

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:                   BLACK COMPOSERS OF THE CLASSICAL  
MUSIC GENRE FROM THE EIGHTEENTH  
CENTURY TO THE TWENTY-FIRST  
CENTURY

Amyr Joyner, Doctorate of Musical Arts, 2019

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This dissertation research paper will be an examination of a number of prominent Black composers in the Classical music genre and their influences and contributions to the Classical music violin literature. The overall intent of the paper is to act as an additional resource for violinists and musicians that are interested in exploring the composers and their works, while also increasing exposure to and awareness of Black classical composers. While the purpose of this dissertation lies specifically with exploring influential Black composers, their chosen works in the programs, and how they fit within the broad spectrum of classical music, I am hopeful that it will nevertheless promote a further discussion regarding incorporating a more extended study of minority and women composers in the general curriculum of music institutes, as well as encourage more widespread practice and performances of their works along the likes of Bach, Beethoven, Mahler, and Bartók.

BLACK COMPOSERS OF THE CLASSICAL MUSIC GENRE  
FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

by

Amyr Joyner

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To My Mom, who encouraged me to pursue my doctoral studies  
and who guided me every step of the way.

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I want to also thank my friends, pianists Camille Balleza and Hsiang-Ling Hsiao, who were my accompanists for the dissertation recitals and always professional and amazing during the preparation, even in being tasked with learning highly demanding and often hard-to-read repertoire and who always stuck with me through the entire process.

I am forever grateful for my best and dear friend Sarah, who offered her support in many ways during the process, in particular during the late stages where various difficulties presented themselves to the completion of this document.

My brothers, Jarin and Khari, for always challenging me to be the best I could and for inspiring me in more ways than one; to my family, my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins for always being encouraging in my career as a musician. And to my parents, my father for always insisting that I do the best, and my mother who is the reason I started down the path as a violinist, and whose time and dedication to me and my brothers can never be measured.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
PROGRAM NO. 1.....	v
PROGRAM NO. 2.....	vi
PROGRAM NO. 3.....	vii
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES.....	viii
TABLE OF FIGURES.....	ix
INTRODUCTION.....	1
PART I: PRE-SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR.....	6
CHAPTER 1.....	6
Joseph Bologne.....	6
Concerto in A Major No. 2, Op. 5.....	9
José White Lafitte.....	12
Concerto in f# minor.....	15
Claudio Brindis de Salas Garrido.....	18
Consolation: Romance sans paroles, Op. 5.....	19
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.....	20
Deep River.....	22
Four African Dances.....	24
PART II: POST SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR.....	27
CHAPTER 2.....	27
Clarence Cameron White.....	27
Levee Dance.....	29
William Grant Still.....	31
Suite for Violin and Piano.....	33
Florence Beatrice Smith Price.....	35
Concerto No. 1 in D Major.....	38
CHAPTER 3.....	42
George Walker.....	42
Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano.....	43
Irene Britton Smith.....	44
Sonata for Violin and Piano.....	45
David Nathaniel Baker.....	47
Blues (Deliver My Soul).....	49
Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson.....	50
Blue/s Forms for Unaccompanied Violin.....	53
CONCLUSION.....	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	58

**DISSERTATION RECITAL PROGRAM NO. 1**

March 29, 2018, 8:00PM

Ulrich Recital Hall, Tawes Fine Arts Building

- Suite for Violin and Piano.....William Grant Still  
(1895–1978)  
    I. “African Dancer”  
    II. “Mother and Child”  
    III. “Gamin”
- Blues (Deliver My Soul)*.....David Baker  
(1931–2016)
- Deep River*, Op. 59, No. 10.....Samuel Coleridge-Talyor  
(1875–1912)  
*Transcribed by Maud Powell*
- Blue/s Forms*.....Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson  
(1932–2004)  
    I. “Plain Blue/s”  
    II. “Just Blue/s”  
    III. “Jettin’ Blue/s”
- Concerto in *f#* minor for Violin and Piano.....José White  
(1835–1918)  
    I. Allegro  
    II. Adagio ma non troppo  
    III. Allegro moderato

Camille Balleza, Piano



**DISSERTATION RECITAL PROGRAM NO. 2**

November 5, 2018, 8:00PM

Ulrich Recital Hall, Tawes Fine Arts Building

-Violin Concerto in A Major, Op. 5 No. 2.....Joseph Bologne  
(1745–1799)

I. Allegro moderato

II. Largo

III. Rondeau

-*Four African Dances*, Op. 58 for Violin and Piano.....Samuel Coleridge-Taylor  
(1875–1912)

-Sonata for Violin and Piano.....Irene Britton Smith  
(1907–1999)

I. Allegro Cantabile

II. Andante con sentiment

III. Vivace

Dr. Hsiang-Ling Hsiao, Piano

**DISSERTATION RECITAL PROGRAM NO. 3**

April 30, 2019, 8:00PM

Ulrich Recital Hall, Tawes Fine Arts Building

Sonata No. 1 (in one movement) for Violin and Piano.....George Walker  
(1922–2018)

*Levee Dance*, Op. 27, No. 4.....Clarence Cameron White  
(1880–1960)

*Consolation (Romance sans Paroles)*, Op.5 .....Claudio Brindis de Salas  
(1852–1911)

Dr. Hsiang Ling Hsiao, Piano

***Intermission***

-Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major.....Florence Price  
(1887–1953)

- I. Tempo moderato
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro

Camille Balleza, Piano

## LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Example 1a: Bologne: <i>Concerto No. 2 in A Major</i> , Op.5, 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt.....	10
Example 1b: Mozart: <i>Concerto No. 5 in A Major</i> , KV 219, 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt.....	10
Example 2a: Bologne: <i>Concerto No. 2 in A Major</i> , Op.5, 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt.....	10
Example 2b: Mozart: <i>Concerto No. 5 in A Major</i> , KV 219, 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt.....	10
Example 3a: White: <i>Violin Concerto in f# minor</i> , 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt.....	16
Example 3b: Wieniawski: <i>Violin Concerto in f# minor</i> , Op. 14, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mvt.....	16
Example 4a: White: <i>Violin Concerto in f# minor</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> mvt.....	16
Example 4b: Wieniawski: <i>Violin Concerto in f# minor</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> mvt.....	17
Example 4c: Saint-Saëns: <i>Violin Concerto No. 3 in b minor</i> , Op. 61, 3 <sup>rd</sup> mvt.....	17

## TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Coleridge-Taylor: <i>Twenty-Four Negro Melodies</i> , Op. 59, No. 10 “Deep River”.....	23
Figure 2: Maud Powell’s transcription of Coleridge-Taylor’s “Deep River”.....	23
Figure 3: Clarence Cameron White: <i>Levee Dance</i> , Op. 27 No.4.....	30
Figure 4: Example of tresillo rhythm.....	30
Figure 5: Still, <i>Suite for Violin and Piano</i> .....	35
Figure 6: Price: <i>Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major</i> , Violin Solo Manuscript: 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt.....	39
Figure 7: Price: <i>Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major</i> , Complete Score Manuscript: 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt.....	39
Figure 8: Tchaikovsky: <i>Violin Concerto in D Major</i> , Op. 35, 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt.....	40

## INTRODUCTION

In 1997, noted violinist and scholar Rachel Barton Pine released her album *Violin Concertos by Black Composers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries* on Cedille Records with the Encore Chamber Orchestra and conductor Daniel Hege. The album helped in spawning my interest in Black composers of the Classical music genre. Throughout the centuries and as early as the 1600s, composers of color have been active in their output and contributions to the classical repertoire. As a violinist, it has been my interest to explore and bring to my awareness as well as others the violin repertoire of these composers, repertoire that has over time been forgotten or lost but recently rediscovered.

The purpose of this dissertation is to present, in a series of extended program notes in conjunction with three recital performances, a general overview of chosen composers and their selected works for violin. The works themselves span a variety of genres including sonatas, concerti, suites, unaccompanied solo, short pieces, and dances. There are three concerti presented—one per recital—and they are the main feature of each program. They are, in consecutive order: Violin Concerto in *f#* minor by Cuban-French composer and violinist José White-Lafitte, Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major by French composer and violinist Joseph Bologne, and Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major by the American composer Florence Price.

In deciding the composers and repertoire for the programs, I committed to having as diverse a selection as possible. During the process of planning the recitals, I attempted to set a few parameters, the foremost being the composer having a work written for solo violin, either with or without accompaniment. The total amount of repertoire for all three recitals needed to be

roughly three hours total in time. It was important that a work be substantial enough to be featured in a public recital; there was also an effort to refrain from featuring the same composer too many times throughout the recitals, and to limit the programming to a maximum of two works per composer. I chose to present at least one major concerto per recital, each one covering a different music period and exhibiting the qualities of said period to the fullest and which together covered a large time period range, from the Classical Era to the mid twentieth century. With these criteria, I found that many of my final choices of repertoire inadvertently fell into the periods of the late nineteenth century to mid twentieth century, in large part due to the selected composers being active during those periods. The perhaps unintended consequence of this is that there is only one Classical era composer covered in this paper, the composer in name being Joseph Bologne. And although there were others such as British composers George Bridgetower and Charles Ignatius Sancho, it is exceedingly difficult to find any record and surviving material of Black classical composers who composed for the violin prior to the 1820s, where the Classical period is considered to have ended.

The overall results of the imposed criteria yielded a list of a total of eleven composers. Two are Latino composers, and two European composers. The majority of the composers were also highly skilled violinists who also had performing careers, with many of the others having at least studied the violin at some point in their education. There are at least three composers that were active during and fall firmly within the mid and late Romantic period, although many of the later twentieth century composers in this study had a compositional style that included strong ties with Romantic era harmonic practice.

While this study focuses on Black composers of the classical music genre specifically, what we will find of the twentieth century composers is that although they were fully trained in traditional forms at the conservatories of their day, they would also write in styles that would be heavily indicative of other non-classical American-born genres, including blues, gospel, jazz, spirituals, popular music, and ragtime. While many would utilize traditional European forms such as the sonata or Fugue, they would also write in a mixture of styles and as a result, it is often hard to narrowly define these composers as being either “Classical” or as any other in a traditional sense. Jazz, in particular, has frequently been referred to as “America’s Classical Music” by performers and scholars throughout the last century.<sup>1</sup> It has been the longstanding practice of classical composers to refer to the folk songs of their countries for creating a nationalistic musical style and identity and both Black and White classical composers would draw heavily on the styles and idioms of African American music in an attempt to define a purely “American” classical music. As such, conceptual notions of Classical music that this study may imply may vary widely from traditionally more Eurocentric and “academic” notions.

A note of relevance has been the number of musicians and composers who, during various points in their education, travelled to France for study, either independently or as a student of a particular institution. The Paris Conservatory of Music in particular played a recurring role in serving as a safe haven and nurturing center for many of the composers examined in this dissertation to develop their skills and talents. It was the center in which two of the greatest violinists that had ever lived—both Cuban violinists—studied a tradition of violin playing that was (exemplary back in its day) considered the leading back in its day and which

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<sup>1</sup> Herzig, Monika, *David Baker: A Legacy in Music* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press: 2011), 47.

had enormous pedagogical and stylistic influence in the violin playing and literature of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

Lastly, it is important to remember during this examination that the success of the majority of the composers is not indicative of a common success found amongst their peers, other musicians of color active in the genre. They are the exception to the rule, in that it was extraordinarily difficult for many Black composers to find the same opportunities and advantages afforded to white composers in classical music that could have led to them finding and experiencing similar levels of success. The composers in this study were men and women of color. However, what can be deduced from further examination is that they also had certain privileges unavailable to many other Blacks such as a direct access to enormous wealth, status gained through inheritance, and an early and rich musical training. As such, the composers here are outliers and are not meant to be taken as the norm. However, it would also be remiss to conclude that these composers did not experience any particular disadvantages or racial animosity as well. Historically, to be a composer was considered socially by many an extremely difficult and unprofitable profession, but to be a Black composer was considered nearly impossible, and as we will see even the most prominent of these composers would still at times face racial discrimination and would find themselves and their progress hindered by the racial views of their surrounding society. As well, there are some composers here who are much lesser known and did not achieve as wide a success as the others in this list.

Rather than divide the paper and examine the list of composers by recital order, I have opted to divide the paper by program notes in the following manner: The composers will be



divided as being pre-Samuel Coleridge Taylor and post Samuel Coleridge-Taylor as a way of differentiating the composers that began drawing extensively from the characteristics and DNA of American Black folk music, particularly the spiritual, which amongst the list of composers presented, Coleridge-Taylor will be the first to do so in a significant way (Coleridge-Taylor also had a large influence on the succeeding composers of the early twentieth century who often adopted a neo-romantic style, although American composer Harry T. Burleigh is often credited as being the first to introduce Black artists to spirituals and to also have made sheet music for Black spirituals and folk songs more widely available).<sup>2</sup>

The first section, Part I, will cover in Chapter One the violinist-composers, those who had high profile performing careers and were known as being some of the very best violin players of their time, but who were also highly adept composers in the same league as Pablo de Sarasate, Eugène Ysaÿe, and Henryk Wieniawski. While Clarence Cameron White is also a part of this group of composer-performers, I have put him after Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. The second section, Part II, will first cover in Chapter Two the neo-romanticists and composers who were, more or less, trained to play the violin but ultimately whose primary instrument was another, and who were heavily immersed in the vernacular of a variety of Black American musical styles. From this point forward, all of the remaining composers of the study are American. The third chapter covers the composers that began to branch out even further into other styles and genres that are increasingly difficult to define as being one style or the other. It includes the composers that were active up throughout the early twenty-first century. In the concluding section, having

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<sup>2</sup> Southern, Eileen. "America's Black Composers of Classical Music," *Music Educators Journal*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (Nov., 1975). 46-59. Accessed November 2, 2019. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3394895>. 48

presented the composers and their violin compositions, I will discuss my thoughts about a greater discussion at large frequently taking place in many musical circles and amongst my colleagues, namely the lack of diversity and representation in the Classical music performing and academic worlds, despite there currently being a vast pool of literature from undiscovered and forgotten composers.

## **PART I: PRE-SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR**

### **CHAPTER 1**

#### Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745–1799)

Joseph Bologne, the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, stands as being a compelling figure in eighteenth-century history. He was largely forgotten in time, but recently there has been an increasing revival of his works. A highly versatile person, Bologne had a number of talents: composition, dance, conducting, impeccable athletic ability, virtuosity on the violin, and being quite possibly the greatest swordsman in France during his time. He attracted the respect and admiration of his society and of those who knew him, colleagues, friends, and teachers alike, despite his background and his status as a mulatto in a country that was and grew increasingly hostile to Blacks. Rarely making enemies, he was a noble gentleman and something of a Don Juan. However, very little is known about his musical background and training from before the time he was roughly sixteen.

Bologne was born on 25 December 1745 in Baillif, Guadeloupe to George Bologne, a plantation owner and his slave Nanon. With the exception of a brief stay in France around two years of age (the result of his father fleeing the country and evading a trial for the death of a man that many others considered Bologne Sr. not responsible for<sup>3</sup>), Joseph would spend his early childhood in Baillif, before travelling to France to live permanently. At thirteen, he was enrolled by his father into the Académie royale technologique d'escrime et d'équitation, a fencing school founded in 1759 by the French fencing master Benjamin Nicolas Texier La Boëssière. This may have been done by Bologne's father to advance his status in French society, as possessing a sword and having the skill to wield it was a mark of privilege and of high rank.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps due to his physical conditioning in early youth, Bologne was a prodigy in the art of fencing, standing out amongst his peers and was the model student at the school. It is noted that even before he had joined the academy he had considerable fencing skills. According to his lifelong friend La Boëssière fils, the school headmaster's son,

“Already at the age of ten he surprised the masters he had been given by his facility at learning. At thirteen he was placed in the care of M. La Boëssière, where he spent six years...At fifteen his progress proved to be so rapid, that he was already beating the strongest swordsmen.”<sup>5</sup>

Bologne eventually went to serve as a Gendarme du roi for King Louis XV and was made a chevalier after finishing from the academy. He would continue to fence, building a reputation as being possibly the greatest swordsman in Europe. It is also thought that during this time Bologne made incredible advances in his violin studies, although little is known on his earlier

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<sup>3</sup> Banat, Gabriel, *The Chevalier de Saint-Georges: Virtuoso of the Sword and the Bow*, (New York, Pendragon Press, 2006), 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-56.

<sup>5</sup> La Boëssière fils, Tessier de, “Notice historique sur le chevalier de St.-Georges,” introduction to La Boëssière, Texier de, *Traité de l'art des armes à l'usage des professeurs et des amateurs, par M. La Boëssière, maître d'armes des anciennes académies du roi et des écoles polytechniques et d'équitation*, (Paris:Didot, 1818), vi.

musical training. There is evidence that French composer François-Joseph Gossec was Bologne's teacher for at least composition, and whom also dedicated six string trios to Bologne. Violinist Antonio Lolli also may have possibly taught Bologne and had composed for him two violin concertos. Two years after first joining in 1769, Bologne would eventually serve as concertmaster for Gossec's Concert des Amateurs, an orchestra founded by Gossec whose purpose was to serve as an independent orchestra that did not exist explicitly for servitude to high-born figures in aristocratic society and for the royal courts. Gossec would eventually step down from his role as director from the orchestra that he created, passing leadership to Bologne, who became the new director and conductor of the largest symphonic ensemble during the time (the orchestra averaged eighty players, which was staggering considering the traditional numbers of between twenty and thirty players)<sup>6</sup>.

During his musical career, Bologne would write numerous compositions including over a dozen string quartets, violin concerti, symphony concertante, and operas. His violin concerti exhibited a high level of technical prowess that matched and often surpassed that of the concerti of the Baroque composers of Vivaldi and Leclair. Gabriel Banat, in his work *The Chevalier de Saint-Georges: Virtuoso of the Sword and the Bow*, notes

“A glance at a page of one of his concertos confirms that it was Saint-Georges who initiated the ‘modern’ French violin school (rather than Viotti, Kreutzer, or Rode) and influenced, from a technical perspective, the violin compositions of Beethoven. That same violin technique went on to serve romantic composers and is still in use today.”<sup>7</sup>

In fact, there are multiple instances in the repertoire of Bologne's violin concerti—which he most likely premiered with himself as soloist during his time as director with the Concert de

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<sup>6</sup> Banat, *The Chevalier*, 118.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

Amateurs (it was the custom for new works to be premiered by the composer themselves as soloist, until the tradition waned in the nineteenth century)—which appear to possibly be an influence on sections of concerti of Brahms, Beethoven, and Mozart. The Violin Concerto No. 2 in A Major, Op. 5, the piece that is featured on the second recital program, contains multiple passages that could possibly have informed direct phrases in the concerti of the aforementioned composers.

*Violin Concerto in A Major No. 2, Op. 5*

The first movement opens with the strings in steady continuous eighth-notes. The lengthy exposition ends and the solo violin introduces the first main motif of the movement. Throughout the movement there is considerable virtuosity in the solo violin part; Bologne makes heavy use of rapid string crossings between two strings, which gives the bow a visual appearance reminiscent of a sword master making quick and rapid thrusts with a rapier in a brilliant fashion. The higher registers of the instrument are utilized considerably, which is unusual among classical era concertos. The movement is marked by an absence of any cadenza, the composer instead opting to write one for the second movement. In listening to the piece and studying the score, one finds passages that are nearly identical to passages in the violin music of Mozart. For instance, there can be found a similarity with the way the violin solo begins in the movement and that of its entrance in Mozart's fifth violin concerto, as show in the following figures:

Example 1a: Bologne: *Concerto No. 2 in A Major, Op.5*, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt.



Example 1b: Mozart: *Concerto No. 5 in A Major*, KV 219, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt.



Example 2a: Bologne: *Concerto No. 2 in A Major*, Op.5, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt.



Example 2b: Mozart: *Concerto No. 5 in A Major*, KV 219, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt.



The second movement is punctuated by continuous triplet eighth note figures in the strings throughout. The violin enters much the way as it does in the first movement, with an 'A' whole note held and tied over to the next bar, bearing similarities to the exposition of the first movement to Mozart's fifth violin concerto, also written in the key of A major. The melody line follows a contour that goes up from the tonic to the submediant by stepwise motion. The majority of the movement is defined by triplet figures for its melodic material, the notes moving mostly in stepwise motion and by intervals of a third.

The last movement is a Rondo in which the main theme, in contrast to the themes of the previous movements, falls downward in stepwise motion from the dominant to the tonic, firmly establishing the key of A Major in a V to I harmonic progression. The motif is characterized by rapid eighth-note sixteenth-note figures, giving the movement a forward driving motion. There is again passages rapid string crossings with the bow in the violin solo. The orchestra and violin solo modulate briefly to a minor in the development section before transitioning into C Major with the violin in unison with the orchestra in two heavy and unchanging quarter-notes that land on a dotted quarter note. The effect is that of a country dance, or a duel of two fencers. The section then leads to a repeat of the A minor section before the recapitulation. The movement ends with one last statement of the motif by the orchestra.

### José Silvestre White Lafitte (1835–1918)

It is difficult to overstate the importance of José White to the classical tradition of violin playing. Not only was he a violin virtuoso of the highest regard with many comparisons in his day to Henryk Wieniawski and Norwegian violinist Ole Bornemann Bull, but his compositional output held immense pedagogical value to violin literature and for the Franco-Belgian style of playing that was prominent amongst many in and around Paris during the nineteenth century. White was one of a handful of eminent Black musicians to attain status on an international level during the nineteenth century. He came from a now nearly dead tradition of highly skilled, pre-eminent violinists who were also highly skilled composers including Wieniawski, Pablo de Sarasate, Henri Vieuxtemps, Niccolò Paganini, Eugène Ysaÿe, and Fritz Kreisler, many of whom he associated with and were his peers. Similar to Pierre Rode, Pierre Baillot, and Rodolphe Kreutzer, who were his direct pedagogical ancestors, he was a prominent proponent of the Franco-Belgian style and a highly influential teacher at the Paris Conservatory for decades.<sup>8</sup> He was as much a product of the Paris Conservatory and its richness of the musical traditions as he was of his homeland of Cuba and the styles and traditions that flourished there.

White's musical compositions are distinctly unique in the blending of the traditions and while he rarely performed his own works publicly during his national tours of the United States and France,<sup>9</sup> his first book of Six Etudes for Violin would go on to become accepted by the Conservatory in 1868 as part of its official curriculum.<sup>11</sup> The etudes are highly demanding in

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<sup>8</sup> Boyadjiev, Yavet. "Breaking New Ground." *The Strad*, June 2018, 44.

<sup>9</sup> Boyadjiev, Yavet. "Violinist José White in the United States: New Information about his North American tour from 1875-1876." *Chilean Musical Magazine*, July-December 2018, 115-145

<sup>10</sup> PDF file of article translated using Google Translate.

<sup>11</sup> Boyadjiev, "Breaking New Ground," 45.



technical study, but still hold enough musical value to challenge the student in developing a sense of style. They also show many influences of the French school of playing and bear the stylistic qualities of the Cuban music that surrounded White for most of his childhood. The etudes indicate that he may have been at least partially influenced by his teachers, Jean-Delphin Alard, Henri Reber, and Ferninand Taite, as well as his peers Vieuxtemps and Wieniawski. The indication of any influence may be attributed to White dedicating each of the etudes in the book to a particular teacher, colleague, or musician he had admired or felt inspired by.<sup>12</sup> What has largely been overlooked was White's prominent role in promoting composers and their works to Parisian audiences during the 1860s as an active chamber musician, especially the works of Robert Schumann.<sup>13</sup> He performed in concerts often alongside his peers including Saint-Saens, Charles-Joseph Lebouc, and George Mathias. Although he was immersed in the traditions of the French School, he was not averse to performing and promoting the works of German composers amongst French audiences, which drew some mixed reactions from critics for the emphasis on works from the German School.<sup>14</sup> White had co-founded his own chamber ensembles for this purpose, including the Société des Trois Anciens et Modernes which included cellist Jules Lasserre and pianist Paul de la Nux.

White's professional career began shortly after winning the Grand Prize at the Paris Conservatory's annual competition. One attribute of White was that even during his performing career, he was no stranger to holding benefit concerts for various social causes during the day. Many of his concerts, especially in New York during his U.S. tour were often attended by an

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 45-48.

<sup>13</sup> Wright, Josephine. "Violinist José White in Paris, 1855-1875." *Black Music Research Journal* Vol.10, No. 2 (1990): 213-232. Accessed August 8, 2019. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/779386>, 218.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 219.

audience comprised largely of Cuban expatriates and migrants who were supportive of the Cuban war for independence from Spain.<sup>15</sup> The Ten Years War had been in full swing; White, while holding a temporary residence in Cuba in the early to mid 1870s, would end up banished from Cuba by orders of a military leader of the Spanish military.<sup>16</sup> The proceeds of his concerts would often go to support Cuban insurgents who were fighting the war back on his homeland.<sup>17</sup> He also held charity concerts for hospitals, children, and various churches. One particular congregation he had an association with was the Plymouth Church, which during the American Civil War and all throughout the nineteenth century was an abolitionist center and defender of the rights of people of African descent.

White's resume is extensive. It is of note that he was the only musician of color to have performed with the New York Philharmonic at the time, as well as the Thomas Theodore Orchestra that later went on to become the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.<sup>18</sup> He performed in a number of high-profile venues, including Steinway Hall in New York. White would also serve as a violin instructor for the emperor of Brazil's daughter, as well as acting as head of the Imperial Conservatory of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro from 1877 to 1889.

White, having been a Black mulatto, did have certain advantages that would not have been available to African Americans. While it is certainly possible and likely that he would have experienced racial discrimination, his status as a foreigner, at least in America, helped to characterize him in the eyes of American society as "exotic".<sup>19</sup> In addition, it was much easier

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<sup>15</sup> Boyadjiev, "Violinist José White," 119.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 122.

for European soloists to gain recognition in America than it was for American soloists to gain recognition in their own country.<sup>20</sup> This illustrates how certain circumstances of nationality, location, and other features of social classification can help mitigate circumstances that would be immobilizing to others in another given situation.

### *Violin Concerto in f# minor*

The Violin Concerto in f# minor was written by White in the 1860s and premiered by the composer himself in Paris in 1867, with violinist Ruggiero Ricci giving the American premiere over a century later in 1974 in Avery Fisher Hall at the Lincoln Center. The work itself bears similarities to a number of other concerti, in particular Wieniawski's first violin concerto, written in the same key and sharing the same structure.

The first movement introduces the main theme by way of the strings and later picked up and started by the solo violin which enters after a lengthy exposition. The movement exemplifies fully the French style of violin playing seen in many of the other concerti and violin repertoire of composers of the Paris Conservatory, and features an operatic style, with recitative passages in the development section. As with the Wieniawski, Saint-Saëns, and Vieuxtemps concerti, there are several up-bow staccato passages in addition to passages of multiple thirds and octaves. Throughout the movement, White utilizes rhythms reminiscent of the Cuban tresillo, (Spanish meaning 'triple'), a rhythm originating in Sub-Saharan Africa which came to define the Cuban contradances of the nineteenth century. Elsewhere there can be found passagework that bear similarities with various other works of those in White's inner circle, namely his colleagues and fellow composers at the Paris Conservatory.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 122.

Example 3a: White: *Violin Concerto in f# minor*, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt.<sup>21</sup>

Example 3b: Wieniawski: *Violin Concerto in f# minor*, Op. 14, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt.

Example 4a: White: *Violin Concerto in f# minor*, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt.

<sup>21</sup> White, Joseph. *Concerto in F# minor*, (Melville, NY: Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp., 1976). 5.

Example 4b: Wieniawski: *Violin Concerto in f# minor*, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt.



Example 4c: Saint-Saëns: *Violin Concerto No. 3 in b minor*, Op. 61, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt.



The first movement ends and proceeds directly into the second movement without pause, modulating between the keys of A major, D Major, b minor, F# Major in a circle of fifths progression, before returning to A Major in the recapitulation. A cadenza is featured after the recap, with fast chromatic runs punctuated with embellishments, leading into a V-I cadential sequence, the V being expanded over three measures in an arpeggiated manner spanning over three octaves.

The last movement introduces a rhythmic motif, first in the orchestra then handed off to the violin solo, that defines much of the character of the movement. The second half of the motif is a dotted sixteenth-note to 32<sup>nd</sup> note, played with marcato in an up-to-down bow pattern. The motif bears similarities to the motifs in the last movements of both the Saint-Saëns's b minor

violin concerto and Wieniawski's *f#* minor violin concerto, as shown in the previous figures. Here, White uses this motif in 2/4 meter to impart a driving perpetual motion to the movement while also evoking a dance-like nature similar to the Polonaises that Wieniawski wrote for the instrument. The violin makes effective use of thirds, sixths, and broken octaves in a series of passages that involve double stops as well as rapid string crossings with the bow, demanding a high degree of virtuosity and technical dexterity from the violinist.

#### Claudio José Domingo Brindis de Salas Garrido (1852–1911)

Claudio Jose Brindis Domingo de Salas Garrido, another one of many Cuban-born violinists during the nineteenth century, was one of the most preeminent violinists of the time. Trained at the Paris Conservatory, his career spanned decades and included recitals and concerts across Europe, Russia, Mexico, and the U.S. His playing style continuously brought multiple allusions and comparisons to Italian violinist Niccolò Paganini, which is notable given Paganini's status in the history and evolution of violin technique, and it had earned him colloquial titles such as “El Rey de las octavas”, “El Paganini negro”, and “El Paganini Cubano”.

Born in Havana on 4 August, 1852, de Salas was taught originally by his father Claudio Brindis de Salas Monte, a violinist and the band leader to the most popular band during the time, Concha de Oro. He gave his first public recital at eleven with pianist Ignacio Cervantes as accompanist, and toured throughout the country and in Mexico with his father and brother. His later career in some ways mirrored that of Jose White Lafitte; he entered the Paris Conservatory in 1870, studying with Charles Dancla, Camilo Sivori, and Hubert Leonard. Similar to White, he would win the conservatory's Grand First Prize and establish himself amongst a list of pre-

eminent Paris Conservatory-trained Grand Prize-winning violinists including White, Wieniawski, Pablo de Sarasate, Fritz Kreisler, Jacques Thibaud, and George Enescu. He performed in Saint Petersburg, becoming the first Cuban to perform on a Russian Stage.<sup>22</sup> and earned a number of titles and honors including Legion d'Honneur by the French government, and Baron de Salas by the German Emperor William I. He also served as appointed chamber musician to the court of Emperor William II. He served on the faculty of the Haiti Conservatory of Music. While De Salas was largely a performer, he did write a few compositions, one being presented in the third dissertation recital.

*Consolation: Romance sans paroles, Op. 5*

Consolation, Op. 5 is a composition written by Brindis and dedicated to Madame Mühlrad. It exemplifies French Romanticism and a broad lyricism, the piano setting a grave character in a brief exposition before the violin solo enters with the melody line, the key set for the piece being c minor. Although there is not much technical virtuosity displayed in the Romance that seemed to characterize Brindis's playing according to so many accounts, the title "El Rey de las octavas" that was given to the composer would appear to be exemplified by the use of consecutive octaves in various passagework throughout the piece. There is a constant ebb and flow given by the fluctuations in tempo between various accelerando and ritardando which bring a troubled and restless mood, that briefly seems to let up in a following C Major section.

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<sup>22</sup> Varona, Arnaldo. "Brindis de Salas: El Paganini Cubano." *The Cuban History*. Last Modified March 12, 2012. Accessed August 13, 2019. <https://www.thecubanhistory.com/2012/03/6183/>.

Brindis is also not averse to utilizing the high registers of the lower strings, particularly the G string, doing so quite often to bring out warm tones and a pained agony that exemplify the work.

### Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912)

Born in 15 August, 1875, British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor spent most of his life in Croydon, Surrey, England and would achieve considerable acclaim during the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was the son of a Creole doctor from Sierra Leone and an Englishwoman living in the home of one of his father's patients. His mother's side of the family was highly musical, and Coleridge-Taylor's musical education started at an early age having first been taught violin and music's fundamentals by his maternal grandfather and later by Joseph Beckwick, a local violin teacher and conductor of the Grand Theatre Orchestra of Croydon. In late 1890 at the age of fifteen, Coleridge-Taylor would enroll into the Royal College of Music in London, first studying the violin with Henry Holmes, harmony with Charles Wood, and Algernon Ashton for piano before finally entering the composition studio of Charles Stanford along with his contemporaries Gustav Holst, and Ralph Vaughan Williams. During this period, he wrote and premiered many works which have come to be his earliest surviving compositions, which include his Piano Quintet Op. 1, Clarinet Sonata in f minor, the Nonet in f minor, and a group of songs including *The Arrow and the Song*, *Solitude*, and *The Broken Oar*. After graduating from Royal College in 1896, Coleridge-Taylor would go on to become one of Britain's leading composers, a career spanning nearly two decades as he composed more than 100 works which would include



There are many similarities in his works with Brahms. The influence of Brahms is noted due to his teacher Stanford, an admirer of Brahms's music and whose works often demonstrated an Austro-German influence that would also be transmuted to his other students such as William Yeates Hurlstone and John Ireland. Also present in Coleridge-Taylor's music are many similarities with the works of African American composer Henry T. Burleigh and Czech composer Antonín Dvořák. Both Coleridge-Taylor and Dvořák were acquaintances of Burleigh and were highly influenced by his works and the folk music and spirituals of Native Americans and African Americans. Burleigh in particular has been credited for introducing Negro spirituals to classically trained artists on a larger scale and with adapting the idioms of the spirituals to classical forms. Coleridge-Taylor would come to adopt this idiomatic style into his works in an increasing persistence. West African and African American elements would be the most prominent in his later works after 1896, after attracting the attention of many eminent Black Americans from scholars to poets.<sup>23</sup> One major influence was Paul Laurence Dunbar, a Black American poet who, in a visit to London in 1896 for public readings of his poems, met Coleridge-Taylor. The two would become acquaintances and Coleridge-Taylor took an interest in the daily lives and experiences of African Americans, eventually making three trips to the U.S. over the course of his lifetime.

Coleridge-Taylor would continue to attract greater attention and publicity from both the British and the American general public and many figures such as W.E.B. DuBois, George Washington Carver, Booker T. Washington, and President Theodore Roosevelt. Coleridge-Taylor's early attempts at integrating Negro melodies and spirituals as well as African idioms are

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<sup>23</sup> Thompson, Jewel Taylor, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: The Development of His Compositional Style, (Metuchen, N.J., The Scarecrow Press, Inc.: 1994), 77.

found in several works based on the poems of Dunbar, which include *African Romances*, *A Prayer*, and *The Corn Song*. Coleridge-Taylor writes:

“What Brahms has done for the Hungarian folk-music, Dvorák for the Bohemian, and Grieg for the Norwegian, I have tried to do for these Negro Melodies. The plan adopted has been almost without exception that of the Tema con Variazioni. The actual melody has in every case been inserted at the head of each piece as a motto. The music which follows is nothing more nor less than a series of variations built on the said motto. Therefore my share in the matter can be clearly traced, and must not be confused with any idea of “improving” the original material any more than Brahms’ Variations on the Haydn Theme “improved” that.”<sup>24</sup>

Around 1904 and 1905 during his first U.S. visit and at the behest of the Oliver Ditson Company, a music publishing company in Boston, Coleridge-Taylor would compose respectively, *Four African Dances for Violin and Piano*, Op. 58, and *Twenty-Four Negro Melodies Transcribed for the Piano*.<sup>25</sup> *Deep River* was Coleridge-Taylor’s transcription of the anonymous spiritual melody from a collection of published songs that were often performed by Fisk University’s Jubilee Singers.<sup>26</sup> Violinist Maud Powell would eventually arrange Coleridge-Taylor’s version of “*Deep River*” for violin and piano and it is this piece, along with the *Four African Dances*, that is featured in the first and second recital programs respectively.

### “Deep River”

Coleridge-Taylor’s version of “*Deep River*” is for piano, with the violin and piano version being a transcription by Maud Powell, the violin now covering the right-hand treble part in the piano. The piece begins in the key of E major with an A B B’ A form. Coleridge-Taylor

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<sup>24</sup> Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel, “Forward.” *Twenty-Four Negro Melodies Transcribed for Piano*, (Boston: Oliver Ditson Co., 1905).

<sup>25</sup> Thompson, *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*, 115.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

utilizes other pitches from both the chromatic and diatonic scales in addition to the pentatonic scale of which the melody is based on. The harmonic rhythm is consistent with quarter note chord changes in E major moving from the tonic to vi (c# minor) and back to the tonic again. The second section utilizes a number of various pentatonic scales and harmonic rhythm has become more persistent and forward moving, with a sixteenth-note rhythm figure that is shared by both the violin and piano, particularly at the beginning of the section where both are in unison.

Figure 1: Coleridge-Taylor: Twenty-Four Negro Melodies Op. 59, No. 10 “Deep River”



Figure 2: Maud Powell’s transcription of Coleridge-Taylor’s “Deep River”



The last section is a return to the main theme but with slight variation with the melody line moving briefly an octave above. A coda brings the piece to a close, the first half of the melody repeating itself four times moving upwards and outlining an E major triad with chord changes on each scale degree from the tonic, to the median, and then the dominant. The piece ends with E major arpeggiations in the piano.

### *Four African Dances, Op. 58 for Violin and Piano*

Coleridge-Taylor's *Four African Dances (Danses Nègres)* is a collection of short pieces organized in a suite-like fashion and again demonstrates his utilization of Black folk music idioms. It was completed in 1904, a year before *his Twenty-Four Negro Melodies*, and was dedicated to his friend violinist John Saunders. While both the second and fourth dances are, according to Coleridge-Taylor in his manuscript, based on traditional African melodies<sup>27</sup>, the movements all sit firmly within Romantic era harmonic practice. In fact, there appears to be very little regarding the work in terms of aesthetics or techniques that can be associated with African music and dance from a modern-day perspective and here there seems to be more similarities with African American musical idioms in the U.S. than with the former.

The first movement begins in g minor, the violin entering with an eighth-to-sixteenth-note motif that will recur throughout the movement. Following the expository material, there is a modulation into G major, the piano accompaniment with G major and e minor chords passing

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<sup>27</sup> Richards, Paul, "Africa in The Music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor". *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (1987): 566-571. Accessed November 2, 2019. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1159901>.

back and forth on the second and third beats in a 3/4-time bar; the violin introduces the second thematic material, utilizing traditional waltz rhythms punctuated with a triplet figure on the third beat of the measure. The overall impression of the waltz-like character established by the rhythms and the off-beat syncopation establish against the piano is one of a lullaby rather than a dance. Coleridge-Taylor continues to develop the material through varying sections and key modulations, bringing it to a somewhat violent close in comparison to the placid and gentle mood of the movement.

The second movement is notated to be played *con sordino* and is, according to Coleridge-Taylor's notes in his manuscript and notated in the music publisher Augener and Company's edition of the score, is based on a traditional African melody, yet there has never been any verification of such a claim by ethnomusicologists and other researchers.<sup>28</sup> Coleridge-Taylor creates a gentle mood of rolled piano chords in the accompaniment underneath the lyrical violin line which restates itself later an octave higher.

The third movement is set in 6/8 time, a jovial spirit maintained in whirling sixteenth-note passages in the violin voice and a Viennese-style rhythmic figure in both the piano accompaniment and violin line. As with the first movement, Coleridge-Taylor keeps the emphasis on the first and third beats of the measure, continuing the spirit of the waltz. He repeats the material with slight variation in the higher register in the violin. The use of *rallentando*, *accelerandi*, and *ritardando* to affect the tempo unpredictably and give it an expansiveness gives

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<sup>28</sup> Carr, Catherine (2005) "The music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912): a critical and analytical study." Ph.D. Durham theses, Durham University. 2005. 219.

the performer a great deal of freedom to affect the phrasing of the dance with rubato and other expressive devices.

The fourth and last movement labelled *Allegro energico* boasts a heroic and adventurous nature in the spirit of Brahms, suggesting similarities with Brahms's third violin sonata in d minor. Again there are continuous rolled chords in the piano that accompanies a violin solo that is punctuated with strong accents over a triplet figure that builds and releases tension in its melody by moving stepwise motion upwards and downwards. As with previous dance movements, there is a lot of repetition in the thematic material, with slight variations and Coleridge-Taylor repeating the theme an octave above later after a second theme that he introduces. After a repeat, the tumultuous first section ends with the violin and piano in unison on a strong d minor tonic chord. The second section begins in a contrasting manner to the first section, having modulated to the relative major key while returning to the lyrical, lullaby-like quality of the second movement and mimicking its thematic material. The section climaxes in intense tremolos and sustained pedal tones in the accompaniment as the violin plays double-stops in sixths and thirds before finally slowing down to the secondary dominant that transitions the key back to d minor and a Da Capo al fine, leading the piece to its conclusion.

## PART II: POST SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR

In this section, Chapter 2 will cover American composers that were concerned with and influential in further establishing a core Black identity for African Americans in the United States, and in defining a sound emotive of early Black spirituals while not always necessarily utilizing them directly. This process was initiated around the mid to late 1800s with artists such as Harry T. Burleigh. During the 1920s African American society across urban areas in the States saw an enormous boom in artistic, social and intellectual expression and creativity led by African American artists who were looking to control Black representation in the country, a movement referred to as the Harlem Renaissance. Chapter 3 will explore the American composers that, while trained in traditional forms of European music, began to explore and utilize a number of other musical styles and forms. It includes composers that would write entirely in the jazz genre, particularly David Baker and Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, whose works also were inspired by popular music.

### CHAPTER 2

#### Clarence Cameron White (1880–1960)

Clarence Cameron White was another amongst the many Black musicians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to have attended and been trained at the Oberlin College, as was often the case. Oberlin was one of the few universities that had admitted women and minorities into their programs and had even encouraged them to apply as prospective students.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Vernon H. Edward, Michael L. Mark, “Clarence Cameron White.” *The Black Perspective in Music*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1981): 51—72. Accessed November 5, 2019. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1214104>. 53.

As it would turn out, White, who was born in Clarksville, Tennessee on 10 August 1880 (although in White's college record, by his own hand he writes his birthdate as being 1879)<sup>30</sup>, had two parents, James White and Caroline Virginia Scott White, who both were also alumni of Oberlin. Similar to Coleridge-Taylor and George Walker, his father James was also a brilliant physician; White's mother Caroline received her A.B degree and taught in Indianapolis. White inherited his grandfather's violin and began studying the instrument at the age of six, four years after his father passed and his mother relocated the family to Ohio. The White family then moved to Washington D.C. in 1890. It was there that after attending a recital by the violinist/composer/choral conductor Will Marion Cook, White began taking lessons with Cook, eventually studying also with the grandson of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, concert violinist Joseph Douglass. His other teachers include Frederick DoLittle, Franz Micki, and Emma Azalia Hackley. In 1906, he traveled to Britain to study composition with Samuel-Coleridge Taylor, becoming good friends with the composer for the rest of Coleridge-Taylor's days and premiering his work *Four African Dances* in America during the composer's first visit to the country<sup>31</sup>, the featured piece of the second dissertation recital. Later he would also study in Paris with Raol Laparra. Throughout the early and mid-twentieth century, White would have a steady performing career interspersed with teaching and later composition, holding positions at the Washington Conservatory of Music, Hampton Institute, and West Virginia State College. He served as president of the National Association of Negro Musicians, an organization he helped to found in 1919. He wrote two method books for the violin, *A System of One Octave Scale Studies* for the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 57.



Violin (1915), and *The Violinist's Daily Dozen, Twelve Special Studies for the Development of Correct Finger Action in Violin Playing* (1924).

White's compositions include music for the opera *Ouanga!* (1932) and the John Matheus play *Tambour* (1929), as well as many different spirituals and arrangements. Much in the vein of his mentor Coleridge-Taylor, as well as his contemporaries Florence Price and William Grant Still and other American composers, he was highly influenced by and versed in the idiom of African American spirituals. Much like Coleridge-Taylor, he was influenced by the works of poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, and along with other Black composers of the day was interested in shaping in utilizing Black folk music in shaping a new Black identity. His works *Kutamba Rhapsody* Op. 52 (1942), *A Night in Sans Souci* (1929), and *Forty Negro Spirituals* (1927), and *Bandanna Sketches: Four Negro Spirituals* (1918), are among his compositions that display the style and vernacular. Neo-romanticism was also a characteristic of his earlier compositions. His work *Levee Dance*, Op. 27 No. 4, is featured in the third dissertation recital. The edition of music used for the performance is Carl Fischer, LLC., edited by Russian-British violinist Dunja Lavrova.

#### *Levee Dance, Op. 27 No. 4*

Clarence Cameron White's *Levee Dance*, Op. 27 No. 4 is a short piece in the spirit of the ragtime genre that developed and continued in America from roughly 1895 to 1919. The piece was performed frequently and recorded by violinist virtuoso Jascha Heifetz during the years of the Second World War, often performed by the violinist for U.S. troops stationed overseas. The

piece was a staple of Heifetz's repertoire in addition to his own transcription of "Deep River". It holds a dance-like character marked with the repetitive figure:

Figure 3: Clarence Cameron White: *Levee Dance*, Op. 27 No.4



The violin like carries the first portion of this rhythmic figure in the melody line; the first downbeat, the fourth sixteenth-note beat before the second downbeat, and the third subdivision of the second downbeat are emphasized to give a pulse that evokes that of percussive African dance music and polyrhythms. It also takes on a quality similar to the Cuban tresillo.

Figure 4: Example of tresillo rhythm



The piece begins in F Major, the harmonic progression at the beginning alternating between the chords of F Major and f minor, the minor third A-flat accentuating a quality. In the second section, White incorporates the spiritual "Go Down, Moses", notated in the score as a

“Traditional Negro Melody”. The recapitulation follows a violin cadenza (often omitted by Heifetz in his recordings) and leads into the coda section which accelerates in tempo before ending in a ‘cantabile’ and ‘dolce’ fashion.

### William Grant Still (1895–1978)

The Harlem Renaissance included large populations of Blacks who would move north from Southern states to seek better opportunities in northern cities, particularly in cities such as Chicago and New York. In the field of Classical music, William Grant Still would become one of the foremost composers to exemplify this movement. He has often been referred to as the “Patriarch of Black American Composers” with a string of trailblazing accomplishments; his work *Afro-American Symphony* was the first symphony by a Black composer to be performed in the U.S. by a major symphony orchestra, and was hugely successful during the 1950s. With the premiere of his opera *Troubled Island* in 1949 by the New York City Opera, after having completed it in 1936, Still became the first Black composer to have an opera performed by a high-profile opera company.

Born in 11 May 1895 in Woodville, Mississippi, Still was raised in Little Rock Arkansas after his mother moved his family there following the death of his father. Both of his parents, William Grant Still Sr. and Carrie Lena Still, were teachers at Alabama A&M College. His mother taught English while his father also performed in a band. As a youth, Still attended many music concerts and listened to classical music recordings given to him by his stepfather, Charles B. Shepperson. He developed a strong interest in music and eventually learned a wide variety of instruments, including violin, viola, cello, double bass, saxophone, clarinet, and oboe. After

graduating from high school he would enroll in Wilberforce University in Ohio to pursue a degree in medicine at the suggestion of his mother, who believed that there were limited opportunities for Blacks in classical music. However, he continued to be active in music as a musician in the Wilberforce University String Quartet, as well as composing works and doing arrangements for the school band and various bandleaders such as Artie Shaw and W.C. Handy, whom he became close acquaintances with. During this period he became particularly interested in the works of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and was highly influenced by the composer.

In 1915, Still renounced his medical studies and left Wilberforce to attend on scholarship the Oberlin College in Ohio and study with Friedrich Lehmann, also studying with George Chadwick and Edgard Varese. His studies were briefly interrupted when he entered the United States Navy to serve in the First World War. After being discharged in 1918 at the end of the war, he moved to New York and continued to be an arranger and performer for Handy in the Pace and Handy Music Company Band.

During his career, Still would produce over 150 works, including nine operas, five symphonies, and four ballets. His style was firmly rooted in an amalgamation of styles including blues, ragtime, spirituals, jazz, and gospel. While much of Still's music utilizes the harmonies of spirituals, he rarely if ever used or pulled pre-existing melodies from existing spirituals as many other composers commonly would, instead opting to write original melodies that were structurally reminiscent of pre-existing melodies.<sup>32</sup> His Suite for Violin and Piano is the piece featured on the first dissertation recital.

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<sup>32</sup> De Lerma, Dominique-René, liner notes to *Works by Willam Grant Still*, Videmus Inc., New World Records, 80399-2, CD, 1990.

## Suite for Violin and Piano

Written in 1943, Still's Suite for Violin and Piano is inspired by a particular work of art from three Black artists. It was dedicated to American violinist Louis Kaufman and his wife, American pianist Annette Kaufman, who both premiered the work on 12 March, 1944 at Jordan Hall in Boston.

The first movement, "African Dancer", is the result of Still's musing on African American sculptor and Harlem Renaissance artist Richmond Barthe's "African Dancer", a sculpture completed in 1933. Still had attempted to, as he had earlier in his choral ballet *Sahdji* (1931), to approximate indigenous African music. However, during the 1930s there had been scarce studies in African music in ethnomusicology, and so Still had little material to work with, being left to use variations of the minor pentatonic scale.<sup>33</sup> The result is a somewhat "outdated" sound and model, regarding what is considered to be representative of indigenous African music, although African music varies widely throughout the continent. The melody is in a three-bar phrase, punctuated by accents in a steady eighth-note figure. The accompaniment, after introducing a short exposition that is not heard afterwards, underlines the solo part with rapid triplet figures, giving the piece an intense, driving, and insistent quality throughout. The second section is calmer, and more in the style of blues, harmonically and melodically, with the violin line motif highlighted with an array of grace notes in the latter half of the section.

The second movement is based on African American artist Sargent Claude Johnson's lithograph "Mother and Child", and is named so after the work. The movement is notated in E Major, and again Still utilizes c# minor pentatonic throughout the movement. The movement is

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 4.

slower and much gentler in character, the melody invoking spirituals in the vein of “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child” and “Deep River”, and taking on a lullaby quality. The piano accompaniment is harmonically rich and is in constant dialogue with the violin. It is also characterized with sixteenth-note to dotted eighth-note figures, giving a constant gentle pulse throughout. The second section modulates to e minor and is slightly more insistent in mood and Still continues to use modal inventions to move the piece around tonally. There is a reprise of the beginning section after a brief cadenza in the second section that leads into a climax that then tapers off with arpeggiated figures of extended chords and partial restatements of the main motif.

The third movement is based in a bronze sculpture named *Gamin* by artist Augusta Savage. The sculpture which is currently located in the Luce Foundation Center at the Smithsonian American Art Museum is a bust of a young boy wearing a pageboy hat, its name from the French word *gamin* meaning “street urchin”. Still’s third movement of the suite has a playful character that makes full use of the qualities and characteristics of ragtime and giving the impression of being played on a salon-style upright piano. The main theme is characterized by stepwise motion between notes spanning a 5<sup>th</sup> apart from the lowest to highest and defined by dotted eighth note rhythms. There are syncopations throughout in the violin line, with multiple grace note and trill ornamentations and extended uses of glissandi and portamento. Although not explicitly notated by Still, one can interpret the piece with a slight “swung” feel applied to the sixteenth-note passages so that the rhythmic pulse feels slightly off-kilter, but it is always in a constant tempo. An exception to the swing pattern may be the following sixteenth-note passage:

Figure 5: Still, *Suite for Violin and Piano*, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt, “Gamin”<sup>34</sup>



Here Still embeds a train-like character with this figure similar to the ways of Dvořák in his compositions, particularly his Quartet No. 12 in F Major, Op. 96. Overall, the movement is reminiscent of the qualities of city life in 1930s Harlem.

#### Florence Beatrice Smith Price (1887–1953)

The last ten years or so have seen a rediscovery and a revival in the works of American composer Florence Beatrice Smith Price. Price was well known in her day with a steady period of continuous productivity, becoming the first woman and the second Black person to have a symphonic work performed by a major American Black orchestra. After her death in 1953, Price and her music had largely faded from public memory, although there were still few performances of her works. Much of her once published music has been out of print for over a decade, with much of her unpublished works being photocopies that lie in the Florence Price Collection at the

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<sup>34</sup> Still, William Grant. *Suite for Violin and Piano*, (William Grant Still Music: Flagstaff, AZ, 1943). 10.

University of Arkansas library's Special Collections. In 2009, the discovery of a collection of her lost manuscripts, letters, documents, papers, and other materials in an old house once lived in by Price in the suburbs of St. Anne, Illinois<sup>35</sup>—most of the works unpublished or unknown—has led to a resurgence of interest in her works and has yielded works previously unknown such as her first Violin Concerto in D. Over her lifetime she produced an enormous body of work, including four symphonies, string quartets, arrangements of spirituals, piano and violin concerti, and a wide variety of works for chorus and organ. Her works were often programmatic music, setting themselves to poems and other short literary works. To make ends meet early in her career, she would write music for short films playing in her town. Price's music is very much anchored in the traditions of European nineteenth century romanticism, particularly with influences of Piotr Tchaikovsky, whose works were a direct inspiration for her first violin concerto, the piece that is presented in the third dissertation recital.

One of three children, Price was born 9 April, 1887 in Little Rock, Arkansas to James H. Price and Florence Irene Gulliver Smith. Dr. Price was a dentist, the first and only Black dentist to have a practicing office on the Main Street of the town. He was also an inventor, novelist, politician, and painter. Florence Smith, of mixed descent, was a concert pianist, soprano, and music teacher who was also part of a class of wealthy African Americans living in town during the time.<sup>36</sup> Smith would start her daughter Price's music education early on, and at the age of four Price was composing and performing her first piano pieces in public recitals. Although the Price family was well respected within their community and was a part of the wealthy class of

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<sup>35</sup> Dykema, Dan. "Florence Beatrice Smith Price (1887-1953)." In *CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas*. Accessed November 5, 2019. <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/>.

<sup>36</sup> Nichols, Janet. *Women Music Makers: An Introduction to Women Composers* (New York: Walker Publishing Company, Inc., 1992), 112.



African Americans, the political climate during the 1890s was rapidly deteriorating, and threats and hostilities against African Americans during this time grew increasingly virulent. Blacks had begun to be pushed out of their seats in both houses of legislature, disenfranchised by white lawmakers and by January 1906, African Americans had been entirely excluded from voting rights.<sup>37</sup> Due to the rising hostility, Price's mother eventually relocated the family to Boston, and Price would go on to study at the New England Conservatory of Music, studying composition with George Chadwick, Frederick Converse, and Benjamin Cutter. Her mother would register her as Mexican on her application in order to hide Price's ethnicity, believing it would shield Price from the prejudices towards Blacks.<sup>38</sup>

In 1906, Price graduated with an artist diploma from the Conservatory and in 1910 accepted a teaching position at Clark University in Atlanta, Georgia. She taught there briefly before moving back to Arkansas and then to Chicago after violence against African Americans in Little Rock had reached a fevered pitch. Finding greater opportunities in Chicago, Price began a long period of productivity and extensive study at varying institutes such as the University of Chicago and the American Conservatory of Music. A strained financial situation led her to stay with a good friend Estella C. Bonds, a musician who often opened her home to Black artists such as the poet Langston Hughes and sculptor Richmond Barthe. Her daughter Margaret Bonds, was a young pianist whom Price would befriend and mentor in composition. Bonds would also gain much recognition as a composer in the U.S. in the coming decades.

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<sup>37</sup> Jackson, Barbara Garvey. "Florence Price, Composer." *The Black Perspective in Music*, Vol. 5 No. 1 (1977): 30-43. Accessed November 5, 2019. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1214357>, 32.

<sup>38</sup> Nichols, *Women Music Makers*, 113.

After winning the first prize Wanamaker award of the Rodman Wanamaker Foundation, Price's winning composition, her Symphony No. 1 in e minor would be premiered by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on 15 June 1933 at the Chicago World's Fair "Century of Progression Exposition", a performance which was broadcast live through radio nationwide. The instance would mark Price as the second Black composer after William Grant Still to have a symphony performed by a top-ranking American orchestra and the first Black female composer to have done so. She would go on to compose other works for orchestra that would be performed by various ensembles including the Women's Symphony Orchestra of Chicago, the Michigan WPA Symphony in Detroit, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra, the New York City Symphonic Band, American Symphony Orchestra, and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

*Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major*

The first of Price's two violin concerti was completed in 1939 and follows a more traditional form in contrast to her second concerto that is only comprised of one movement. The first violin concerto is an amalgamation of the Romantic-style idiom and the sounds of "Negro Spirit" of the Harlem Renaissance. Her influence of Brahms and in particular Tchaikovsky is made evident throughout the work, with multiple direct quotes of and close imitations to passages in Tchaikovsky's violin concerto and following the format of that concerto closely. However, Price's own voice never seems to be covered or lost in the work, and her compositional fingerprint remains dominant. This homage to and montage of Romantic century

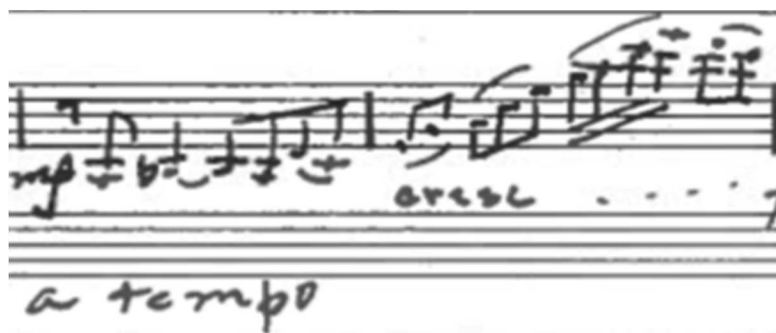
works combined with the idioms of American twentieth century music gives the concerto a unique quality, a type of “retro-romantic” character.

The first movement’s structure follows closely that of the first movement of the Tchaikovsky violin concerto. It is written in D Major, beginning with a brief exposition that is not heard again throughout the entire movement, after which the violin enters with an A3 on the G string going up a minor second to B-flat. In the manuscript of the violin part, there is a discrepancy in the notation of the solo entrance with that of the solo’s entrance in Price’s manuscript of the piano reduction of the orchestral score, shown below in the next figures:

Figure 6: Price: *Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major*, Violin Solo Manuscript: 1<sup>st</sup> mvt.<sup>39</sup>



Figure 7: Price: *Violin Concerto No. 1 in D Major*, Complete Score Manuscript: 1<sup>st</sup> mvt.<sup>40</sup>



<sup>39</sup> Violin Concerto No. 1, digital reproduction of original manuscript, December 1939, Series 2, Box No.9, Folder 1. Florence Beatrice Smith Price Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

As shown in the previous figures, in the violin solo manuscript the solo part's first note is a quarter note, placing the emphasis of the beat on the second subdivision in a syncopated pulse. However, the first note is shown to be an eighth note in the orchestral score manuscript, which is also the case as well in the piano reduction. It is not known what Price had intended, if she had made an error in the violin solo part or if she had changed her mind and had forgotten to make the necessary corrections to the orchestral score and piano reduction (if we are to assume that Price sketched out the orchestral score first, then acted in a reductive manner, sketching out the piano and solo violin reductions afterwards). In the Tchaikovsky violin concerto, the violin solo enters on an eighth note and its placement acts as an upbeat to the following note as the following figure shows:

Figure 8: Tchaikovsky: *Violin Concerto in D Major*, Op. 35, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt.



A question to be had is whether Price was attempting to approximate the rhythm of the violin entrance in Tchaikovsky's concerto or be exact in its quotation. It is also not known which part Price sketched out first, this particular example being one of the instances in which there are differences amongst the orchestral score and the piano reductions, with other sections in the concerto that are not entirely fleshed out by Price. The main motif of the concerto, while similar to Tchaikovsky's theme in lyricism, is much more in Price's own style utilizing the pentatonic

scale and a more whimsical and bird-like quality. The solo violin part also mimics the songs of birds in two instances, which is also repeated by the lower strings giving a sound stylistically similar to Strauss's *Don Juan*. There are many situations throughout the piece that become almost operatic in character, with long recitative-like sections and areas that are more symphonic with the orchestra carrying the melodic and dramatic material as the violin floats along in sustained, tied-over whole notes.

The second movement falls more heavily into the idiomatic styles of American Black composers of the early twentieth century, a style set by the help of Still and Harry Burleigh. The first motif is a type of inversion of that of the first movement. Perhaps the place where the movement most calls to mind the Tchaikovskian elements of the composer's violin concerto or Fourth Symphony is in the second motif in the use of 6/8 meter to give a waltz-type character, with the woodwinds give support to the violin line while the strings punctuate the off-beats with pizzicato. There is a hymn-like in the recap that emulates the spirituals that Price grew up with and was surrounded by continuously.

The last movement continues the format of paying homage to Tchaikovsky's violin concerto, with the violin entering sans orchestra in a brief cadenza that brandishes a whirlwind of sixteenth-note passages. The motif is an eight-bar phrase comprised of two groups of three eighth-notes in a 6/8 meter. For the majority of the movement, the violin continues this pattern of notes in both slurred bowings and separate figures. Price uses chromaticism in many of these passages, while still continuing to employ pentatonicism, with a falling figure carried by the bassoon in many instances. The overall form of the movement can be categorized as sonata form.

## CHAPTER 3

### George Walker (1922–2018)

American composer George Walker has amassed an enormous compilation of works during a career that has spanned decades, and was a trailblazer in many ways. He was the first Black instrumentalist to hold a full recital at Manhattan's Town Hall, as well as the first to perform with the Philadelphia Symphony orchestra and to win a Pulitzer Prize in music. Born on 27 June, 1922 in Washington, D.C., he was a graduate of the Oberlin College and the first graduate of African descent from the Curtis Institute of Music. He also attended the Conservatoire Americaine in Fontainebleau earning a diploma in piano and would go on to receive his doctorate in musical arts from the Eastman School of Music. His teachers include Clifford Curzon, Robert Casadesus, Rudolph Serkin, Gregor Piatigorsky, William Primrose, Rosario Scalero, Gian-Carlo Menotti, and Nadia Boulanger. His list of compositions includes works for chamber, orchestra, various solo instruments, chorus, song cycles, and various concerti for a variety of instruments. He started his professional career as a touring concert pianist traveling around Europe and the United States, beginning with his debut recital in 1945 in Town Hall in Manhattan. Eventually, Walker would move into the field of teaching and composition, holding positions at Rutgers University, Smith College, Dillard, the Dalcroze School of Music, the New School for Social Research, University of Colorado, University of Delaware, and the Peabody Conservatory. A Pulitzer Prize winner for his work *Lilacs* for voice and orchestra, he received a number of awards and honors including a Fulbright Scholarship, John Hay Whitney Fellowship, two Rockefeller fellowships, numerous grants and honorary degrees, and was inducted into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame.

Much of Walker's compositional style has been characterized by the use of twelve-tone scales, serialism, irregular meters and rhythms, syncopations, neoclassical forms, and elements of jazz, spirituals, and blues, although he refused to be limited to any one particular style.<sup>41</sup>

Walker has stated that linear thought has influenced his melodies and harmonies, mentioning in an interview compiled in the book *The Black Composer Speaks*:

“I don't have any preconceived ideas of what I'm trying to do harmonically, partially because I have a strong tendency to think linearly...but I try to evolve harmonic structures which are not symmetrical.”<sup>42</sup>

According to Walker, the stepwise motion of Gregorian chant has also been a strong influence in his melodies, in addition to composer Igor Stravinsky, Charles Ives, and Aaron Copland.<sup>43</sup> As a result of the wide array of influences and lack of adherence to one style, Walker's compositions are difficult to define stylistically.

### Violin Sonata in One Movement for Violin and Piano

Walker's first Violin Sonata for violin and piano, dedicated to his mother Rosa King, was written during his stay in Paris in 1958 and completed in Fontainebleau in the following summer. The work begins in a very modal manner (D Phrygian) in the opening section, grave and somber and setting the character for the work. It leads to a fugal section that is fervent and tormented in character and ends with a revisiting of the beginning section. The third section is highly chromatic and is personified with sharp syncopations marked with accents. The fourth section is

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<sup>41</sup> David N. Baker and Lida M. Belt and Herman C. Hudson, *The Black Composer Speaks* (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1978), 370.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

a recitative for the solo violin, interspersed with brief statements by the piano. The fourth and final section of the piece is strong in lyrical content. The sonata is very standard in its form, each section clearly defined and leading to the next and demonstrates Walker's belief in the traditional forms.

### Irene Britton Smith (1907–1999)

One of less known composers amongst those in this study is American composer Irene Britton Smith, who lived most of her life in Chicago and was heavily involved in teaching in Chicago's public school system throughout the majority of her career. There has been and remains today few sources on the composer apart from the Irene Britton Smith Collection at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, although there is a biography in the book *From Spirituals to Symphonies: African American Women Composers and Their Music* by author Helen Walker Hill, detailing information about Smith by Walker gathered from the author's interview of Smith in the summer of 1989. After graduating from high school and due to her parents being unable to afford a conservatory-level education, Britton had to postpone her musical education and pursue a teaching career, applying to a two-year college and would pursue music and composition on a side avocation. She spent much of her musical career training at various institutes; many of her compositions in fact, were written during her time as a student at a number of conservatories and festivals, including the American Conservatory of Music studying with Stella Roberts and Leo Sowbery where she received a BM, and at DePaul University where she earned a MM. She also studied at the Juilliard School of Music, and although she was proficient in the violin in addition the piano and organ, she would only



compose two violin pieces during her lifetime, *Reminiscence* for Violin and Piano and her Sonata for Violin and Piano. Smith took a Sabbatical from teaching elementary school to pursue graduate studies at the Julliard School. It was during her studies at there in her last two years at the institute as a student of Vittorio Giannini, that she composed the violin sonata, featured in the second dissertation recital.

### Sonata for Violin and Piano

Britton's violin sonata, completed in 1947, demonstrates Britton's unorthodox use of harmonic textures. It is a work that is thoroughly lyrical, and adheres to traditional forms, but also does not fit entirely into the common tropes of Negro Spirituals that many of her contemporaries such as Still and Price would often emulate.<sup>44</sup> Britton's sonata is difficult to define because it gives the impression of being informed by Black music of the Harlem Renaissance, and yet it also feels entirely distinct. She does not shy away from using pentatonic scales and modes as many other composers would, yet she utilizes them in ways that give the piece an ambiguous sonority stylistically. There are multiple instances of unexpected harmonic progressions and unrelated key modulations throughout the work.

The first movement *Allegro Cantabile* starts in a manner similar to Johannes Brahms's third violin sonata. Britton's use of both the natural and melodic B-flat minor tonality in the violin, altering subtly the seventh scale degree between A-flat and A natural, gives a strange and eerie yet beautiful tonal character to the movement. The piano accompanies with arpeggiated

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<sup>44</sup> Walker-Hill, Helen, *From Spirituals to Symphonies: African American Women Composers and Their Music* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press: 2007), 201.

chords underneath the violin's strongly lyrical motif, both instruments ending on an E major cadence. The second section, marked "Allegro di molto", is faster and boasts a wittier and more spritz-like aura in the key of A major. The major pentatonic mode is used extensively throughout this section in both the violin and piano voices. The C section is calmer and marked "expressivo", leading to the A1 and B1 sections.

The second movement *Andante con sentimento*, continues the unexpected key changes, starting off in a melancholy manner in the key of D-flat Major and modulating to G Major in the section. The second section is taken in a faster tempo which further emphasizes a waltz character in its triple meter by the marking *poco più mosso* and from swift eighth note passages that also employ emphasis on the off-beats in the violin line against the piano.

In the last movement *Vivace*, Britton brings out a mischievous and jaunty nature while also continuing to push further the modal ambiguity that has characterized the entire sonata. Here, her use of chromaticism is at its greatest and the movement takes on a rondo form, the motif continuously returning throughout. The piano begins with the main figure in octaves, and here again Britton plays with our sense of tonality and modality, establishing an in-between state of B-flat Major and B-flat mixolydian by using alterations of the seventh degree. In canon fashion, the violin takes over the motif, carrying it into a fugue-like chromatic passage with the piano. There is a slower *moderato* section just before the recapitulation returning themes. A slight bridge takes the piece to its conclusion, the violin and piano part passing sixteenth-note runs off to each other alternatively in a call and response fashion that typifies the entire movement.

### David Nathaniel Baker (1931–2016)

David Nathaniel Baker started his college education at the Arthur Jordan Conservatory of Music in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1949, before transferring to Indiana University in 1950 where he studied bass trombone with Thomas Beversdorf. He originally sought a career as a classical bass trombonist and had auditioned for the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. However, due to the racial climate, racial segregation, and the extremely limited employment opportunities of Blacks in symphony orchestras, Baker turned his sights to the jazz world. This was often the case with many Black musicians historically, where jazz music was one of the few music fields that were deemed appropriate for Black musicians to make a career in. Baker had already had an enormous amount of opportunities and experiences within the jazz tradition as a youth, having opportunities that many musicians in either the field of classical music or jazz did not have access to.<sup>45</sup> This wealth of experience helped prepare him for a lucrative career as a composer and educator, especially after an automobile accident left him with an injured jaw that would end his career as a trombone player.<sup>46</sup> Baker graduated in 1954 from Indiana University with a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Music Education. He returned to Indianapolis and continued to perform in the jazz clubs that were wide around the area, performing in many different bands and forming collaborations with Wes Montgomery. His teaching career began when he was

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<sup>45</sup> This is a special note in the differences in classical music and the jazz world. Generally speaking, there is a difference in priorities with both fields, which in turn manifests in different manners. More apparent is a lesser divide between professionals and students in the jazz traditions. Regarding performance, in the classical world professionals and teachers rarely perform and practice together with their students and with amateur players, instead taking the role of overseers who monitor the growth of students along with their peers, whom are their primary colleagues in ensembles, be it orchestra or chamber. Because there has traditionally been a heavy emphasis in jam sessions in jazz for the student to become fluent in its language and art form, frequent collaboration between professionals and their students has always been more commonplace than in the classical world.

<sup>46</sup> Herzig, *David Baker*, 48-52.

offered a year-long position at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, and eventually became professor at his alma mater, Indiana University.

Baker was important in codifying jazz pedagogy and methodology; he, along with a group of other seminal and upcoming jazz performers set the jazz curriculum for the academic study of jazz up to modern times.<sup>47</sup> It was this group that was instrumental in helping jazz to become accepted as a field of study that was taken seriously, coinciding with the civil rights movement and the increased interest in African American art forms.<sup>48</sup> Baker would draw on the vast experiences of his youth in his later years as a premier jazz educator. He was the founding chairman of the jazz studies program at Indiana University, initiating the program in 1966.

As a composer, Baker has over 400 compositions in his long career, many of them commissioned pieces. While he was primarily a jazz composer, he wrote in a wide array of styles and genres including blues, classical, gospel, and bebop. Often many of his compositions utilized techniques from multiple styles, making it difficult to categorize those pieces as lying in any one particular genre. Baker attributes this to refusing to be limited to any particular sphere, having no preference in genre, as well as being influenced by a number of composers from a wide spectrum including Bela Bartok, Duke Ellington, George Walker, Hale Smith, and Charles Ives.<sup>49</sup> His compositional style with regards to rhythm employed poly-meters, metric modulation, multi-metric schemata, and rhythmic ostinato. It utilized improvisation within his jazz works but scarcely elsewhere, and jazz harmonies featured prominently in any genre he composed in. He

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 52-56.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 46-47.

<sup>49</sup> Baker, Belt, and Hudson, *The Black Composer Speaks*, 24-29.

also employed many classical forms such as the passacaglia, theme and variations, sonata allegro form, and various ostinato methods. It is this variety in his compositional style which has led Baker to insist that "...if I write a piece which does not conform solely to either western art music tradition or jazz (and that is most often the case), then my work must be judged by a critic who understands both aesthetics."<sup>50</sup> This is similar to and falls in line with his views regarding the education system and what he believes to be an Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism pervasive in the academic music world.<sup>51</sup> According to Baker,

"I think the main thing that the educational system has more of an obligation to do than anything else is to accept all music without bias--to be able to put the music in a perspective and deal with it on its own terms without trying to bias a student about what is good and what is bad.....I think we have to start talking about other kinds of music and I think that the educational system has to be able to deal with this territory."<sup>52</sup>

### Blues (Deliver My Soul)

Baker's piece *Blues (Deliver My Soul, 1968)*, is the second piece on the first dissertation recital. It is an adaptation of his *Psalm 22* for choir, and starts off with the solo violin in a cadenza at the beginning of the piece. The form of the piece is a 12-bar blues form in a 24-bar structure and combines elements of both blues and gospel, bringing to mind the services of Protestant and Baptist Black churches. The cadenza lies more in traditional blues format and style, with the piece entering into the gospel tradition as the piano joins in and utilizes the major pentatonic mode with a strong and slow triple meter. Baker also takes advantage of certain tropes

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 22.

such as repeating a figure over and over in an emotional insistence. What is less evident notationally to the performer is the characteristic glissandi, swung sixteenth-note rhythms, and pitch “bends” that are evident in so much of gospel and blues music, and one must be imaginative in interpreting the piece which can easily fall into the territory of being played “too square” or “too classical” by gospel standards. The piece ends with a return to the beginning theme, and although a brief coda section sans piano leads to the last note being a whole note, the ending can also be improvised by both the violin and piano according to the performers’ desires, if again one chooses to follow blues tradition. The piece demonstrates Baker’s skill in utilizing the violin’s lyrical nature to emulate the vocal styles of the blues and gospel traditions.

#### Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932–2004)

Throughout his career, Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson boasted a wide variety of accomplishments as a composer, performer, arranger, teacher, music director, and founder. His works include a number of different genres including ballets, film and television scores, classical, jazz, popular music, and theater. His unique versatility and ability to combine different styles led Perkinson to being one of the most innovative and influential composers of his time and in helping to evolve Black music into new manifestations and forms while contributing to ever-changing definitions of Black identity.

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, named so by his mother after British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor<sup>53</sup>, was born 14 June, 1932 in Manhattan. His mother Vereda “Tosci” Pearson, was a theater director, pianist, teacher, and organist in the Bronx and Perkinson grew up showing

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<sup>53</sup> Banfield, William C., *Musical Landscapes in Color*, (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003), 238.

an early interest in music, although he also held an interest in dance, studying with Pearl Primus and Ismay Andrews, one of the earliest teachers and presenters of African dance music in the United States who were seminal in changing the perception of African dance in the country at the time. In 1945 Perkinson enrolled in New York's High School of Music and Art (merged in 1984 with the High School in Performing Arts in what is now Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School) where he was mentored by choral director Hugh Ross. He began composing during this time, his composition *And Behold* winning him the school's Choral competition and earning him the LaGuardia Prize for Music.

Following high school Perkinson attended New York University, majoring in English with the intention of becoming a school teacher. He decided however to pursue music and transferred in 1951 to the Manhattan School of Music (MSM) majoring in composition and studying with American composers Charles Mills (1914–1982) and Vittorio Giannini, while also taking conducting with Jonel Perlea. During his studies at MSM he developed a strong interest in jazz, largely from his associations with his fellow classmates which included jazz musicians Donald Byrd, Herbie Mann, and Julius Watkins.<sup>54</sup> He developed a great interest in the music of jazz legend Charlie Parker, composing a ballet inspired by Parker titled *For Bird, With Love*. In particular, he developed a close working relationship with American jazz drummer and composer Max Roach, serving occasionally as his pianist in his quartet and also acting as an arranger and choral conductor for various collaborations.

Perkinson graduated with his Bachelor's in 1953, and attained his Master's the following year, also furthered his conducting studies at Berkshire Music Center. He served on the faculty

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<sup>54</sup> De Lerma, Dominique-Rene, liner notes to *African Heritage Symphonic Series, Vol. III*, Katinka Kleijn, Chicago Sinfonietta, and Paul Freeman, Cedille Records, 90000 066, CDR, 2002.

of Brooklyn College from 1959 until 1962 and acted as director of the Brooklyn Community Symphony Orchestra, travelling during the summers to the Netherlands for continued studies in conducting at the Netherlands Radio Union in Hilversum, studying privately with Italian conductor Franco Ferrara and American conductor Dean Dixon, as well as at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg. Perkinson travelled extensively while holding a wide array of teaching, affiliate, and directorial positions at various institutes including Indiana University (1997–1998), Jerome Robbins’s American Theater Lab (1966–1967), Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre (1968–1969, 1978), and the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago (1998–2004) where he also held a position as Coordinator of Performance Activities. He also served as a composer-in-residence for the Ritz Chamber String Players.

Perkinson was also involved in film music, scoring music for television and documentaries in the 1970s such as the Academy Award-nominated Martin Luther King documentary *King: A Filmed Record...Montgomery to Memphis* (1970), the television miniseries *A Woman Called Moses* (1978), and the Sidney Poitier film *A Warm December* (1972). In addition, he also acted as an arranger and music director for a number of popular soul and jazz artists including Marvin Gaye, Melvin Van Peebles, Barbara McNair, and Harry Belafonte.<sup>55</sup>

In 1965, Perkinson co-founded the Symphony of the New World in New York, the first racially integrated orchestra in the United States, where he acted as the orchestra conductor until 1970 and also served as director for the 1972 season. The orchestra aimed to increase the visibility of non-white classical instrumentalists and conductors and to serve as a representation

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<sup>55</sup> Leichner, Helen. “Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932-2004).” *Black Past*. Last modified January 13, 2013. Accessed October 5, 2019. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/perkinson-coleridge-taylor-1932-2004/>.



of the diversity of the city of New York, as well as the country.<sup>56</sup> It also aimed at bringing classical music to the masses.

### *Blue/s Forms for Unaccompanied Violin*

The work *Blue/s Forms for unaccompanied violin* was written in 1972 and dedicated to the American violinist Sanford Allen, who premiered the work in Carnegie Hall. The work consists of three movements, each written in the key of G Major yet Perkinson utilizes blues scales and exploits the lowered third and seventh to bring out very “bluesy” character.

The first movement is structured in AABA form, in 7/4 meter that is not entirely apparent without the performer playing in a strict rhythmic fashion and emphasizing the down beat of each measure. The first statement lasts two bars, the next statement being two bars as well, giving the A section a total of eight bars each, and section B a total of twelve. The movement is highly improvisatory in nature, and there are various ways one can approach interpreting the piece in performance. One of the decisions to be made that can affect the quality of the movement is in deciding how strict to play the triplet sixteenth-note figures. An approach one may take is to bow such figures in an uneven fashion, treating each note in a slightly different time value and thereby giving them an off-kilter nature. This would fall in line to various Baroque approaches to bowing where one may not play each note in a sixteenth note figure with equal time value, but instead gives each note a slightly different time length, evoking an

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<sup>56</sup> Hamer, Gail. “Symphonies doors to all”. *Washington Afro-American Red Star* (Washington D.C.) , October 25, 1975, pg. 9.

unpredictable and improvisatory sense to the line. The movement ends on a half cadence, at the very end of the second 8-bar sequence.

The second movement titled “Just Blues” and marked Very Freely, is contrasted with the first movement in being very free in rhythm and character, the character being contemplative and lax. The score is notated as playing the movement muted, and as with the first movement, it is heavily improvisatorial and evokes a neo-Baroque quality that would also bring comparisons to the violin sonatas of Eugene Ysaÿe. Here the Grave and Adagio movements of the Bach violin sonatas show their influence in Perkinson’s writings. There are grace notes and glissandi ornamentations throughout the movement, emphasizing its relaxed and lazy mood. Perkinson also utilizes dissonances multiple times throughout, particularly the tritone and various suspensions. As with interpreting the first movement, when playing the second movement, it may be preferable for one to keep a strong sense of pulse by keeping the tempo and emphasizing the syncopated off-beats, as playing the piece too freely may erode any sense of metric time. Similar to the first movement, the second movement also ends on a half cadence.

The last movement, titled “Jettin’ Blues”, is the most challenging in its technical demands to the violinist. It is a fast-paced movement with continuous sixteenth note phrases and large leaps between the low and high registers; a particular challenge is the rapid string crossings given and the player must be imaginative in treating the off-beats to bring out a syncopated character. There are rapid and multiple meter changes throughout giving an added sense of unpredictability. The blues scales are in their purest form here, used to lead to a G cadence at the end of the first and last sections. Treating the bowings of the piece will vastly affect the character of many of the passages; one will find, much as with the Bach sonatas, that there is large room for interpretation and phrasing.

## CONCLUSION

The list of composers that have been examined and explored in this research is not comprehensive, only touching the surface of the many unheard voices in the classical music literature. What this paper has further attempted, in addition to contributing to the body of resources and research of Black composers and their compositions for those seeking to expand their knowledge and awareness of them, is to initiate a further discussion that lies outside the scope of this paper.

The discussion pertains to the future of Classical music and its further evolution in the twenty-first century. I believe that in order for the genre to thrive, it is necessary to address the limitations that have been set on the study and performances, the limitations being that we do not devote enough time and resources to the study and performance of music outside of the common repertoire, i.e., the body of music that we will hear most often in the concert halls. Classical music is extremely diverse, encompassing a wide array of geographical areas, time eras, styles, and nationalities. Yet it seems that only a very miniscule fraction of music only ever makes its way to performance, or is deemed worthy of study in our classrooms, practice rooms, and beyond. The status quo has held certain compositions of certain composers as being necessary to study if a musician is to make it at the professional level. It does so by stating the specific repertoire to be learned at college, orchestral, and summer festival auditions, or at international concerto competitions. It is done when the artistic director decides the programming for a professional orchestra's upcoming season. In conservatories it is done when the history and theory classes of the core curriculum and the books to supplement them both do not include the extensive study of that which lies outside the traditional "greats", relegating such composers and their works instead to an elective course or specialty class. There appears to be a lack of initiative

amongst those in higher administrative, executive, and directorial positions to advocate, represent, and champion lesser known composers to the masses, composers who in many instances made great contributions to the literature. I believe that this has two unfortunate consequences. The first is that the musicians themselves as well as the general concert-going audiences remain blind to a substantial portion of music that remain in the shadows. Secondly, I believe that a constant return to the familiar and often performed has the unintended consequence of nurturing bias in the mind, creating partiality towards what one knows and is familiar and comfortable with. These consequences are informed by one another, as one cannot know what one has not been exposed to, yet also the familiarity can give one pause to seek out what they do not know.

Although this paper in particular focuses on Black composers and their contributions to Classical music, there are many other areas where other composers have been little researched as well. Women composers have not been examined with the same enthusiasm as their male colleagues, and there are also composers of other ethnic and national backgrounds that have been given little coverage. There has been less focus on the study Spanish composers in undergraduate coursework than has been given to the German, Italian, and French composers. And this pattern continues. Amongst the great German composers, many others are left out. And even amongst the giants such as Mozart and Beethoven, who all wrote a wide body of music, there seems to be little enthusiasm to perform and cover some of their lesser known works. There are very few performances of Beethoven's opera *Prometheus*, or of Mozart's second violin concerto.

While there may be many factors that lead to such exclusions, of the many postulated some being elements of racism, sexism, Nationalism, financial pressures, and an overall elitist bravura amongst those that decide what gets performed and what doesn't, I believe such an

attitude can and will lead to a deterioration in the rich field of Classical music. Incorporating the study of a greater selection of composers and their music can in turn nurture the study and development of a larger variety of styles, and lead to a greater understanding of different cultures and cultural values. If we fail to present alternatives to an audience then how can that audience develop an interest in any of the alternatives? Art is highly subjective, and I believe that a more democratized approach to the representation of artists and their art may help its evolution in the future.

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