



# UNACCOMPANIED NON-IDIOMATIC CHORAL MUSIC OF BLACK COMPOSERS

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Trends in concert programming reveal that repertoire considerations for Black composers are often limited to spirituals, gospel, and jazz. While some arrangements are quite popular and well known, I argue that the representation of the original works of Black composers rarely receive the same attention in comparison to similar contributions of white composers, a claim echoed by Jeffery Ames, Jason Max Ferdinand, and Robert Herrema, among others.<sup>1</sup> This article makes a case for the inclusion of original choral works of Black composers in music history and choral literature studies as well as concert programming by first defining non-idiomatic in relation to Black composers then surveying eight representative unaccompanied choral works.

## Non-Idiomatic

For the purpose of this article, *non-idiomatic* refers to music that is not in a popular idiomatic style. The idiomatic styles of Black composers include spirituals, gospel, and jazz, among others. The *non-idiomatic* songs may have influences from those styles but are not considered idiomatic either in totality by analysis or by the composer specifically. The extent to which Black composers are often represented through idiomatic styles primarily is a curiosity worth further inquiry. The contributions of Black composers to classical music include but are not limited to operas, piano suites, symphonies, concertos, art songs, anthems, motets, part songs, madrigals, choral art songs, cantatas, and oratorios.

The following eight unaccompanied choral works surveyed in order of original publication year represent living and deceased composers, female and male composers, different tempos, songs ranging from easy to difficult, and both sacred and secular texts. Songs written in the style of a spiritual or work song, but are completely original, are outside the purview of this article while additional representative works are excluded to create a sample.<sup>2</sup>

*Ave Maria* (1930)

R. Nathaniel Dett

- Born in Drummondville, Ontario in 1882
- Bachelor of music degree in composition and piano in 1907 from Oberlin Conservatory of Music
- Third president of the National Association of Negro Musicians, Inc. (NANM), 1924–26

In 1930, the Hampton Institute Choir conducted by R. Nathaniel Dett toured Europe for six weeks where they sang several anthems and motets by Dett using Black folk music as their theme. In addition to performances at Queen's Hall and Royal Albert Hall, the choir sang in the Cathedral of Salzburg. After they finished an impromptu performance of *Ave Maria*, their guide inquired of the song's composer. Dett quietly responded with "Mine."<sup>3</sup>

G. Schirmer granted permission to Hinshaw Music to reprint *Ave Maria*. It is available in "The Music of Black Americans," a choral series edited by Evelyn D. White. The motet features vocal lines written by a composer who understands the abilities and limitations of the human voice. The melodies allow each voice to move through the full range. The first eight measures exploit

the lower registers of all vocal lines, while later sections sometimes effortlessly float above the staff.

As in many of his other choral works, Dett characteristically uses paired voices in thirds. The motet shifts quickly through several tonicizations before returning to the home key of F major. He also frequently employs descending chromatic lines (as seen in the bass where the choir sustains chords and the baritone solo recites a portion of the text) (Figure 1). As the choir returns to more strict rhythms, the solo sings "Amen" before the tenor sings the final pitches above the soprano.

Part of the challenge of the song lies in the few large leaps, such as the tenor's ascending seventh in measure 10 and the bass's descending sixth in measure 11 and ascending seventh in measure 12. Dett contrasts these leaps with continuity in the reappearance of the first two measures of the soprano melody later in the motet in both alto and bass.

*Ave Maria* is one of only a few of Dett's many choral works to remain in performance repertoires. His most significant pioneering work was the use of Black folk music as thematic material for anthems, motets, hymns, and other works including his two choral-orchestral works *The Chariot Jubilee* and *The Ordering of Moses* that use *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* and *Go Down, Moses*, respectively. It is for this reason that many of his songs are often miscategorized as spiritual arrangements, including his most

The musical score for measures 44-46 of *Ave Maria* by R. Nathaniel Dett. The score is in 4/4 time and F major. It features a Baritone Solo part and a four-part vocal harmony (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The lyrics are: Ave Maria gratia plena ora pro nobis peccatoribus, in hora mortis nostrae.

Measure 44: The Baritone Solo part begins with a half note G2, followed by a half note A2. The vocal parts enter with a whole note chord of G2, B2, D3, and F3.

Measure 45: The Baritone Solo part continues with a half note A2, followed by a half note B2. The vocal parts continue with a whole note chord of G2, B2, D3, and F3.

Measure 46: The Baritone Solo part concludes with a half note B2, followed by a half note A2. The vocal parts conclude with a whole note chord of G2, B2, D3, and F3.

Figure 1. R. Nathaniel Dett, *Ave Maria*, mm. 44–46.

Text by Frederick Martens  
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famous work *Listen to the Lambs* first published for mixed choir in 1914 as “A Religious Characteristic in the form of an Anthem.” His choral music outshone his numerous art songs and piano suites. Notably, most of his music is unaccompanied even though he was a celebrated pianist.

### ***He Stooped to Bless* (1936)**

Edward Margetson

- Born in the British West Indies on December 31, 1891
- Emigrated to New York in 1919
- Founded the Schubert Music Society in New York in 1927
- Served as an organist at the Church of the Crucifixion in New York City
- Died in 1962
- Triad Chorale and Schubert Music Society performed a concert of his music at Alice Tully Hall in 1974<sup>4</sup>

- Edward H. Margetson Music Manuscripts housed at Columbia University as a gift from his son, Desmond Margetson

*He Stooped to Bless* was originally published by J. Fischer & Bro in 1936 then licensed to GIA Publications in 2006 and is available in the African American Church Music Series edited by James Abbington. The score indicates an anonymous text. However, it can be found in both *Mission Studies: Woman's Work in Foreign Lands, Volumes 23-24* (1905) and *The Record, Volume 16-17* by Girls' Friendly Society in America (1908) as penned by A. R. G.

#### Text

*He stooped to bless, and stooping raised us.  
And the tenderness which looked in pity on a world of  
sin, long years ago,  
still waits in love to call the nations in.  
Till all shall know that all may rise in him to holiness.  
Because he stooped so low.*

The home key of F major repeatedly returns while the song effortlessly moves without pause through various tonal centers. The first phrase ends in A major and uses a common-tone modulation to return to the opening musical material in the home key (Figure 2). Ad-

11

S na - tions in. Till all shall know that

A na - tions in. Till all shall know that

T na - tions in. Till all shall know that

B na - tions in. Till all shall know, till all shall know that

**Figure 2.** Edward Margetson, *He Stooped to Bless*, mm. 11–15.

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ditionally, Margetson uses text painting for the phrase “may rise” by repeating the musical material a fourth higher in all voices.

The final section is introduced in the bass with the words “Because he stooped.” The four notes descend as if stooping and are imitated six times in all voices (Figure 3).

Singer accessibility of *He Stooped to Bless* makes it a great reading exercise for more advanced readers. The song features simple rhythms and ranges with the exception of a few higher notes in the tenor line. The thirty-one measures are a mixture of homophony, imitation, and sequence. These compositional techniques are hallmarks of Margetson's style and are present in other works like *A Few More Years Shall Roll* and *Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal*.

*How Stands the Glass Around?* (1956)

Ulysses Kay

- Born on January 7, 1917, in Tucson, Arizona
- Learned piano at an early age
- Studied at Eastman and Columbia University

- Awarded a Julius Rosenwald Fellowship, a Fulbright scholarship, and a grant from the National Institute of Letters and Arts
- Died on May 20, 1995
- Ulysses Kay Papers, including his diaries, music, programs, and photographs, are housed in Columbia University's Rare Book & Manuscript Library

In 1944, David Randolph organized the Randolph Singers, a group dedicated to performing madrigals. To boost the number of contemporary contributions to this genre, he requested (not commissioned) several composers to write for his quintet. Their album, *Lament for April 15 and Other Modern American Madrigals*, includes two madrigals written by Kay (*How Stands the Glass Around?* and *What's in a Name?*).<sup>5</sup>

*How Stands the Glass Around?* is a contemporary madrigal for SSATB that features the imitation of various themes and swift tonicizations. The utilization of crossing voices, inspired by Renaissance madrigals, is intuitive and allows for freedom in the vocal lines, not limited by range.

The first theme sung by the tenor is an ascending five-note passage in F minor. The bass enters with the

23

S  
ness. Be-cause he stooped so low, be-

A  
ness. Be-cause he stooped, be-cause he stooped, be-

T  
ness. Be-cause he stooped so low, be-cause he

B  
ness. Be-cause he stooped so low, be-cause he stooped so low, be-

*p* *mp* *f*

**Figure 3.** Edward Margetson, *He Stooped to Bless*, mm. 23–27.

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same melody two beats later. Once joined, they continue mostly in stepwise motion. The treble voices enter with the same melody separated by two beats, imitating the opening canon.

The first soprano introduces the second theme in measure 10, contrasting the previous stepwise motion by outlining a C-major triad. As the text shifts to “the colors they are flying,” the music moves from disjunct motion to more conjunct motion in all voices.

The third theme begins in F-sharp minor preceded by an enharmonic third used as a dominant. The duet of thirds in the second soprano and alto, colored by open fifths and octaves, contrasts the melody in the bass. The theme is imitated among the voices that did not possess the melody.

Earlier themes return with varied entrances, contrasting dynamics, and octave doublings. After the third theme reappears in measure 65, octave doubling in the tenor and bass and unison in the sopranos and alto begin to close the final section as the tonal centers quickly shift from B minor to G minor to A<sup>b</sup> minor to A minor.

Similar to the use of texture and rhythm for text painting, Kay uses the tritone relation between D minor (m. 78) and the vertical harmony

of A<sup>b</sup> major to draw attention to “kind” (m. 83) in the text “But if we remain, a bottle and a kind landlady cure all again” (Figure 4).

Full of quick lines, imaginative writing, and colorful imitation, *How Stands* is worthy of a revival from its mid-century beginning. It was completed in 1954,

The musical score for Figure 4 consists of two systems of five staves each, labeled S1, S2, A, T, and B. The first system covers measures 78-81, and the second system covers measures 82-85. The lyrics are: "But if we re - main, a bot - tle and a kind land - la - dy cure all a - gain, main, a kind land - la - dy cure all a - and a kind la - dy bot - tle and a la - dy". Dynamic markings include *p*, *mp*, *poco f*, and *p sub.*. The score is written in a key with one flat (B minor) and a 4/4 time signature.

Figure 4. Ulysses Kay, *How Stands the Glass Around?*, mm. 78–85.

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recorded in 1955, and published in 1956. In the same year, Kay completed *A Wreath for Waits*, utilizing anonymous Christmas texts, for unaccompanied choir. The set was composed for the Cornell University A Cappella Chorus, consisting of three songs between two and three minutes each.

Additionally, the American Choral Directors Association commissioned Kay for its first independent convention in 1971. *Parables* is a two-movement work for chorus and string orchestra premiered by Kansas State University Concert Chorale and Chamber Orchestra conducted by Paul Roby.

## Psalm 57 (1972) Betty Jackson King

- Born in 1928
- Bachelor of music degree in piano and a master of music degree in composition at Roosevelt University in Chicago

- Organized and conducted the Betty Jackson King Artists who performed in the Chicago area<sup>6</sup>
- Taught at Dillard University in New Orleans
- President of NANM, 1980–1985

*Psalm 57* is published by Jacksonian Press. King dedicated the song to the Brazeal Dennard Chorale, a Detroit-based choir founded in 1972 by the celebrated conductor and arranger of Negro spirituals, Brazeal Dennard.<sup>7</sup> Table 1 shows the adaptation of four verses of Psalm 57 from the King James Version of the Bible for this anthem.

The song opens with an extended “oh” for pleading. The layered entrances build not only in intensity but also in range as the alto imitates the first four measures of the bass and the soprano imitates the first three measures of the tenor. After the imitation ends, the final call to God is made before the request of mercy using homophony.

In measure 13, the voices return with the opening two measures of each entrance, separated by homophonic requests using syncopation for agitation. The opening

**Table 1. Comparison of King James Version and Betty Jackson King text for *Psalm 57***

King James Version	Betty Jackson King Version
1 Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.	Oh God, be merciful unto me For my soul taketh refuge in thee Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I take refuge Until these sorrows pass over
7 My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.	My heart is fixed
10a For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.	For thy loving kindness is great unto the heavens And thy truth unto the skies
11 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.	Be thou exalted, oh God, above the heavens Let thy glory be above all the earth

key of B minor briefly transitions through D minor before arriving at the relative major utilizing a melisma on “unto” similar to that of “Oh, God” in previous material. When the text switches to assurance, the music begins in D major with parallel triads in the upper three voices supported by bass pedal tones on the tonic.

King heard spirituals frequently at her childhood church in Mississippi. The use of syncopation throughout and call-and-response between the divided soprano and alto voices and divided tenor and bass voices recall this history.

The first verse of the psalm ends with the text “until these sorrows pass over.” With the last word, all lines ascend with *cresc. e accel.* as the sorrows quickly gather and are tossed away. The ascending lines also grow with intensity.

Verses 7a and 10a repeat with the same musical material after the initial melodic statement in measures 59–66. Before finishing verse 10, King uses a deceptive cadence, rather than repeating the use of a half cadence, as she did in measure 66.

The last verse explores the upper parts of each voice’s range. This may be challenging for younger singers, as the final three pages of the nearly five-minute song call for more physical stamina to finish the song with power. Repeated rhythmic and melodic ideas abound while mixing modes with the use of C, B<sup>b</sup>, and F. Syncopation (inspired by spirituals) and duets fill the last two pages before final “Amen’s” build utilizing opposing vocal forces (fast vs. slow melismas). The penultimate chord requires some musical decisions on the part of the conductor because the rehearsal piano and voice parts disagree.

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### ***Lord, We Give Thanks to Thee* (1973)**

Undine Smith Moore

- Considered the “Dean of Black Women Composers”
- Born on August 25, 1904, in Jarratt, Virginia
- Granddaughter of former slaves



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- Degrees from Fisk University and Columbia University
- Composed music while teaching chorus at Davis Laboratory High School because the school did not have enough money to purchase music<sup>8</sup>
- Taught theory, counterpoint, piano, and organ at Virginia State College (now University), 1927–1972

*Lord, We Give Thanks to Thee* was originally published by Warner Brothers and later reissued by GIA Publications in 2006 in the same series as *He Stooped to Bless*. When mentioning the work, she said: “Another work that pleases me is *Lord, We Give Thanks to Thee* [1971], a festive choral setting that was commissioned by Fisk to celebrate the Centennial Anniversary of the ‘going-out’ of the Fisk Jubilee Singers in 1871. This work gave me the opportunity to use such contrapuntal skill as I possess. It includes a fugue that is completely Afro-American in its subject; the rhythms are all Black; and the climaxes call for the zest and intensity characteristic of Black style.”<sup>9</sup>

This anthem is a prelude and fugue in C major in which the prelude returns as an extended *coda* on text from Leviticus 25:9. The joyful homophonic opening uses parallel seventh chords for many iterations of “*Alleluia*.”

The fugue begins at measure 16 marked “Steady tem-

po, strongly marked rhythm” with a suggested tempo of M.M. 80 as compared to M.M. 138<sup>10</sup> from the prelude. The melodic subject in the bass voice alludes to a mode absent of the third scale degree until the final tone. The tenor responds with a real answer while the bass’s “*Alleluia*” interjection is used throughout the remainder of the song. The alto and soprano close the exposition with an octave trumpet call used as a common-tone modulation to A<sup>b</sup> major when the bass reenters.

The “*Alleluia*” exclamations become solo interjections similar to a Black Pentecostal or Baptist experience. In these church services, congregants freely express their agreement by exclaiming “Amen” and “Hallelujah” during the service. Two measures later, an extended “*Alleluia*” in the minor mode with only sixteenth notes uses the mode mixture from the previous key to modulate to E<sup>b</sup> minor. The first two measures of the fugue subject repeat canonically at the octave with soprano, tenor, and bass separated by one measure each. The extended “*Alleluia*” returns with two altered tones (second and raised third scale degrees) in the soprano before modulating to E minor in the tenor.

The following sections in E minor and A minor use a truncated subject and “*Alleluia*” exclamation with imitation and call-and-response, the latter being one of the characteristics Moore mentioned in her conversation with Carl Gordon Harris, Jr. (Figure 5).

To return to C major, the relative major of A minor,

Figure 5. Undine Smith Moore, *Lord, We Give Thanks to Thee*, mm. 50–53.

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The final measures of the fugue begin with a unison pentatonic scale in echo without the third scale degree. When the voices combine, the dynamic falls to *subito piano* with a *crescendo* to *fortissimo* in three measures. The

Moore's most famous piece is an arrangement of the spiritual *Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord*. However, she did not consider that one of her best compositions. In a conversation with Harris, she mentioned many other original works including her epic cantata *Scenes from the Life of a Martyr* (mixed chorus, narrator, soloists, orchestra), a Christmas cantata *Glory to God* (TTBB chorus, narrator, flute, organ, piano), and two short songs *Striving after God* (unaccompanied mixed chorus) and *The*

63

**S** *f* Then shalt Thou cause the trum - pet to

**A** *f* Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -

**T** *f* Then shalt Thou cause the trum - pet to sound, the trum - pet to sound, the

**B** *f* Then shalt Thou cause the trum - pet to sound, the trum - pet to sound, the

66

**S** sound. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -

**A** lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -

**T** trum - pet to sound. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

**B** trum - pet to sound. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

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*Lamb* (SS chorus, piano).<sup>10</sup>

In celebration of her 100th birthday, Philip Brunelle wrote an article for the *Choral Journal* titled “The Centenary Year of Undine Smith Moore.” He also recorded her sublime arrangement of *We Shall Walk through the Valley* and two settings of Langston Hughes’ poetry *Mother to Son* and *Tambourines to Glory* on the VocalEssence Witness album titled *Dance Like Wind: Music of Today’s Black Composers*.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Hehlehlooyuh* (1978)**

James Furman

- Born on January 23, 1937, in Louisville, Kentucky
- Completed two degrees at the University of Louisville, where he studied composition
- Later coursework in theory and composition at Brandeis University
- Taught at Western Connecticut State University until his death in 1989

Furman is likely most famous for *Hehlehlooyuh*, subtitled “A Joyful Expression,” with high energy and at a fast tempo. This challenging song features marked rhythms, varying time signatures, some tonal ambiguity, ascending melodic lines, and repeated chord tones

in a measure.

In the opening section, two of the prevailing motives appear in the first two measures. Continuous eighth notes drive to the next measure. Some ambiguity and tension arise in measure 3 with a consonant triad in the three voices against a dissonant bass (Figure 7).

Measures 12–22 are a repetition of the first eleven measures with varied bass pitches in measure 13–16. The change of dynamics from *forte* to *pianissimo* highlights the greatest contrast.

Section B starts at measure 23. Furman contrasts the previous section by removing one voice to change the texture. Additionally, the dynamics change almost every measure, sometimes between syllables. Momentum is achieved through ascending lines and parallel motion from earlier measures.

Section C is built over a static E in the bass. There is more rhythmic interest in the differing rhythms of each voice. The alto and tenor have most of the melodic movement.

The two motives of section D are derivations from the opening. The truncated melodic bass ascent is from measure 7 transposed down a perfect fourth similar to the parallel fourths in the inverted triads from earlier sections. And an eighth rest punctuates the opening rhythm. Brief soprano solos become a descant and create split chords (C<sup>♮</sup> in solos and C<sup>♯</sup> in alto). The opening four measures repeat with increasing dynamics but without soprano through measure 93.

After the repeated measures end, two motives con-

**Figure 7.** James Furman, *Hehlehlooyuh*, mm. 1–4.

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tinue in measures 95–105. Parallel fifths replace the repeated notes as in the beginning. Soprano and bass ascend in parallel motion.

The final section begins in measure 107 with a unison exclamation in soprano and tenor followed by parallel melodies in sixths. The tempo briefly slows then returns to *tempo primo*. After a three-measure *accelerando*, the final seven measures recapitulate the now-familiar rhythms but at higher pitch classes until the end.

Furman composed works in a variety of styles including *The Declaration of Independence for Narrator and Orchestra* with bagpipes and *Vocalise Romantique for Voice and Piano*. Among his choral works include spiritual arrangements

with gospel influences and original works like *Four Little Foxes*, four short songs for unaccompanied mixed choir using the text of Lew Sarett.

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***The 23rd Psalm* (1994)**

Bobby McFerrin

- Born in New York City
- Father was the first African American male to perform solo at the Met



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- Collaborated with several popular and classical artists around the world
- Several Grammy awards and albums<sup>12</sup>

McFerrin’s *23rd Psalm* was released in 1990 on the EMI label. The score edition became available in 1994 by Prob Noblem Music. Don Stolper transcribed Bobby McFerrin’s performance of all four voice parts.<sup>13</sup>

The salient element of this song dedicated to his mother is the use of the feminine gender for a text that

is traditionally masculine. McFerrin continued with this change in the Gloria Patri as seen in Table 2.

There are two sections of similar music repeated twice. Each phrase begins with a recitation on either the tonic chord or a cluster. Stolper’s transcription uses different time signatures based on the strong pulses of McFerrin’s performance. The meters shift among 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, and 5/4. The vocal lines between the tonic chord and cluster comprise mostly conjunct motion.

Listening to the recording by McFerrin may help singers understand the serenity of the work. This sim-

Table 2. Comparison of King James Version and Bobby McFerrin Adaption of *Psalm 23* and *Gloria Patri*

King James Version with Gloria Patria	Bobby McFerrin Adaptation
1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.	The Lord is my Shepherd, I have all I need,
2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.	She makes me lie down in green meadows, Beside the still waters, She will lead.
3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.	She restores my soul, She rights my wrongs, She leads me in a path of good things, And fills my heart with songs.
4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.	Even though I walk through a dark and dreary land, There is nothing that can shake me, She has said, She won’t forsake me, I’m in Her hand.
5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.	She sets a table before me, in the presence of my foes, She anoints my head with oil, And my cup overflows.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.	Surely, surely goodness and kindness will follow me, All the days of my life, And I will live in Her house, Forever, forever and ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.	Glory be to our Mother, and Daughter, And to the Holy of Holies, As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, World, without end. Amen.

ple homophonic song reinforces the “still waters” mentioned in the psalm.

## Nocturne (1994)

Adolphus Hailstork

- Degrees from Howard University, Manhattan School of Music, and Michigan State University
- Composition teachers include Mark Fax, Nadia Boulanger, Vittorio Giannini, David Diamond, and H. Owen Reed
- Commissions from the Detroit Symphony, Houston Choral Society, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and more
- Works have been performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Virginia Symphony, and Boston Symphony Orchestra
- Professor of Music and Eminent Scholar at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia<sup>14</sup>

*Nocturne* is the second song in the set *Five Short Choral Works*. (The other songs include *I Will Sing of Life, Crucifixion, The Cloths of Heaven*, and *The Lamb*.) The score provides rehearsal letters and can be divided into three sections with a *coda* (Table 3).

While the song features a wide range of dynamics from *pppp* through *ff*, the vocal ranges are rather acces-

sible. The highest notes for soprano and tenor are F<sup>#</sup>, while the lowest note for alto is B.

Both A sections use aleatory for an atmospheric feeling. All voices except soprano have the same formula: “Sing the words one time then hum three times.” The entrances in section A are not metrically defined. Some entrances dovetail another voice’s ending. Hailstork provides the note: “There is no syncopation between the sections, only within the sections.” Conductors have interpreted this differently. In the VocalEssence recording, each presentation of the vocal lines is clearly heard in unison. The opening aleatory after the octave G<sup>#</sup> in all voices except bass present all seven pitches of the G<sup>#</sup> natural minor scale.

After all alto and tenor voices enter, the soprano sings the melody. The first three lines before the basses enter are pentatonic. At rehearsal E, the divided basses enter with dovetailed aleatory. The soprano melody then introduces E<sup>#</sup> and A<sup>#</sup> before all voices end with metric endings associated with either words or rests at rehearsal G.

The B section begins with imitative entrances by soprano voices and a divided altos line (Figure 8 on page 30). Similarly to section A, the basses rest for half of the section. The voices enter at the quietest dynamic to show the wonder that is felt inside versus what may be seen. The first question of this section is, “Have you

**Table 3. Formal design of *Nocturne***

Section	Rehearsal Letters
A	A–G
B	H–L
A'	M–O
<i>Coda</i>	P

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felt the wonder that flows without end in those mighty spaces, where countless fires burn in the surrounding darkness?" Hailstork depicts the flickering flames utilizing both small and large leaps. Before the tenors enter, a quick *crescendo* from *pppp* to *f* imitates light permeating the darkness.

Rehearsal I uses call-and-response between tenor and soprano and divided alto voices. A brief bass pedal point of A<sup>#</sup> helps to tonicize D<sup>#</sup> minor. When the basses return, full choir homophony supports the final invitation of the poem, "Then come and watch these skies, come and watch these fields."

Section A' ends on a C<sup>#</sup> major chord with the return of the opening aleatory but with stricter rhythmic entrances. The opening melody also recapitulates with a soprano solo on text while the soprano section hums in rehearsal N.

The *coda* on a hum outlines a descending pentatonic scale with each entrance. As a higher voice moves, the

next lowest voice enters on the following sequential pitch. The softest dynamics from *pp* to *pppp* close the work, ending with a B-major seventh chord in third inversion.

In addition to several operas and works for organ, chamber ensembles, and orchestra, Hailstork has composed choral works of varying sizes, many published by Theodore Presser. *Done Made My Vow* is a forty-five-minute extended work for mixed choir, soloists, narrator, and orchestra and based on two spirituals while also using Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech, updated with a speech by President Barack Obama. *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes* is a three-movement cantata for tenor, mixed choir, and chamber orchestra and is to the memory of Undine Smith Moore. *Shout for Joy* is an extended anthem for the 150th anniversary of Bank Street Memorial Baptist Church in Norfolk, Virginia. It was originally written for mixed choir, brass, timpani, and organ. Hailstork composed *The God of Glory Thunders* for unaccompanied choir in 1998 as ACDA's

The musical score for "Nocturne," Rehearsal H, measures 2-6, is written for Soprano (S), Alto 1 (A1), and Alto 2 (A2). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The lyrics are: "mm in those might - y Have you felt the won - der that flows Have you felt the won - der that flows with - out end spac - es, where count - less fires burn in the sur - in those might - y spac - es, where count - less fires burn, in those might - y spac - es". The score includes dynamics *pppp* and *cresc.* (crescendo). The Soprano part begins with a rest followed by a half note G#4, then a half note A4, and a half note B4. The Alto 1 and Alto 2 parts begin with a half note G#3, then a half note A3, and a half note B3. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Figure 8. Adolphus Hailstork and Jim Curtis, *Five Short Choral Works*, "Nocturne," Rehearsal H, mm. 2–6.

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1999 Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission.

### Conclusion

The non-idiomatic choral music of Black composers is not limited in style and range. The songs surveyed explore elements from simple homophony and tonality to aleatory and tonal ambiguity in myriad accessibility levels depending on the ensemble. Some use elements inspired by the composers' work with spirituals and other Black music, while most do not. These and other composers have a rich history that should be studied, taught, and appreciated.

The inclusion of this music and others in these styles should not be a replacement of the idiomatic music of Black composers that are reputable contributions to the wider musical canon. These unaccompanied works and others are comparative in breadth and depth to the standard works frequently studied and performed.

The limitations of this article do not allow for a full description of the many works that could represent this topic, including several works by deceased, historical composers such as *Heu me Domine* by Vicente Lusitano (died after 1561) and *The Lee Shore* by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1915). Further studies include the accompanied and choral-orchestral non-idiomatic choral works. Several sources are available for locating other titles considered non-idiomatic, including the *International Dictionary of Black Composers* and the *Encyclopedia of African American Music*. Additionally, visit [www.mlagmusic.com/research/beyond-elijah-rock](http://www.mlagmusic.com/research/beyond-elijah-rock) for an evolving list dedicated specifically to this music. The appendix can serve as a starting point for music still in print or available in the public domain. ■

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Jeffery L. Ames, "A Pioneering Twentieth-Century African-American Musician: The Choral Works of George T. Walker" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 2005), xiv, ProQuest (3183034). Jason Max Ferdinand, "A Study of Robert Nathaniel Dett: His Creation of The Chariot Jubilee and a Setting of a New Accessible Reduced Orchestration" (DMA diss., University of Maryland, 2015), 2, ProQuest (3711550). Robert D.

Herrema, "Choral Music by Black Composers" *Choral Journal* 10, no. 4 (Jan. 1970): 15, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23543248>.

<sup>2</sup> Songs written in the style of a spiritual or work song include *Ain't Got Time to Die* by Hall Johnson, *Great God A'mighty* by Jester Hairston, and *I'm Gonna Sing 'Til the Spirit Moves in My Heart* by Moses Hogan.

<sup>3</sup> R. Nathaniel Dett, "A Musical Invasion of Europe," in R. Nathaniel Dett Reader: *Essays on Black Sacred Music*, ed. Jon Michael Spencer, special issue, *Black Sacred Music: A Journal of Theomusicology* 5, no. 2 (Fall 1991): 90.

<sup>4</sup> Raymond Erickson, "Margetson Works Played at Concert," *New York Times*, October 14, 1974, <https://www.nytimes.com/1974/10/14/archives/margetson-works-played-at-concert.html>.

<sup>5</sup> David Randolph, liner notes to "Lament for April 15 and Other Modern Madrigals," Randolph Singers, David Randolph, conductor, Composers Recordings Inc., 1955, NWCRI102.

<sup>6</sup> "Betty's History," Jacksonian Press, Inc., <https://www.bettyjacksonking.com/African-American-composer-chicago-il.html>.

<sup>7</sup> For more information, see "An Interview with Brazeal Dennard," by David Morrow, *Choral Journal*, December 2007, page 22.

<sup>8</sup> Helen Walker-Hill, *From Spirituals to Symphonies: African-American Women Composers and their Music*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002, 55.

<sup>9</sup> Carl G. Harris, Jr, "Composer and Master Teacher," *Black Perspective in Music* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 84, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1214794>.

<sup>10</sup> The reissued publication is missing this new tempo indication.

<sup>11</sup> Carl Harris and Undine Smith Moore were neighbors and friends. Harris was choir director at Virginia State during her later years on faculty.

<sup>12</sup> Philip Brunelle, "The Centenary Year of Undine Smith Moore: Dean of Black Women Composers" *Choral Journal* 44, no. 7 (Feb. 2004): 39-41, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23555068>.

<sup>13</sup> "extended bio," <http://bobbymcferrin.com/whos-bobby/press-kit/extended-bio/>.

<sup>14</sup> *The 23rd Psalm* is the final track on the Medicine Music album released by EMI in 1990.

<sup>15</sup> "Biography," Adolphus Hailstork, <https://www.adolphushailstork.com/bio>.

## Appendix: Additional Unaccompanied Non-Idiomatic Choral Works

Composer	Title	Voicing	Publisher
Adams, H. Leslie	<i>Psalm 23</i>	SATB	American Composers Alliance
Allen, Kevin	O Sacrum Convivium (from <i>Motecta Trium Vocum</i> )	3 voices	Kevin Allen Music/ CC Watershed
Boykin, B. E.	<i>O Magnum Mysterium</i>	SSAA	Klavia Press
Brown, Jr., Uzee	<i>Wake Me Up, Lord</i>	SATB	Roger Dean Publishing
Butler, Mark	<i>Ave Maria</i>	SATB	Colla Voce
Carter, Nathan	<i>Psalm 131</i>	SATB	GIA Publications
Clary, Salone T.	<i>I Want to Live with God</i>	SATB	GIA Publications
Coleman, Charles D.	<i>Alleluia</i>	SATB	GIA Publications
Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel	<i>The Lee Shore</i>	SATB	Novello (Public domain)
Dett, R. Nathaniel	<i>Gently, Lord, O Gently Lead Us</i>	SATB	GIA Publications
Ferdinand, Jason Max	<i>A Choral Triptych: Three Prayer Responses</i>	SATB	GIA Publications
Garrett, Marques L. A.	<i>My Heart Be Brave</i>	SATB	MLAG Music
Hailstork, Adolphus	<i>I Will Sing of Life</i>	SATB	Theodore Presser
Hailstork, Adolphus	<i>Missa Brevis</i>	SSAA	Theodore Presser
Harris, Christopher H.	<i>Alleluia</i>	SATB	C. Harris Music
Harris, Robert A.	<i>Oh, How Can I Keep from Singing?</i>	SATB, TTBB	Oxford University Press

Haywood, Carl	<i>The Sixty-Seventh Psalm</i>	SATB	GIA Publications
Kay, Ulysses	<i>O Praise the Lord</i>	SATB	Edition Peters
King, Betty Jackson	<i>Psalm 57</i>	SATB	Jacksonian Press
Lusitano, Vicente	<i>Heu me, Domine</i>	SATB	Public domain
McIntyre, Phillip	<i>That's How Good God Is</i>	SATB	Shawnee Press
Miller, III, Julius C.	<i>Set Me as a Seal</i>	SATB	MorningStar Music
Moore, Undine Smith	<i>Striving after God</i>	SATB	GIA Publications
Morrow, David	<i>Rejoice!</i>	TTBB	GIA Publications
Powell, Rosephanye	<i>Non Nobis, Domine</i>	SATB, SSAA, TTBB	Gentry Publications
Simpson-Curenton, Evelyn	<i>Psalm 91</i>	SATB divisi double choir	ECS Publishing Group
Southall, Mitchell	<i>In Silent Night</i>	SATB	Willis Music
Spencer, Brandon J.	<i>Gloria!</i>	SATB	Colla Voce
Waddles, Brandon	<i>If My People</i>	TTBB	GIA Publications
Walker, George	<i>Stars</i>	SATB	Lauren Keiser Music