and its general vicinity. Following are abstracts of the papers to be presented at the meeting. The entire schedule of events will be announced in a brochure for the joint meetings of the Center and the College Music Society.

**John W. "Blind" Boone,
Pianist-Composer: Merit, Not
Sympathy Wins**
Ann Sears

In 1893 the St. Louis publishing firm of Kunkel Brothers published two pieces by John William "Blind" Boone: "Caprice de Concert No. 1:

Melodies de Nègres," and "Caprice de Concert No. 2: Melodies de Nègres." Like the majority of Boone's works, these pieces are virtuosic and idiomatic, using an imaginative approach to the piano's potential sound. Such compositional skill puts Boone in a small group of Afro-American pianist-composers who wrote concert pieces in addition to functional dance arrangements, sets of variations, and ceremonial music. (This group would include Thomas Greene Bethune and the Lambert brothers, Lucien and Sydney, who later emigrated to Europe.) The charm and freshness of these caprices qualifies them for the concert stage today.

Of particular interest are the references to black identity in the titles and in the musical references to the

tune "La Bamboula" in "Caprice No. 2." Perhaps Boone is acknowledging the influence of black musicians who inspired and helped him with his career.

It also seems likely that Boone is commenting on the world around him through his music. The United States of 1893 was a world of contradiction for black people. On one hand, Antonin Dvorák encouraged Americans to consider the spiritual as a foundation for American music; at the same time, oppressive "Jim Crow" legislation sanctioning segregation appeared in many states, signaling what many historians have called "the failure of Reconstruction." Boone's titles may contain a political comment about the importance of community in troubled times. An ex-

amination of his concert career through programs, reviews, advertisements, and other sources will tell us more about where Boone appeared as well as under what auspices and for what audiences he played.

**"But He Done Her Wrong!":
A Historical, Literary, and Cultural
Analysis of "Frankie and Johnnie,"
the Afro-American Love Ballad**
William H. Wiggins, Jr.

This paper will examine the historio-geographical origins and the multiple cultural impact of "Frankie and Johnnie," the popular Afro-American love ballad. It will pose and answer three basic questions. First, when and where did the song originate? Questions related to this first one include the following: Was the song first sung during the Civil War or at the turn of the century, and was Memphis or St. Louis the birthplace of this ballad? Second, what is the extent of the ballad's impact upon folk, popular, and classical forms of American culture? Field recordings of the song, commercial recordings, and slides of paintings based on the ballad will be presented to illustrate how it has influenced creative expression in each of these respective areas of American art. Third, why has this bawdy love ballad proven to be so popular? The paper's conclusions will be based upon a careful analysis of the song's lyrics, especially as they relate to the ballad's theme, ploy, setting, characters, and dialogue. The paper will show where, when, why, and how some nameless Afro-American balladeer was moved to utter the refrain that has become a part of the American folk, popular, and classical landscapes: "But he done her wrong!"

**Scott Joplin in Sedalia:
New Perspectives**
Edward A. Berlin

It was while living in Sedalia, Missouri, that Scott Joplin composed the "Maple Leaf Rag" and other early

pieces with which he established his reputation as "The King of Ragtime Writers." The Sedalia period (ca. 1894-1901) is the earliest from which enough facts have emerged for us to have some perception of Joplin the man and artist. Successive biographers have been able to draw from these facts vivid pictures of Joplin and Sedalia of that time, some images being solidly based on fact, others being more fanciful. The problem is that, despite some good evidence, there are many contradictions and gaps.

Not all of these problematic areas are resolvable. In fact, new discoveries seem to lead to new contradictions and gaps. Our task is to subject the evidence to critical scrutiny and determine what is most plausible. The result is still not a complete picture, but a new plane of understanding, a move closer to the truth about the life and work of this leading ragtime composer.

Issues included in the presentation are as follows: When did Joplin arrive in Sedalia and why did he choose to go there? What were his musical activities? Who were his associates and what were they like? What is the likelihood of a marriage that was rumored to have taken place prior to his union with Belle Hayden? What was the nature of the Maple Leaf Club and other places where he worked? What were Joplin's character, attitude, and artistic aspirations?

**John Stillwell Stark, 1905-1908:
Readings from the *Intermezzo* and
His Personal Ledgers**
Trebtor Jay Tichenor

The legacy of the Stark Press is central to the history of ragtime music in St. Louis. Publisher John Stark, along with his sons Will and Etilmon, pioneered the classic ragtime of Scott Joplin, James Scott, Joseph Lamb, and other masters of the art. Most of our information about the concern comes from Blesh and Janis's *They All Played Ragtime*, originally published in 1950. Blesh and Janis's research was based largely on testimony from the surviv-

ing Starks, and it preserved the basic story of the publishing company and the family.

More recent research and collecting by this writer have unearthed additional sources of information: one is the obscure *Intermezzo* magazine, edited by John Stark, that began publication in St. Louis in January 1905. This musical monthly was largely a "house organ" for Stark and contained articles, ads, biographies, humor, and commentary. In addition to the *Intermezzo*, there are handwritten ledgers, letters, and other materials left in the estates of Etilmon Stark and ragtime composer Arthur Marshall. Finally, there are the collected original sheet music publications with the legendary Stark hyperbolic advertising blurbs mixed with information and opinion. Characteristic of John Stark, these writings combine the basic philosophy of a country peddler with the sophistication of a self-taught man of the arts, well grounded in the classics.

All these findings add insights to John Stark and the history of the Stark Press, its character, ideals, and even business transactions, especially the problems that the smaller legitimate publishers such as Stark were confronting as the eastern concerns began to monopolize the music business.

Through a survey and analysis of the above new source materials, this paper will be one of historical additions and clarifications of questions, such as the degree to which Stark thought of himself as a ragtime publisher and how he viewed ragtime and Scott Joplin, especially in the context of other music. These findings will modify our traditional view of the Stark Press as the "classic rag house" and add to the knowledge of the company, its composers, and its history.

The Blues Tradition in St. Louis
Harriet Ottenheimer

St. Louis was a major center of black musical activity at least as early as the 1860s. Black musicians

throughout the area were drawn to its lively nightlife and to a milieu in which they could exchange musical ideas. By the turn of the century the city was nearly as well-known for its blues as for its ragtime. It is probably no accident that the blues was first documented in St. Louis (in 1893) and that the first scored twelve-bar blues was published in St. Louis (in 1904). This early intersection of blues with ragtime resulted in several styles that are more characteristic of St. Louis than other blues regions. Piano blues and guitar-and-piano duos, for example, were particularly common in pre-war St. Louis blues, and many blues musicians, such as Henry Townsend and Peetie Wheatstraw, played both piano and guitar.

Through the years, the blues has continued to exchange distinct musical influences with other related styles. The swinging "Territories" style of jazz of the 1930s, for example, drew much of its inspiration from the blues of the St. Louis-Kansas City region, while trombone, trumpets, and other swing-jazz instrumentation were incorporated into small blues combos of the city. The distinctive rhythm-and-blues styles of Ike and Tina Turner and Chuck Berry, developed in the 1950s, drew from the existing traditions of the city, as have the newer urban blues styles of Oliver Sain and Silver Cloud. This paper explores the origins and development of blues in St. Louis from its beginning to the present, with special emphasis on the musical and cultural contexts of the genre.

Riverboats from St. Louis and the Dissemination of Jazz

David Chevan

Since 1901, when the Streckfus steamer company hired a black trio to play ragtime on its riverboats, St. Louis has been a central port for the dissemination of black music. St. Louis served as a base port from which excursion steamboats traveled the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio rivers. This study explores the music

and musicians who played on the Streckfus steamers from 1901 until 1942. Riverboat life, significant ports of call, and the expectations of the Streckfus company for their musicians are discussed. Of primary focus are three of the prominent leaders of black riverboat bands during this period: Charlie Creath, Dewey Jackson, and Fate Marable. Other topics to be explored are the notion of a St. Louis sound (in comparison to a New Orleans sound), the role of the white riverboat bands, and the music they played.

Political and Musical Forces That Influenced the Development of Kansas City Jazz

Nathan W. Pearson, Jr.

Jazz in Missouri has had important centers in both St. Louis and Kansas City (and also minor centers in such cities as Sedalia, Missouri), but Kansas City saw the development of a more distinctive and influential jazz style. This occurred despite St. Louis's larger size, generally stronger economy, vibrant indigenous black population, and central position along a frequent South-to-North migratory route. Important disparities in the political, economic, cultural, and social forces affecting these two closely related but very distinct cities are largely the cause of this differentiation. Examining and developing an understanding of the complex interplay in these forces offer insights into both the creative process and the development of jazz.

More or Less Willie Mae Ford Smith: A Shaping Influence in Black Gospel Singing William T. Dargan and Kathy White Bullock

St. Louisans, through the work of their composers, performers, and organizations, have had a sustained impact on black gospel music since the 1930s. Dating from that period, the singing style of Willie Mae Ford Smith may be seen as an original and potent influence on aspiring artists of

her generation. Though the significance of her singing and personal style is generally acknowledged, few recordings of her early works are available. Against the background of a survey of black gospel in St. Louis, we will explore accounts of Smith's performances and extant recordings to determine and present the salient features of style and expression that mark the Willie Mae Ford Smith legacy.

Six St. Louis Composers Aaron Horne

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century (1880-1900), St. Louis had a thriving black population. As elements of that culture thrived, the traditions for St. Louis's black composers were established by successful ragtime composers such as Tom Turpin and Scott Joplin, called, respectively, "The Father of St. Louis Ragtime" and "King of Ragtime Composers." Other notables included James Sylvester Scott, Scott Hayden, Arthur Marshall, Louis Chauvin, and Joe Jordan. Continuing the tradition of outstanding black composers in St. Louis, but not limited to the ragtime genre, were and are a number of other figures, the most notable of them being Jesse Gerald Tyler, N. Clark Smith, Robert Ray, Olly Wilson, John Carter, and Oliver Nelson.

N. Clark Smith (1877-1933) was a music educator/composer whose career spanned minstrelsy and concert music. Smith organized Chicago's first black symphony orchestra and founded a publishing house with J. Bernie Barbour.

Oliver Nelson (1932-1975), composer and jazz saxophonist, received his formal musical education in St. Louis and later studied composition with Elliot Carter. Nelson composed in a wide variety of styles, including commercial popular, jazz, film, and television music.

Jesse Gerald Tyler (1879-1938), a choral conductor, concert pianist, and composer, received his formal education at the Oberlin Conservatory and later with private teachers of compo-

sition. He organized and trained a Gerald Tyler Choral Society that performed his and other works.

John Carter (b. 1937) has composed at least two impressive works: *Cantata* and *Saetas Profanos*, both of which are settings of Negro spirituals for voice and piano.

Olly Wilson (b. 1937) is a composer of first rank. He received his early music education in St. Louis and did post-doctoral study at the Studio for Experimental Music at the University of Illinois. Wilson's works include the prize-winning *Cetus*, for electronic tape (1968); *Sometimes*, for tenor and electronic tape (1976); and *Expansions*, for organ (1979).

Robert Ray (b. 1946) is a pianist and composer who had his training in St. Louis and at Northwestern University. He has taught at the University of Illinois and is presently Minister of Music at the West Side Baptist Church in St. Louis and an instructor at the St. Louis Conservatory. Ray has written exclusively for the choral and choral/orchestral medium, the most notable of his works being *Gospel Mass* (1981).

This paper will explore the contributions of these individuals to America's musical and cultural life and heritage.

**Tell Tchaikovsky the News:
Postmodernism, Popular Culture,
and the Emergence of Rock 'n' Roll**
Bruce Tucker

The contemporary notion of postmodernism, developed in the early 1970s, arose in the context of pop, in its broadest sense. From its beginnings until today, postmodernism in its most significant manifestations has challenged modernism's unyielding hostility to mass culture. One of the original inspirations for that challenge came from rock 'n' roll performers like Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and Elvis Presley, all of whom first appeared at a time when modernism, having lost its adversarial character, had become the basis of cultural authority. This paper will argue that postmodernism, though a

problematical concept, gives us a way of better understanding those early musicians and that those early musicians are our culture's proto-postmodernists.

In America, hostility to mass culture reached its apex in the 1950s, for a variety of complex cultural, political, and intellectual reasons, including the harnessing of high culture to the imperatives of the Cold War, the triumph within the academy of an eviscerated and self-congratulatory modernism, a snobbish reaction to the postwar appearance of working-class and lower-middle-class suburbs, the emergence of television, and, horror of horrors, rock 'n' roll. Until recently, commentators on the left and on the right have been united in their disdain for mass culture. The right sees mass cultural phenomena like rock 'n' roll as a levelling of standards, a lowest common denominator that drives everything worthwhile out of circulation. The left sees mass cultural phenomena as another opiate of the masses that keeps them in subjection to capitalist domination. In both cases the modernist distinction between high art and popular art underpins the indictment.

In the field of black music research, much writing about rock 'n' roll accepts the modernist distinction between high and low, condemns rock 'n' roll, and then has to find some way to redeem, in terms of high art, the forms of black music the critic likes. Or, alternatively, the critic upholds some vague notion of authenticity in popular art, a standard that turns modernism upside-down, but nevertheless uncritically adopts the high art/low art distinction on which modernism rests.

As one of the dominant cultural practices of the postwar period, rock 'n' roll must be understood in more than merely musicological terms harnessed to a modernist aesthetic that reflexively condemns the popular. Central to an understanding of Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, or Little Richard is the very fact of their popularity, their manipulation of the

media, and their participation in the culture of spectacle. Moreover, in their performances and their public personae, they embodied and manipulated highly ambiguous symbols of race, sex, and gender, bringing into public consciousness for the first time many of the aesthetic-political issues with which postmodernism now consciously concerns itself. That accounts for the vitality of early rock 'n' roll and for the speed with which that socially dangerous moment passed.

Today, the postmodern sensibility, parting company with modernism and with the avant-garde, raises questions of cultural conservatism and tradition as an aesthetic and political issue. It rejects the modernist categories of progress versus reaction, Left versus Right, present versus past, abstraction versus representation, and avant-gardism versus kitsch, which in this century have dominated discourse about the arts. Like much black cultural production, postmodernism operates in a field of tension between tradition and innovation, mass culture and high art, without automatically privileging the second terms over the first. Modernism, which does privilege the second terms, often leaves little place for Afro-American art or artists. Commentators on popular music should give up the exhausted framework and tired questions of modernism, which can neither explain, understand, defend, nor wound—if that is their pleasure—popular music. Issues of black popular music should be worked out in the arena of postmodernism, which black popular music and other manifestations of popular culture to no small degree inspired.

**The Availability, Training, and
Recruitment of Black Scholars for
the Profession**
Doris Evans McGinty

The number of black scholars at work in the field of music, though relatively small, has increased considerably since the 1970s. A few have

turned their attention exclusively to traditional musicological subjects, but the most visible activity on the part of the black scholars in the field of music has been related to black culture. It is not expected that black scholars will study only Afro-American or other black music even as it is not expected that all research on black music will be conducted by blacks. However, the need for illumination of this area of music is sufficiently pressing as to suggest a responsibility on the part of black scholars.

Historically, black writers and scholars have led the way in the study of black music. The earliest comprehensive studies of Afro-American music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were presented by black writers. Currently, the work of black scholars has been responsible for the creation of basic reference works and for defining the overall directions of future research. The contributions of the leading black scholars have been impressive indeed. In addition, black scholars are engaged in significant exploration of various aspects of black music such as gospel, jazz, popular music, and the black musical, to name a few.

There are important questions that bear equally on the availability, training, and recruitment of black scholars in the field of music. For example: Is there a special role for the historically black college or university in providing encouragement for black scholars? How can black students who are interested in music be encouraged to use their skills and insights as scholars? What kind of training would best prepare these students to develop as scholars? Training, recruitment, and ultimately, availability of scholars all depend on the answers.

Black Faculty and Students in College and University Music Departments

Warren C. Swindell

This study focuses on the attitudes and actions of the academic music establishment toward Affirmative Ac-

tion programs that were intended to end racial segregation and to promote racial integration. Several questions are addressed, including the following. As modern patrons of the arts, what have colleges and universities done to include black music students and faculty members in their curricula and performing arts series? To what extent have music departments espoused a philosophy articulating the right of everyone freely to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy music? How have black graduates fared in the job market? Have Affirmative Action goals and objectives been established, including time tables for evaluation of results attained? Are standards of competence and qualification set independently of the actual choices made, and are they in writing?

Both quantitative and qualitative standards are used to indicate how changes in race relations since the Civil Rights Act of the 1960s have reshaped the standings of blacks in the social order. Because rational arguments can often mask discriminating behavior, the best means for detecting the possible presence of discriminating processes is to examine their stated outcomes. Unequal results are viewed as strong indicators that discrimination may have occurred.

Several conclusions and recommendations are reached pertaining to desegregation. Racial discrimination, a major tenet of white supremacy, will continue unless it is systematically dismantled. Discriminatory processes are self-supporting. Attitudes, for example, are built into the operations of organizations and their supporting social structures, thereby becoming institutionalized and firmly entrenched. In order to reverse this process, the governing bodies of colleges and universities, such as boards of regents, boards of trustees, and boards of curators, ought to make a public commitment to implement Affirmative Action principles for departments of music. Presidents, vice presidents, provosts, and deans, along with the chief music executives, ought to be held accountable

for administering their Affirmative Action plans and for putting them in writing. The results of their efforts should be communicated to the external and internal publics.

Black Music and the College Curriculum Edith Borroff

The problems in presenting black music for our students are many; and these problems interface with other problems—American music, for one, and twentieth-century music, for another. It is of course a racial issue, but perhaps not in the way one would expect.

Historically, our education about music in the university system has been German in origin and bias. Nineteenth-century immigrants ignored the strong American music that did in fact flourish here, told Americans what they had to like, and trained that segment of musicians who took the university jobs at the end of the century. That segment has retained control of academic music, publishing, and criticism. The result was that all American music was labeled as inferior, not just black music. During the 1930s and 1940s another influx of Germans found haven in the United States and canceled the good progress in furthering the cause of American (and that included black) musicians. Before the second World War, the education of musicians had taken place in several venues; after the War these would shrink to a single venue for concert musicians: the university system, which was anti-American, anti-black, and anti-female.

The issue before us is how to emerge from this academic cocoon when our texts and our course outlines remain Germanic, even when the teachers are not.

There are several means, and it is my opinion that this battle will be won by thousands of individuals, each doing his and her share in gestures large or small, each with pride and knowledge that "one on God's side is a majority."

BMR Bulletin 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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