ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: GOSPEL MUSIC TRAINING, PERFORMANCE PRACTICE AND ITS IMPACT ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMED NATIONALISM IN A COLLEGIATE MILITARY CHOIR

Karla P. Scott, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2016

Dissertation directed by: Professor Carmen Balthrop
School of Music

Since America's beginnings as a British colony, its musical standards have adhered to those of Western Europe. For this reason, musical forms native to America like Black folk spirituals and Gospel music have historically been marginalized in favor of music in the Western classical tradition. Today, a bias towards music of the Western classical tradition exists in those American universities that grant music degrees. While this bias is understandable, inclusion of Gospel music history and performance practice would result in a more complete understanding of American music and its impact on American nationalism. The United States Naval Academy is one of few American universities that has consistently elevated the performance of Gospel music to the level of Western Classical music within its institutional culture.

The motivations for writing this document are to provide a brief history of Gospel music in the United States and of choral music at the Naval Academy. These historical accounts serve as lenses though which the intersection of Gospel music performance practice and leadership development at the United States Naval Academy may be observed.

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, Gospel music intersected American military culture at the U.S. Naval Academy. After a few student-led attempts in the 1970s, a Gospel Choir was formed in 1986 but by 1990, it had become an official part of the Music Department. Ultimately, it received institutional support and today, the Gospel Choir is one of three touring choirs authorized to represent the Academy in an official capacity.

This document discusses the promotion of Gospel music by the Naval Academy in its efforts to diversify Academy culture and ultimately, Naval and Marine Corps leadership. Finally, this dissertation examines the addition of performed cultural expression (Gospel music) in light of a shift in American nationalism and discusses its impact on Naval Academy culture.

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# GOSPEL MUSIC TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE PRACTICE AND ITS IMPACT ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMING NATIONALISM IN A COLLEGIATE MILITARY CHOIR

by

Karla Patricee Scott

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
2016

Advisory Committee:
Professor Carmen Balthrop, Chair
Professor James Ross
Professor Sherri Parks
Professor Martha Randall
Professor Gran Wilson

# Dedication

To Collin and Marye, whose loud cheers from among that great cloud of witnesses encourage me to continue.

# Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to my teacher and mentor of many years, Professor Carmen Balthrop, whose encouragement and guidance did much to shape this project. To the members of my committee: Professors Randall, Wilson, Ross and Parks, your insight, practical advice and willingness to serve are deeply appreciated.

Thank you to Dr. Barry Talley, Joyce Garrett, Laura Stubbs, Janie Mines, Monte Maxwell and Lt. Alana Abernethy  Without your time and willingness to be interviewed, this project would not have been possible.

I offer sincere thanks to my students at the Naval Academy. Your willingness to train, study and serve as continual inspiration.

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# INTRODUCTION

Since America's beginnings as a British colony, its musical standards have adhered to those of Western Europe. For this reason, indigenous American forms like Black folk spirituals and Gospel music have historically been marginalized while a bias towards music of the Western classical tradition continues to exist in American universities that grant music degrees. While this bias is understandable, if Gospel music history and performance studies were included at those universities, a more complete understanding of American music history, and its impact on American nationalism[1] would result.

Over the past decade, the United States Naval Academy has become one of few American universities, which consistently elevates the performance of Gospel music to the level of Western Classical music within its institutional culture. Although the Naval Academy does not offer any degrees in music, it does offer its midshipmen[2] the opportunity to participate in musical ensembles, including the Gospel Choir, which represent the institution, the military and the U.S. on national and international tours, in televised performances and at high profile concerts for high ranking government officials.

The motivations for writing this document are to provide a brief history of American Gospel music and of choral music at the Naval Academy. These historical accounts will serve as lenses through which to observe the intersection of Gospel music

[1] For the purposes of this study, nationalism is defined as group coherence based upon recognized sameness of culture, political and religious ideology and shared ethnicity. This coherence often has political connotations.

[2] Midshipman(en) refers to students at the Naval Academy regardless of rank or gender. It is equivalent to the term 'cadet' used at the Airforce and Army (West Point) Service Academies.

training and performance practice, and its impact on leadership development at the Academy. Secondly, this document will discuss how the promotion of Gospel music by the United States Naval Academy represents a change in our understanding of how American nationalism is performed within Academy culture.

After placing the Gospel choir in historical context, I will discuss two correlates between Gospel music and leadership using research that demonstrates the positive impact of musical instruction upon technical mastery in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, (STEM). Further, I will examine the observed correlation between musical performance and donning the Mask of Command.[3] Young military leaders face the challenge of learning how to use the Mask of Command in their interactions with superior officers (those to whom they report) and subordinate enlisted, (those they lead). According to First Lt. Abernethy, (a graduate of the Naval Academy and alumna of the Gospel choir):

> Military leadership is considered most effective when an officer commands the respect of both superiors and subordinates. While wearing the Mask of Command or displaying Command Presence, an officer must gain the respect of his superiors by displaying skill in readiness, planning, situational problem solving and the consistent adherence to clearly defined leadership practices within military hierarchy. However, an officer who hopes to gain the respect of subordinates, shows self-awareness – which can manifest as the ability to express one's humanity and to connect interpersonally. Both types of interactions must be carried out while displaying the Mask of Command.[4]

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[3] The Mask of Command is the authoritative demeanor displayed by military and law enforcement officers in times of crisis in order to properly influence and motivate subordinates to complete tasks without panic. It is closely related to Command Presence, the ability to influence others, command respect or communicate one's authority verbally and non-verbally.

[4] Alana Abernethy interview. September 2015.

Another setting in which donning the Mask of Command/Command Presence would prove advantageous is found in, *Men Against Fire*, where Marshall, a WWI veteran and combat historian, describes conditions under which military units are most likely to remain unified in battle conditions: "the tactical unity of men working together in combat will be in ration of their knowledge and sympathetic understanding of each other. Lacking these things, though they be well-trained soldiers, they are not likely to adhere…"[5] I will examine how the learned components of Gospel music particularly the ability to clearly communicate emotion and lyric message translates to donning the Mask of Command.

The final part of this study will examine the promotion of Gospel music by the Academy for the purpose of institutional advancement and how this changes our understanding of performed nationalism. Performed nationalism is generally associated with the expressions of cultural ideology that unite a group. Gospel music is consistent with this notion.

The century-old genre of Gospel music, which developed as an outgrowth of the spiritual, carries within its sound and practice the faith traditions of Africans in America (a nation within a nation) and their descendants. In the lyrics of spirituals, the journey from slavery to integration is chronicled- a journey that historically placed Black people and their cultural practices at odds with the white American majority, even after equal rights laws passed in the twentieth century suggested otherwise. "[While] Negro spirituals were the products of slaves; Gospel songs emerged during the first quarter of

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[5] S.L.A. Marshall, Men *Against Fire*; *The Problem of Battle Command* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947 and 2000), 150.

the twentieth century among members of the working class – the lower economic and educational strata of the Black community."[6]

In the 1940s, Blacks from the working class enlisted in the military, mostly the Army. A few Blacks enlisted in the Navy, but based on the common belief that it was the most racist of the military branches many Blacks avoided it. "Although African Americans had served at sea throughout American history, the Navy's official racial policy had long been one of discrimination…Black sailors bristled at being relegated to chambermaids of the [brigade]" [7]

I would argue that the admission and graduation of Black students beginning in the mid 1940s followed by the introduction of Gospel music in 1985 led to the existence of a 'nation within a nation' at the U.S. Naval Academy. The 'nation' of Black students, who entered the Academy between 1945 and 1990, left their homes, but not their culture. They eventually found their place within the white, male culture using one of two strategies: assimilating (as in the case of Wesley Brown)[8] discussed in chapter four, or by celebrating their culture, as in the case of those students who started the Gospel Choir.

By the 1970s, the United States military began to recruit Blacks with advertising that drew heavily upon the Black power/pride message of that decade. The slogans used in these targeted ads included: "Your son can be Black and Navy too" and "You can

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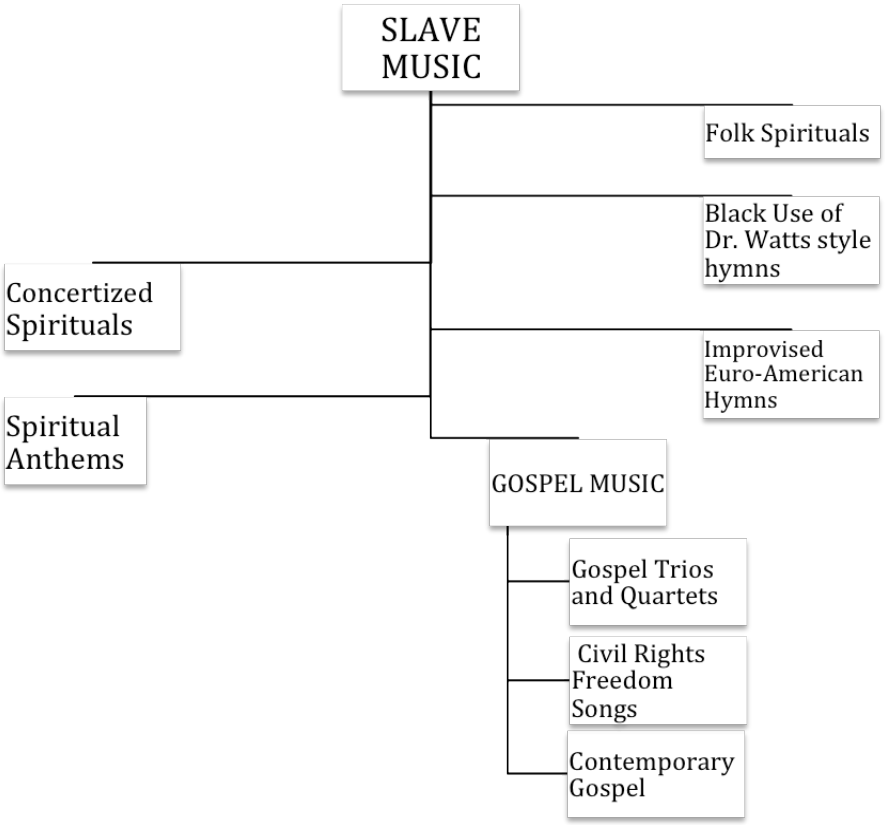
[6] Melonee V. Burnim, Portia K. Maultsby, eds. *African American Music: An Introduction* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 51-52.
[7] Robert J. Schneller, JR, *Blue & Gold and Black: Racial Integration of the U.S. Naval Academy* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press), 3.
[8] Wesley Brown was the first black student to successfully enroll, graduate and be commissioned as a Naval Officer from the Academy in 1949.

study black history and you can go out and make it."[9] By actively recruiting Blacks, the Navy joined America's redefinition of nationalism. By endorsing the Gospel Choir, in the late 1980s, Academy leadership followed suit.

A detailed overview of each of the four chapters in this dissertation follows.

*History of Black American Gospel Music*

**Figure 1. Black Sacred Music in the United States.**[10]




Though Gospel music is largely a "twentieth century phenomenon, born of a people moving from rural communities to the urban centers of this country," [11] it is

[9] See Appendix B for examples of Navy Recruitment ads from 1972-76.
[10] * Adapted from the diagrams of Wendel Whalum in *Review and Expositor*, Spring 1972 p. 581 and Wyatt Walker's *Somebody's Calling My Name*. p. 146.

important to the historical events that led to its development and popularity within the larger culture. (Figure 1) provides a sequential overview of Black sacred music genres discussed in the first chapter, beginning with the arrival of slaves in the American colonies and the development of the folk spiritual. The term "folk spiritual" is used in Mellonee Burnim's research, a leading Musicologist in the area of Black music. She uses the term to refer to slave songs that borrow heavily from African culture and performance practice.[12] It should be noted that folk spirituals are distinct from the concertized spirituals made popular in the nineteenth century that combine African American and European music styles, structure and performance practices.

The image (Figure 1) further illustrates the transition of the folk spiritual through the Revolutionary War and the first two waves of Protestant revivals, called the Great Awakening. The outcome of these revivals is key to understanding the intersection of religion and nationalism discussed in this document as well as the origins of the assimilationist (Blacks who shed African traditions to be accepted by the White establishment) and traditionalist (Blacks who retained Africanisms as a way to preserve their culture) church worldviews. Next, I will trace the rise of the Independent Black Church in the North and the Invisible Church[13] in the South, respectively, which were organized just before the Civil War. Their existence led to the development of seven Black Christian denominations of which three: African Methodist Episcopal (AME),

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[11] Bernice Johnson Reagon, ed., *We'll Understand it Better By and By: Pioneering African American Gospel Composers*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 4.
[12] Burnim and Maultsby, *African American Music,* 51.
[13] The Invisible Church was the name given to worship meetings conducted by slaves in secret at the risk of legal punishment if discovered.

Baptist and the Church of God in Christ, are historically significant to the advancement of Gospel music.

Although the origins of Gospel music are tied to the Black Church, important cultural shifts began in the 1940s and culminated in the 1970s that moved Black music from the margins of society for the first time. "In the 1940s, some Gospel singers began to take their music into the secular world, raising the question as to whether Gospel was religious or entertainment music."[14] By examining the transition of Gospel from church to the mainstream, I will explain one of the reasons a tiny minority of Black students at the Naval Academy would elect to start a Gospel choir.

*A Brief History of Choral Music at the Naval Academy*

In chapter two, I will begin my discussion of choral music at the Academy by talking about the first student choirs, which prior to the 1950s were comprised exclusively of white males and end with the addition of a Black Gospel choir in the mid 1980s when Gospel music intersected American military culture at the U.S. Naval Academy. After a few short-lived attempts by Black midshipmen in the late 1970s, a viable student-led Gospel choir was established in 1985 and was granted official student organization status by the Naval Academy's midshipmen Activities Department in 1986. From 1985 until 2006 the choir's membership was largely Black and given the small number of Black students enrolled at the Academy, its presence served as both a source of cultural and musical support for its members.[15] As the Gospel Choir's performances

[14] Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997), 484.

[15] Student body population at the Naval Academy has numbered just over 4,000 annually since the 1960s. Black student enrollment has grown from just nine Black

became more widely requested by local Maryland organizations, the Naval Academy saw the institutional value in using the choir in Black student recruitment efforts.

When I joined the Music Department in 2006, I began to accept singers of every race based upon their musical ability, which broadened the ethnic makeup of the choir tremendously. Academy officials took notice of the racial diversity in the Gospel Choir and increased the number of recruitment tours from one annual tour to three. Today, the choir is one of three touring ensembles authorized to represent the Academy in an official capacity. By including the observations of former staff members of the Gospel choir, I will further contextualize the growth of Gospel music at this largely dominant-culture military institution.

I will discuss the tenures of Professor Gilley, who served as Director of Musical Activities during the desegregation of the Academy, and his successor Dr. Talley, who elevated the Gospel choir's status to that of an ECA[16] and also hired its first professionally trained director, Joyce Garret. Garrett held two earned degrees in choral conducting when she was hired by Dr. Talley in 1989. Talley tasked her with elevating musicianship within the Gospel Choir to that of the Glee Club and Chapel Choirs directed. I will examine how the Gospel choir became the most ethnically diverse touring group representing the Academy, and its importance in Academy recruiting.

*Gospel Music Training, Performance Practice and Leadership Development*

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students in 1960, to over 600 in 2015, making up approximately 6% of the student body.

[16] ECA was the designation given to institutionally recognized and funded campus organizations from 1970-2006. These organizations were given authority to represent the Academy in an official capacity

In the third chapter I will discuss my findings on the correlation between music training and spatial development using the research of neuroscientists, select documentation from a military leadership thesis and quotes from a SWO (Surface Warfare Officer). Given the fact that the Naval Academy is a school that trains engineers to become military leaders, all approved campus activities are expected to contribute to leadership development goals including musical activities like the Gospel Choir. Given this goal, I will highlight neuroscience research which shows that spatial skill, (which is the ability to mentally convert a two-dimensional illustration into a three-dimensional object and predict its action), is enhanced by musical training.

Also important to leadership development is the documented relationship between developing authoritative leadership skill and choral performance. The ability to 'get into character' that is required in choral performance is also directly related to donning the Mask of Command.

The second part of chapter three explains the training methodologies and performance practices specific to Gospel music. Further, I discuss the techniques used in introducing those practices to an ethnically diverse population and the results of doing so within Military culture. One such result is the development of Military leaders who understand multiculturalism (the acceptance of all cultures as unique yet equal with the goal of creating a unified whole).

Learning to respect a culture or ethnicity different from one's own will greatly benefit Midshipmen who immediately after graduation become Naval Officers expected to lead ethnically and racial diverse enlisted sailors in the Fleet.[17]

*Performances of Nationalism at the Academy*

In the final chapter, I will discuss three distinct nationalistic ideologies that have defined American culture since the time of the Revolutionary War. Divided by time period they are: cosmopolitan liberalism in the 18th century, which combined the appreciation of all cultures with the desire for political and religious liberty; nativism in the 19th century, which asserted the cultural and political dominance of whites born in America over immigrants; and multi-culturalism in the twentieth-century, in which diverse legacies and traditions were celebrated as equal parts of a united American whole.[18]

Within Naval Academy history all three ideologies are evident but in this project, nationalism will be examined in light of multiculturalism, since that ideology gained momentum simultaneous to the establishment of a Gospel choir at the Naval Academy. Further, I will examine the connections between the use of the Gospel choir to demonstrate multiculturalism/nationalism and discuss how this changes our understanding of American nationalism.

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[17] The fleet refers to active duty, working members of the US Navy and Marine Corps. This term includes enlisted sailors and commissioned officers.

[18]. Jack Citrin, Ernst B. Haaas, Christopher Muste and Beth Reingold, "Is American Nationalism Changing? Implications for Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly,* 38. no. (March 1994): 2.

*Scholarship Sources of Note*

Throughout this document, I will repeatedly reference the scholarship of three leading Musicologists in the area of Black music whose collective works were published from the 1970s to the present: Eileen Southern, Portia Maultsby and Melonee Burnim. Eileen Southern's exhaustive research on Black music is included in the *Biographical Dictionary of Afro-American Music and Musicians* published in 1982 and in *The Music of Black Americans: A History* 3rd edition published in 1997. Burnim and Maultsby collaborated to co-edit *African American Music: An Introduction* in 2006, a text widely used in African American studies courses in the United States. Portia Maultsby served as Professor of Folklore and Ethnomusicology at Indiana University from 1971 until her retirement in 2014 when her successor, Mellonee V. Burnim was appointed to that vacated post as well as to the position of Director of the Archives of African American Music and Culture, also at Indiana University.

The research of Bernice Reagon is included due to her long partnership with the Smithsonian Pathways archives on Black music yielded definitive notes on the field recordings of music in the Civil Rights Era. In addition, the research of Wyatt Walker and Michael Harris provide established scholarship on Black music and its intersection with social change. Finally, the research of Naval historian Robert Schneller, Jr. who has published extensively on racial inequality and gender politics at the Naval Academy, is included to provide historical accounts that demonstrate the role American legislation played in advancing racial equality in the Navy and at its Service Academies from the 1940s through the early 2000s.

# CHAPTER 1: THE HISTORY OF BLACK AMERICAN GOSPEL MUSIC

"Slaves are generally expected to sing as well as to work." Frederick Douglas

## *Folk Spiritual- A Precursor to Gospel Music*

The earliest slave music -sung cries and wordless moans - originated with the first slaves to land in the north American colonies in the early seventeenth century and birthed the folk spiritual. Folk spirituals arose as a way to create unity among African slaves who were forced to master English after slave masters separated those who shared a common African language.

> How natural that the uprooted forbearers of Black Americans would retain…the musical forms of their culture…to escape dehumanization. With no common tongue, the musical expression was reduced to chants and moans on the rhythm, forms and in the musical idioms that survived. As slaves learned the language of the masters, their verbal commonality became most pronounced in the music that developed in the context of slavery. [19]

The earliest extant documentation of folk spirituals is contained in the 1847 publication *Slave Songs of the United States,* compiled by William Francis Allen and Charles Pinkard Ware. The volume contains the historians' best efforts at musical notation of the spirituals and includes first hand observations of slaves singing the songs:

> …the leading singer starts the words of each verse, often improvising, and the others, who "base" him, as it is called, strike in with the refrain…when the words are familiar…striking an octave above or below…so as to produce the effect of a marvelous complication and variety, and yet with the most perfect time and rarely with any discord.[20]

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[19] Wyatt Lee Walker, *Somebody's Calling my Name: Black Sacred Music and Social Change,* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1979), 29.

[20] William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware and Lucy McKim Garrison, eds.,*"Slave Songs of the United States: The Classic 1867 Anthology,"*(New York, NY: Dover),v.

*Musical Elements of the Folk Spiritual*

As Garrison and Ware wrote about the musical components of folk spirituals; song structure, rhythm, melody, and harmony, they seemed keenly aware of the distinct differences between European music and 'slave music'. The folk spiritual's form was organized in call-and-response song structure. During the song, a leader sang a solo phrase that was answered by the group ("basers") in repeated refrain. "As a form ubiquitous among the musical cultures of West and Central Africa…the call-response form is a strong marker of the pervasiveness of African cultural memory in the lived experiences of the New World slaves."[21] This highly repetitive song form was designed to encourage group participation and foster unity amongst the participants.

Southern and Burnim assert that while call-and-response elements are at times found in European folk music, it is the sole form of vocal music found in Central and West Africa. Call-and -response remains an integral part of most Black music, even gospel music written in the twenty-first century is organized to a large degree around a call-and-response song structure resulting in music that is simple, repetitive and highly interactive.

Rhythmically, folk spirituals maintained a constant pulse, accompanied by handclaps and body movement while simple texts were altered to fit this steady rhythm. In *American Negro Songs* John Work highlights this fact; "throughout [slave] songs we definitely sense the importance of music over words."[22] A deeper reason for the

[21] Burnim and Maultsby, *African American Music,* 55.
[22] John Work, *American Negro Songs: 230 Folk Songs and Spirituals, Religious and Secular,* (New York, NY: Dover, 1940), 119. Kindle Edition.

rhythmic nature of the spirituals is connected to the shared cultural memory of drumming retained by these descendants of West and Central Africa.

Understanding shared cultural memory is key to understanding the mindset and worldview of African slaves. In Western and Central Africa, singing, dancing and drumming were not simply musical elements, but were ubiquitous within African lived experience. In African culture, music and drumming are "more closely bound up with the details of daily living than in Europe"[23] therefore when slave masters forbade the building and use of drums by African slaves, they found a way to retain and practice the cultural memory of drumming within the handclaps and foot-stomps which accompanied their songs: "early descriptions of spirituals uniformly document the singing as accompanied by only handclaps and foot stomps, which provide a percussive element reminiscent of drumming."[24]

Though viewed as heathenish, barbaric and wild by the dominant culture, the insistent inclusion of singing, dance, clapping and stomping by African slaves in America was a valiant attempt at bringing shared cultural memory into their lived experience; the sweet, or at least the familiar into the bitter.

Early folk spiritual melodies were simple, repetitive and often sung on the pentatonic scale in keeping with its African origins. The ever-present call-and-response form depended upon a lead singer and a chorus. The lead singer determined the content of the lyrics while the chorus agreed by either, repeating a simple refrain or by repeating the words of the leader. The harmony and vocal texture of early spirituals was

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[23] Paul Oliver, *Conversation with the Blues (*New York, NY: Cambridge), 30.
[24] Burnim and Maultsby, *African American Music*, 57.

heterophonic as seen in (Figure 2). Common among African populations but not found in Western music, heterophony is characterized by singing that is neither strict unison nor harmony.

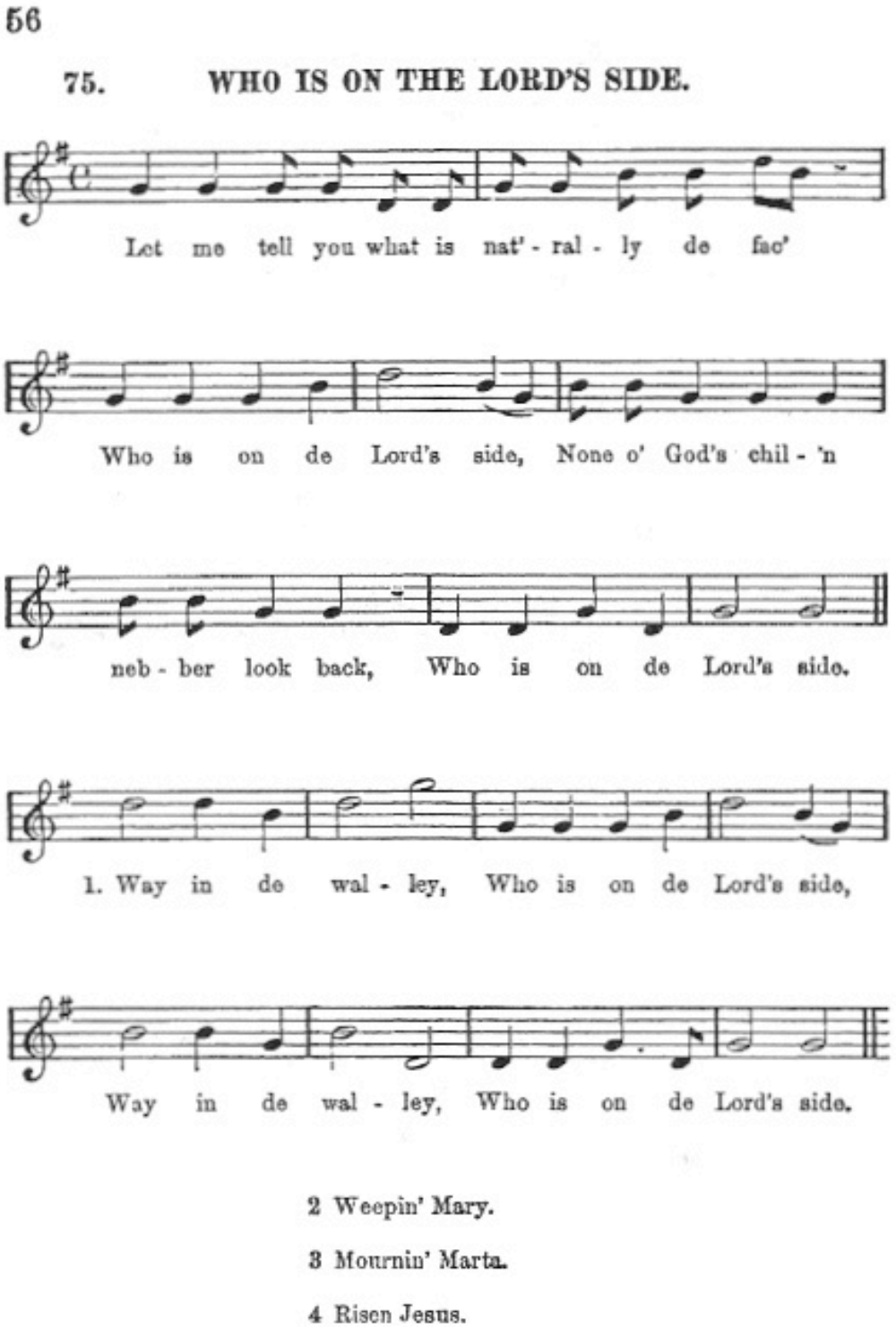
**Figure 2. Visual Example of Heterophony**.

Allen and Ware recount their observations: "There is no singing in parts as we understand it, and yet no two appear to be singing the same thing."[25] Heterophony continued well into the twentieth century in most traditional Black churches, evident in the practice called hymn lining discussed later in this chapter.

In "Who is on the Lord's Side" seen in (Figure 3), an example of call-and-response structure is evident. The choral response sections of the song consist of the repeated text 'who is on the Lord's side' throughout. This response was likely sung heterophonically instead of in the diatonic harmonies that characterize singing of modern spirituals.

[25] Allen, Ware and Garrison, *Slave Songs*, v.

**Figure 3. "Who is on the Lord's Side" from *Slave Songs of the Unites States*.[26]**



56

75. WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE.

Let me tell you what is nat'-ral-ly de fac'

Who is on de Lord's side, None o' God's chil-'n

neb-ber look back, Who is on de Lord's side.

1. Way in de wal-ley, Who is on de Lord's side,

Way in de wal-ley, Who is on de Lord's side.

2 Weepin' Mary.

3 Mournin' Marta.

4 Risen Jesus.

[26] Ibid., 56.

The power of transforming a shared cultural memory into a coping mechanism and a means of transitioning to the new lived experience was not relegated to African slaves, but can be seen in every generation slaves produced. For example: long after Emancipation, when Blacks willingly fled the South, during the Great Migration of the early twentieth century, they took the music and practices that reinforced a sense of cultural identity with them to the North, West and Midwest. I suspect that the first students to start a Gospel choir at the United States Naval Academy were similarly motivated to bring the familiarity of their culture into new and unfriendly territory.

### *The Ring Shout*

The ring shout was arguably the most prevalent of the religious folk spiritual forms as well as the most polarizing. Characteristics of the ring shout included a simple, improvised text; highly repetitive sections; lengthy performances of a single song; loud-voiced timbre; and polyrhythmic pulse with handclaps and foot stomps.[27] Most scholars agree that the ring shout was different from any worship form practiced by the dominant culture and its performance presented a sharp contrast to the metered hymns of the early White American church. Due to the ecstatic nature of its performance, which included dance, the ring shout "was abhorred by members of the…White Christian establishment and labeled…profane and heathenish."[28]

To perform the ring shout, slaves assembled in a circle and began to sing a call-and-response chorus accompanied by handclaps and foot stomps. As the song progressed dancing within the ring would follow:

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[27] Southern, *Music of Black Americans*, 180-189.
[28] Burnim and Maultsby, *African American Music,* 56.

> "…all stand up in the middle of the floor, and when the 'sperchil' is struck up, begin first walking and by-and-by shuffling round, one after the other, in a ring…the progression is mainly due to a jerking, hitching motion…Sometimes they dance silently, sometimes…they sing the chorus of the spirituals but more frequently…some of the best singers…stand at the side of the room…singing the body of the song clapping their hands…or on the knees. Song and dance are alike extremely energetic." [29]

Trace elements of the form are present in the twentieth century pentatonic melodies of Dorsey's blues Gospels, the repetitive shout choruses of the Holiness/Pentecostal movement, and the call-and-response song structure of twentieth and twenty-first century Gospel music.

*The Early Black Church – From Invisible to Independent*

African slaves attended religious services with their white owners in significant numbers during an American frontier revival period known as the Great Awakening, which I will discuss in greater detail later in this chapter. "In some instances slaves attended church with their masters, sitting in the galleries or on the floors of the churches as they listened to the sermon through open windows from outside the church"[30] Interestingly enough, Southern, Burnim, Maultsby, DuBois and other scholars agree that slaves continued to interpret the music and teachings they heard in these services through a distinctly African lens. This non-Eurocentric worldview contributed to the rise of what scholars call the Invisible Church in the south in which slaves defied Black codes - ordinances that forbade the private gathering of slaves. Risking fatal punishment, slaves gathered in secret to worship, pray and sing in ways that were uplifting and culturally familiar. They often sang after placing overturned metal basins in the center of the

[29] Allen, Ware and Garrison, *Slave Songs of the United States*, xiv.
[30] Ibid., 38.

gathering, believing the basins would 'catch' the sound so that it would not be heard by the slave master.[31] "Even before the erection of physical places of worship, the "invisible churches" …gave cohesion and commonality to an oppressed people…snatched from their homeland and raped of their culture and language."[32]

By the end of the eighteenth century, independent Black congregations were formed in both the South and North. In the South, the most prominent Christian denomination was Baptist, North of the Mason Dixon line it was Methodist. Southern, Burnim and Maultsby and other scholars, chronicle this critical period in detail, concluding that the need for independent worship among Blacks was due in part to the mounting frustration they felt during White worship services.

As early as the 1770s, independent Baptist groups were organized in Georgia where slaves like George Leile were given permission to preach to slaves on various plantations.[33] In 1788 Andrew Bryan, a Georgia slave, was ordained as a minister, yet went on to purchase his freedom in 1790 and to establish the first permanent Black Baptist congregation in the South.[34]

In the North, the Methodist Church included Black congregants as early as the 1760s. Though Northerners relaxed their attachment to slavery before Southerners did, Black churchgoers continued to experience the same discrimination against their preferred style of worship in White churches, as did their southern counterparts. For this reason, Black Methodists left the White church to start their own. In the South, "The

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[31] Ibid., 179.
[32] Walker, *Social Change*, 19.
[33] Southern, *Music of Black America*, 72.
[34] Ibid.

amount of independence gained by [Black] congregations varied...some had white ministers; but all enjoyed more freedom to worship than…in the white mother churches."[35] Prior to the Civil War, this newly found independence was cut short due to uprisings and insurrections, like the one attributed to Nat Turner. "Since the leaders of these revolts were preachers, southern states blamed religious groups… and enacted laws …destructive to [Black] religious groups."[36] Following the Civil War, independent Southern congregations started up again and attracted more congregants than ever.[37] This exodus of Blacks from White churches would impact the development of Gospel music. Eventually, the Black church would provide a place for Gospel music cultivation, performance and appreciation.

*Richard Allen and the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church*

The most notable early leader of this exodus movement was Reverend Richard Allen. Born into slavery in Delaware in 1760, Allen purchased his freedom in 1780. By 1784, he had received preaching qualifications at the Methodist National Conference in Baltimore, Maryland. By 1794, he headed his own congregation named the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania becoming its first ordained Bishop. The AME Church was the first Independent Christian denomination led by and created for Blacks in the United States.[38]

Allen adhered to Methodist doctrine which emphasized religious instruction of the Scriptures because, "…no religious denomination would suit the capacity of the colored

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[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., 72-75.

people so well as the Methodists, for the plain simple Gospel suits best for any people, for the unlearned can understand, and the learned are sure to understand."[39] Allen's church services were noted, in both positive and negative references, for the way he married Methodist doctrine to Black/African worship traditions. Allen rejected the existing Methodist Hymnal and created one of his own, published in two editions. The first hymnal published in 1801, *A Collection of Spiritual Songs and Hymns Selected from Various Authors by Richard Allen, African Minister* included fifty-four hymn texts without melodies.[40] Allen's second volume of hymns was published in 1818 and included 314 hymns. In the introduction to the 1818 publication he wrote: " Having become a distinct and separate body of people, there is no collection of hymns, we could with propriety adopt…[I] have endeavored to collect such as were applicable to the various states of Christian experience."[41] The texts included in Allen's first hymnal, were written to be performed in the style of folk spirituals or music sung in that vein – complete with repetition, hand clapping and foot stomping. His second hymnal included many more traditional hymns that had been adapted by Black churchgoers.[42]

*The Assimilationists, Traditionalists and Daniel Payne*

Following Emancipation, the Black Church continued to play an unprecedented role in the lives of Black people. Within its walls, the faith that had sustained generations of slaves intersected with social discourse around issues of personhood, worthiness and freedom. For slaves, from whom all basic constitutional rights had been withheld for

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[39] Richard Allen, *The Life Experience and Gospel Labors of the Right Reverend Richard Allen* pp. 25-26 quoted in Southern, *Music of Black America, 74.*
[40] Southern, *Music of Black Americans*, 76.
[41] Richard Allen, *The African Methodist Pocket Hymn Book* (1818) quoted in Southern, *Music of Black Americans*, 81.
[42] Southern, *Music of Black Americans*, 81.

generations, including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, as well as the most basic of human dignities, the significance of the Black Church cannot be overstated.

> The Black Church became the center of social intercourse and the citadel of hope against the unfulfilled promises of Emancipation. It provided the cocoon of insulation that softened the impact of the disorientation produced by America's hypocrisy regarding freedom. The…political, social, and economic disfranchisement and the inherent ill-preparedness of urban or rural life on their own drove the newly freed slaves to internalize their meager growth and development and to focus on their religious faith. Thus, the Black Church was the proving ground for the development of leadership and literacy training. [43]

A more careful look at the Black Church during its inception in the late eighteenth century reveals a fundamental divide within its leadership about how worship should be conducted – a debate that would ultimately shape the styles of music produced and endorsed by the Black Church.

On one side of the argument stood the traditionalists represented by the aforementioned Reverend Richard Allen. On the other side were the assimilationists, who sought to remove all Africanisms from worship and replace them with the cultural practices of Whites. The most prominent, early assimilationist leader in the AME Church was its sixth bishop, Daniel Alexander Payne appointed in 1852. As Bishop, Payne organized travelling missionary groups to organize AME congregations throughout the south and provide training to the newly appointed leaders of those congregations.

Born to free Blacks in Charleston, South Carolina in 1811, Payne was well educated and ascribed to the social ideology that if black people showed themselves to be respectable members of society, white people would have no reason to show prejudice. According to Payne, Blacks, particularly those who sought leadership positions in the

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[43] Walker, *Somebody's Calling My Name,* 20.

AME Church, had to be literate and trained in a variety of academic subjects. Payne's efforts to educate Blacks would propel him to start several schools over the course of his lifetime and ultimately to become one of six founders of Wilberforce University in Ohio in 1856 and in the same year to become Wilberforce's president, the first black man in our nation's history to do so.

While Payne and Allen agreed that Blacks should have a church independent from whites, they disagreed upon worship style.

> There were Blacks who, in clinging to Afro-American folkways, expressed their allegiance to the self-contained culture of their slave ancestors. Among these people, the ring shout, so bothersome to Payne, thrived along with the spirituals, hand clapping, and foot stomping that gave it life. There were other Blacks who found indigenous Black culture an impediment to the assimilation of Afro-Americans into the mainstream culture. Singing was one of the ways they could demonstrate that they deserved a place in the white culture to which they were still denied access.[44]

Bishop Daniel Payne adhered to a cultural aesthetic much more aligned to Euro-American performance practice. Even though the Black organized by Payne's missionary teams were committed to assimilationist practices, it was very difficult to erase all evidence of Africanisms from their services. Payne was noted for his opposition to the ring shout in particular and famously confronted a song leader in the following exchange.

> You might sing 'til you fell down dead, and you would fail to convert a single sinner, because nothing but the Spirit of God and the Word of God can convert sinners." The leader of the ring shout replied, " The Spirit of God works upon people in different ways. At camp meeting there must be ring here, a ring there, a ring over yonder, or sinners will not get converted.[45]

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[44] Michael W. Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3.

[45] Daniel Alexander Payne, *Recollections of Seventy Years*, quoted in Eileen Southern, *Readings in Black American Music* (New York: Norton, 1983), 65-70.

Beginning in 1830, The AME Church, introduced trained choirs accompanied by pipe organ into many of their churches. By the late 1800s, Black assimilationist churches offered public concerts featuring these trained musicians- evidence of the pride they took in producing music like that of the dominant culture. Payne's observations in his 1888 memoirs reflect positively on this achievement:

> In a musical direction what progress has been made within the last forty years! There is not a church of ours anywhere in any of the great cities of the republic that can afford to buy an instrument, which is without one.[46]

Allen, of the traditionalist camp, was fully aware of the disagreement between assimilationists and traditionalists and the impact it had on the Black church. In fact, Allen addressed this divide in his poem, "Spiritual Song."

*Hymn Texts of Richard Allen*

Written prior to the 1801 hymn collection, from the perspective of a traditional Black worshipper addressing an assimilationist worshipper, who is dubbed Brother Pilgrim, the multi- stanza poem emerges painting a clear picture of both assimilationist and traditionalist arguments. Throughout the work, the traditionalist worshipper reminds Brother Pilgrim of the biblical evidence supporting exuberant worship. At the end of poem, Brother Pilgrim repents and concedes. Dorothy Parker's *Early Negro Writing* contains the song in its entirety.[47]

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[46] Daniel Payne, *Recollections of Seventy Years* (Nashville 1888); quoted in Southern, *Music of Black Americans*, 128.
[47] Dorothy Porter, ed., *Early Negro Writing: 1760-1837* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1971), 559-561.

**Table 1. The Text of Allen's "Spiritual Song."**

| Stanza 1 | Stanza 2 (Brother Pilgrim) |
|---|---|
| Good morning brother Pilgrim, what marching to Zion, What doubts and what dangers have you met to-da y,Have you found a blessing, are your joys increasing?Press forward my brother and make no delay;Is your heart a-glowing, are your comforts a-flowing,And feel you an evidence, now bright and clear;Feel you a desire that burns like a fire,And longs for the hour that Christ shall appear. | I came out this morning, and now am returning, Perhaps little better than when I first came, Such groaning and shouting, it sets me to doubting, I fear such religion only a dream; The preachers were stamping, the people were jumping, And screaming so loud that I neither could hear, Either praying or preaching, such horrible screeching, T'was truly offensive to all that were there? |

| Stanza 3 | Stanza 4 (Brother Pilgrim) |
|---|---|
| Perhaps my dear brother, while they pray'd together, You sat and consider'd and prayed not at all, Would you find a blessing, then pray without ceasing, Obey the command that was given by Paul, For if you should reason at any such season, No wonder if Satan should tell in your ears, The preachers and people they are but a rabble, And this is no place for reflection and pray'rs. | No place for reflection, I'm fill'd with distraction, I wonder what people could bear for to stay, The men they were bawling, the women were squaling, I know not for my part how any could pray; Such horrid confusion, if this be religion, Sure `tis something new that never was seen, For the sacred pages that speak of all ages, Does no where declare that such ever has been. |
| Stanza 5 | Stanza 6 |
| Don't be so soon shaken, if I'm not mistaken, Such things have been acted by Christians of old, When the ark was a-coming, King David came running, And dancing before it by scripture we're told, When the Jewish nation had laid the foundation, And rebuilt the temple at Ezra's command, Some wept and some prais'd, and such a noise there was rais'd, It was heard afar off, perhaps all through the land. | As for the preacher, Ezekiel the teacher, Was taught for to stamp and to smite with his hand, To shew the transgression of that wicked nation,<br><br>That they might repent and obey the command. For scripture quotation in the dispensation, The blessed Redeemer had handed them out, If these cease from praying, we hear him declaring, The stones to reprove him would quickly cry out. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Stanza 7 (Brother Pilgrim)<br><br>The scripture is wrested, for Paul hath protested, That order should be kept in the houses of God,<br><br>Amidst such a clatter who knows what they're after, Or who can attend to what is declared; To see them behaving like drunkards a-raving, And lying and rolling prostrate on the ground, I really felt awful and sometimes was fearful, That I'd be the next that would come tumbling down. | Stanzas 8-10<br><br>You say you felt awful, you ought to be careful, Least you grieve the Spirit and make it depart, For from your expressions you felt some impressions, The sweet melting showers has tender'd your heart;<br><br>You fear persecution, and that's the delusion, Brought in by the devil to turn you away; Be careful my brother, for bless'd is no other, Than creatures who are not offended in me. When Peter was preaching, and boldly was teaching, The way of salvation in Jesus' name, The spirit descended and some were offended,<br><br>And said of the men they were fill'd with new wine. I never yet doubted but some of them shouted, While others lay prostrate by power struck down, Some weeping, some praying, while others were saying, They are as drunk as fools, or in falsehood abound.<br><br>Our time is a-flying, our moments a-dying, We are led to improve them and quickly appear, For the bless'd hour when Jesus in power,In glory shall come is now drawing near, Methinks there will be shouting, and I'm not doubting, But crying and screaming for mercy in vain: Therefore my dear Brother, let's now pray together,That your precious soul may be fill'd with the flame. |
| Stanza 11<br><br>Sure praying is needful, I really feel awful, I fear that my day of repentance is past; But I will look to the Saviour, his mercies for ever, These storms of temptation will not always last, I look for the blessing and pray without ceasing, His mercy is sure unto all that believe, My heart is a glowing, I feel his love flowing, Peace, comfort, and pardon, I now have received. | |

Allen's skillful depiction of both sides of the ideological argument uses scripture to bolster the argument made to Brother Pilgrim for example, the Stanza 3 reference King David is found in 2 Samuel 6:14-16.[48] The Stanza 8 reference to resisting the Holy Spirit is found in Ephesians 4:30.[49]

[48] 2nd Samuel 6:14 (King James Version).
[49] Ephesians 4:30 (King James Version).

> The historic conflict between affirmationist Black Christians and assimilationist/accomodationist Black Christians becomes more sharply defined when we introduce another historical personality to the discussion. Brother Pilgrim, of course, was only a literary construct that functioned as a sounding board for Allen's polemic. There was, however, an actual person of unquestionable historic significance who embodied the sentiments that Richard Allen opposed, although he, for the most part, made his mark on history after Allen's.[50]

*The Great Awakening – Rise of Religion and Nationalism*

I was curious about the origins of the two opposing ideologies within the early Black Church: Why the divide? In *The Rise of Gospel Blues,* Michael Harris theorizes that assimilationist ideology could be attributed to the "deculturation of former slaves through the Bibles and primers of northern white missionaries,"[51] who after training Blacks, expected them to teach the uneducated members of their community thereby communicating the Eurocentric values they learned.[52] Southern's research determined that in an effort to prove they deserved their independence, some Black churches chose to assimilate, because "[prior to the Civil War] white Methodists welcomed the exodus of Blacks from their congregations they were reluctant to let Blacks govern themselves…with whites willing to scrutinize their every move, Blacks lost few opportunities to show that they…could oversee their affairs….as effectively as whites."[53]

I agree with the research of the scholars mentioned who explain in part the reasons for an assimilationist Black Church. Though myriad justifications exist for the

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[50] Kenneth L. Waters, "Liturgy, Spirituality and Polemic in the Hymnody of Richard Allen." *The North Star: A Journal of African American Religious History*.2, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 6.

[51] Michael Harris, *Rise of Gospel Blues,* 5.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Southern, *Music of Black Americans* 7.

assimilationist point of view, its existence from the inception of the Black church promoted a cultural divide that still remains today evident in the music performed in Black Church services. "Wherever Black congregations were resistant to White influences, the music of the forefathers remained intact, and the link to Mother Africa was retained."[54] and conversely, "the [assimilationist] church…perhaps unwittingly, divorced itself culturally from Africa [and] moved toward joining the culture of the dominant society." [55]

Elements of the traditionalist and assimilationists can be seen as early as the previously mentioned Protestant revival movement known as the Great Awakening. The first wave of the Great Awakening occurred from 1720-1740, and the second wave from 1820-1850. Both revivals preceded major military conflicts – the American Revolution and the Civil War respectively. The purpose of the first revival wave was to reignite religious conviction amongst believers while the focus of the second was to convert unbelievers. These revivals accomplished far more as history records.

### *Camp Meetings and Denominations*

During both waves of the Great Awakening a new type of worship service the open-air camp meeting, became popular. It was given that name because attendees - white, slave and free Black alike, pitched tents, camping in one location for several consecutive days. Attendees would hear several sermons each day interspersed with hymn singing and prayers often into the night. The result of these revivals was massive growth of the Protestant church and the creation of new denominations. Even more

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[54] Walker, *Somebody's Calling*, 25.
[55] Ibid., 24.

importantly, "the Great Awakening ... was America's first truly national event…the process that would lead to European immigrants identifying themselves as 'Americans' had begun."[56] Echoing these sentiments Handy states "many of the bonds of national feeling that later helped to give a sense of unity to the people were first forged in the warmth of religious renewal."[57]

The first Great Awakening wave heavily impacted the New England states. Preachers arose from its many converts at revival meetings. Training schools sprang up to educate new convert and preachers. These training schools grew to become some of the great universities of New England, for example this is how Dartmouth and Yale originated. The revivals also created denominations like the Methodists and Wesleyans. These denominations became powerful social structures that unified colonists outside of existing governmental structures. Robert Handy in *A History of Churches* states, "with their many inter-colonial aspects, the Awakenings played a role in the emergence of a national spirit."[58] The restrained, intellectual tone of the first Awakening (1720-1750) was set by the preaching of Johnathan Edwards, then considered American's greatest preacher and the Englishman, George Whitefield. The metered hymns that accompanied this revival wave were composed by or in the style of hymn writer Isaac Watts, (1674-1748). A prolific hymn writer, Watts was considered the Father of English hymnody and was the author of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* a collection of poems published in 1701 and well known in the colonies. The emphasis of this first revival wave was on the

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[56] Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 110-111.
[57] Robert T. Handy, *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1977), 77.
[58] Ibid.

pursuit of a "pure, uncorrupted Christianity"[59] which prized reason over emotion, a sentiment later imitated by Payne as he formed assimilationist Black churches. "The Black congregations…imitative of white worship styles did so with a parallel loss of enthusiasm and spirited worship so native…to their beginnings."[60]

In sharp contrast to the first Awakening, the second wave was characterized perhaps unintentionally, by its emotionalism. This was due in part to the integrated camp meetings, where Black slaves participated with lively, joyous songs, shouts and dances. From the perspective of Whites in attendance at these camp meetings, Blacks were "holding songfests away from proper supervision" and were "singing songs of their own composing…dangerously near to being dance tunes in the style of slave jubilee melodies. None of this was acceptable [to whites]." [61] Varying accounts tell of Black campers who sang shouts and choruses long after the meetings ending and sometimes throughout the night. Though the singing of Black campers had its critics, its presence in the camps forever changed the way the hymns were raised (sung) especially the traditional hymns composed by Isaac Watts. This jubilant style of hymn singing had great impact upon Allen, the traditionalist Methodist leader.

Even in the late nineteenth century, hymns written by Isaac Watts, still lived on in the Black church in a unique musical style called hymn lining. Sung in short, long or common meter, each meter with several corresponding tunes, these tunes would vary

[59]C. Leonard Allen and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of the Churches of Christ,* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 1988), 90.
[60] Walker, *Somebody's Calling My Name,* 25.
[61] Southern, *Music of Black Americans*, 85.

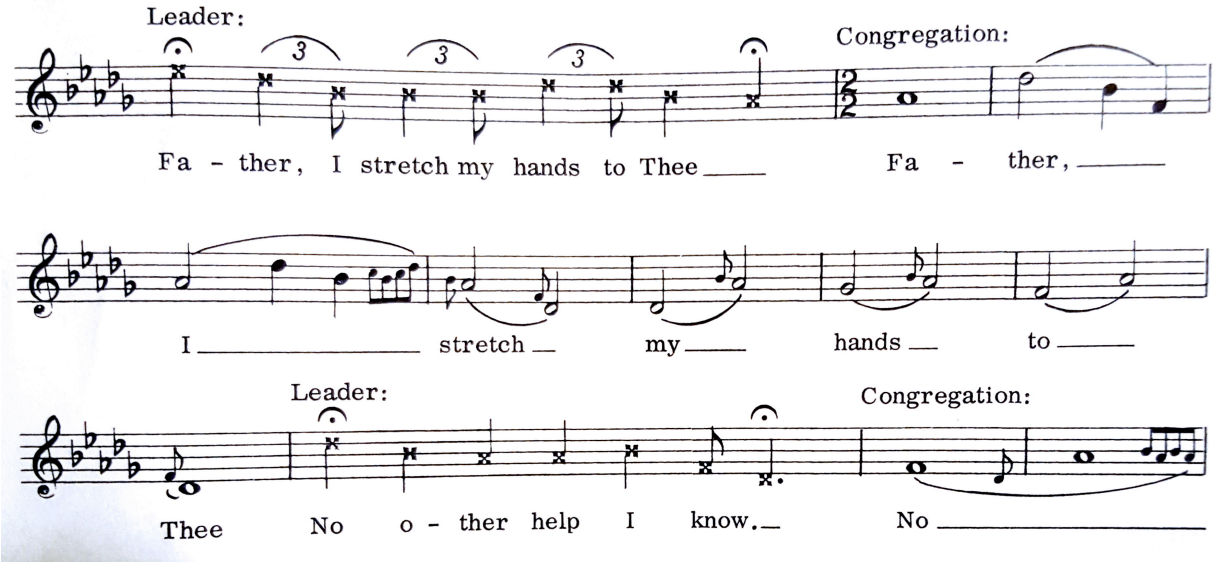
based on region of the country. Any song text that fit a given meter could be sung to its tune.

Lined hymns were performed in call-and-response style and most frequently used long metered phrasing. To begin, a leader – usually any person who could read, would sing a phrase of the hymn. Using heterophonic vocal parts, and long phrases, the congregation would respond by repeating sections or the entirety of the phrase the leader 'called.' In practice, hymn lining was not exclusive to the Black church. In fact, some White southern Protestant congregations also sang in this tradition. In a few Black churches, hymn lining is still practiced today. In most churches however, hymn lining was overtaken by Gospel music at the turn of the twentieth century.[62]

> Words seem inadequate to describe [lined hymn's] power and the ambience they created within the singing group. The singers actually create and share a common moan that encircles the depth of struggle and pain and rises in peaks of celebration-joy, shouting, never light, always weighted with the burden of the day.

[62] Burnim, *African American Music,* 613.

**Figure 4. Example of a lined hymn (transcribed by Ben. E. Bailey).**[63]




*Fisk Jubilee Singers*

Following Emancipation, the Black Church continued to support both traditionalist and assimilationist ideologies. By the late nineteenth century, concertized or arranged spirituals, which largely abandoned the performance practices of the folk spiritual, flourished. The Fisk Jubilee Singers, who were trained by George White, a white Music Professor and arranger at Fisk, remain one of the most celebrated examples of the success of the arranged spiritual and by default, assimilationist ideology.

> The singers were students at the newly established Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, which opened its doors in 1866. George L. White, one of the school's young white teachers, [provided] music instruction…and training in musicianship to select students...They went on to sing …in the United States, before crowned heads of Europe and before the common people of Germany, Switzerland, and Great Britain.[64]

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[63] Southern, *The Music of Black Americans,* 454.

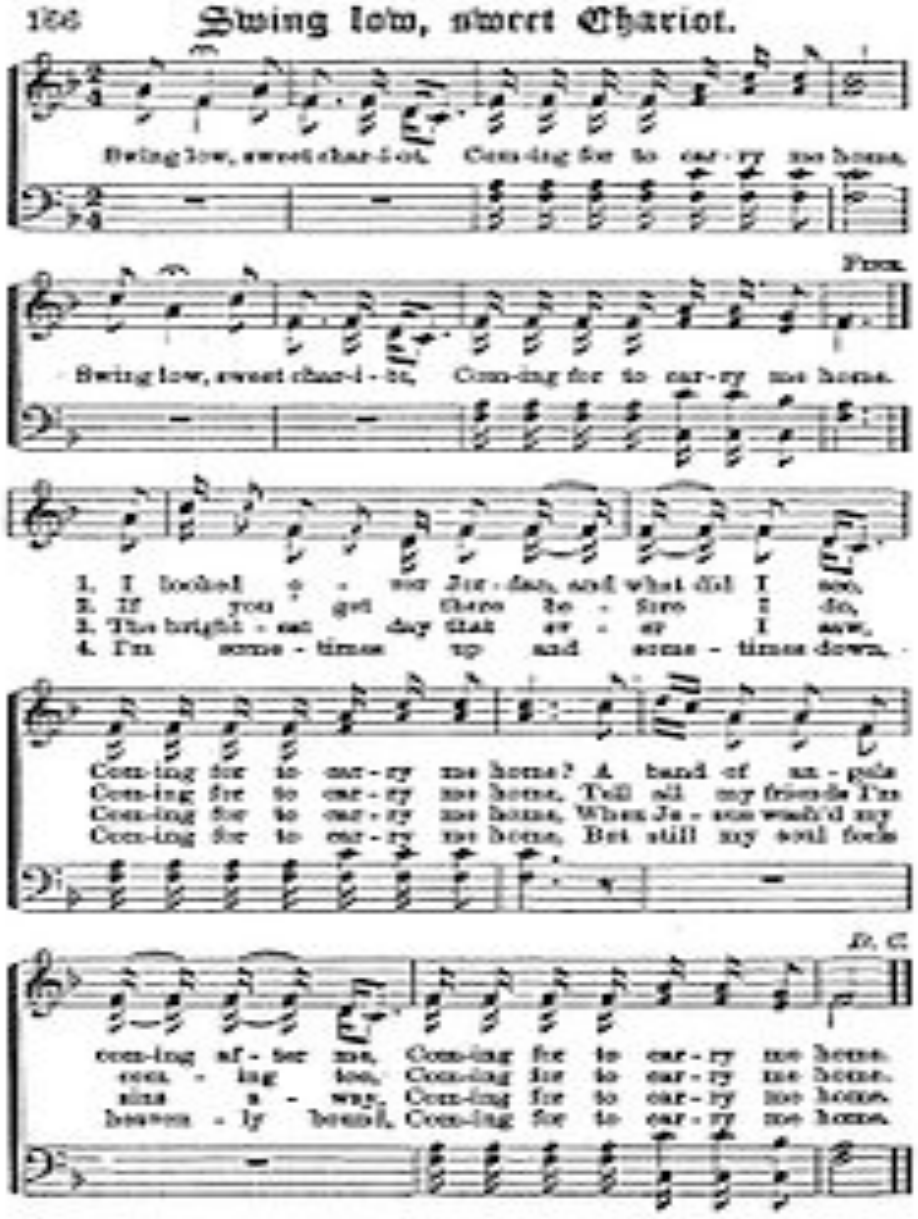
[64] Ibid. 227-229.

"The hand clapping, foot stomping, and individual latitude in interpreting the melodic line that characterized the folk spiritual were replaced by predictability, controlled reserve, and the absence of overt demonstrative behavior. The aesthetics of the [dominant] musical culture were now being superimposed onto the Negro spiritual"[65] and to make it more palatable to European and White American ears. Among the few discernible African elements remaining were the call-and-response song structure and the singers themselves. Audiences who heard this and other arranged spirituals by the Jubilee Singers were proudly assured:

> …they have been educated out of the peculiarities of the Negro dialect…They have also received considerable musical instruction...and become familiar with much of our best sacred and classical music [so as to] modify the manner of execution. They do not attempt to imitate the grotesque bodily motions or drawling intonations that often characterize the singing of great congregations of the colored people in their excited religious meetings."[66]

[65] Burnim, *African American Music*, 62.
[66] George White, ed., *Jubilee Songs as sung by the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University*. (New York: Bigelow and Main, [nd]), 31.

**Figure 5. "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" from Jubilee Songs 1873**[67]




In the version of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" seen in (Figure 5) made popular by the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the four-part diatonic harmonic structure, use of contrary motion, equal phrases with perfect authentic cadences were characteristic of European music – especially hymns. While it can be argued that the efforts of assimilationist

[67]Ibid.

arrangers like George White preserved spirituals that may otherwise have been lost, it is also true that by Europeanizing the melodies, harmonies, rhythmic structure, and removing all dance or motion during performance, an entirely new musical form was created – equally European and African American in sound and practice.

By the 1880s, many Black groups were imitating the Fisk model of touring and performing spirituals as a way of earning money. In fact in 1888, Fisk abandoned the practice due to the increased competition in the very marketplace it had established.

*Black Classical Composers and American Nationalism*

The success of the Fisk Jubilee Singers led the way for twentieth century Black composers who were "excellently trained [having] studied at Oberlin, New England Conservatory…or privately with competent, European-trained white musicians," many of whom immigrated to the United States following the Civil War.[68] In light of America's changing musical landscape at the end of the nineteenth century when opera companies and symphonies arose, along with opportunities for Black musicians to study abroad, composers like Harry T. Burleigh, R. Nathaniel Dett, Jester Hairston and Hall Johnson who benefitted from the changing times and the influx of European musicians who served as teachers. From concert stages, films and choral arrangements to recordings these composers would do much to increase the reach of the assimilated spiritual.

Interestingly enough, Eileen Southern considered these twentieth century Black composers "nationalists in the sense that they consciously turned to the folk music of

[68] Southern, *Music of Black Americans,* 268.

their people as a source of inspiration for their compositions, whether in the fields of concert music, show music, or dance and entertainment music."[69] She contends:

> The songwriters set the poems of Black poets and made vocal and choral arrangements of spirituals and other folksong types. Instrumental composers wrote program music, drawing heavily upon characteristic Negro melodic idioms and dance rhythms. All the composers placed special emphasis upon traditional African-American performance practice.[70]

This emerging thread of performing nationalism by means of performing one's own culture became increasingly important within the Black community as the social narrative of the great migration and subsequent Civil Rights movement gained momentum. Black composers were not the only ones redefining nationalism by appropriating Black culture. Dvorák, the Czech composer whose well-known 1893 symphony *From The New World,* said the following about the concertized spiritual:

> I am now satisfied that the future music of this country must be founded upon what are called the Negro melodies...they are the folk-songs of America, and your composers must turn to them.[71]

Dvorák's influence was widely felt among both white and Black American composers who took his admonishment to heart. His influenced extended the Europe where Samuel Coleridge Taylor, an Afro-British composer of the late nineteenth century was inspired to compose spirituals in the style of the Fisk Jubilee Singers.

Despite two compelling factors – first; the growing popularity of Europeanized spiritual and second; the dramatic increase in the literacy rate of Blacks just thirty years following Emancipation which "facilitated the introduction of hymnbooks into church

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[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., 265-267.
[71] Ibid.

services [wherein] Black folks and Euro-American hymns were joined together," [72] Black sacred music of the traditionalists continued to grow. In my opinion, the retention and performance of Africanisms: folk spirituals, coded spirituals, "Dr. Watts", and transitional Gospel forms, serve as an historical record of the changing social context of Blacks in America. Musical forms that retain Africanisms serve as witness to "social relations…being negotiated by means of musical performance."[73]

For example, when traditionalist Blacks encountered the metered hymns of Isaac Watts, rather than perform what was written they transformed it to fit Black folk spiritual performance practices adding, "the presence of a distinct "beat"…the call-and-response device… and obvious free syncopation [making] apparent the direct relationship [to the early spiritual]."[74] Wendell Whalum, scholar and former director of the famed Morehouse Men's Glee Club noted:

> The Black Methodists and Baptists endorsed Watts' hymns, but the Baptists 'Blackened' them. They virtually threw out the meter signature and rhythm and before 1875 [began] a new system… though based on the style of singing coming from England to America in the eighteenth century, was drastically different from it. It was congregational singing music like that spiritual had been in which the text was retained."[75]

As the twentieth century dawned, America was a hopeful, independent nation – post Emancipation, post Reconstruction and now entering into the new age of Industrial Revolution. As Blacks began to find their place in this new American landscape, performance of Black culture served to contextualize the community in the face of

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[72] Walker, *Somebody's Calling,* 101.
[73] Kelly M. Askew, *Performing the Nation; Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago,: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 17.
[74] Walker, *Somebody's Calling*, 76.
[75] Wendel Philips Whalum, "Black Hymnody," *Review and Expositor* 70, no. 3 (Summer, 1973), 342 quoted in Walker, *Somebody's Calling*, 76.

rapidly evolving social constructs. In Church music, two key figures emerged continuing the lineage of the traditionalists: Albert Tindley and Thomas Dorsey. Dorsey emerged as the father of Black Gospel Music after introducing a blues influenced style that ushered in traditional, modern and contemporary Gospel music styles.

Burnim credits the Great Migration as a contributing factor to the rise and spread of Gospel music. After the turn of the twentieth century and following World Wars I, and II, southern Blacks began to move in large numbers to the North, Mid-west and Western United States. During this time of transition, Blacks took with them the traditional spirituals and lined hymns, the sounds of a familiar culture, so prevalent in the South. Upon reaching places like Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angeles migrating Blacks were met with new musical styles, mainly jazz and the blues.[76] The continuum that began with folk spirituals of slaves met the meter music of Euro-American hymns. Upon that foundation was placed the jazz and blues of the "secular" world created in the Depression, which opened to door for the creation of Gospel.[77] For these reasons, the rise of Gospel music completed the circle of Black sacred musical expression in North America. Still, As Burnim points out, "as did the folk spiritual, Gospel music in its formative years faced staunch opposition and criticism, "[78] mainly due to its incorporation of musical styles and instruments not commonly associated with Black sacred music.

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[76] Burnim, *African American Music*, 66.
[77] Walker, *Somebody's Calling*, 127.
[78] Ibid.

*Charles Albert Tindley (1851-1933)*

The Pentecostal church was gaining momentum within the Black community as Charles Tindley began pastoring Tindley Temple United Methodist Church in Philadelphia just before the turn of the twentieth century. Pentecostal music was characterized by extremely energetic "rhythmic piano" and services that called for "full participation of the congregation in all its worship activities."[79] It was the first Black denomination to add musical ensembles to the folk church tradition. The use of the instruments common to jazz and blues performers, piano, guitar, saxophone, trombone and drums allowed the sound of secular dance music to enter the Black church. While Tindley incorporated these elements into his services, he did not depart completely from his Methodist roots:

> filled with spirited congregational singing and extemporaneous prayers, features that had also characterized the worship of slaves. As a devout Methodist, TIndley's church [also] included hymns and anthems of European origin. Most important to the development of Gospel music, however, Tindley himself wrote songs designed to complement his sermons. [80]

By the early 1900s, Tindley was sponsoring concerts of church songs he had composed and in 1916 composed a volume of thirty-seven "popular and religious song for the Sunday Schools, Prayer Meetings, Epworth League Meetings and Social Gatherings."[81]

Burnim makes a clear distinction between the community-oriented, spontaneously sung folk spiritual and the intentionally composed early Gospel song. "Tindley's compositions are largely distinguished from the folk spiritual by the use of instrumental accompaniment (piano and organ) and the prevalence of the verse-chorus external

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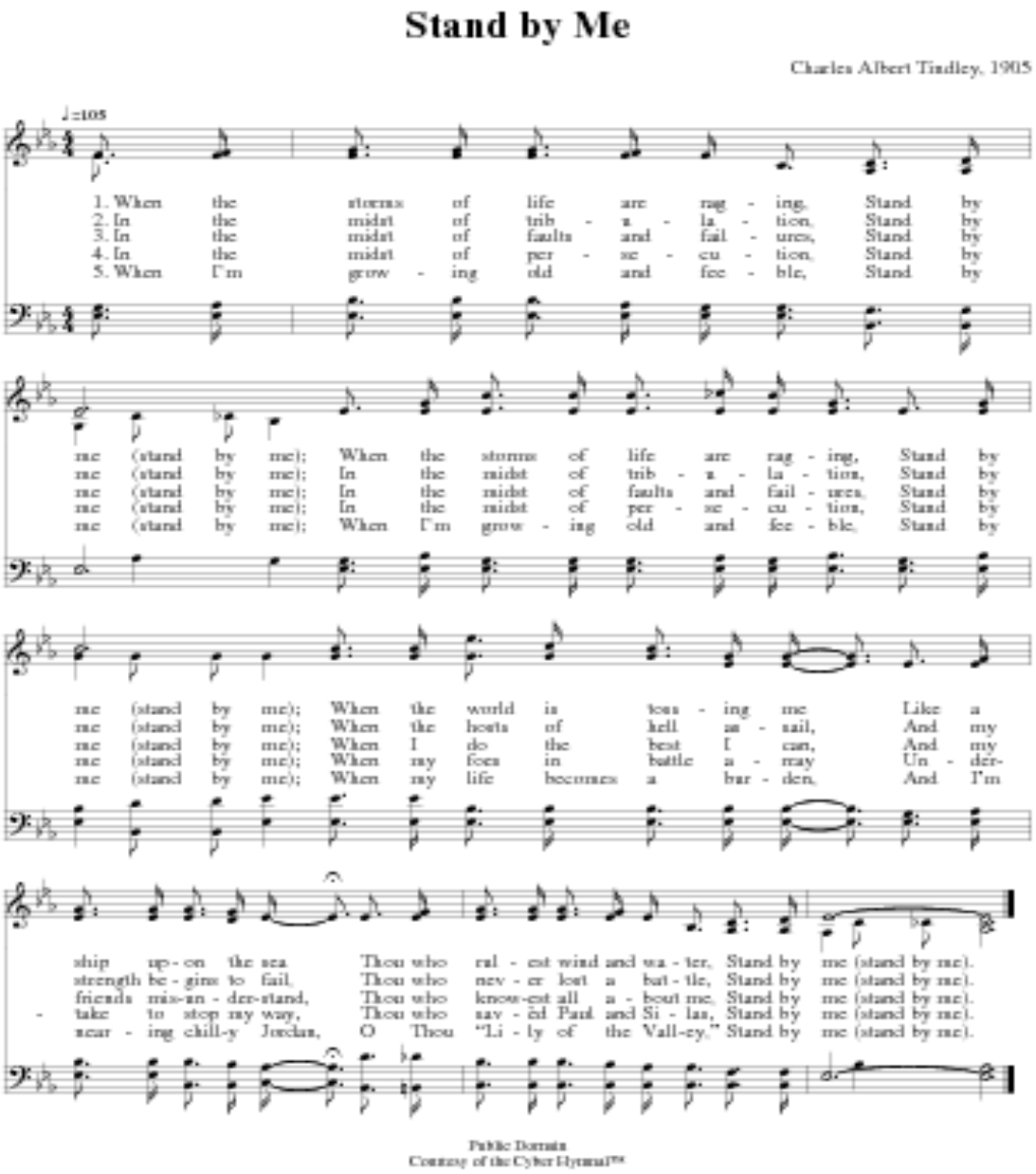
[79] Southern, *Music of Black Americans*, 456.
[80] Burnim, *African American Music*, 67.
[81] Southern, *Music of Black Americans*, 458.

structure…incorporating call-and-response into this larger structure." [82] Horace Boyer's research notes that the Tindley style also leaves room for improvisation of "text, melody, harmony and rhythm,"[83] identifying the origins of attributes that still characterize Gospel music performance practice today. His best known compositions include "Stand by Me" (Figure 5), "Beams of Heaven", "I'll Overcome" which was re-worked musically and lyrically to become the Civil Rights Anthem, "We Shall Overcome" and "We'll Understand it better by and by."[84]

In Tindley's "Stand by Me" the merger between standard hymn form and emerging Gospel is evident. Though composed in four bar phrases characteristic of Euro-American hymns, the repetition of "Stand by me" at the end of the 1st, 2nd 4th phrases complete with flatted thirds is common in blues and jazz music and reminiscent of the call-and-response of folk spirituals. Recordings by popular artists of "Stand by Me" well into the mid twentieth century yield performances that are extremely varied. The slow, lined hymn /blues mix version recorded by the Staple Singers in 1955, is markedly different from the andante, hymn-like version recorded by Elvis Presley in 1967 on his sacred music album*, How Great Thou Art*.

[82] Burnim, *African American Music*, 67.
[83] Ibid p. 69
[84] Walker, *Somebody's Calling My Name*, 130.

**Figure 6. "Stand by Me" by Charles Albert Tindley**[85]




[85] Albert Tindley, "Stand by Me" *Cyberhymnal*, http://www.hymnary.org/tune/stand_by_me_tindley (accessed 24 December 2015).

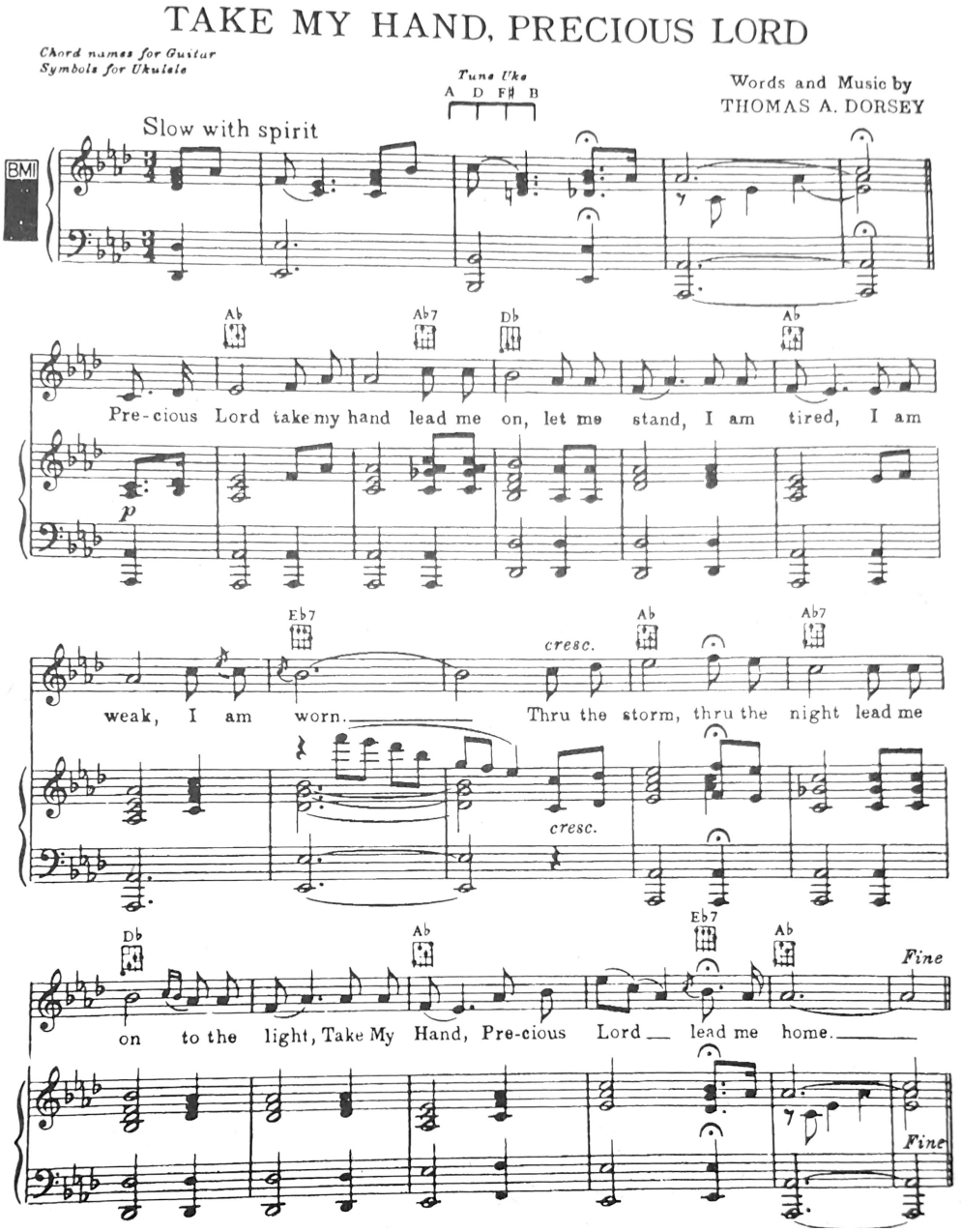
*The Father of Modern Gospel – Thomas Dorsey*

Thomas Dorsey (1899-1993) was based in Chicago after migrating from Georgia in his late teens. He was equally well versed in church, jazz and blues music yielding a unique piano performance and songwriting style that was at first too secular for some churches. In his most well-known and enduring piece, "Precious Lord Take My Hand" Tindley's influence is apparent. Like his predecessor, Dorsey was "skillful in utilizing the verse-chorus hymn structure as a foundation for the melodies, chord progressions and rhythms which reflected his background in blues and jazz."[86]

Alongside the compositions of Tindley and Dorsey sprang up performers; Mahalia Jackson, and Sallie Martin who not only promoted this new style of Black sacred music, but were the founding members of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses in 1932. By having the foresight to form an organization that would promote and teach Gospel music, these early pioneers created a way to expand the reach of Gospel music internationally. In the late sixties, James Cleveland would create a similar organization, The Gospel Music Workshop of America, which is still active at the time of this writing, with an annual attendance that exceeds 20,000 participants.[87]

[86] Burnim. p.70
[87] Ibid.

**Figure 7. "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" by Thomas Dorsey**




Source: Hill and Range Songs, Inc., New York, NY. ©1965.

Burnim further notes that, "the performance of traditional Gospel music reflects aesthetic values consonant with the performance of the folk spiritual." [88] As far as performance practice goes, scholars Reagon, Burnim, Harris and Southern agree that similarities between the folk spiritual and Gospel include the call-and-response song form, transmission via oral tradition, use of chest voice that is often extended well into the upper range, polyrhythmic pulse and dance.

Distinguishing factors between folk spirituals and Gospel songs include:
1) The heterophony of the folk spiritual is replaced in Gospel with a three- part harmonic structure comprised of soprano, alto, and tenor where all parts move in similar motion. When soloists are used, the singing style is both melismatic and improvisatory in nature.
2). The simple melodies of the folk spiritual become highly melismatic in Gospel, frequently sung around the pentatonic and blues scales with common use of flatted thirds while outlining seventh chords – the more highly decorated the better.
3) Gospel music texts tend to repeat a single idea throughout while the accompanying instruments use characteristic syncopation and percussive instrumentation, an augmentation of the sole use of hand claps and foot stomps used in the folk spiritual.[89]

As Gospel music developed between 1910 and 1930, soloists gave way to trios, quartets and choirs. Quartets were initially comprised of male singers, often four or five in number (where the fifth singer sang lead) who sang in very tight vocal harmonies, reminiscent of barbershop style singing. Trios and larger choirs were often comprised exclusively of female singers – a practice that has been retained by modern Gospel

[88] Burnim, *African American Music*, 71.
[89] Southern, *Music of Black Americans*, 460.

choirs. From the late twentieth to the early twenty-first century, the popularity of small mixed voice ensembles gained popularity.[90]

Between 1940 and 1970, the use of non-traditional instruments including brass, extensive percussion and electric keyboards, basses and guitars allowed for Gospel to fuse with more secular styles like rock & roll, R&B, jazz, funk, rap and hip-hop. By 1970, Gospel had "moved beyond the protective confines of the Black Church to become a music that knew neither denomination, racial, cultural, or musical boundaries"[91] and now "firmly established on college campuses…in concert halls, theaters and movie houses; and on radio and television…Gospel was flourishing….no longer confined to the anecdotal but [appearing in] solidly researched articles, books…and doctoral dissertations of quality."[92]

Perhaps emboldened by, and no doubt under the influence of these favorable conditions, twenty young Black Midshipmen at the Naval Academy decided to form a student led Gospel choir in 1985. It is reasonable to conjecture that they sought relief from the relentless inequalities, racial tensions and challenges of integrating a dominant culture military organization by creating a social context for performances of their own culture in a way that was familiar and unifying.

Not only did these students repeat the history of their forefathers by leveraging the retained Africanisms of their ancestors' music to draw positive distinction between themselves and the dominant culture at the Naval Academy, but they also repeated history by coming out of the dominant population to create their own social structure – a

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[90] Burnim, African American Music, 72.
[91] Ibid., 73.
[92] Southern, *Music of Black Americans* , 487.

Gospel Choir where both their fundamental culture and sense of nationalism could be performed.

It is important to provide a close look at the factors that contributed to the formation of the Gospel Choir. Certainly, racial discrimination was a large part of the culture at the Naval Academy since as an institution it reflected the prevailing beliefs and attitudes about Black people within American culture from the Civil War through the end of the twentieth century.

# CHAPTER TWO: CHORAL MUSIC AT THE NAVAL ACADEMY

*Naval Academy - The Civil War and Newport Rhode Island*

In 1842, Secretary of the Navy A. P. Upshur's report on the condition of the Navy addressed an immediate need for improvement in the education of naval officers.[93] Shortly thereafter, The Naval Academy was established in Annapolis, Maryland in 1845. By the 1860s the Academy had established a five-year training program, which required two years at sea and three years in the classroom. Congress regulated academy admissions and various buildings were constructed to house and train the Midshipmen in order to accommodate the growing student body and support services.

An historical timeline published on the Naval Academy's intranet lists the first Midshipmen choir in 1861. I found no evidence in the Naval Archives in Nimitz Library or in Chapel records to corroborate this and the choir's presence on campus would have been cut short, as its was organized one year prior to the start of the Civil War. To avoid Confederate attack on the Academy, all daily activities were physically relocated from Annapolis, Maryland to Newport, Rhode Island for the duration of the War. According to Fred Zilian's article in the *Newport Daily News* the arrival of professors, their families and the Midshipmen was "…welcomed with a 24-gun salute from Fort Adams. Newporters gathered to enjoy the military [band] music springing from [both vessels]."[94] In August of 1865 at the end of the war, the Academy returned to Annapolis.[95]

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[93] http://www.usna.edu/USNAHistory/history-tablet.html accessed 11 November 2015.
[94] Fred Zillian, "After war began the Naval Academy Temporarily moved to Newport" *The Newport Daily News*, April. 2013.
[95] (accessed December 2014) http://www.usna.edu/USNAHistory/History.php

There are copious records about band and instrumental music dating from the earliest days of the Naval Academy. Curiously, neither the Archives located in Nimitz Library nor the records contained in the Chapel at the Naval Academy chronicle choral music prior to the mid-twentieth century. Despite the late entry of choral music into the musical culture of the Academy, it is inextricably bound to the history of race relations in America. Since the history of a people is often observed through performances of culture, nationalism and patriotism, the history of choral music at the Academy also reflects this multi- layered view of past events.

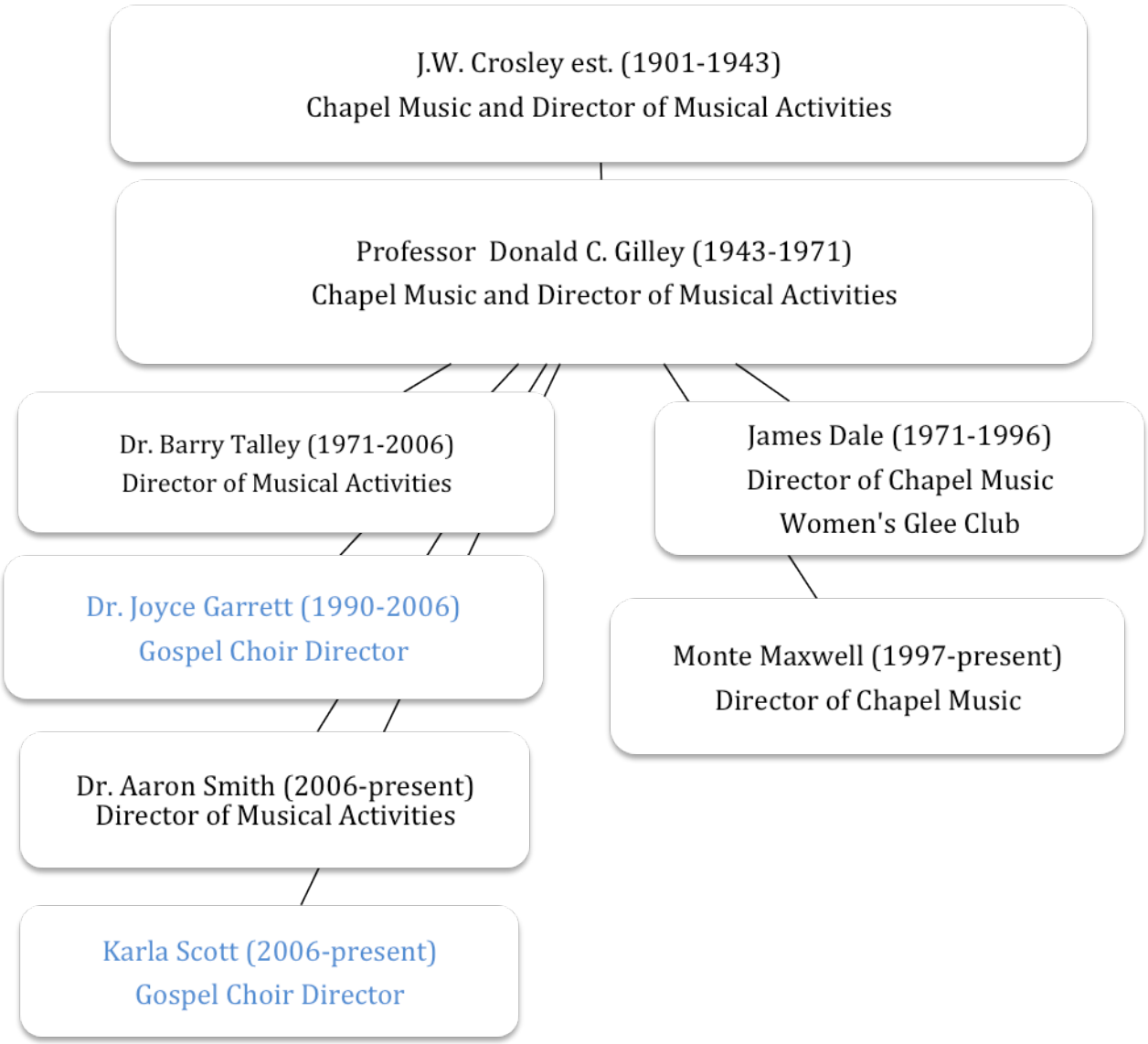
Using interviews and media archives, I have been able to assemble the succession of Directors of Chapel Choirs beginning at the turn of the twentieth century. It is a remarkably short list of musicians. Little is preserved in writing about the choirs during the tenure of J.W. Crossly, the Academy's first Chapel Organist/Choir Director who served from 1901-1943. Crossley is primarily remembered for composing the Naval Academy's school song, *Blue and Gold* in 1932. His successor, Professor Gilley served in the position for nearly thirty years. After Professor Gilley's retirement in 1971, Dr. Barry Talley was hired. During his tenure, he expanded choral music to include a Women's Glee Club (following the admission of women in 1975), and a Gospel Choir (first directed by Joyce Garrett), created a Music Department, and started the Distinguished Artist Series, a subscription concert series which helped to finance the construction of Alumni Hall, the current home of Music Department.

When Talley and Garrett retired in 2006, Dr. Aaron Smith assumed the role of Director of Musical Activities and I was hired to direct the Gospel Choir. Monte

Maxwell, who had served as Chapel Organist since 1997 following James Dale, assumed the role of Director of Chapel Music.

The existing historical data about the Choral Directors at the Naval Academy begins around 1940. For this reason, I will focus my historical overview on the tenures of Professor Gilley and Dr. Talley. Significantly, their years of service overlap the admission of Blacks and the introduction of Gospel music to the Academy. (Figure 8) shows the succession of choral music Directors and major choral ensembles at the Academy.

**Figure 8. Naval Academy Choral Music Directors and Timeline**.



*Professor Donald Gilley*

Professor Donald Curtiss Gilley became the second Organist and Chapel Choir Director at the Academy in 1944. He earned music degrees from the Cincinnati Conservatory, Peabody and Catholic Universities. He also earned a Certificate in Theater Organ Playing from Eastman Conservatory. Prior to joining the staff at the Academy, Gilley held teaching posts at Earlham College, Butler University and Jordan Conservatory. Upon arrival at the Academy, Gilley began directing the existing Chapel Choir, comprised largely of civilian citizens with some Midshipmen. Since the Academy's Sunday services have always been open to the public, the Chapel Choir included local volunteers. He then organized the midshipmen Antiphonal and Plebe Summer Choirs, both of which were organized into separate choirs for Protestants and Catholics. He also served as Chapel Organist.

In 1947, Gilley conducted the Academy premiere of Handel's "Messiah," which has since become an annual tradition at the Academy. From 1947 until the time of this writing, the "Messiah" performances have combined both Naval Academy Glee Clubs, students from Hood College, and the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra.

> About 1950 Professor Gilley reorganized the student-directed Glee Club and became its first professional Director. Thereafter the Glee Club achieved prominence through movie, radio and television appearances, performances at the White House, and public concerts before large audiences including schools, conventions, and Congress[96].

Professor Gilley was the first Director under whom the Midshipmen choirs were invited to represent the Naval Academy in an official capacity. This transition from Midshipmen choirs serving the Academy, to one serving the nation was possible in part

[96] Appendix A: Music Department Biography of Donald Curtiss Gilley.

to the growth in size and musical excellence of Gilley's groups during his tenure. The *Truman Library's White House and Social Office Files* from February 9, 1947 contain the notation; "Concert (U.S. Naval Academy Choir)" indicating a scheduled performance for then President Truman.[97] Following the tragic presidential assassination in 1963, Midshipmen from the Chapel Choirs sang at the funeral services of John F. Kennedy, Jr. In an article entitled "Accurate Listing of Funeral Music" by Irving Lowens it was reported:[98]

> Last Monday, millions watched the solemn procession of the caisson from the Capitol to the White House, from the White House to St. Matthew's Cathedral, from the cathedral to Arlington National Cemetery and as they watched, heartsick, they listened. What music did they hear? Every momentous event breeds legends, and already the legends about the music that accompanied the dead march proliferate. Some are entirely wrong. This is a verified listing of what was played and sung.[99]

Then, within a minute-by-minute historical account, he records the following:

> At the White House 11:35 a.m.: The cortege arrives at the White House. The Naval Academy Catholic Choir sang three selections at the north portico: "Above the Hills of Time the Cross Is Gleaming" (Londonderry Air) "Eternal Father, Strong to Save," and "Dona Nobis Pacem."[100]

Gilley was the last Musical Director to personally direct each choral ensemble while simultaneously serving as Chapel Organist. His successor hired a Chapel Music Director and expanded the role of Director of Musical Activities to include oversight of an official Music Department.

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[97] (Accessed 30 November 2015)http://www.trumanlibrary.org/hstpaper/social.htm
[98]Irving Lowens, "Accurate Listing of Funeral Music," *Washington Star.* 12/1/1963. (accessed 11 December 2015) http://tapsbugler.com/accurate-listing-of-music-at-president-kennedys-funeral/Lowens, Irving.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.

*Professor Barry Talley*

In 1971, Barry Talley was invited to the Academy to serve as Assistant Musical Director to Professor Gilley. Talley earned music degrees from Oberlin and Peabody Conservatory. He served as Musical Director for Bryn Mawr School for Girls in Baltimore, the Baltimore Comic Opera, Harford Choral Society, and at the Church of the Good Shepherd.[101] Talley thought his position at the Naval Academy would be a short-lived assignment, but after his first year, Professor Gilley retired and handed over the reigns to Talley. According to a 1999 interview in Oberlin's Alumni Magazine:

> He [leads] the Academy's Protestant and Catholic choruses and the Men's Glee Club and its smaller divisions: the Skivs, the Barbershop Quartet, and a country and western group. The U.S. Naval Academy Glee Club presents 70 to 80 concerts a year, including performances for U.S. Presidents, the Vatican, St. Peters, Westminster Abbey, Winchester Cathedral, and the New York Yacht Club. [Featured annually at] "Christmas in Washington," the singers [also] annually present Handel's "Messiah" a Glee Club tradition for more than 50 years.[102]

Under Talley's leadership, the number of Midshipmen participants grew, as did the number of musical groups and professional staff hired. He recalls:

> I must give credit to the Superintendent who hired me back in 1971, James Calvert. He was a visionary, and believed that the choice of a Music Director could have a profound impact on a school… When I came to work here, there were two Protestant choirs, one Catholic choir, the Glee Club (all men) and a music theater group and a Drum & Bugle Corp that were student directed. Calvert thought their productions were amateurish, and wanted a professional in charge, and that fell to me. Thus began a gradual professionalization of musical leadership at USNA.[103]

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[101] Mavis Clark, "The Naval Academy Music Man" *Oberlin Alumni Magazine,* Spring 1999.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Various questions (via email interview), were answered by Barry Talley, December 15, 2015. His answers are quoted throughout this document.

Dr. Talley served the Academy during a time when American ideologies were being challenged and overturned, particularly those which concerned issues of racial and gender equality. Changes in the larger culture were eventually seen at the Academy but issues of class and privilege, race and discrimination, were addressed within its halls at a slow pace. This was due in part to the fact that the Academy was populated with few exceptions white males until the mid-twentieth century. Talley's memories of his early years at the Academy confirm this observation:

> When I arrived at the Naval Academy [in 1971], the brigade of Midshipmen was not very diverse. Midshipmen were, for the most part, white and Protestant, with a few Catholics, fewer Hispanics, even fewer African-Americans, and no women. I worked with Candidate Guidance and by the mid-1970s I knew that the Academy was aggressively seeking to become more diverse.[104]

When asked what motivated him to develop choirs that supported all Midshipmen including women and minorities, Talley responded:

> All the program additions including Women's Glee Club and Gospel Choir were made in response to Midshipmen calls for opportunity. I supported these because it became apparent to me that such organizations were vitally important in feeding the spirit of the Midshipmen.[105]

*Gospel Choir – Student Led Years*

Naval historian, James Schneller, wrote that Gospel music appeared at the Naval Academy through the efforts of Midshipmen in 1985 and served as an "extracurricular activity that enhanced the brigade's awareness of African American culture."[106] His account is correct, but incomplete. Though an official Gospel Choir was recognized in

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[104] Talley, interview by author, December 2015.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Robert J. Schneller, *Blue & Gold and Black* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press. 2008,), 321.

1986, there was at least one unofficial Gospel group comprised of Midshipmen formed in the late seventies. A letter from Academy alumnus Mickey Ross from the Class of 1977 recounts:

> There was a group, called the "Upper Room" made up mainly of members of the class of 1977 who sang at churches around Annapolis, Philadelphia, and DC. We were not recognized as a USNA sponsored organization. We brought in speakers and singing groups [since we were] supported by the chaplains at the time. We were successful in putting on a Gospel concert with singers linked to Andre Crouch. Our "Upper Room" Gospel group included: J.T. Hardy, Mike Hill, Eli Turner, Kenneth Anderson, Daryl Anderson, Charles Ivey, Robert Goodrum, Ronald Duplesis, RADM Derwood Curtis ('76), Ike Owens (76), and several others including myself.[107]

Dr. Laura Stubbs, a now retired, Black Navy Captain, provided a first hand account of the event that encouraged Midshipmen to start a Gospel Choir in 1985. At the time, Dr. Stubbs was a Naval Lieutenant who worked as an Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the Academy. She remembers:

> In 1985, I invited the Gospel Choir of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, to perform at USNA. The Choir was an established cadet activity…comprised of about two hundred members from the Corps of Cadets. A representative group of approximately fifty cadets came to Annapolis [to perform]. [The] Gospel concert was spirit filled and lively. The Midshipmen in attendance were so impressed that they contacted the Midshipmen Activities Officer to request formation of a Gospel Choir but the request was denied [108]

Before the Choir could reapply to become a recognized Academy organization, they received an invitation to sing at the Academy's Martin Luther King, Jr. Chapel service in January of 1986. Up until that time, Naval Academy chaplains had always invited outside choirs from Howard University or Morgan State to perform at the annual

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[107] Mickey Ross letter to the Naval Academy Gospel Choir on the occasion of Dr. Garrett's retirement., November 2006.

[108] Various questions (via email interview), were answered by Dr. Laura Stubbs, December 15, 2015. Her answers are quoted throughout this document.

MLK Service. The idea to feature an unapproved Midshipmen organization was not well received. Stubbs recalls:

> . I was contacted by the Office of Midshipmen Activities in November of 1985 and directed to stop all [rehearsal] activities. I responded that I could not because our Gospel choir was scheduled to perform for the Chapel service by special request of Captain Brian A. Holderby, Jr. the Senior Chaplain. I explained that it was now too late to secure an outside choir. I was told that I could continue with rehearsals for now but that [the choir] must end after our performance.[109]

The choir did not disband after its first appearance; instead it received several new invitations to perform and eventually became a recognized student club in 1986. Dr. Talley remembers that requests to elevate the status of the choir from student club to Extra Curricular Activity (ECA) went largely ignored. As the choir continued to gain attention on and off campus, Dr. Talley was asked by Academy officials to propose a course of action that would assure the Gospel Choir was performing consistently at a high level. He recalls:

> As long as the Gospel Choir stayed inside the Academy, all seemed to be going well, but when the group began to accept outside invitations, problems appeared. Due to the small number of interested students, the level of performance was uneven, commitment was unreliable and in a few performances, quality was low which embarrassed the Naval Academy. I was asked to propose a course of action and to this end, I made two recommendations that were accepted: That the Gospel Choir be given official ECA status with their own budget, and that the Gospel Choir be given the best leadership the Academy could find.[110]

*Professor Joyce Garrett*

In the fall of 1989, Dr. Talley invited Mrs. Joyce Garrett to come and direct the newly formed Gospel Choir. Garrett was well known in Washington, DC music circles and around the country due to enormous media coverage generated by the international

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[109] Stubbs, interview by author, December 2015.
[110] Talley, interview by author, December 2015.

success of the choir she directed at Eastern High School. In 1988 Garrett raised $150,000 and took her inner city choir to a choral competition in Vienna. The choir won second prize.

> In Vienna, the Eastern High - choir one of four invited from the U.S.—finished second among eight international finalists. Says bass Albert Graves, 17: "We all had so many personal problems. It just goes to show you can do anything if you want to—and if you have someone like Mrs. Garrett on your side." [111]

Upon Garrett's return to the United States, national press coverage followed by high profile offers to hear her choir perform, began pouring in. White House performances during the Regan Administration were followed by a coveted invitation to sing for the Kennedy Center Honors – an annual performance request Mrs. Garrett's choir continues to fulfill at the time of this writing in 2015.

Educated at Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, North Carolina where she earned a Bachelor of Music Degree in Music Education, Garrett then earned a Master's Degree in Music from Catholic University. Mrs. Garrett brought solid teaching experience and an "it can be done" philosophy to the Academy.

Talley remembers encountering Mrs. Garrett and Eastern High School Choir for the first time when both of their choirs were performing for "Christmas in Washington," a nationally televised annual special filmed at the White House:

> I had already been impressed by all aspects of this choir—they were musically excellent, but also highly disciplined, beautifully behaved, motivated, great representatives of their school, all things that would matter so much at the Naval

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[111] Ron Arias, "Choir Director Joyce Garrett Battles D.C.'s Mean Streets with the Power of Positive Singing", *People Magazine* 31, no.23 (June 12, 1989) accessed November 2015, http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20120521,00.html

> Academy. I approached Ms. Garrett about the position, she graciously accepted, and for the next seventeen years, led the group with distinction.[112]

Although all Midshipmen admitted to the Naval Academy by the mid-1980s were expected to undergo a rigorous vetting process requiring: congressional endorsement; evidence of above average scholastic achievement; community and athletic achievements; and good moral character, the level of discipline expected of such high achieving students was not always evident within student led clubs (like the one that began the Gospel choir). In an interview with Garret about her tenure at the Academy, she reflected:

> I remember a roster of 23 singers during my first year. There was a resistance to trained leadership from some of the singers, because the Gospel Choir rehearsal hour had formerly been more unstructured, and more of a social hour, absent of the numerous campus military rules and regulations. We made great strides in decorum, singing ability, and musicianship, the following years [although] I was not immediately welcomed by all of the students at first. As an educator, I knew that discipline and a standard of "presentation" needed to be established …students needed to view the genre of Gospel music as equal in value to the music being performed by the Glee Club and the Women's Choir. That meant that rehearsals, although enjoyable and fun, could not be play-time.[113]

Under Garrett's leadership, the choir developed a diverse repertoire of traditional and contemporary Gospel songs, spirituals, and some patriotic songs. By teaching songs from various Gospel sub-genres (categories) she successfully broadened Midshipmen understanding of Gospel music and its accessibility to the audiences they served. She insisted on hiring a band comprised of professional, civilian Gospel musicians to ensure an authentic instrumental sound. Dr. Talley remembers her as "a real champion for the Gospel Choir…successfully arguing with [him] at times for professional accompanists

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[112] Talley, interview by author, December 2015.
[113] Various questions (via email interview) were answered by Joyce Garrett, November 30, 2015. Her answers are quoted throughout this document.

and adequate operating budgets."[114] With Mrs. Garrett on the podium, Talley was confident in the Gospel Choir's ability to serve the interests of the Academy. She recalls:

> I programmed mostly contemporary Gospel music. In addition, I taught the "Top 40" Gospel songs the students wanted to learn. I welcomed their suggestions for repertoire. For the Black History Program, I would teach a spiritual medley in addition to the Gospel songs. I always included a patriotic song at each concert usually arranged and sung in Gospel style.[115]

The choir also released several recordings during Garrett's tenure (Table 2) a process she only undertook during years when there was Midshipmen leadership was particularly outstanding.[116] "I believed in recording [special] moments in time that showcased and provided legacy for future singers." [117] The recordings, like the concerts, displayed music from various Gospel sub-genres ranging from traditional spirituals to contemporary R&B infused Gospel and when specific students displayed solo quality talent, they were always highlighted. "The commodity of great solo talent was a bonus at a school whose mission was the development of the next generation of military leaders."[118]

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[114] Talley, interview by author, December 2015.
[115] Garrett, interview by author, November 2015.
[116] Strong Midshipmen leadership refers to members of the senior class (Firsties) who successfully managed the scheduling of studio time, processing movement orders (written permission to leave campus for official assignments), securing of transportation as well as publicizing the recording and CD release concert.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.

**Table 2. USNA Gospel Choir Discography with Gospel Sub-genres.**

| RECORDING TITLE | YEAR | TRACK LISTINGS | SUB-GENRE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Down By the River[119] | 1997 | 1. My Country tis of Thee<br>2. Stranger<br>3. Amazing Grace<br>4. Perfect Praise<br>5. Help is on the Way<br>6. I love the Lord<br>7. Lord, You're Worthy<br>8. Not Just for Today<br>9. Down by the Riverside | 1. Patriotic<br>2. R&B Gospel<br>3. Hymn<br>4. Gospel Anthem<br>5. Contemporary<br>6. Gospel Anthem<br>7. Worship Gospel<br>8. Blues Gospel<br>9. Jazz Spiritual |
| Glory and Honor[120] | 2002 | 1.Let's Just Praise the Lord<br>2. Jesus Lifted Me<br>3. Angels Watching Over Me<br>4. Glory and Honor<br>5. Magnify Him<br>6. Spiritual Medley<br>7. For Every Mountain<br>8. Oh the Blood of Jesus<br>9. Halleluia, Amen<br>10. America | 1. Contemporary<br>2. R&B Gospel<br>3. Contemporary<br>4. Worship Gospel<br>5 Church/Shout<br>6. Concert Spiritual<br>7. Gospel Spiritual<br>8. Contemporary<br>9. Gospel Anthem<br>10. Patriotic |
| In His Presence[121] | 2006 | 1. Mighty God<br>2. I Was Glad<br>3. He's God<br>4. Gospel Medley<br>5. Done Made My Vow<br>6. You ought to run and tell that<br>7. The Lord is in this Place<br>8. Hush<br>9.God Bless America | 1. Contemporary<br>2. Contemporary<br>3. Gospel Anthem<br>4. Church/Shout<br>5. Concert Spiritual<br>6. Quartet<br>7. Gospel Worship<br>8. Blues Spiritual<br>9. Patriotic |

[119] United States Naval Academy Gospel Choir, *Down By the River,* Recorded 1997.
[120] United States Naval Academy Gospel Choir, *Down By the River*, Recorded 2002.
[121] United States Naval Academy Gospel Choir, *In His Presence,* Recorded 2006.

*Culture Shift from Dominant to Inclusive*

It is important to place the Directors and their roles within the Music Department in context as it relates to Naval Academy culture. I will do this first by looking briefly at racial integration at the Academy.

The instrumental and choral groups at the Academy were used historically to echo patriotic and nationalistic sentiments – ones that championed the freedom and equality referenced in the U.S. Constitution. Still, discriminatory practices prevented the successful matriculation and commissioning of Black candidates for a century and women for even longer at the Naval Academy. Immediately following Reconstruction, a handful of Black males were admitted to the Academy but all failed to graduate, for reason beyond their control. In fact, the first five black Midshipmen admitted to the Academy; three during the 1870s, two during the 1930s and one in 1945 never made it past their first year. "Racist white Midshipmen hazed them unmercifully, physically assaulted them, or ignored them; each one left Annapolis under dubious circumstances."[122] It was nearly a century after the Academy's opening before the first Black midshipman, Wesley Brown would successfully matriculate and graduate to become a commissioned Naval officer in 1949.

His presence at the Academy was largely the result of a Congressional requirement to integrate the Officer Corps during the Truman Administration, but it was

[122] MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces*, 72 quoted in: Schneller, *Blue &Gold and Black*, 4.

during the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson in the mid 1960s that real changes were made in this regard.[123]

> In the summer of 1965, Pres. Lyndon Johnson ordered United States Naval Academy superintendent R. Adm. Draper Kauffman to double that institution's Black enrollment before fall classes began. Until then, Academy officials had ignored racial issues, African Americans constituted only a token presence among the brigade of Midshipmen, and equal opportunity eluded them…From then on, racial issues appeared near the top of the leadership's agenda as the Academy developed policies to increase minority representation, celebrate diversity and curb discrimination.[124]

Prospects for enlisted Blacks were just limited. According to Navy historian Robert J. Schneller, Blacks who enlisted in the Navy in the 1940s were relegated to steward class or other jobs, which offered no hope of promotion. By 1942, some general service positions were available to Blacks but training and occupation were still largely segregated. In 1941, then president Roosevelt issued an executive order prohibiting discrimination based upon race within the government. As a result, in March of 1944, the first Black Naval Officers known as "The Golden Thirteen" bypassed Naval Academy Admission and were commissioned after completing two months of accelerated Officer Training in Great Lakes, Illinois.[125]

At the Academy, the slow shift in the racial makeup of its student body beginning in the 1940s was symptomatic of the racial upheaval happening all over the United States.

> Post World War II, the United States experienced a time of great economic prosperity enjoyed largely by a growing white middle class. Following the first great migration from 1910 to 1930, a second wave of Blacks migrated from

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[123] Robert J. Schneller, *Blue & Gold and Black*, xi.
[124] Ibid., xi.
[125] Ibid., 4.

> the south to major cities and urban areas from 1940-1970, seeking opportunities and an escape from Jim Crow segregation.[126]

Jim Crow policies were upheld in the fleet until the 1940s so "race relations at the Naval Academy reflected race relations in America."[127] In 1942, pressures exerted by "the Black press, the NAACP and civil rights activists" caused President Roosevelt to "expand the role of African Americans in the fleet."[128] Still, it would not be until the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of the 1960's that a more steady stream of Black applicants would matriculate and graduate from the Academy.

The end of Jim Crow and the rise of the Civil Rights Movement coincided with what is known as the golden age of Gospel during which "Gospel became the most important Black musical form since early jazz"[129] The blues Gospel pioneered by Thomas Dorsey, as discussed in chapter one, led to the proliferation of many Gospel quartets and small groups whose music was regularly recorded, presented in concert and heard over the radio. During the 40s and 50s "Black-oriented radio programs played nearly as much Gospel as they did rock and roll."[130]

By the time a Gospel Choir was formed at the Naval Academy, the Civil Rights movement and resulting favorable legislation of the 1960s and 1970s had profoundly changed the national conversation about race and equality – even if it had not yet

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[126] Karla Scott, "*Black Christian Nationalism: Separatist Song"* (presentation, University of Maryland, College Park, April, 2014), 2.
[127] Schneller, *Blue &Gold and Black*, xii.
[128] Ibid., 3.
[129] Tony Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound*: *Good News and Bad Times* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1971,), xxix.
[130] Walker, *Somebody's Calling,* 151.

completely transformed the country's heart and soul. The Civil Rights movement revisited Black folk spirituals often rewording lyrics to suit modern racial struggles. Alongside these re-worked spirituals was modern Gospel. It became ubiquitous in America – from the music of Thomas Dorsey, Mahalia Jackson, the Dixie Hummingbirds and Sallie Martin to the newcomers, James Cleveland, Edwin Hawkins and Andre Crouch.

*Gospel Choir as Academy Recruitment Tool*

Joyce Garrett remembers that, "The 'Gospel Choir on campus' revolution [gained momentum] at the beginning of the seventies, so there were quite a few years [before] a choir of this type was permitted at the Academy. I believe increased African-American presence on campus was the catalyst for student interest"[131] The revolution to which Garrett refers was an outgrowth of two factors: The use of the spiritual *cum* freedom song by the Civil Rights Movement and the simultaneous "transfer of Gospel influence to the world of entertainment."[132]

Not only did the Gospel choir benefit its Black members, but it also benefited the Academy's new message of diversity. Garrett asserts, "The Academy was also beginning to see that this choir could aid in the recruitment of minority students. I always believed that recruitment was the number one reason the choir was supported by leadership." [133] Talley echoes this sentiment:

> It was important to show respect by formally recognizing the Gospel Choir with official Extra Curricular Activity (ECA) status, and to further show the Naval

[131] A series of questions in the form of email interview was completed by Joyce Garrett on November 30, 2015. Her answers are quoted throughout this document.
[132] Walker, *Somebody's Calling My Name*, 155.
[133] Ibid.

> Academy's commitment to cultural diversity by producing the absolute best performance product we could possibly manage.[134]

As the choir began to integrate military structure, it also began to display those characteristics expected by the Academy of the leaders it commissions – including the ability to foster unity among subordinates, selflessness, dedication to the mission, and mentorship. Talley discusses those hallmarks adding:

> Musical organizations seemed so much more important to the Naval Academy students than at most other schools, possibly because the demands of the school are so intense that the sort of relief offered by making music at a high level, such that they could lose themselves in its creation, is of vital importance. I know that hundreds of former Midshipmen singers will attest to this. Midshipmen form a brotherhood, or sisterhood, or family that understands this at an intimate level, and that understanding cannot be shared with those who did not participate.[135]

Until late in the twentieth century, Midshipmen who represented the Academy with the greatest frequency were athletes. As discussed earlier, the only choral group that shared this responsibility was the Men's Glee Club with its documented track record of high profile performances dating back to the 1940s. Once public demonstrations of diversity became an institutional goal, the Gospel Choir became an obvious choice to represent the Academy. In that regard, Dr. Talley concluded:

> Midshipmen making music is often the public face of the Naval Academy - in chapel services, on the concert hall stage, and in high school and church presentations. While the public doesn't see what goes on in the halls of Bancroft or in the classroom, it can certainly see what is before them on stage and on the athletic field. Since the outcome of athletic contests does not always go the Academy's way, musical performances may be the most potent way to engage the public.[136]

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[134] Barry Talley completed a series of questions in the form of an email interview on December 15, 2015. His answers are quoted throughout this document.
[135] Talley, interview by author, December 2015.
[136] Ibid.

Using the Gospel Choir as the public face of the Academy mirrored a shift being felt throughout the United States, a shift in the understanding and performance of American nationalism, which I will discuss in chapter four.

# CHAPTER 3: LEADERSHIP AND GOSPEL PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

"President Kennedy once said, 'There is a connection, hard to explain logically but easy to feel, between achievement in public life and progress in the arts." [137]

In his quote, Kennedy seems to recognize a connection between leadership and the arts – a connection that has direct application to the Gospel Choir at the Naval Academy. Like other campus groups, the Gospel Choir works to develop future military leaders. In fact, every aspect of Academy life is expected to do so by adhering to its mission: "To develop Midshipmen morally, mentally and physically and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor and loyalty in order to graduate leaders who are dedicated to a career of naval service and have potential for future development in mind and character to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship and government."[138]

The Gospel Choir is organized around displays of nascent military leadership a few of which include; operation through a defined chain of command (See Figure 9) clearly stated objectives, the performance of specific missions, and developing people, (evident in the mentorship culture of the choir). The Gospel Choir bears the additional responsibility of representing the Naval Academy in numerous public settings throughout the school year. Midshipmen members must perform at the highest musical level possible and display the professionalism expected of a young military leader and also be

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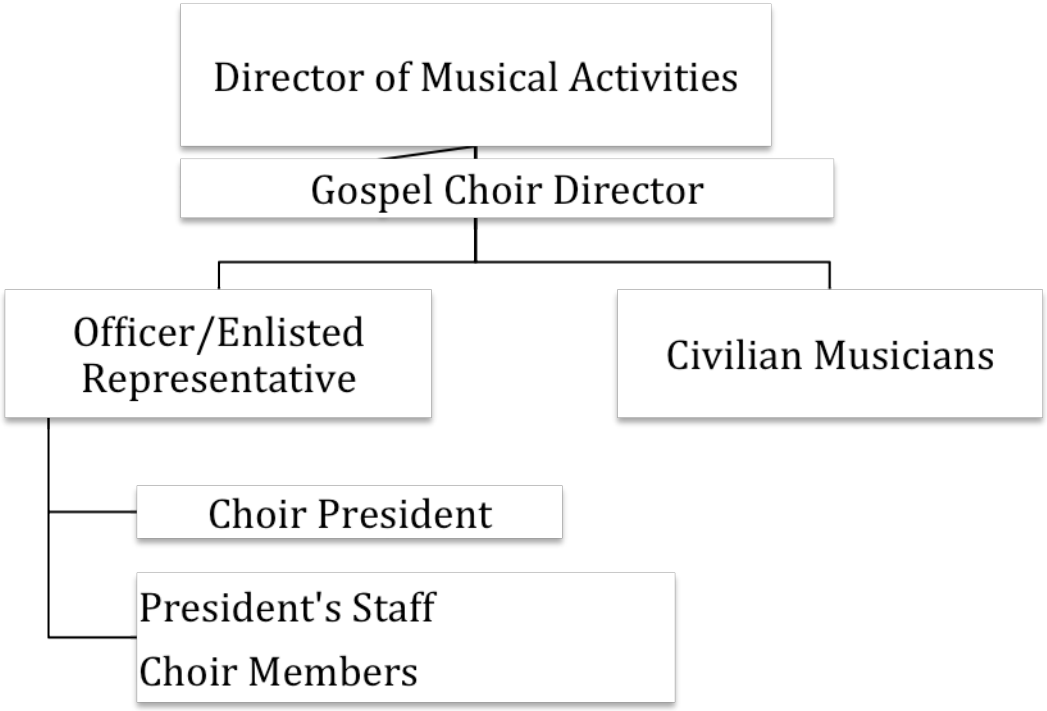
[137] The letter to Miss Theodate Johnson, Publisher, *Musical America* September 13, 1960 is Kennedy's response to Johnson who posed identical questions by letter to then presidential candidates Nixon and Kennedy. As the publisher of the leading Music magazine of the time, Johnson sought their views on government subsidies for arts education and performance as well as the role of the arts in foreign relations.

[138] United States Naval Academy Website (accessed 9 December 2015) http://www.usna.edu/About/mission.php

willing to engage audience members after performances by answering questions about the Academy and their experiences there.

**Figure 9. Gospel Choir Leadership Hierarchy**.




Additionally, membership requires an audition, and due to the opportunity to represent the Academy, Midshipmen in the choir must maintain academic, physical training and honor standards, which exceed those of the Brigade (student body). Failure to meet standards in any one of these three areas makes midshipmen ineligible to tour with the Choir and may, in extreme cases, result in their dismissal from the Choir.

After nine years of teaching at the Academy, I have grown to respect these regulations but as a civilian musician, I remained curious about the impact musical training had upon leadership development beyond the anecdotal. **Does musical training within the Gospel Choir simultaneously improve musicianship and positively impact leadership development**?

I believe the answer is yes. Leadership development at the Academy is based in part on Midshipmen gaining advanced mastery of (STEM) science, technology, engineering and mathematics principles accomplished through four years of required coursework in these specific areas. The desired outcome is a Naval or Marine Corps officer who is able to enter their first assignment after graduation that will include rigorous, task specific training based on STEM competencies. The majority of graduates of the Naval Academy will work in a technical capacity onboard a warship as a Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) within the Surface Warfare Community[139] where daily decisions will require good spatial reasoning skills.

Brain researchers confirm that music training positively affects spatial reasoning ability. For this reason, membership in the Gospel choir, along with other musical organizations can be said to positively impact the skills necessary for the development of leaders. (Figure 10) illustrates this process.

[139] SWO, Surface Warfare Officer is the title given to any officer who works aboard a warship or aircraft carrier. Not only are SWOs tasked with navigating the course a warship takes, but they are also tasked with managing subordinate, enlisted soldiers.

**Figure 10. Training, Performance Practice and Spatial Reasoning.**


The second area of support for the connection between musical training and leadership development is shown in (Figure 11). When gospel music training and performance is used to train midshipmen to "get into character" or to encourage the meaningful portrayal of emotional content in performance, this ability further works to assists them in donning the Mask of Command.

**Figure 11. Training, Performance Practice and Mask of Command.**


I will first discuss the impact of musical principles (rote music training and unaccompanied singing) on leadership. I will then explain gospel music training and performance practice in a choir rehearsal setting.

*Rote Training – Rehearsal and Performance Practice*

Though the Gospel choir at the Naval Academy began as all black organization in 1985, over the years, its membership has become more ethnically diverse, particularly under my leadership. I made this adjustment largely due to increased interest in the choir by Asian, Hispanic, white and mixed race midshipmen and the genuine talent each displayed in their audition. As a result, I have discovered that when introducing Gospel

music to an ethnically diverse choir it is important to identify singers who have no rote-training experience. The term, "rote training", generally refers to repetitive teaching that encourages memorization. Singers who have used score reading as a primary training method often find the transition to rote-learning challenging. In *Spirituals and Gospel Music Performance Practice*, Robert Jefferson notes the discomfort visual learners experience in an aural/rote training setting:

> [the] group, with a background primarily in the visual learning tradition, displayed minimal signs of discomfort after initially being introduced to the notated Spiritual. However, when the Gospel song was taught to them by rote, there were observable signs of discomfort displayed both by body language and verbal comments. They were obviously less familiar with learning songs by rote and had "nothing tangible" in front of them to see. But, based on their comments and perhaps because of their racial background that focuses on the aural tradition, this group was not opposed to the idea of learning a song by rote.[140]

Lt. Abernethy, a former member of the Gospel Choir and a 2010 graduate of the Academy, sat in on a recent rehearsal in 2015 and shared the following:

> Coming back to a Gospel Choir rehearsal five years after graduating and trying to learn the songs at such a quick pace, I found myself struggling to keep up. As a Midshipman, I was able to learn the parts and sing them very quickly –it was so much easier then. You do a great job at teaching the parts, but it's not easy.[141]

The observations of Dr. Jefferson and Lt. Abernethy highlight a significant truth. It is my opinion that when children begin to recognize printed letters and numbers in preparation for learning to read, they transition from an aural (hearing) learning style to a visual learning style. By the time a student is college-age, nearly all learning and

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[140] Robert Jefferson. *Spirituals and Gospel Music Performance Practice: A Dual Curriculum that Bridges the Cultural Divide* (DMA diss., University of Maryland, 2010), 2, accessed November 2015.

[141] Abernethy, interviews by author, Annapolis, September and December 2015.

retention is accessed visually. For these reasons, like an under used muscle, "hearing" based learning can be hard to grasp and retain.

*Rote Teaching, Spatial Reasoning and Leadership*

In a Gospel Choir, rote training works in tandem with other musical principles to achieve desired results. Gospel music is taught though oral demonstration and repetition while memorizing musical, poetic and rhythmic patterns that occur sequentially. The research of neuroscientists, Grandin, Peterson and Shaw indicates that "music instruction can enhance the "hardware" in the brain for Spatial-Temporal reasoning[142] and Lois Hetland's neuroscience research has shown, "learning to make music enhances spatial reasoning; spatial memory, spatial recognition, mental rotation, and spatial visualization, [all] are enhanced by music instruction."[143] Hetland's research is of particular interest because her analyses were based on "active instruction in the making of music involving such activities as singing, clapping…and moving responsively to music."[144] Many of the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) courses offered at the Naval Academy encourage spatial reasoning; musical training can be added to that list, as well.

An important follow-on to the music training /spatial reasoning link is its connection to technical decision-making. Spatial reasoning is also used when a chess player thinks several steps ahead or when an engineer"[reasons] about an illustrated

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[142] Temple Grandin, Matthew Peterson and Gordon L. Shaw, "Spatial-Temporal versus Language-Analytic Reasoning: The Role of Musical Training." *Arts Education Polity Review* 99, no. 6 (1998): 11.
[143] Lois Hetland, "Learning to Make Music Enhances Spatial Reasoning, *Journal of Aesthetic Education*34, no. 3/4 (2000): 220.
[144] Ibid., 193.

mechanical device's functions."[145] This aspect of cognitive reasoning is related to cognitive mapping, a term found in the research of behavioral psychologist, Edward Chace Tolman. His research led to the following observation:

> To maneuver in everyday environments, people need to know the spatial organization of the objects and structures in their surroundings. Much of this knowledge exists in memories of familiar spaces. Such spatial memories have traditionally been explored as being grounded in visual-spatial experience.[146]

Given the fact that the Academy is an engineering school, these connections are important ones. The expected outcome after four years of intense training is a young leader who has gained technical knowledge along with experience in leading people, skills that are enhanced by participation in Gospel Choir.

Though there are various jobs a newly commissioned officer may select (termed service selection), most graduates of the Academy will be released into the fleet and work onboard warships as SWOs – Surface Warfare Officers.[147] Once released into the Surface Warfare Community, young officers quickly learn that "when the military is not operating, it is training.[148] Junior officers receive training in the five Naval Leadership

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[145] Gregory Park, David Lubinski, Camilla P. Benbow on "Recognizing Spatial Intelligence." *Scientific American Magazine* November 2, 2010. Accessed December 10, 2015 http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/recognizing-spatial-intel/

[146] Amy Shelton and Timothy McNamara, "Visual Memories from Nonvisual Experiences," *Psychological Science*, 12 no. 4,(July, 2001), 343.

[147] SWO, Surface Warfare Officer is the title given to any officer who works aboard a warship or aircraft carrier. Not only are SWOs tasked with navigating the course a warship takes, but they are also tasked with managing subordinate, enlisted soldiers.

[148] Commander Richard H. Rosene, *Naval Leadership Assessment and Development* (mss., U.S. Army War College, 2005),10. accessed November, 2015.

Competencies seen in (Table 3): Leading Change, Resource Stewardship, Leading People, Working with People and Accomplishing Mission.[149]

An important sub-category within the Accomplishing Mission competency is technical credibility. This required knowledge base applies to combat systems and engineering knowledge[150] - both benefit from spatial reasoning – a skill which musical training helps enhance.

**Table 3. U.S. Navy Leadership Competencies***

| ACCOMPLISHING MISSION | LEADING PEOPLE | LEADING CHANGE | RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP | WORKING WITH PEOPLE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Responsibility, Authority Accountability Decisiveness/Risk Management Problem Solving Technical Credibility | Developing People Conflict Management Leverage Diversity Professionalism Team Building Crisis Leadership | Creativity Innovation External Awareness Flexibility Service Motivation Strategic Thinking Vision | Financial Management Leveraging Technology Human Resource Management | Influencing Negotiating Oral Communication Partnering Political Awareness Written Communication |

***Adapted from Blackwell's *Analysis Of Surface Warfare Officer Training***

Both spatial reasoning and cognitive mapping come into play when technical credibility is in use. Surface Warfare Officer, Lt. Abernethy, whose primary job is to drive or pilot Naval warships confirms:

> There are many tools and instruments used in the safe navigation of a ship. The common understanding is that ship driving is a balance between and art and a science. When I drive, or navigate the ship, I visualize everything in my head, the other ship, the wind, the seas, and then I am able to mentally calculate what needs to be done.[151]

[149] Robert Blackwell, *United States Navy Officer Leader Development: An Analysis Of Surface Warfare Officer Training*. (mmas., Marine Maritime Academy, 2008), 36. accessed November, 2015.
[150] Ibid.

[151] Abernethy, interview by author. December, 2015.

In a broad context, musical training can be considered one of many tools, which contributes to the fulfillment of the Academy leadership mission. Beyond the Academy it positively contributes to mastery of Naval Leadership Competencies.

### *Unaccompanied Singing and the Mask of Command*

The second principle that impacts upon musicianship and leadership is un-accompanied singing in rehearsal. A normal Gospel Choir rehearsal takes place once per week for ninety minutes. The first forty-five minutes of each rehearsal consists of rote teaching and unaccompanied singing. Choreography, scriptural principles in the text, and emotional choices the choir will project are discussed and rehearsed. This exchange between director and choir serves as a time to focus on technical and non-technical elements. It is also during this time that professional demeanor (the ability to continue a given performance at a high level despite mistakes, amplification issues, and myriad unexpected challenges) is reinforced.

Marine Colonel Stephen Liszewski, the Naval Academy's Commandant of Midshipmen, spoke about the impact of such training during a Summer Choir rehearsal he attended in July of 2015:

> Midshipmen who participate in the musical arts have a distinct advantage over their shipmates who do not. The act of performing requires one to assume a character that in turn will make it easier for these young leaders to don the Mask of Command once released into the Fleet.[152]

The Mask of Command most often refers to the face of authority a superior officer shows his subordinates during times of crisis. It is also associated with Command

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[152] Col. Liszweski made these observations during an impromptu speech to the Plebe Summer Choir in July of 2015 at the Naval Academy's main chapel. His comments are used with permission.

Presence, the illusive leadership quality associated with a leader's influence, bearing, spoken communication, and decisiveness, which causes others to perceive that individual as person of authority.[153] The correlation between choir members "getting into character" during musical performance and donning the Mask of Command made by such a Senior Military Leader has far reaching implications.

The rank of Colonel within the Marine Corps is the final rank before reaching General, which implies that one has led hundreds of soldiers and overseen many combat tours. As Commandant of Midshipmen, Colonel Liszewski is second in command at the U.S. Naval Academy, and also serves as Dean of Students. For these reasons, the Commandant of Midshipmen is highly regarded within military and government communities. His perception that the connection between music performance and the Mask of Command provides an important advantage to young military leaders cannot be overstated.

Colonel Liszewski's statements about the positive correlation between music making and ease in donning the Mask of Command suggest equal benefit to young leaders no matter their choice of musical ensemble at the Academy. The inclusion of the Gospel Choir in these statements, despite its use of non-traditional training and performance practice such as, rote-training, incorporation of dance and adherence to marginalized musical form serves as further endorsement of the Gospel Choir by Naval Academy Leadership.

[153] John Keegan, The Mask of Command. (New York: NY Penguin Books, 1987), i.

The leadership correlates I explained in the first section of this chapter illustrated in Figures 10 and 11 are viable when choir members learn Gospel music technique and perform Gospel songs. For this reason, I will discuss the techniques I use when teaching Gospel music and its performance practices to an ethnically diverse group of singers. While the concepts I teach at the Naval Academy are identical to those used when teaching an all-Black group of singers with a background in Gospel music, I find that I must allow more time to explain and rehearse those musical concepts that may not be universally familiar. To define the elements of Gospel performance practice I will discuss song selection, poetic structure and gospel sub-genres. I will continue by explaining the importance of unaccompanied singing as a teaching tool, teaching Gospel harmonies, the importance of movement and clapping while singing, and by explaining Gospel music's unique conducting style based upon hand-gestures not found in other choral conducting styles.

*Performance Practice – Gospel Music Song Selection*

Performance practice refers to "the way… music is performed as it relates to the 'authentic' style of previous generations and eras."[154] There are many styles or sub-genres of Gospel music, and a well-rounded Gospel music repertoire will include music from each – a process that begins with song selection.

Song selection must first support the underlying faith ideology of the choir found in Colossians 3:16, "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit,

[154] *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary,* s.v. "performance practice" accessed 21 December 2015_ http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O76-performancepractice.html.

singing to God with gratitude in your hearts."[155] This verse, chosen by the Midshipmen, stands as a statement of faith and intention for the choir.

The second aspect of song selection is a technical one; the song structure must be logical and presented in a way that is simple to understand since it must be memorized without benefit of a musical score. As a Director, I introduce a musical piece to a rote choir after careful review of the poetic structure, repetitions, bridge and vamp material, as well as modulations and key changes. Often, musical sections that feature canonic, poly-textural and or polyrhythmic and harmonic challenges are introduced first.

Table 6 outlines the differences in poetic/musical structure within five sub-genre examples. Additional background for each piece is provided.

**Table 4. Representative Gospel Sub-genres and their Musical and Poetic Structure.**

| Song Title | Sub-Genre | Biblical Reference | Poetic/Musical Structure |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hush, Somebody's Calling My Name | Traditional Spiritual | 1 Samuel 3 | Aaab<br>cccd<br>aaab |
| Revelation 19 | Gospel Worship | Revelation 19:1 | aa'b<br>Simultaneously:<br>cda'<br>b |
| The Blood Still Works | Church | Hebrews 9:11-28 | ab ab<br>c c<br>Simultaneously:<br>d e f<br>b |
| Total Praise | Gospel Anthem | Psalm 121 | A – through composed<br>B |
| Sold Out | Contemporary Gospel | Romans 8:35 | aab<br>ac<br>aa' |

[155] Zondervan; *Holy Bible* [King James Version] Colossians 3:16, 1604 (The Zondervan Corporation, 2000).

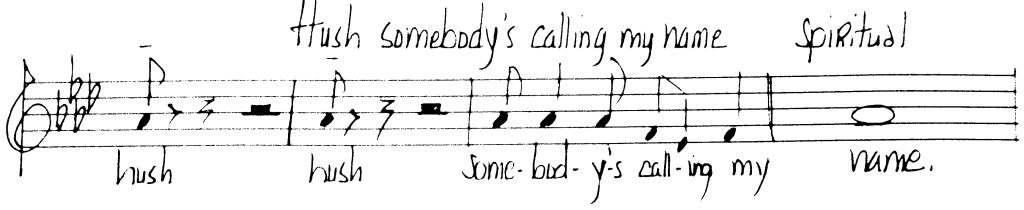
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | de de d |

*Gospel Sub-genres Musical Analysis*

The sub-genres listed in (Table 4) are as varied in performance practice as they are in poetic structure. In a few cases, I have transcribed small sections of the music by hand in order to provide a musical reference. In most cases, I have done so because no musical score exists.

The first example is of a spiritual (Figure 12), a form that has been discussed at length in chapter one. As the poetic structure indicates, it is the most basic and straight forward of the sub-genres seen in (Table 4). The simple, melodic line is displayed below.

**Figure 12. "Hush, Somebody's Calling My Name" opening melodic idea.**




"Hush" is a traditional spiritual performed over a 12 bar blues bass-line. Just after the turn of the twentieth century, the spiritual merged with the blues, especially in the compositional work of Thomas Dorsey, discussed in Chapter One. Blues influence on the spiritual was most commonly heard in Chicago and St. Louis during the early waves of the Great Migration. Following the union of the genres (blues and Gospel) many spirituals were performed in this style.

The aaab poetic structure of "Hush" functions as a type of refrain during which the text "Hush, hush somebody's calling my name" is repeated three times. The first time, three-part harmony is sung in minor first inversion, the second time in minor second

inversion, the third time, it returns to first inversion leading to the cadential fourth line, which asks, "Oh my Lord, oh my Lord, what shall I do?" Here the bass-line cadences in traditional blues fashion: mediant; submediant; supertonic; dominant to tonic.

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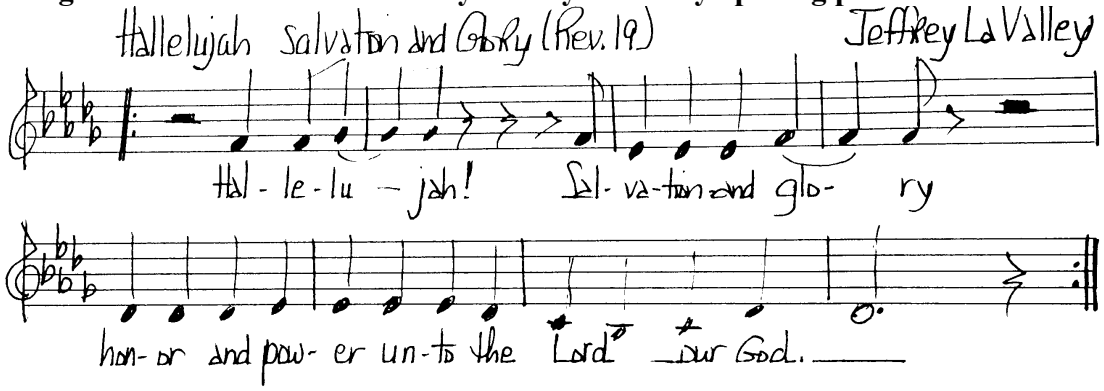
**Figure 13. "Revelation 19:1" by Jeffrey LaValley opening phrase.**




"Revelation 19:1" is a contemporary Gospel anthem composed in 1985 by Jeffrey LaValley, a well-known contemporary Gospel musician. Though he refers to it as the 'accidental composition' it continues to experience wide crossover appeal and is sung by classical concert choirs as frequently as by Gospel choirs. In a recent interview LaValley remembered:

> "Revelation 19" was an accident. We were in communion service [at New Jerusalem Baptist Church] one Sunday evening in 1985, and the spirit was high. My pastor was standing in the pulpit with his Bible. He walked over to the organ. He flings the Bible on the organ and says, "Sing this." I said, "Excuse me?" He said, "Sing this." The Bible was turned to Revelation 19:1.[156]

As displayed in (Figure 13), the entire choir begins the song in unison, singing "Halleluia, salvation and Glory, honor and power unto the Lord our God." The A section

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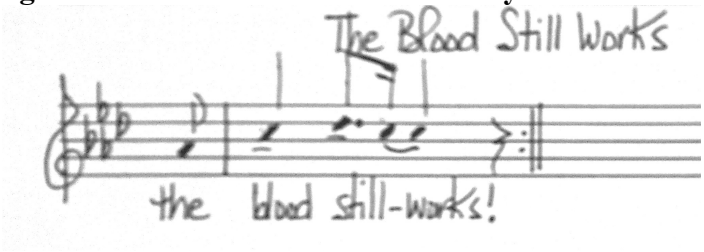
[156] Bob Marovich, "Genesis of a Gospel Song: "Revelation 19" (A. Jeffrey LaValley)," *Journal of Gospel Music* http://journalofGospelmusic.com/contemporary/genesis-of-a-Gospel-song-revelation-19-a-jeffrey-lavalley/. accessed 24 November 2015.

music is repeated while the choir sings new text using parts of verse six – "For the Lord our God is mighty, yes the Lord our God is Omnipotent, the Lord our God, He is Wonderful!" The B section begins a polyphonic overlay of three different texts and melodies sung by soprano, alto and tenor sections simultaneously. All three sections cadence IV-V-I with the text "He is wonderful."

**Figure 14. "The Blood Still Works" by Malcolm Williams opening motive.**




Malcolm Williams composed "The Blood Still Works" in 2009. Featured on his "Your Glory" recording, the popularity of the song at the time of this writing remains high. The song is written in "church" style – a sub-genre of Gospel music characterized by a ragtime piano accompaniment featuring stride bass-line, a brisk tempo – (quarter note at 100), and a simple melodic line sung in syncopated- swing fashion.

The A section features three-part harmony on repetitions of the text, "The Blood Still Works" after which new material is presented using a common Gospel technique of separate vocal entrances that outline the chord. For example, the text "it will never" is first sung by the tenors on the dominant of a second inversion minor chord, repeated by the altos on the tonic and again by the sopranos on minor third. "Lose it's power, returns all parts to major tonality while the final "The blood still works" outlines dominant- tonic harmonies. The B Section of the piece, much like "Revelation 19:1" layers three different melodic, textual, and rhythmic phrases simultaneously. Once the accompanying instruments drop out for dramatic effect, except for the drums, the African polyrhythms

upon which the Gospel is built and those that characterized the early ring shout songs become obvious. The song usually ends with improvised instrumental accompaniment while hand-claps, foot-stomps and dance from the choir invites the participation of the listener.

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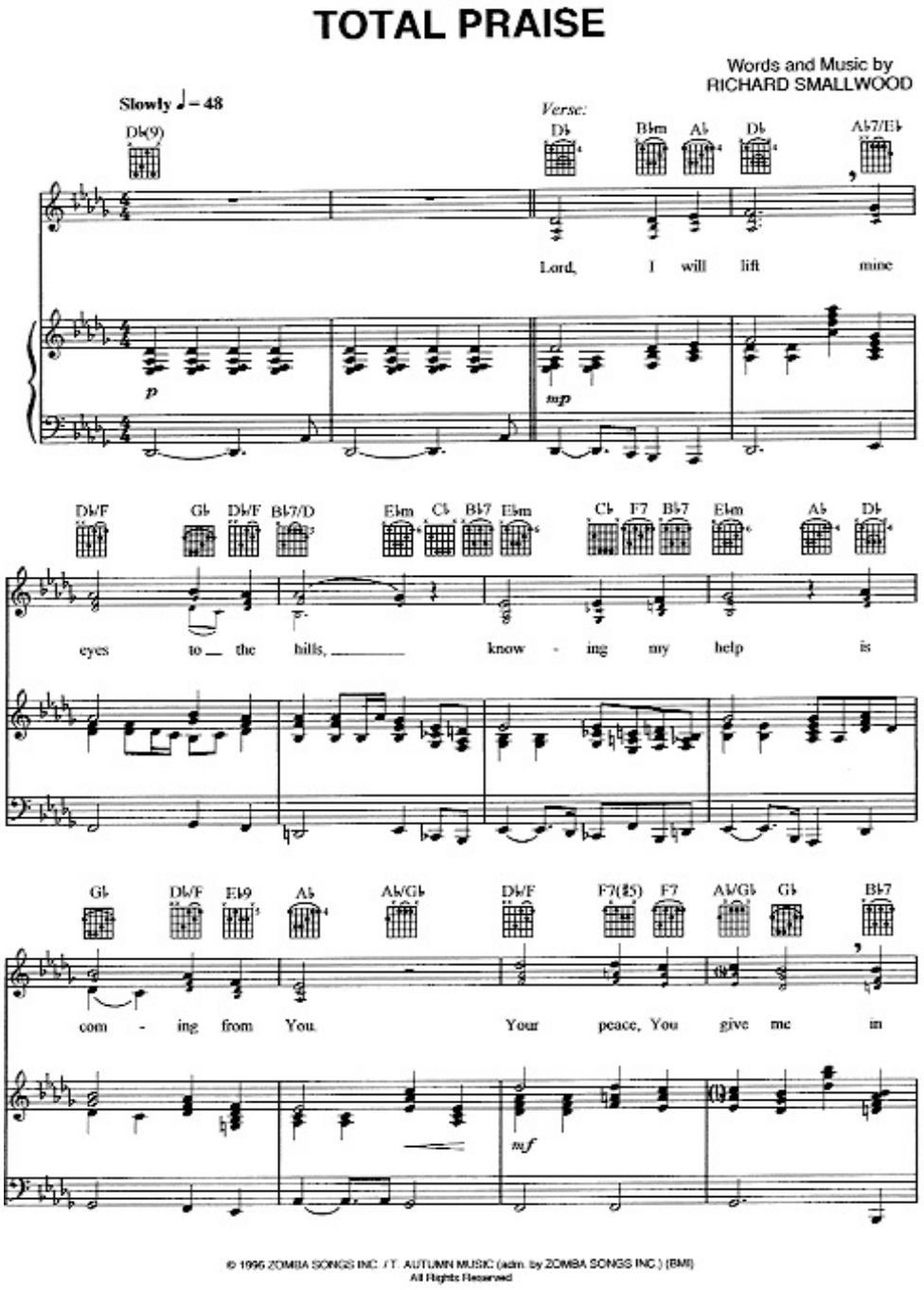
**Figure 15. "Total Praise" by Richard Smallwood piano intro and opening phrases**.




Source: © 1996 Zomba Songs.

Richard Smallwood, one of the most widely sung Gospel music composers of the last forty years, wrote "Total Praise". Smallwood's compositional style is unique in that it contains obvious elements of classical music.

> … my sound is a combination of everything I was exposed to growing up…in my house, my mother would play classical music… and I listened to Gospel as well as Broadway and Jazz; especially…Nat King Cole, Ella Fitzgerald, and Sara Vaughn… what I do is a combination of those exposures and influences. It's a combination of [many styles] and classical. My major at Howard University was classical piano and all the others come as a result of what I was exposed to.[157]

The A section of "Total Praise" is through composed, featuring three part harmony and in keeping with Smallwood's affinity for classical music, there is a written score seen in (Figure 15). Smallwood combines the three-voice texture of Gospel music with cadential suspensions common to Baroque music in measure six. All three voices generally move in the same direction in keeping with Gospel part-writing, inner harmonic voices move chromatically – again a reflection of Baroque music (Alto part measures 11 and 12).

The B section (not shown here) consists of a four fold "amen" with alternating polyphonic vocal lines combined with rising inversions each time the "amen" is repeated. The amen section also uses chromatic harmonies and deliberate dissonances created by passing tones and suspensions to heighten the drama and intensity of the glorious finale.

In terms of performance practice, choirs typically sing "Total Praise" with full vibrato throughout. It is also common to sing a reprise of the final Amen section. Many choirs will sing the reprise acapella so as the showcase Smallwood's chromatic part-writing.

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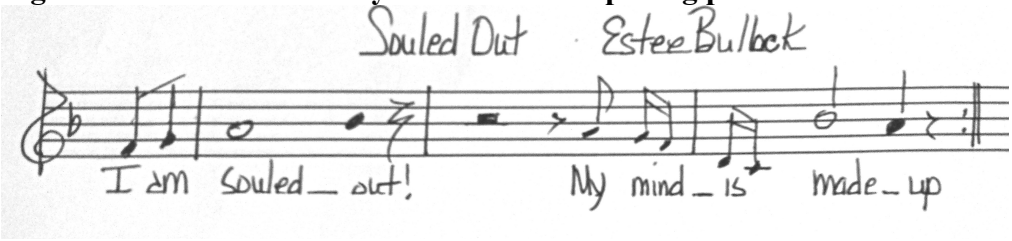
[157] http://Gospelbreak.com/2014/04/exclusive-interview-richard-smallwood-talks-his-start-in-Gospel-total-praise-much-more/ accessed 24 November 2015 Jermaine Rucker April 22, 2014.

**Figure 16. "Souled Out" by Estee Bullock opening phrase** *




*In performance the melodic line sung in more highly syncopated fashion than this approximated notation conveys.

"Souled Out", is representative of yet another sub-genre called contemporary Gospel. Composed by Estee Bullock, a writer who is responsible for many Gospel songs that merge R&B and hip-hop textures into Gospel music. The song structure features two sections beginning with a short refrain – " I am souled out, my mind is made up" repeated over a driving beat reminiscent of "house" music. A short verse is twice inserted after repetitions of the refrain serve as bridge material to the second section of the song.

The B Section is comprised of a four-lined verse that is repeated in alternation with a single word interjection, "Yeah!" which then becomes bridge material to the extension of the B section of the song. A final repetition of the four-lined verse concludes the song.

Gospel music written in the 2000s, such as "Souled Out," often mirrors secular dance music, in that the excitement of the song's text is supported by the driving beat, simple repetitive choruses sung in higher inversions, and improvisation by the soloist during call-and-response sections of the song.

Musical and poetic structure within sub-genres is often similar from song to song therefore, once a choir has become familiar with the general structure, new music within each sub-genre can be assimilated very quickly based on one's ability to retain recognized patterns and systems of organization.

*Performance Practice – Overview and Hand Signals*

Gospel music performance practice includes: singing in three-part harmony, moving while singing, clapping on the off-beats (generally beats two and four) and singing in declamatory style.[158] Additionally, Gospel music directors use hand signals uncommon in other choral genres.[159] (See Appendix C) Since Gospel music performance practice includes improvisation, the sequence of these hand signals has direct impact upon song sequence in performance. For this reason, singers who are new to Gospel music must memorize the meaning of each gesture, with an ultimate goal of reading the director instead of a printed score.

*Rehearsing Gospel Harmonies*

Since the 1950s, when Gospel Choirs began to emerge, three-part harmony has been a hallmark of the genre. All three parts tend to move in similar motion with very little contrary motion. The characteristic soprano, alto and tenor voice parts were first sung exclusively by women's voices. Though Gospel choirs eventually added men to become mixed voice choirs, the vocal scoring remained the same, which explains the high tessitura of tenor parts today. In many cases, bass-baritone singers who join a Gospel choir sing the tenor part down an octave, or double the soprano line down the octave. Due to the way Gospel music is taught – aural/rote, a well developed ear for harmony is essential, but for singers who have not grown up hearing these harmonies, or are accustomed to singing in four-parts, learning to hear Gospel harmony can prove challenging at first. Gospel music is also characterized by frequent key modulations,

[158] Linda B. Walker, "Developing a Gospel Choir" *Music Educators Journal* 89, no. 3 (Jan., 2003), 23-28.
[159] Descriptions of these conducting signals are found in Appendix A.

which require singers to hear their part in the next key before singing it. I've discovered three techniques that quickly train the ear in this regard:

1) The use of warm-up songs that require three-part harmony and modulations. This practice normalizes the singing of harmony and modulating after each phrase.

2) I change the choir layout: Instead of large sections of where all sopranos, tenors and altos stand together, I place singers in rows of individual trios, i.e. (Row 1: STA, STA, STA, STA). This change in position allows each trio to hear harmony in close proximity and greatly improves intonation.

3) Required listening – Once a song is taught in rehearsal, I create a listening list of Internet links of the music. Singers can study authentic Gospel performances while at the same time speed their memorization of the music.

*Singing, Dancing and Clapping*

Today, Black Americans are many centuries removed from a direct cultural memory of African music and from the lived experience of slaves. Still, the "Africanisms" of clapping (a type of drumming) and moving while singing remain central to modern Gospel music performance practice. In Gospel music, clapping is generally done on beats two and four while dancing ranges from a simple "two step" to very intricate choreography designed to highlight the text. In the Gospel choir at the Academy, Midshipmen learn a mix of both. While clapping may be optional on slower songs, no Gospel song is performed without movement.

*Declamatory Style*

Coming from a background where all my vocal training has been classical, I am aware that there is a broad assumption among voice teachers trained in the Western

classical tradition, that singing Gospel music guarantees vocal damage. I am also aware of a few Gospel choirs that sing with wide-vibrato, splayed vowels, shouted vocal quality and other unhealthy techniques that underscore these negative assumptions. A lack of vocal training leads to vocal damage, no matter the musical genre. Still, the declamatory style of Gospel music depends on a singing technique that is more vocally aggressive than that of the average classical concert choir. A vocally astute director will offset more aggressive up-tempo, repetitive, high tessitura songs with slow anthem-like pieces, bringing balance to vocal use and audience experience. Singers will also be taught how to use the body, proper vowels and breath to effectively navigate each sub-genre.

For soloists within a Gospel Choir, variances in tone color, vocal agility and large vocal range are equated with vocal beauty. Soloists are not expected to maintain a single vocal color throughout a song, nor are they expected to mask register changes by modifying vowels. When a female soloist sings in tenor range, or when a male tenor sings in soprano range, these acts are considered demonstrations of vocal prowess and are widely encouraged in Gospel singing. Singers are expected to embellish the melodic line by adding melisma and to improvise vocal ad-libs in counterpoint to the choir.[160]

Gospel music training and performance practice is based upon technical skills that while different from those in Western classical music, are no less exacting in their requirements. The use of rote-training, specific harmonic and poetic structures, the mastery of moving and clapping while singing as well as memorization of a different conducing language are remnants of Africanisms found within its musical performance.

[160] Horace Clarence Boyer, "Contemporary Gospel Music," *The Black Perspective in Music* 7, no. 1 (Spring, 1979): 5-58.

For this reason, Gospel music whether performed by an all black choir, or a choir of mixed ethnicity carries the history of African and African American cultures within its sound and practice.

In Chapter four, I will examine how Gospel music at the Naval Academy continues to be used as a minority recruitment tool. Based in part upon the diverse population of midshipmen who make up the choir, I will discuss the role the Gospel Choir has played in assisting the Naval Academy to meet its institutional goals of integrating marginalized cultures into Naval and Marine Corps leadership.

## CHAPTER 4: GOSPEL AT THE ACADEMY: NATIONALISTIC PERFORMANCE

Nationalism as an ideological construct, gained prominence in 19th century Europe and can be understood to mean:

> A group of people united by characteristics that differentiate them, in their own minds, from others should be politically autonomous, that the nation and the state should be coterminous… nationalism implies that membership in the nation is the most critical of all the loyalties an individual carries as part of his or her political identity.[161]

Without providing an exhaustive account of the development of individual European nation-states in the nineteenth century, it is important to note that between 1848 and 1880, new European nation states were formed in France, Germany, Italy and Russia often as a result of military conflict. From these struggles for independence, an emphasis on cultural unifiers like common language and shared ethnicity were encouraged and new political structures emerged. In nineteenth-century Europe, nationalistic composers arose employing indigenous folk music as a way to support the growth of burgeoning nation states. In particular, the rhythms and inflections of each nation's 'mother tongue' had great impact on musical composition. Nationalism in Europe thus emerged as political movement with cultural ramifications or vice-versa.[162]

> It is reasonable to suppose that, if a composer becomes accustomed to use a distinct musical phraseology in setting words, he will not be able, even if he so wish, to dispense with it when writing purely [instrumental] music…

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[161] Jack Citrin, Ernst B.Haas, Christopher Muste, Beth Reingold,. "Is American Nationalism Changing? Implications for Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (March1994), 2.

[162] New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians "Nationalism" p. 702.

> The study of his national folk-songs is useful to a composer, in that it does teach him how to set his language to music and consequently- because all languages require different musical rhythms and cadences-how to give a distinctive flavor to his music in general.[163]

As discussed in chapter one, American nationalism was birthed during the Great Awakening, whose first and second waves coincided with the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Due in part to a lack of cultural/ethnic unity, American Nationalism emerged as distinct from European Nationalism. Performances of American nationalism fall into three broad constructs whose timeframes tend to overlap but can be generally noted as: cosmopolitan liberalism, nativism and multiculturalism.

**Table 5. Chronology of American Nationalist Ideologies**.[164]

| Nationalist Ideology | Time Frame |
|---|---|
| Cosmopolitan Liberalism | 1776-1840s |
| Nativism | 1840-1960s |
| Multiculturalism | 1960s – present |

The earliest expression of American nationalism is best described as "liberal and Cosmopolitan."[165] Simply defined, "cosmopolitan" means to "identify with and take pleasure the vast diversity of humankind"[166] while liberalism is a political ideology based on liberty and equality. Both ideas are expressed in the Preamble to the Constitution:

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[163] Francis Toye, "A Case for Musical Nationalism" *The Musical Quarterly* 4, no.1 (Jan. 1918), 13.
[164] Jack Citrin, Ernst B. Haas, Christopher Muste and Beth Reingold, "Is American Nationalism Changing? Implications for Foreign Policy" *International Studies Quarterly* 38, no.1 (March 1994), 6.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Kai, Nielsen, "Cosmopolitan Nationalism" *The Monist* 82, no. 3, (July 1999), 446-468.

"…and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity" as well as in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness…"

Early American nationalism lacked congruence between its stated and performed outcomes. Although the Founding Fathers wrote eloquently about liberalism, the notions they espoused were only be applied to the dominant elite members of the nation state and property-owning men between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. For minority populations during this time frame (enslaved Blacks, Native Americans, and women) disenfranchisement and exclusion were commonplace.

After the Civil War, during Reconstruction, a shift in American identity meant that free Blacks began to participate in American society in ways that had been impossible beforehand. With emancipation came opportunities in education, industry, ministry and government. The passage of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments provided new levels of equality during the transition from slavery to freedom.

At the same time, Europeans began entering the United States in waves after the Civil War, a migration trend that continued through the early twentieth century. Though the prevailing nationalist ideology - colonial liberalism "expressed great faith in the ability of American society to assimilate newcomers…the arrival of massive numbers of [foreigners] triggered feelings of exclusiveness."[167] Reaction toward these immigrants gave rise to nativist expressions of nationalism.

> Nativists could agree that the liberal political ideals embodied in the cosmopolitan national 'creed' were inherently American *but* simultaneously maintain that only

[167] Citrin, et. al, "Is Nationalism Changing", 6.

> Anglo-Saxons possessed the moral and intellectual qualities required for democratic citizenship. In short, only some racial, religious, or ethnic groups could be "truly' American.[168]

By the late nineteenth century, those who espoused a nativist doctrine saw their beliefs bolstered by the rise of Darwinist theories, adding weight to the "scientific" argument that all races, cultures and ethnicities were inferior to Anglo-Saxons.[169] Eventually, nativist ideology began to lose ground due to a shift in American identity, which occurred as a result of several national events. Beginning with the downfall of Hitler and the devastation that resulted from his ideology at the end of World War I, America began to rethink the "superior race" construct. During World War II, many black men with farming backgrounds, joined the Armed Forces to escape the poverty that resulted from the Great Depression. Once these men returned from war, they sought work based on the skills they gained in the military instead of returning to farming life, which in turn, accelerated the economic and political mobilization of Blacks. Finally, America's global show of strength against Communism paved the way for America's next expression of nationalism – multiculturalism.[170]

By the 1960s and 1970s, on the heels of the Civil Rights era, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and after decades of absorbing immigrants, multiculturalism gained a foothold as a distinct American nationalistic ideology. Its earliest form was termed the 'melting pot', a concept that resembled nativist thinking, in that it required minority communities to assimilate. Ethnically diverse populations were expected to Americanize

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[168] Ibid., 7.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid., 9.

themselves by divesting their native culture while adopting the cultural expressions dictated by the majority white population by so that "diverse cultural streams [would] acquire a common identity"[171]

Modern multiculturalism differs from the 'melting pot' concept in that it encourages ethnic and cultural differences as an act of nationalism:

> Multiculturalism construes racial group identity as the preferred choice for self-definition …it retains an egalitarian perspective, regarding all the distinct cultures within the country as equal, morally and intellectually…[so that] no race, culture, or language in a state should have a unique, superior status. Moreover, the government must strive to achieve equality in cultural recognition for all groups and to extend this condition to the political and economic realms.[172]

*Multiculturalism, Diversity and The Naval Academy*

For the sake of clarity, I should emphasize that although nationalism is being discussed in relation to the military, nationalism and patriotism should not be used interchangeably. Nationalism is based upon recognized unity or sameness within a group. "Men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as being from the same nation."[173] In other words, nationalism is often based upon cultural or ethnic connections. Patriotism on the other hand is the connection or sense of devotion one assumes for their homeland often at the expense of ethnic affiliation.

For a century, from 1845 to 1945, Academy culture was comprised of a single nation, white, American males and was unified around performances of this culture, i.e., language, faith, and music. For nearly seventy years, since the graduation of the first

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[171] Citrin, Sears, Muste and Wong "Multiculturalism in American Public Opinion" *British Journal of Political Science* 31, no. 2 (April 2001), 251.
[172] Citrin, et. al, "Is Nationalism Changing", 9.
[173] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 6-7.

Black Midshipman, Wesley Brown in 1949, separate but distinct nations have co-existed at the Academy. Brown's matriculation, graduation and commissioning marked a turning point for Academy culture, but also for national culture. John P. Davis, publisher of *Our World* magazine, wrote to Brown in January of 1949, just months before his graduation, requesting an interview. In his letter, he highlighted Brown's significance to the Nation:

> the fact that it is likely that you will be the first Negro graduate of the United States Naval Academy, is a fact of extreme importance to all American people for it raises the hopes of first-class citizenship for several million Negro American youth. It is a demonstration to the whole world – at a time when America needs increasingly to give such a demonstration – that America is fulfilling its destiny as a democratic nation.[174]

When Brown attended the Academy, remnants of nativist nationalism prevailed. In other words, all non-Anglo-Saxons needed to fully assimilate in order to gain cultural acceptance within the dominant white culture, so this is exactly what Brown did. After reading the biography of Henry O. Flipper, the first Black cadet to graduate from West Point, Brown learned that Flipper had kept to himself and maintained a low profile.[175] Therefore, Brown reigned in his normally outgoing personality, made a conscious effort to keep his room and person neat, and attempted to follow every regulation to the letter. His strategy was to be seen as just another plebe.[176]

Twenty years after Brown's graduation, multiculturalism would slowly begin to overtake nativist ideology at the Academy. Multiculturalism – the celebration of one's ethnicity as an act of nationalism - coincided with the Naval Academy's task to become a more diverse Institution. In 1965 after learning that there were only nine black, male

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[174] John P. Davis letter quoted in Robert Schneller, Blue & Gold and Black, 243.
[175] Robert Schneller, *Blue& Gold and Black,* 193.
[176] Ibid.

midshipmen enrolled at the Academy out of a 4,100 member student body, President Lyndon Johnson required Paul Nitze, then Secretary of the Navy, to implement a plan to further integrate the Naval Academy. Nitze's solution led to the development of the Academy's minority recruitment plan.[177]

*Diversity and Nationalism at the Naval Academy*

By the mid 1970s, Naval minority recruitment efforts became more organized. At that time the Navy's Affirmative Action Plan (NAAP) was drafted and included directives on race relations training and minority recruiting. Not only did the Academy strive to contribute 20 percent of minority Naval Officers to the Fleet each year, but also it also sought to diversify its employees, uniformed officers and student body.[178] Until the turn of the twenty-first century, the Academy relied heavily upon its minority admissions counselors (MCA) to travel the country and visit prospective candidates with the goal of increasing the number of Black applicants.

In the late 1990s, the Gospel Choir began conducting concert tours to regions of the country with either low minority Academy enrollment, or no Midshipmen representation at all. These visits were designed to show the future Naval leaders, in all their ethnic diversity, to underrepresented parts of the country and to reinforce the efforts of the MCAs (Minority Admissions Counselors). The diverse roster of Midshipmen in the Gospel Choir combined with the performances of Gospel Music –a style of music not normally associated with the Military - made the message of the Academy more accessible to minority prospects. Concerts included a section during which Admissions

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[177] Schneller, *Blue & Gold and Black*, 113.
[178] Ibid., 248.

Officers informed audiences about how to apply to the Naval Academy. Midshipmen choir members answered candidate questions following the concerts as well.

When the Academy granted the Gospel Choir Charter in 1986, it sent a positive message of acceptance to its Black Midshipmen. When it began to use the Gospel choir as official Ambassadors of the Institution, however, it broadened that message immeasurable. In much the same way as the graduation of Wesley Brown had broadcast a new message to the nation regarding the definition of Nationalistic performance at the Academy, so too did using a Black cultural form- Gospel – as an ambassador.

*Gospel Music as Performed Nationalism*

When audiences attend a Gospel choir concert there are at least three intersections at play: The audience will experience another musical culture first-hand; they will encounter a message of hope, as evident in the uplifting song lyrics, and they experience the principles the Academy values as played out through the Midshipmen performers all through exposure to musical repertoire that is often excluded from Euro-American history.

Dr. Laura Stubbs, was able to see its future impact on minority recruitment in 1986 when she drafted the organizational charter:

> I wrote a charter for the U.S. Naval Academy and submitted it to the Midshipmen Activities Office. In that charter, I stated that the U.S. Naval Academy Gospel Choir would be ambassadors of good will for the Navy and Naval Academy. Not only would the group aid in recruiting for the Naval Academy, it would quickly show the positive effects of leadership and teamwork to civilians who are outside of a military environment and may not understand what can be accomplished when [future Military leaders] come together.[179]

[179] Stubbs, interview with author, December 2015.

Although the current ethnic make-up of the Gospel Choir though diverse, it is still majority Black. The choir's makeup is not representative of the racial makeup of the entire Brigade, and for this reason, minority students who enroll at the Academy after attending a Gospel choir tour performance often seek membership in the Choir. Gospel Choir becomes not just a musical opportunity, but also a source of mentorship, community and family. Dr. Stubbs remembers these 'community building' attributes being present from the very beginning in 1985:

> Midshipmen who sang in the Gospel Choir were primarily Black, however, the choir has been culturally and academically (Plebes, 3rd, 2nd and 1st class Midshipmen) diverse from the beginning. While we were focused on singing and rehearsing when we came together, I saw upper class Midshipmen take on the role of mentor of the younger Midshipmen who they might not have interacted with in any other occasion. I saw the younger Midshipmen coming out of their shell and gaining confidence.[180]

*Performed Nationalism Abroad*

In addition to representing the Academy in matters of diversity in the United States, the Gospel Choir has also acted as ambassadors abroad. In 2011, the Gospel Choir toured South Korea over a ten-day period. Performances at a variety of churches, universities and the Korean Naval Academy took the choir to four major cities in South Korea: Seoul, Taegu, Busan and Chinhae, during which one of the expected objectives was: "to demonstrate the far reaching effects of music in promoting better understanding between different cultures and enhancing opportunities to interact with local populations."[181] At the conclusion of the tour, Lt. Vance Scott, the Naval Officer Representative for the choir in 2011, submitted an after action report designed to

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[180] Ibid.

[181] Vance Scott, *After Action Report for USNA Gospel Choir Tour in Republic of Korea* (ROK), 11-20 March 2011. Declassified email document, 1.

summarize the trip for the Commandant of Midshipmen in which he wrote, "Senior U.S. and Republic of Korea officials expressed their admiration, respect and appreciation of the Gospel Choir. They were clearly impressed by the Gospel Choir in particular, when the Midshipmen sang the Korean National Anthem in Korean. Gospel Choir reception from every venue in country is a clear indication of their love for Gospel music and the fine arts."[182]

The Naval Academy Gospel Choir tour to South Korea, perhaps more than any U.S. tour, underscored the importance of multiculturalism in performed Nationalism in part due to the selection of such an ethnically diverse choir to represent the United States. Although the Gospel Choir includes some patriotic music (widely viewed around the world as representative of American pride), the Gospel music it performs is much more closely associated with Black or Black church culture. The intentional use of this multi-cultural yet non-traditional display of American nationalism served as evidence of an important shift in Naval Academy culture from dominant to inclusive.

[182] Ibid., 4.

# CONCLUSION

While musicologists agree that many forms of American popular music are derived from Gospel music, few courses at the university level include information about its history, performance practices and contributions to American culture. By and large, with the exception of specialized institutions like the Naval Academy, American universities with music departments do not include Gospel music, within its choirs or course offerings, instead, at most universities, Gospel choirs are student led. As performances of American nationalism continue to reflect our country's ever expanding multi-cultural citizenship, all American musicians would greatly benefit exposure to the history of gospel music and the role it has played in shaping other American music forms.

In the early 1990s, a Gospel Choir was added to the Music Department at the United States Naval Academy. By the end of that decade, the choir was one of three touring choirs authorized to represent the Academy in an official capacity. Institutional support for the Choir came about largely because of the group's diverse Midshipmen population, as well as its performance of an evolved folk form – gospel music. By the late 1990s, in keeping with the Navy's desire to appear more diversified, the Academy began to use the Gospel Choir as a recruiting tool. On behalf of the Academy, the Choir began performing nationally and internationally as a way to increase minority enrollment.

In this study, I have examined the culture of a military university that elevated Gospel music to the same tier as its classical music offerings. I discussed Gospel music performance practices and highlighted the impact of Gospel music training on leadership development. I concluded that the Naval Academy's endorsement of its Gospel Choir stemmed from a desire to display diversity within its Officer ranks while simultaneously

reflecting a change in American nationalism; from nativist to multi-cultural. It is my belief that the presence of a Gospel Choir has in part assisted in the diversification of the Naval Academy's dominant culture population while supporting the shift in its historical narrative from one of institutional segregation and inequality to one of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity.

# Appendix A – Professor Gilley Biography

***PROFESSOR DONALD CURTISS GILLEY***

*Director of Musical Activities, USNA (Ret.)*

Donald C. Gilley was born in Stoughton, Wisconsin, on June 4, 1904. After studying for two years at Beloit College, he transferred to Oberlin Conservatory of Music from which he graduated in 1928. He later obtained the degree of Mus.M. from the University of Cincinnati Conservatory, studied privately with E. Power Biggs, and did graduate study in composition at Peabody Conservatory and Catholic University. He also acquired a Certificate in Theater Organ Playing from Eastman Conservatory. Further, he was an Associate of the American Guild of Organists and held the Choirmaster's Certificate from that organization.

From 1928-1933 Professor Gilley was head of the music department at Earlham College where he established the first music major. From 1933-1938 he was head of the organ department at Butler University and the Jordan Conservatory of Music and conducted their concert choir. Subsequently, he was Minister of Music at Wesley United Methodist Church in Worcester, Massachusetts.

In 1942 he joined the faculty of the Navy Chaplains' School in Williamsburg, Virginia, where he directed a weekly national radio broadcast entitled "The Navy Sings", played the organ and directed the choir at daily services in Wren Chapel, and gave organ recitals in Bruton Parish Church. While there he was invited to become Organist and Choirmaster at the Naval Academy, and he assumed this position on January 10, 1944. At that time there was only the Chapel Choir which, under Professor Gilley's direction, performed at all Chapel services, on network radio and television, at churches throughout the United States, and at the Hollywood Bowl.

In 1950 Professor Gilley organized the Antiphonal Choir which afforded an opportunity to more midshipmen to participate in the Chapel musical program. They joined the Chapel Choir in singing at all weekly services and gave concerts at many churches along the East Coast. He also established the Plebe Choir which each summer provided training for Plebes in the music and traditions of the Chapel and enabled them to be placed in either the Chapel or Antiphonal Choirs at the end of Plebe Summer.

About 1950 Professor Gilley reorganized the student-directed Glee Club and became its first professional Director. Thereafter the Glee Club achieved prominence through movie, radio and television appearances, performances at the White House, and public concerts before large audiences including schools, conventions, and Congress.

Professor Gilley had the vision in 1947 to inaugurate the annual presentation of Handel's "Messiah" by the choirs of the Naval Academy and Hood College. He conducted this work, which is now a community tradition, for 25 years until his retirement, performing before capacity crowds in the Naval Academy Chapel. One performance was recorded for television and was broadcast nationally for many years. Over the years he also played numerous recitals on the Academy organ, much of which he designed, played for thousands of weddings, composed many pieces for organ and other instruments, arranged choral music, and demonstrated his adeptness at organ improvisation in the Sunday services. His composition for organ and string quartet was performed at the American Music Festival at the National Gallery of Art.

After almost 29 years, Professor Gilley retired on October 1, 1972, as Director of Musical Activities, a position which he considered a privilege and a challenge — emotionally, spiritually, and professionally. In recognition of his service, he had been made an honorary member of the Naval Academy Alumni Association, an honorary member of the Naval Academy Classes of 1950 and 1973, and an Honorary Chaplain in the U.S. Navy.

On May 11, 1983, Professor Gilley died, and a Memorial Service was held in the Naval Academy Chapel on May 16. At this service the hymn "O Jesus, I Have Promised to Serve Thee to the End" characterized his life. His deep care and concern for generations of midshipmen and his devotion to the Chapel earned him the respect of those who knew him, and he served His Master with joy and dedication until the end of his life.

Source: United States Naval Academy Music Department. Provided Fall 2015.

# Appendix B – 1970s Navy Posters Targeting Black Recruits


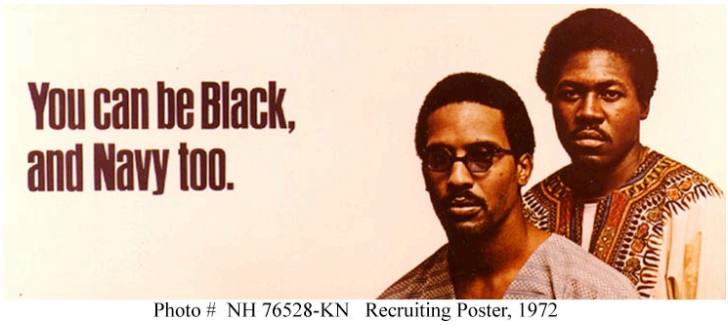


Photo # NH 76528-KN Recruiting Poster, 1972



Source: http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/OnlineLibrary/photos/prs-tpic/af-amer/afa-pstr.htm. Accessed 24 February, 2016. *According to the web reference, these are public domain images.

# Appendix C- Chart of Hand Signals and Descriptions Used in Gospel Music.

| DECRIPTION | USE |
|---|---|
| Point Thumbs backward over one's shoulders | Indicates leaving one musical section of a piece and entering another |
| Circle hands around one another in tempo | Indicates repetition of section, phrase or word |
| Extend arm in the air with hand in a fist | Indicates the end of the song or<br>Do not sing – instruments only. |
| Place hand above head parallel to the floor | Indicates repetition from the beginning of the song or the current section |
| Thumb and forefinger form the letter "L" with a rapid flipping motion | Invert the chord being sung<br>Root position moves to 1st inversion<br>1st inversion to 2nd. |
| Thumbs up | Modulate upward by half or whole step |
| Thumbs down | Modulate downward by whole or half step |
| Bring thumb and fingertips together rapidly | Indicates that the choir should cheer, or provide vocal encouragement |
| Extend arm with palm facing choir | Begin to sing |
| One hand to ear | Increase volume |
| Show three fingers | Sing in parts |
| Show index finger | Sing in unison |
| Move hand upward or downward | Teach melodic line |
| Single Clap | Choir should begin clapping |
| Point to soloist then show a set number of fingers | Indicates which verse a soloist should sing. |

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