



EXPLORING THE AESTHETICS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

AN ANNOTATED
BIBLIOGRAPHY

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR AESTHETICS

PREPARED BY CHRISTOPHER JENKINS

SYNOPSIS

Scholars and performers of American rock and pop music have a relatively coherent understanding of the relationship between these styles and African-American musical traditions, as well as the general aesthetical profile of African-American popular music. The influences of the blues, swing rhythms, improvisation, and reliance on a driving beat/groove on these styles of music have been well-documented and are even taught in conservatory classes with a focus on "African-American music."

The history and aesthetics of "classical" music compositions by African-American composers - defined here as musical compositions written by persons identifying as African-American, utilizing both European notation and historically European compositional structures, for instruments or instrumental groups originating in Europe - have enjoyed less robust inquiry. The most obvious feature of this genre is its diversity, as no single description could adequately capture the variety represented in this canon. While some of these composers utilize techniques or idioms similar to

those found in traditionally African-American musical forms such as spirituals, gospel, blues, jazz, rock, and hip-hop, other composers utilize these techniques only infrequently or not at all.

One established trend in scholarship has been to label composers in this second group as “the esoterics” or “the eclectics,” implying a divergence from or even rejection of traditional African-American musical values, and branding their work as iconoclastic. This categorization simplifies and racializes the analysis of African-American classical music composition by dividing the genre into the unsatisfying categories of “Black-referencing” and “Not Black-referencing,” while simultaneously providing inadequate analysis of the rich diversity of music in either category. On what grounds are Black composers who do not reference historically Black idioms excluded from consideration as being “genuinely Black?”

One approach to this question is to consider the presence of musical and other stylistic elements related to African culture, known as African survivals, in African-American classical music. These survivals manifest themselves in well-known African-American musical styles such as blues, swing, or spirituals. But, how do African survivals manifest in African-American classical music? Should we consider only classical music written by Black composers, and referencing African survivals, to be “genuinely Black” classical music? When African-American composers invent their own systems of musical references and motives, or adapt serialist or minimalist techniques (as in the works of Hale Smith and Julius Eastman respectively), on what grounds are these inventions not considered to be idiomatically “Black” themselves? Would we label all classical music written by White composers that references African survivals as appropriative? Scholars and performers of classical works by African-Americans have not thoroughly explored these questions.

On an unconscious level, given the deep penetration of negative stereotypes regarding all things Black in the American subconscious, how much of the African-American composer’s choice in avoiding or utilizing Black idioms is, and has historically been, wholly conscious, rather than affected by an unconscious bias on the part of the composer? This question is not intended to denigrate all African-American composers who do not utilize these idioms by implying some sort of universal unconscious self-denial or hatred, but it deserves examination. How significant is the influence of a composer’s perception of market forces and the relative appeal of music referencing African-American idioms and African

survivals for both White and Black audiences? This ought to be an important question in examining the works of William Levi Dawson and William Grant Still, in addition to contemporary composers.

Given the breadth and depth of the genre labeled “African-American classical music,” and the relative lack of research into these questions of aesthetics, this bibliography is designed to provide a wide range of sources for those interested in expanding their understanding of the aesthetics of African-American classical music composition. In addition to works on aesthetics, the second edition of this bibliography includes a list of important works on anti-racism in American society and academia, as well as culturally responsive pedagogy, because several contemporary publications have begun to exert a greater effect on discussions around the racial framing of musical pedagogy and academic study of music.

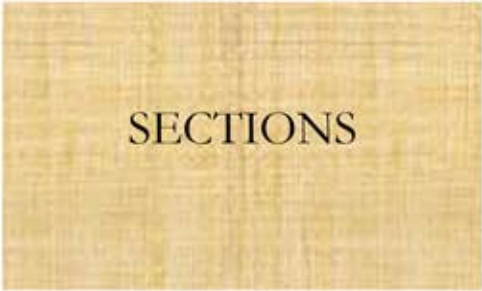


AIMS

- To list important sources related to African-American classical music that professors from a broad range of areas might incorporate into syllabi to diversify their course material.
- To provide a broader understanding of and context for the study of Black aesthetics outside of the realm of music for scholars and performers who may already have a thorough musical understanding of works by African-American classical composers.
- To provide a list of sources relating to African-American classical music composition, including musical analysis and biographies, for philosophers and Africana scholars who may already have a thorough understanding of Black aesthetics.
- To provide professors, students, and scholars from diverse disciplines outside of music and Africana studies with resources to frame African-American classical composition in the larger context of Black aesthetics.
- To stimulate the general level of understanding, research, and performance of classical compositions by African-Americans

through the promotion of a diverse range of perspectives on this genre.

- To educate those with an interest in African-American classical music about best practices in anti-racism, institutional diversity, and culturally responsive music education, in order to facilitate a fuller understanding of the historical roots of American racism and its effects on academia, music education, and the student-teacher relationship.



SECTIONS

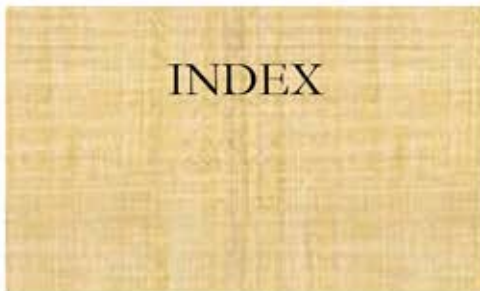
The sections of this bibliography are intended to frame the aesthetics of African-American classical music composition through multiple lenses, in order to inform a multidimensional perspective and inspire analysis on multiple axes. In order to historically frame the creation of African-American

classical music and interpret the use of certain idioms and compositional techniques, it is important to understand the relationship between Black cultural theory and African-American music. Section I, *Studies in Black Aesthetics*, lists relevant works in Black cultural theory and Black music studies. The concept of “signifyin(g),” as articulated by Henry Louis Gates Jr. in relation to literary theory, is especially critical as an analytic tool in the examination of Black music in general and African-American classical music in particular.

It is also important to understand the history and development of the African-American spiritual. This is not simply because so many African-American classical composers draw upon spirituals in their works, and not only because the rhythmic and intervallic characteristics and idioms of the spiritual inform so much of the aesthetic of Black music, but because the conditions and emotional motivations informing the composition of spirituals underpin Black emotional life and serve as a creative wellspring. Section II, *Roots of African-American Music: The History and Aesthetics of Spirituals*, lists sources exploring the aesthetics of spirituals, their representation of African survivals, and the history of their creation.

An understanding of relevant Black cultural theory and the aesthetics of spirituals should appropriately inform our perspective on the musical

analysis of actual compositions as found in Section III, *Theoretical Analysis of Musical Compositions by African-Americans*. To present a more complete picture of the history of African-American classical music and provide resources for further study and performance, Section IV, *Biographies and Bibliographies of African-American Composers, Performers, and Compositions* lists bibliographic sources of information about African-American composers and their works, including often-overlooked categories such as African-American composers from Appalachia, African-American female-identifying composers, and African-American composers from the 19th century, as well as interviews with composers, transcripts of discussions between composers, and biographies. Additionally, related articles supplement certain readings in each section, for readers with a specific interest in a particular topic. Section V, *Anti-Racism, Institutional Diversity, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*, lists works that answer not only the question of *how* to introduce a more diverse group of musical works into curricula, but *why* such diversity is necessary, and aid the reader in the development of a robust understanding of the long-standing structural impediments to the full integration of classical music performance and study.



Section I: Studies in Black Aesthetics.....	7
Section II: Roots of African-American Music: The History and Aesthetics of Spirituals.....	17
Section III: Theoretical and Aesthetic Analysis Of Musical Compositions by African-Americans.....	24

Section IV: Biographies and Bibliographies of African-American Composers, Performers, and Compositions	33
Section V: Anti-Racism, Institutional Diversity, And Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.....	39
Acknowledgments and Author Biography.....	44

SECTION I
STUDIES IN BLACK
AESTHETICS

Many musicologists, theorists, and performers with an interest in African-American composers do not have a background in the study of African-American cultural aesthetics or a deep understanding of African-American history. This section bridges that gap by providing background and basic knowledge in the study of Black aesthetics, including the persistence of

African survivals and the creation of Black music as a response to the conditions of slavery. While not all of these works relate directly to African-American classical music, these concepts can and should be applied to that field to provide a broader context.

Highlights:

Gates' *The Signifying Monkey* is a gateway to a critical understanding of many aspects of African-American culture. Its main thesis - that the African-American literary tradition emphasizes the act of "signifyin(g)," or, put broadly, repetitive referential treatment of source material that may imply a kind of revision, mocking, or irony - also relates to Black music. (Section III includes several works examining the role of "signifyin(g)" in classical compositions by African-American composers.) Guthrie Ramsey's *Race Music* and William Banfield's *Cultural Codes: Makings of a Black Music Philosophy* also provide insight into the development and application of Black aesthetics in music. Melville Herskovits' *The Myth of the Negro Past* is one of the first musicological studies to explore African survivals in African-American music and links African and African-American musical cultures. Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* explores the psychopathology of the African diaspora as its members strive to acculturate in White-dominated societies. These pressures deserve to be examined in conversations about African-American participation in the field of classical music.



“Singer James Brown being greeted by a crowd of Nigerian fans upon his arrival at Kaduna Airport to begin a tour of Nigeria, 1970.” 1970. Richard Saunders, photographer. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Print Division. Retrieved from NYPL Digital Collections.

Banfield, William C. (2010). *Cultural Codes: Makings of a Black Music Philosophy*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Banfield’s meditation on the construction of a philosophy of African-American musical production, merging Black culture studies and Black music studies, traces the

influence of the West African griot, a historian, musician, and living archive. He places particular emphasis on the disruption of a natural evolution of Black music through the effects of market forces. The general emphasis is on the development of blues, jazz, and contemporary music, but his philosophical principles are applicable to the use of vernacular in compositions by African-American musicians and integration of improvisation into classical performance and composition.

Related Reading:

Banfield, William C. (2004). Black Artistic Invisibility: A Black Composer Talking ‘Bout Taking Care of the Souls of Black Folk While Losing Much Ground Fast. *Journal of Black Studies*, 35(2), 195-209

Banfield emphasizes the need for more Black composers and the difficulties faced in expanding the field, documenting in particular the “eight political ‘mine and mind fields’” challenging the development of Black composers.

De Lerma, Dominique (Ed.). (1970). *Black Music in Our Culture: Curricular Ideas on the Subjects, Materials and Problems*. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press.

This book presents transcripts of audio recordings of the proceedings at a seminar organized by De Lerma, titled “Black Music in College and University Curricula,” at Indiana University in 1969, when De Lerma was head of Indiana University’s Black Music Center. Throughout the conference, participants sought to clarify the characteristics of African-American classical music by answering the questions “What is Black?”, “What is Black music?”, “What is a Black composer?”, and “What is the Black experience?” Conference proceedings also included seven appendices, including lists of sample syllabi with a focus on Black music.

Fanon, Frantz. (1967). *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press.

Fanon dissects the pressures in colonial environments for the oppressed to unconsciously emulate (if not adopt) the culture of the oppressor. In particular, he points to the results of the unconscious psychopathological training of Black Americans to associate “Blackness” with “wrongness” as a drive to emulate White culture. In the context of African-American participation in classical music, it is essential to grapple with this viewpoint.

Related Reading:

Fanon, Frantz. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press.

Fanon explores the psychological consequences of colonization upon the colonized people, and specifies the social and cultural context necessary to embark on a process of decolonization.

Freeburg, Christopher. (2017). *Black Aesthetics and the Interior Life*. Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press.

Freeburg focuses on the Black artist as an individual, rather than simply part of a group, and challenges the central identification of Black art with

the collective rather than as a series of personal and individual expressions.

Gates, Henry L., Jr. (1988). *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Considered a landmark in the field of Black cultural studies, this book draws upon the figure of the “signifying monkey,” a figure from Yoruba folklore appearing in a story in which he mocks the Lion and, through sophisticated wordplay, goads him into attacking the Elephant. Conceptually, “signifyin’”, or “signifyin(g)” has been categorized as parody, implication, metaphor, repetition, misdirection, humorous wordplay, all of which are categorized as “tropes” with distinct utilizations within Black culture.

While Gates originally drew this concept from the Black literary tradition, it is a useful tool of analysis in Black music as well. In the context of hip-hop, it is easier to perceive repetition and metaphor as “signifyin(g)” something unspoken. The hidden meaning of spiritual lyrics, intended to conceal the transmission of important information from the overseer, might be another simple example. In the context of instrumental music, “signifyin(g)” might appear as repetition of a riff, cut, or harmonic fragment over a shifting texture or context that changes its meaning. The central concept of (mis)representation and metaphor through implication, and the unspoken meaning behind metaphoric speech and repeated musical idiom, appears in multiple genres and contexts in African-American culture, including comedy routines, popular songs, spoken word, and even rapper Schoolly D’s 1988 song “Signifying Rapper.” Many of the works cited in Section III of this bibliography examine the phenomenon of “signifyin(g)” in works by composers such as William Grant Still, William Levi Dawson, Florence Price, and Fredrick Tillis.

Related Reading:

Baker, Houston A. (1984). *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Prior to Gates’ publication of *The Signifying Monkey*, Baker presented a critical theory of Black vernacular that explores the concept of tropeology, or signifiers that refer back to elements of African-American and African history and culture and exist outside of the realm of Eurocentric concepts.

Gates was influenced by Baker's ideas about African-American expressive culture and the function of the trope.

Caponi, Gena D. (Ed.). (1999). *Signifyin(g), Sanctifyin' & Slam Dunking: A Reader in African-American Expressive Culture*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Caponi presents essays analyzing elements of Black style through the lens of "signifyin(g)" in multiple spheres of activity, ranging from basketball to music.

Coady, Christopher. (2011). From Gospel to Gates: Modal Blending in African-American Musical Discourse from Before the Signifyin(g) Monkey. *PORTAL: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, 8(1), 1-15.

Coady traces the history of the concept of "signifyin(g)" back to Roger Abrams' *Black American Folklore From the Streets of Philadelphia*, and examines multiple attempts to apply this theory to Black music predating Gates' *The Signifying Monkey*.

Snead, J. A. (1981). On Repetition in Black Culture. *Black American Literature Forum*, 15(4), 146-154.

Snead examines the phenomenon of "the cut," or repetitive use of specific phrases, in the music of James Brown and gospel singing and preaching. Applying Gates' theory, Snead demonstrates that motives appearing as simple repetition are actually used to cue, or "signify," a shift in texture or accompaniment.

Reichardt, Ulfried. (2000). "Time and the African-American Experience: The Problem of Chronocentrism." *American Studies*, 45, 465-484.

Reichardt distinguishes between the linear conception of time expressed through the exposition, development, and return of the victorious hero as typified by sonata form, with a cyclical conception of time represented by the return of a central theme over a perpetual groove, as in jazz music.

Tomlinson, Gary. (1991). Cultural Dialogics and Jazz: A White Historian Signifies. *Black Music Research Journal*, 11(2), 229-264.

Tomlinson reviews the connection between Baker and Gates, and applies the theory of "signifyin(g)" to the music of Miles Davis.

Walser, Robert. (1993). "Out of Notes: Signification, Interpretation, and the Problem of Miles Davis." *The Musical Quarterly*, 77, 343-365.

Walser also applies the concept of “signifyin(g)” to the music of Miles Davis.

Herskovits, Melville J. (1941). *The Myth of the Negro Past*. New York: Harper Brothers.

Herskovits’ exploration of the African origins of African-American cultural traditions was one of the first serious anthropological examinations of these cultural links to gain traction among White scholars. His observations include connections between African-American and African musical traditions, specifically call-and-response, in a chapter titled “Music and the Arts,” as well as commonalities between African cultures and African survivals represented in African-American culture.



THE HOE-DANCERS. [THE HOE-DANCE IS A HAUSA AGRICULTURAL DANCE OF GREAT ANTIQUITY.]

“The Hausa Hoe-Dancers.” 1911. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division. Retrieved from NYPL Digital Collections.

Related Reading:

Herzog, George. (1936). *Research in Primitive and Folk Music in the United States: A Survey*. Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies.

Herzog was one of the first ethnomusicologists to conduct field studies in the southern United States and record spirituals and other Black folk music. As founder of Columbia University’s Department of Ethnomusicology, Herzog provided a model for White ethnomusicologists to seriously study and analyze African-American folk music.

Jones, Leroi. (1963). *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*. New York, NY: Morrow Quill Paperbacks.

Jones presents a counterpoint to Herskovits' direct linkage between African and African-American cultural practices, writing "while I am inclined to accept [Herskovits'] view. . . I would have to insist that the African, because of the violent differences between what was native and what he was forced to in slavery, developed some of the most complex views imaginable" (7). Jones traces the evolution of African survivals through the development of the music of slaves, primitive blues, swing, and bop. He also discusses the transformations of White hymns into Negro spirituals.

Locke, Alain. (1936). *The Negro and His Music*. Washington D.C.: The Associates in Negro Folk Education.

Locke models the perspectives of educated and professional African-Americans on the music of their colleagues during the Harlem Renaissance. A celebrated author and the first African-American Rhodes Scholar, Locke was one of the earliest African-American music critics, but much of his view has been characterized as being heavily influenced by the racist assumptions of his white peers and unconscious psychological marginalization, as reflected in his references to African-American folk music as "a broken, musically illiterate dialect" and his characterization of jazz as being "fortunately. . . also human enough to be universal in appeal."

Maultsby, Portia K. (2005). Africanisms in African American Music. In Joseph E. Holloway (Ed.), *Africanisms in American Culture* (326-355). Bloomington, IL: University of Indiana Press.

This chapter is dedicated to an exploration of the African survivals in African-American musical expression. Portia Maultsby highlights the communal aspect of Black music-making, the colors and fashions employed in concert halls and discos, the aesthetics of sound quality, and the physicality of performance, among other characteristics, as African survivals. Maultsby also notes that the survival of African aesthetics was promoted by slave traders who brought African instruments on board and encouraged slaves to dance and sing, and makes a comparison between the characteristics of music in slave communities in the United States and music in communities of freed African-Americans in the Northern states.

McNeil, Albert J. (1974). The Social Foundations of the Music of Black Americans. *Music Educators Journal*, 60(6), 43-46 & 81-82.

Inspired by the creation of Black Studies departments and a focus on Black Philosophy in the 1970s, McNeil argues that African-American musicians should advocate for the creation of Black Music Studies departments as well. McNeil also discusses the definition of "Black music" and the contributions of Herskovits to the notion of Black music as a product of African cultural survival.

Phillips, Damani. (2017). *What Is This Thing Called Soul: Conversations on Black Culture and Jazz Education*. Peter Lang Inc.

In a series of conversations with jazz educators and performers, Phillips bemoans the transformation of jazz into an anaesthetized and soulless practice, as it is filtered through the academy and engineered for mass delivery to students through institutions guided by white supremacy.

Powell, Damon. (2018). The Aesthetics of Blackness: Aesthetics & Blackness in the Black Arts Movement Western Aesthetics and Blackness. *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 11(6), 192-212.

Powell traces modern negative stereotyping of Africans and African-Americans within Western culture to unconscious archetypes dating from the medieval period, which today perpetuate Eurocentric prejudices that insist that European persons have greater physical beauty and intellect, and damage both European-descended persons and others through the promotion of unobtainable ideals of entitlement, and "retarding the moral capacity for realistic self-evaluation or self-correction." (201) He asserts that the context of slavery made it impossible to maintain African viewpoints or practices, and instead required the psycho-deconstruction and reconstitution of the self. This was also an aesthetic act requiring reliance upon both art and religion to achieve spiritual transcendence and transcend language barriers between African tribes, and reached a fuller expression through the Black Arts Movement in its re-appropriation of Blackness as beautiful.

Radano, Ronald M. (2003). *Lying up a Nation: Race and Black Music*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Radano challenges the notion of an enduring and stable aesthetic in African-American music, particularly by questioning the historical accuracy of our understanding of Black musical practices from the colonial period up to the Civil War. By “deconstructing musical Blackness” (4) he aims to redefine Black music primarily as a social force and a response against racial violence and discrimination, rather than a genre bound by any particular conception of sound or style rooted in African cultural practices.



“Old Negro [former slave] with horn with which slaves were called; near Marshall, Texas.” Russell Lee. United States Farm Security Administration; Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Print Division. Retrieved from NYPL Digital Collections.

Related Reading:

Floyd, Samuel A., Jr., and Ronald Radano. (2009). Interpreting the African-American Musical Past: A Dialogue. *Black Music Research Journal*, 29(1), 1-10.

This article captures a series of written exchanges between Floyd and Radano over the summer of 2008, regarding their disagreement on the extent to which African-American music is more a product

of African influence, or a result of the social environment and other pressures inherent in the United States.

Radano, Ronald M., & Bohlman, Philip V. (Eds.). (2000). *Music and the Racial Imagination*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

This collection of essays examines the history of race in the study of American and European music.

Ramsey, Guthrie P., Jr. (2003). *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. (Esp. Chapter 2)

Ramsey describes this work as “a poetics of ‘race music’,” in which he explores the totality of the relationship between African-American identity and African-American music. Focusing on his family’s own experience as part of the Great Migration and his musical journey as a young pianist, Ramsey examines three distinct periods in the development of contemporary African-American music: references to Africa in the 1940s, “soul music” of the 1960s, and post-industrial music of the 1990s. Chapter 2 focuses especially on music’s place in Black cultural theory, referencing Gates and Samuel Floyd, Jr. (whose works are listed in Sections III and IV of this bibliography).

Related Reading:

Ramsey, Guthrie P., Jr. (2004). The Pot Liquor Principle: Developing a Black Music Criticism in American Music Studies. *Journal of Black Studies*, 35(2), 210-223.

Ramsey articulates a new direction for music criticism that does not reinforce old hierarchies and social orders – a Black music criticism with its own validated tools and standards, developed in a fashion similar to those used in Black literary studies and allowing for “Blackness as a unit of analysis in American music scholarship” (217). To develop this new criticism, Ramsey advocates for the fostering of African-American musicologists who might be better culturally situated.

Taylor, Paul C. (2016). *Black is Beautiful: A Philosophy of Black Aesthetics*. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.

Taylor’s work is the first to fully ground Black cultural theory within the field of the philosophy of aesthetics. Ranging from topics such as Black invisibility to the politics of artistic production and the involvement of Black cultural figures in politics, *Black is Beautiful* argues for the expansion of aesthetics beyond Western art and Eurocentric conceptions of beauty.

Related Reading:

Taylor, Paul C. (2010). Black Aesthetics. *Philosophy Compass*, 5(1), 1-15.

Black is Beautiful represents an expansion of the themes referenced in this article from 2010.

Wilson, Olly. (1983). Black Music as an Art Form. *Black Music Research Journal*, 3, 1-22.

Olly Wilson wrestles with the characterization of Black music as a singular genre, and derives a six-part definition: the primacy of rhythm, as well as the use of cross-rhythm and metrical ambiguity; a percussive approach to the playing of any instrument; the use of call-and-response; high musical density; dramatically contrasting timbre among the instruments utilized, or what Wilson describes as “the heterogeneous sound ideal tendency” (3); and the integration of physical body movement into musical performance. Wilson also approaches the question of “art” from the West African context, in which the aesthetic and utilitarian ideals are inseparable, and the shift away from utilitarian art in the form of religious and work songs through the interpenetration of African cultural practices by Euro-American ideals.

SECTION II

ROOTS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSIC: THE HISTORY AND AESTHETICS OF SPIRITUALS

Spirituals have served as essential touch points for all styles of African-American music, ranging from gospel to classical, and are even frequently sampled in hip-hop. Many African-American classical composers utilize spirituals as reference material through direct quotation, theme and variations, or even as fugue subjects (which relates to the concept of “signifyin(g)”). Perhaps even more

profoundly than the specific tunes themselves, the melodic and rhythmic contours of spirituals inform African-American musical idiom and aesthetic. The provenance of specific tunes has been a source of contention; various spirituals are argued to be purely African tunes, Anglo tunes, or some amalgamation thereof.

The inspiration behind spiritual lyrics is similarly uncertain. It is likely that they served a need for collective emotional expression, and also functioned as a system of coded communication to pass vital messages while avoiding detection by overseers and slave owners. Moreover, the tempo of work songs is thought to have played an important role in governing the pace of work and measurable productivity. But at the same time, it appears that slaves, and work gangs after the end of slavery, would resist and figuratively engage in “work slowdowns” by modulating the pace of their songs (and/or choosing to only sing slower songs). In this way, both lyrics and the actual musical characteristics of these tunes were influenced by the conditions slaves endured, as well as a shared history and culture.

Highlights:

Abromeit’s *Spirituals: A Multidisciplinary Bibliography for Research and Performance* is one of the most exhaustive bibliographies available on the subject of spirituals. Allen, Garrison, and Ware’s *Slave Songs of the United States* was the first collection of spirituals ever published. Jones examines the emotional content of spirituals from a psychological perspective, and Cruz details the function of the spiritual as a work song that actually increased efficiency and pace through the modulation of coordinated labor, while providing a necessary emotional outlet. Krehbiel discusses which musical elements of spirituals should be characterized as African survivals.



“Choir.” 1915. William A. Joiner. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division. Retrieved from NYPL Digital Collections.

Abromeit, Kathleen. (2015). *Spirituals: A Multidisciplinary Bibliography for Research and Performance*. Middleton, WI: Music Library Association and A-R Editions, Inc.

This comprehensive resource lists a wide range of functions and appearances of spirituals in many genres of African-

American music. It contains a bibliography of resources related to spirituals and African-American composers in general, as well as the generalized use of, exegesis and meaning of, and pedagogy related to, the spiritual.

Allen, William F., Lucy McKim Garrison, and Charles Pickard Ware. [1867] (1996). *Slave Songs of the United States*. Bedford, MA: Applewood Books.

This volume is the first collection of African-American songs to be published in the United States. While it consists of music rather than discussion or analysis, the collection itself is of historical significance for those with a particular interest in the development of spirituals.

Related Reading:

Radano, Ronald. (1996). Denoting Difference: The Writing of the Slave Spirituals. *Critical Inquiry*, 22(3), 506-544.

Analyzing selections from *Slave Songs of the United States*, Radano proposes that white contemporary critics viewed slave songs through three lenses: as romantic expressions; as sacred songs melding the primitive with sublime perfection; and as representations of an African aesthetic indecipherable to White American ears.

Cruz, Jon. (1999). *Culture on the Margins: The Black Spiritual and the Rise of American Cultural Interpretation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

In describing the origins of the African-American “work song,” Jon Cruz writes that while slave masters often forced slaves to sing, slaves also voluntarily and spontaneously would choose to use song as a tool to coordinate physical labor and alleviate suffering. African-American persons in bondage found such group vocalizations to be a necessary symbolic expression of profoundly negative emotion, and one of their only available emotive avenues, even though slave masters typically encouraged only “cheerful” tunes.



“Slaves packed above and below deck.” 1857. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division. Retrieved from NYPL Digital Collections.

Dett, Nathaniel. (1936). *The Dett Collection of Negro Spirituals*. Minneapolis, MN: Schmitt, Hall & McCreary.

Known as one of the first African-American composers to interweave the spiritual into classical compositions, Nathaniel Dett published a collection of spirituals in 1936 and was the first person of African descent to graduate from Oberlin College. While the bulk of this publication consists of music rather than commentary, Dett’s preface provides insight into his point of view.

Johnson, Guy. (1931). The Negro Spiritual: A Problem in Anthropology. *American Anthropologist*, 33(2), 157-171.

One of the first anthropologists to consider spirituals to be serious American art music, Guy Johnson examines the intervallic leaps, melodic patterns, and rhythms of more than 500 spirituals, and their comparison to contemporary White American hymns.

Johnson, James W. & John R. Johnson. [1925] (1977). *The Books of American Negro Spirituals*. New York: Da Capo Press.

Known as the co-composers of “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” the song regarded as “the Black National Anthem,” singer John Rosamond Johnson and his brother James Weldon Johnson were well-known African-American musicians in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. J. W. Johnson

was additionally a celebrated activist, lawyer, and author. In 1925 they published this two-volume collection of spirituals, including a preface by J. W. Johnson in which he discusses the presence of African survivals in spirituals and African-American general musical practices in the early 20th century.



“Group portrait (left to right) of composers Bob Cole, James Weldon Johnson, and J. Rosamond Johnson, circa 1900s.” Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division. Retrieved from NYPL Digital Collections.

Related Reading:

Johnson, James W. (Ed.). (1922). *The Book of American Negro Poetry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Johnson's preface to this collection of 177 poems by 31 African-American poets also touches on his thoughts about African-American artistic aesthetics, including dialect, as well as ragtime and spirituals.

Johnson, James W. (1912). *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. Boston, MA: Sherman, French, & Co.

In this novel, Johnson references his own life experiences in his relation of the musical development of his fictional protagonist in childhood, and the fusion of multicultural creative elements leading to his career in music and as an intellectual, as well as his experiences as a light-skinned African-American capable of passing.

Jones, Arthur C. (2004). The Foundational Influence of Spirituals in African-American Culture: A Psychological Perspective. *Black Music Research Journal*, 24(2), 251-260.

A singer and clinical psychologist, Arthur Jones describes the spiritual as a tool to develop resilience and psychological coping, as well as an oral repository for the complex emotions experienced by slaves. He believes that the shared musical and religious elements of the African communities from which slaves had descended reinforced the development of bonds through shared music, and characterizes the lyrical and motivic repetition common in spirituals (which perhaps could also be characterized as "signifyin(g)") as a communal soothing mechanism that has been demonstrated in psychological studies to promote inner calm.

Krehbiel, Henry E. [1914] (1967). *Afro-American Folksongs: A Study in Racial and National Music*. New York: Frederick Unger.

While Herskovits traced general African-American cultural practices back to Africa, Henry Krehbiel focuses specifically on linkages between African musical practices and African-American spirituals. Like Johnson, Krehbiel also pushed back against the views of contemporaries who characterized spirituals as primitive and underdeveloped music.

Odum, Howard. W., & Guy B. Johnson. (1925). *The Negro and his Songs: A Study of Typical Songs in the South*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Dr. Howard Odum, founder of the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was an important sociologist and one of the first Southern researchers to publish on racial disparities in the justice system and the systemic foundations of Black poverty in the South. His doctoral dissertation, which was the basis for this publication, focused on the content, symbology, and style of religious and secular folk songs of African-Americans, and was informed by Odum's research conducted between 1905 and 1908 when he was living in rural communities in Mississippi and Georgia. Because this research occurred during an unfortunate period when Odum's political philosophy had not yet progressed to an understanding of the full equality and humanity of African-Americans, the reader should be warned that some of his observations on the motivations underlying African-American music making are racist in character. However, because little field research on this music exists from such an early period, the lyrics and style captured by Odum as well as this work's place in the historiography of African-American folk song remain significant.

Related Reading: Bernal-Marcos, Marcos J., Jorge Castro-Tejerina, and José Carlos Loredó-Narciandi. (2017). "Psychological Keys in the Study of African American Religious Folk Songs in the Early Work of Howard W. Odum (1844 – 1954)." *History of Psychology*, 20(1), 28-49.

The authors trace the evolution of Odum's attitude toward race, particularly in his publications on folk songs, towards a stance that was progressive for its time.

Odum, Howard W. (1909). Religious folk-songs of the Southern Negroes. *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, 3, 265–365.

Odum, Howard W. (1911b). Folk-song and folk-poetry as found in the secular songs of the Southern Negroes. *Journal of American Folklore*, 24, 351–396.

Howard's 1925 work was based on these two earlier publications, although his stance on race evolved after 1911 and reflected the positive effect of co-author Guy B. Johnson's relatively liberal views and rejection of essentialism.

SECTION III

THEORETICAL AND
AESTHETIC ANALYSIS
OF MUSICAL
COMPOSITIONS BY
AFRICAN-AMERICANS

This section directly examines the genre of African-American classical music, including general thoughts on aesthetics and also theoretical analyses of musical examples drawn from works by African-American composers. Many of these authors reference “the esoterics” or “the eclectics,” terms used to describe African-American composers who do not explicitly refer to Black idiom or reference

material such as spirituals, and whether a justifiable demarcation exists between composers who transparently refer to source material that is identifiably African-American and those who do not.

Musical examples in this section are not particularly dense or complex and students and professors with the ability to read music should find them illuminating. An effort has been made to include publications focusing on a range of specific genres, including art songs, solo brass repertoire, choral works, and symphonic works, as well as jazz-oriented composers such as David Baker. While the survey works in this section all mention female African-American composers, several works focus specifically on this topic, such as Helen Walker-Hill’s *From Spirituals to Symphonies: African-American Women Composers and their Music*. The overrepresentation of dissertations in this section relative to others might be attributed to the historic lack of published research and scholarship with a focus on African-American classical music in general, and female African-American composers specifically, an issue hopefully to be addressed by future scholars.

Highlights:

Many of these authors, particularly Farrah, Floyd, and Maxile, apply the analytic framework of “signifyin(g)” to the music of Black classical composers. Perhaps no work is more exhaustive than Southern’s “The Music of Black Americans: A History.” While this work could fit in multiple sections of this bibliography, it is listed in Section III because of its extensive use of musical examples.



"Henry F. Williams." 1887. William J. Simmons. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division. Retrieved from NYPL Digital Collections.

Brooks, Tilford. (1984). *America's Black Musical Heritage*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. (Esp. Chapter 5)

While much of the focus on African-American composers has been limited to the 20th and 21st centuries, Brooks makes a biographical listing of African-American composers in the European tradition from the mid-19th to the mid-20th centuries, as well as an extensive list of compositions with musical examples. In Chapter 5, he analyzes folk melodies and spirituals in various compositions

by African-Americans from this time period, in addition to examples of the arrangement and instrumentation of spirituals. Brooks also distinguishes between composers deriving most of their material from the African-American folk tradition and those he labels "the eclectics," who do not consistently refer to Black idioms in their compositions.

Davis, Nathan T., and Ursula Broschke-Davis. (1996). *African-American Music: A Philosophical Look at African American Music in Society*. Needham, MA: Simon & Schuster. (Esp. Chapter 9)

While the majority of works in this section focus on the use of Black tropes in classical music, these authors reference both non-African and non-Western influences present in the works of several African-American composers, including W. G. Still.

Dungee, Jason A. (2016). *A Socio-Pedagogical Analysis of "Five Short Choral Works" by Adolphus Hailstork*. University of Arizona. (Dissertation)

Jason Dungee provides a historical overview of multiculturalism in music education and the evolution of the definition of Black classical music composition, followed by a musical analysis of Hailstork's "Five Short Choral Works," incorporating musical examples. Dungee focuses particularly on the third movement of this work, *Crucifixion*, in which Hailstork has set a spiritual by an unknown composer.

Farrah, Scott D. (2007). *Signifyin(g): A Semiotic Analysis of Symphonic Works by William Grant Still, William Levi Dawson, and Florence B. Price*. Florida State University Libraries. (Dissertation)

Scott Farrah examines Still's Symphony No. 1 "Afro-American", Dawson's Negro Folk Symphony, and Price's Symphony in E minor, with musical examples. Farrah's analysis of Still's use of the blues third and a 12-bar blues progression in his second movement is particularly interesting. Farrah's list of musical tropes utilized in African-American classical music is extremely useful. He also explores Floyd's application of "Signifyin(g)" in Black music by examining repetition in the spiritual *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*.



"Lieut. 'Jimmy' Europe and his famous band." 1919. Kelly Miller. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division. Retrieved from NYPL Digital Collections.

Floyd, Samuel A., Jr. (1995). *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting its History from Africa to the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Esp. Chapters 6 and 9)

Floyd examines the musical concept of “Signifyin(g)” in classical music works by Black composers and engages in an extensive analysis of the tropes common in Black music in general. One example would be his discussion of the transformation of the chariot/railroad-as-freedom metaphor into rhythmic motive utilized in jazz and classical music. Floyd also cites Wendell Logan’s text painting in the European classical style as an example of musical syncretism in the use of vernacular text and pronunciation.

Floyd, Samuel A., Jr., Melanie Zeck, and Guthrie Ramsey. (2017). *The Transformation of Black Music: The Rhythms, The Songs, and The Ships of The African Diaspora*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

In this companion volume to *The Power of Black Music*, the authors include a more substantial evaluation of African-American classical musicians and composers. Beyond a retelling of the historical evolution of the music of the Black diaspora, this volume situates the Black musics generated by forced migration within political and cultural history, highlighting the interdependence between social change and Black culture.

Related Reading:

Floyd, Samuel A., Jr. (2008). Black Music and Writing Black Music History: American Music and Narrative Strategies. *Black Music Research Journal*, 28(1), 111-121.

Floyd reiterates his belief that the music in the Caribbean cultures and maroon settlements of the 18th century is chiefly rooted in African culture, and criticizes research that deemphasizes the importance of such influences.

Floyd, Samuel A., Jr. (1991). Ring Shout: Literary Studies, Historical Studies, and Black Music Inquiry. *Black Music Research Journal*, 11(2), 265-287.

Floyd describes the ritual of the Ring Shout, an African survival practiced during slavery, as a prototypical Black musical activity containing the entirety of all tropes present Black music. Floyd also declares call-and-response to be a master trope, the “trope of tropes.” The second half of this article includes Floyd’s analysis of musical tropes present in Still’s Symphony No. 1 “Afro-American”.

Floyd, Samuel A., Jr. (1993). Troping the Blues: From Spirituals to the Concert Hall. *Black Music Research Journal*, 13(1), 31-51.

Floyd discusses tropes represented across various mediums and genres, in spiritual lyrics and blues songs, such as salvation and escape on a chariot, or the desolation and loneliness of the "motherless child." Floyd's comparison of this particular spiritual to the rhythmic and melodic contours of Gershwin's "Summertime" is particularly illuminating.

Green, Mildred D. (1975). *A Study of the Lives and Works of Five Black Women Composers in America*. University of Oklahoma. (Dissertation)

Mildred Green examines the art songs of Florence Price, Margaret Bonds, Evelyn Pittman, Julia Perry, and Lena McLin. While Price, Bonds, and Perry have enjoyed greater levels of exposure, Pittman and McLin are relatively unknown, making this dissertation one of the few sources of information about them and analysis of their works. The second chapter of this dissertation is devoted to a summary of the historical role of women in African music; the role of Black women in American music; and the role of women in European music.

Jenkins, Christopher. (2019). Signifyin(g) within African American Classical Music: Linking Gates, Hip-Hop, and Perkinson. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 77(4), 391-400.

This article provides a definition of signifyin(g) in relation to jazz, classical music, and hip-hop, and provides an analysis of the use of musical signification in Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson's *Lament for Viola and Piano*.

Johnson, John Andrew. (1999). William Dawson, "The New Negro," and His Folk Idiom. *Black Music Research Journal*, 19(1), 43-60.

Andrew Johnson provides a stylistic and musical analysis of Dawson's "Negro Folk Symphony," as well as an exploration of the aesthetics behind its modern lack of popularity and Dawson's subsequent reputational decline.



“Seated Chief Playing Thumb Piano (Mwanangana).” Before 1869. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gallery 352.

Kimberlin, Cynthia T, and Akin Euba. (Eds.). (2005). *Towards an African Pianism: Keyboard Music of Africa and the Diaspora* (Vols. 1-2). Point Richmond, CA: MRI Press.

This two-volume edition, focusing on works for keyboard, features essays, scores, and CD recordings of pieces by composers from the African diaspora. Recordings include works by several African-American composers such as Nkeiru Okoye, Andres Wheatley,

and Gary Nash. The outsized popularity of the keyboard among African composers in particular might seem unusual; after all, the instrument’s tuning is fixed to a Western scale system. However, the piano’s simultaneous categorization as a percussion instrument and a melodic string instrument could be a partial explanation. Of particular interest are Kofi Agawu’s essay, “Is African Pianism Possible?,” Ed Bland on “An African-American Composer’s View of African Connections,” and Joshua Uzoigwe’s “African Pianism: The Problem of Tonality and Atonality.”

Maxile, Horace J., Jr. (2003). Reverent References: African American Cultural Topics in William Grant Still's Symphonic "Prayer." *The American Music Research Center Journal*, 13, 91-104.

Horace J. Maxile Jr. analyzes tropes in the second movement, titled “Prayer”, of Still’s “Sunday Symphony”. In addition to noting Still’s use of more familiar tropes such as call-and-response, gospel clichés, blues inflections, and repeated figures and riffs, Maxile highlights the larger structural similarities between the cadence and arc of Black worship service and the structure of this movement. While Still’s Afro-American Symphony receives a fair amount of attention, this essay represents a rare focus on the lesser-known “Sunday Symphony.”

Maxile, Horace J., Jr. (2013). Implication, Quotation, and Coltrane in Selected Works by David N. Baker. *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 7(2), 147-164.

Baker's enthusiasm for Coltrane was hardly a secret, given Baker's publication of *The Jazz Style of John Coltrane* in 1980. Maxile analyzes similarities between specific works by Baker and recorded Coltrane solos, as well as Baker's mixture of modal and polyphonic compositional techniques. Those exploring the connections between Baker's classical works and the jazz tradition will be particularly interested in Maxile's analysis of similarities between the styles of Bach and Coltrane and Baker's Sonata for Cello and Piano, as well as Baker's use of Coltrane-esque blues and suggestions of Bartok in Baker's Piano Sonata.

Related Reading:

Maxile, Horace J., Jr. (2014). On Vernacular Emblems and Signification in David N. Baker's "The Black Experience." *American Music*, 32(2), 223-251.

Maxile, Horace. (2008). Signs, Symphonies, Signifyin(g): African-American Cultural Topics as Analytical Approach to the Works of Black Composers. *Black Music Research Journal*, 28(1), 123-138.

Maxile examines the concept of signifyin(g) through the use of tropes, which he labels "African-American cultural topics" (129), in classical composition, and makes a comparison to analogous collections of tropes in Western classical music. The second half of this article consists of an analysis of the tropes present in Fredrick Tillis' work titled "Freedom" for acapella choir.

Mitchell, GERALYN S. (2007). *Margaret Bonds: A Comparative Study of Four Spirituals (1942-1967)*. University of Texas at El Paso. (Masters Thesis)

Mitchell presents a biographical profile of Bonds and a musical analysis of four of Bonds' spiritual arrangements: *You Can Tell the World, I'll Reach to Heaven, Didn't It Rain!*, and *Mary Had a Little Baby*.

Moham, Carren D. (1997). *The Contributions of Four African-American Women Composers to American Art Song*. Ohio State University. (Dissertation)

Florence Price, Margaret Bonds, Undine Smith Moore, and Dorothy Rudd Moore were often known for their arrangements of spirituals. This dissertation, however, focuses on their art songs. Source material includes

interviews with Rudd Moore and friends and former students of all four composers.



“Blind Street Musicians, West Memphis, Arkansas, Sept. 1935.” Ben Shahn. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division. Retrieved from NYPL Digital Collections.

Southern, Eileen. (1997). *The Music of Black Americans: A History*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company. (Esp. Chapters 8 and 13)

Southern’s work is one of the most exhaustive surveys of African-American music in general, and African-American classical music in particular. Chapter 8 analyzes the use of Negro spirituals and other Black folk idioms in the music of lesser-known composers Henry Burleigh, Will Marion Cook, and Nathaniel Dett, as well as the tension and occasional resistance expressed by African-American composers in the integration of Negro spirituals and secular songs into their own classical compositions. This chapter also features profiles of lesser-known African-American performers from the 19th century, such as Joseph Douglass (grandson of Frederick Douglass), Clarence Cameron White, and the members of the Negro String Quartet.

Chapter 13 explores the music of African-American performers and composers in the 20th century, as some turned away from the direct

quotation of folk tunes towards a more abstract syncretism of European and African-American influences. In her discussion of the “eclectic aesthetic,” which she defines as “draw[ing] upon several sources and different styles” (540), Southern presents a work by Hale Smith incorporating serialist techniques as an example.

Walker-Hill, Helen. (2002). *From Spirituals to Symphonies: African-American Women Composers and Their Music*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Helen Walker-Hill begins with chronological list of important events in the development of African-American classical music, followed by eight profiles of female-identifying African-American composers. In addition to Bonds, Perry, Smith Moore, and Rudd Moore, profiled in Denby’s 1975 dissertation, and Baiocchi, profiled in Wilson’s 2011 dissertation (both in Section III of this bibliography), Walker-Hill also discusses the life and works of Valerie Capers, Mary Watkins, and Irene Britton Smith. In particular, Walker-Hill is credited with the discovery and first exposure to the wider public of the works of Britton Smith, a little-known composer who taught for 40 years in the Chicago public school system.

Wilson, Orrin. (2011). *The Contributions of Twentieth Century African American Composers to the Solo Trumpet Repertoire: A Discussion and Analysis of Selected Works by: Ulysses S. Kay, Adolphus C. Hailstork, Regina Harris Baiocchi, and Charles Lloyd, Jr.* University of Nebraska. (Dissertation) (Esp. Chapter 1)

Orrin Wilson’s dissertation focuses on four relatively unknown pieces: Ulysses Simpson Kay’s “Tromba” for trumpet and piano; Hailstork’s Sonata for Trumpet and Piano; Baiocchi’s “Miles Per Hour” for unaccompanied trumpet; and Lloyd Jr.’s “The Crucifixion” for trumpet and piano. Wilson includes a biographical sketch for each composer. Following an overview of African-American classical music composition and trumpet repertoire in the Introduction, Chapter 1 also includes a discussion of the distinction between Black Nationalist and eclectic composers.

SECTION IV

BIOGRAPHIES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMPOSERS, PERFORMERS, AND COMPOSITIONS

While previous sections focused on the aesthetics informing African-American classical music composition, this section provides historically relevant and contemporary listings of African-American composers and compositions. This section provides resources those who may have little or no familiarity with these composers but require a starting point; those who are

familiar with the most well-known African-American composers but would also like to research the lesser-known; those with a historical interest in particular time periods, geographic locations, and/or musical styles; and those with an interest in the historiography of Black classical music research.

Highlights:

The Black Composer Speaks and *Musical Landscapes in Color* humanizes modern-day composers through first-person interviews. From a historical perspective, *Trotter's Music and Some Highly Musical People*, published in 1878, and the first compendium of Black musical activity in the United States, and Cuney-Hare's *Negro Musicians and their Music* from 1936, focus on the work of nineteenth-century African-American musicians overlooked in contemporary sources. Few genres are more obscure than Freed's *Preliminary Biography of Best-Known Black Appalachian Musicians*. And, few sources are more exhaustive than Floyd's *International Dictionary of Black Composers* and Southern's *Biographical Dictionary of African-American and African Musicians*. For a list of compositions rather than composers, Horne's four bibliographical volumes catalogue all music written by Black composers for brass, piano, strings, and woodwinds before the 1990s, when these volumes were published.



“Prays Meetin’.” 1935 – 1943. Lillian Richter Reynolds. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Art and Artifacts Division. Retrieved from NYPL Digital Collections.

David N. Baker, Lida M. Belt, and Herman C. Hudson. (Eds.). (1978). *The Black Composer Speaks*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.

In preparation for this publication, the three co-editors, all

associated at the time with Indiana University’s Afro-American Arts Institute, conducted telephone interviews with 15 contemporary African-American composers and performers. The resulting publication presents the narratives of these composers first-hand.

Banfield, William C. (2003). *Musical Landscapes in Color: Conversations with Black American Composers*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

In preparation for *Musical Landscapes in Color*, which might be characterized as a sequel to *The Black Composer Speaks*, Banfield interviewed 40 African-American composers and performers. This book profiles many composers who were not active in 1978 when *The Black Composer Speaks* was published, such as Michael Abels, Jeffrey Mumford, Anthony Davis, Jonathan Holland, Julius Williams, and Regina Harris Baiocchi.

Cuney-Hare, Maud. (1936). *Negro Musicians and Their Music*. Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers. (Esp. Chapter 9)

Written before the most popular compositions typically recognized as “African-American” became well known (just after Still’s Afro-American Symphony in 1930, and Dawson’s “Negro Folk Symphony” in 1934,) this

compilation focuses on works and Black composers from the 19th and early 20th centuries. While other bibliographies in this section focus exclusively on works by African-Americans, Cuney-Hare lists works by both African-American and European composers that she characterizes as “serious works written in various forms, the spirit of which is Negro.”

De Lerma, Dominique-René. (1981-1984). *Bibliography of Black Music* (Vols. 1-4). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Because De Lerma prefers a wide-ranging definition of “Black” music, this bibliography is broader than others, and includes members of other minority groups that might not consider themselves as belonging. Its only limitation as a contemporary reference source is its publication date; Floyd’s *International Dictionary of Black Composers*, published in 1999 and included later in this section, is more recent.

De Lerma, Dominique-René. (1983). A Concordance of Black-Music Entries in Five Encyclopedias: Baker’s, Ewen, Grove’s, MGG, and Rich. *The Black Perspective in Music*, 11(2), 190-209.

De Lerma provides a guide in the use of standard music dictionaries to research Black music by listing related topics in *Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, compiled by Nicholas Slonimsky; *Musicians since 1900: Performers in Concert and Opera*, compiled and edited by David Ewen; *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie; *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik* (MGG), edited by Friedrich and Ruth Blume; and *Who’s Who in Opera*, compiled by Maria Rich.



Copyrighted, Western Newspaper Union.
Negro Band of the 814th Infantry Leaving the Celtic After Her Arrival.

“Negro Band of the 814th Infantry leaving the Celtic after her Arrival.” 1919. Kelly Miller. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division. Retrieved from NYPL Digital Collections.

Floyd, Samuel A., Jr. (Ed.). (1999). *International Dictionary of Black Composers* (Vols 1-2). Chicago, IL: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers.

This dictionary includes 185 entries for composers of African descent worldwide, with 87 entries devoted to composers of classical music, and the rest focused on jazz and other types of music. In compiling this edition while he was director of the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, Floyd recruited 100 experts in the field as contributing authors, and sent questionnaires to living composers to provide an opportunity for them to edit their own entries.

Related Reading:

Floyd, Samuel A., Jr., and Marsha J. Reisser. (1987). *Black Music in the United States: An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Reference and Research Materials*. White Plains, N.Y.: Kraus International.

This bibliography is a precursor to Floyd's 1999 compilation, the *International Dictionary of Black Composers*.

Magee, Jeffrey. Fletcher Henderson, Composer: A Counter-Entry to the "International Dictionary of Black Composers." *Black Music Research Journal*, 19(1), 61-70.

Magee, who wrote the entry for Fletcher Henderson in the International Dictionary of Black Composers (IDCB), challenges the IDCB's guidelines, which made clear distinctions between art compositions and concert music versus arrangements with improvised sections. He argues that while Henderson is known as a jazz arranger, he ought to be labeled a true composer, and makes the case that African-American musical composition naturally reflects a blend of aural (improvisatory) and written traditions.

Freed, Mark. 2004. Preliminary Biography of Best-Known Black Appalachian Musicians. *Black Music Research Journal*, 24(1), 91-169.

Freed presents a collection of general sources relating to, and discographies of music by, African-American performers and composers originating in or with ties to the Appalachian region of the United States.

Gray, John. (1988). *Blacks in Classical Music: A Bibliographic Guide to Composers, Performers, and Ensembles*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Gray's bibliography is particularly useful because it includes a list of African-American composers, performers and ensembles in a single collection.

Green, Mildred D. (1983). *Black Women Composers: A Genesis*. Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers.

Greene's survey includes a catalogue of musical works by female African-American composers on p. 154 - 167, plus a bibliography of related sources.

Horne, Aaron. (1996). *Brass Music of Black Composers: A Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Horne, Aaron. (1992). *Keyboard Music of Black Composers: A Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Horne, Aaron. (1991). *String Music of Black Composers: A Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Horne, Aaron. (1990). *Woodwind Music of Black Composers: A Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

In addition to alphabetical listings of works for each category of instrument, Horne includes information about the life and career of the African-American composers whose works he catalogues.



“Blind Tom, the Musical Prodigy.” 1879. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division. Retrieved from NYPL Digital Collection.

Southern, Eileen. (1982). *Biographical Dictionary of African-American and African Musicians*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Southern’s dictionary from 1982 is an exhaustive source, although outdated compared to the *IDBC* from 1999.

Trotter, James M. [1878] (1969). *Music and Some Highly Musical People*. Chicago, IL: Afro-Am Press.

In 1878, Trotter published the very first comprehensive survey of all African-American musical activity in the United States. This publication focuses on African-American composers and musicians from the nineteenth century.

Related Reading:

Delapp, Jennifer. (1995). An Index to James M. Trotter's "Music and Some Highly Musical People". *Black Music Research Journal*, 15(1), 109-136.

Delapp's name-title index is a useful tool in the study of Trotter's survey.

SECTION V

Anti-Racism, Institutional Diversity, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

These works help us begin to answer the question not only of *how* to introduce diverse works into standard curricula, but *why*; and compel readers to understand and question the structural frameworks supporting white supremacy in the academy and broader American society. Some of these works directly inform the student-teacher relationship and provide suggestions for the

institutionalizing of antiracist practices in both classroom interaction and curricula. Others have been the basis for important recent anti-racist scholarship in music. All of them compel the reader to directly confront the deep roots of racist ideology in American institutions, including the academy.

Highlights: Kendi's *How to be an Antiracist*; Lind and McKoy's *Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education*; McClary's *Feminine Endings*; and the video clip of Ewell's lecture on *Music Theory's White Racial Frame*, available as of fall 2019 online and scheduled for journal publication at an undetermined future date, are all critically important for teachers considering how to advance diversity, antiracism, and pro-Black agendas.

Ahmed, Sara. (2012). *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

In her research for this project, Ahmed interviewed 21 diversity practitioners - those charged with advancing institutional missions of

diversity within academic institutions – to assemble a picture of the efficacy of this work following the passage of the Race Relations Amendment Act in the UK requiring such institutions to promote race equality. One notable conclusion is that, aside from a general lack of mandate or empowerment, diversity managers found that their work was more about promoting the “right image” of an institution, rather than fundamentally altering it; or in the words of the author, “changing perceptions of whiteness rather than changing the whiteness of organizations.” Ahmed’s work calls into question not only the strategies upon which institutions currently rely, but their very definitions of “diversity,” “race,” and “racism,” as well as the effectiveness of policy work and diversity committees in effecting true structural change.

Ewell, Philip. (2019, 11/9). “Music Theory’s White Racial Frame.”
Delivered at the Society for Music Theory’s annual meeting. Retrieved from
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSOFpwDIZCA&feature=youtu.be&t=2h13m28s>

Ewell draws upon the work of Bonilla-Silva, Ahmed, and Feagin in his penetrating analysis of the white supremacist structures underlying the teaching of Western music theory, with a focus on Heinrich Schenker, a notorious racist and prominent musical theorist whose ideas are a required part of most graduate theory curricula.

Related Reading:

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. (2014). *Racism without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* (4th ed.). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Bonilla-Silva addresses the persistence of coded or otherwise hidden racist practices and attitudes through an analysis of certain habits of speech and other methods of framing (such as “I’m not a racist, but...”) drawn from interviews with college students and professionals.

Feagin, Joe R. (2013). *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

The concept of the white racial frame represents an attempt by social scientists and legal scholars to develop a more robust theory of racial oppression in the United States, by drawing together racial stereotyping; racial narratives and interpretations; racial images; racialized emotions; and inclinations to discriminatory action into a single picture highlighting the aesthetics of white supremacy, and the attendant characterization of whites as the most virtuous racial group and white aesthetics as the most desirable. Feagin highlights the insufficiencies and inaccuracies in the mainstream understanding of U.S. racism as a matter of racial bigotry, prejudice, and stereotyping, a “race problem” to be solved, or the declaration of our supposed proximity to a “colorblind” or “post-racial” society. Feagin traces the evolution of the contemporary white racial frame from the extreme racial oppression foundational to the origins of White civilization in America and its codification in public and private bureaucracy, including the U.S. Constitution.

Implications for these ideas in relation to musical study should be self-evident: the on the most basic level, the white racial frame is responsible not only for the minimization of artists of color and the canonization of European artists, but the negative characterization and outright rejection of elements of Black music and culture in the sphere of white music. In relation to teaching Black aesthetics, musicology, and generally navigating academia from an anti-racist viewpoint, Feagin’s discussion of counter-framing as an antidote to the white racial frame provides an important perspective on selection, framing, and presentation of course materials, as well as the bias towards a white perspective typical of American textbooks.

Kendi, Ibram X. (2019). *How to be an Antiracist*. New York: One World.

Kendi advances the powerful argument that any idea, policy, or action is either racist, in its contributing to and sustaining our racist history; or antiracist, in that it actively confronts and attempts to dismantle racist structures; but, no space exists in between. In admitting to his own racism, Kendi highlights the fact that all of us, indeed, may be functioning as racists, or as antiracists; but that which is not antiracist is implicitly racist if only in its inability to confront existing structures, which are and have been perpetually racist.

Related Reading:

Kendi, Ibram X. (2016). *Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*. New York: Nation Books.

The title of this work refers to Jefferson Davis' speech to Congress in 1860, in which he declared that the inferiority of African-Americans was beyond question and "stamped from the beginning," an indelible brand upon their bodies. Kendi highlights the racial, and racist, thinking within the ideologies of American leaders and heroes from the beginning of American history, demonstrating that even leaders such as W.E.B. Du Bois based their ideas on an assumption of Black racial inferiority. Ultimately, the maintenance of racist ideas has been an American ideological necessity to justify racist policies with the ultimate goal of preserving existing power structures and distribution of material wealth.

Lind, Vicki R., & Constance L. McKoy. (Eds.). (2016). *Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education: From Understanding to Application*. New York: Routledge.

Based on their experiences in the production of numerous research articles on culturally responsive pedagogy, Lind and McKoy ground examples of culturally responsive pedagogy in the K - 12 classroom setting within theoretical and philosophical frameworks of social justice. The use of vignettes from both teachers and students relating common points of friction in diverse environments and new lenses for understanding provide a vital connection between theory and practice. In addition to integrated lesson plans, the authors provide strategies for creating inclusive learning environments, understanding the influence of music on the development of cultural and individual identity, and best practices in connecting to and drawing upon the strength of local communities.

Related Reading:

Hammond, Zaretta. (2015). *Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.

Hammond prepares educators to be culturally responsive practitioners and avoid deficit-based thinking in their approach. Of particular note is Chapter 3, which focuses on the negative effects of perceived marginalization in the learning process, and the role played by cultural learning aids – stories, music, and repetition – in building neural pathways.

Love, Bettina L. (2019). *We Want To Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Labeling the American educational system the “educational survival complex,” Love argues that this system, in its failure to acknowledge that racial and class oppression are the causes of the achievement gap, is calibrated to allow students of color to simply survive, but not to thrive. Love singles out for particular criticism racist programs intended to instill “grit” or “character” in students of color, arguing that the weight of racist systems embedded in educational institutions kills the spirit of these students, and that only a radical reimagining of our approach to education, through the lens of culturally responsive pedagogy, can help students truly thrive.

Related Reading:

Pollock, Mica. (Ed.). (2008). *Everyday Antiracism: Concrete Ways to Successfully Navigate the Relevance of Race in School*. New York: New Press.

This collection of essays edited by Pollock provides concrete strategies for engineering antiracist school environments and navigating the tension between the antiracist impulse to treat all people as human beings and the antiracist impulse to recognize experiences of racial group members, as well as dealing with specific situations such as students’ use of the n-word in the classroom.

McClary, Susan. (1991). *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

The first musicologist to bring the application of critical feminist theory to the forefront of musical study, McClary implores musicologists to develop a theory of musical signification that goes beyond formal structures and

empirical research. Although this book relates principally to the politics of gender and sex within the interpretation of classical music, these topics are equally relevant in thinking about race, the musical expression of white heteronormativity and fear of female sexuality, and the perpetual foregrounding and worship of white male composers. In particular, chapter 3 discusses the musical techniques utilized by Bizet in order to “other” the central character in *Carmen*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Thanks and gratitude goes to the American Society for Aesthetics' Curriculum Diversity Grant, which provided inspiration and support for this project, and the generous support and assistance

of Dr. Julie Van Camp and Dr. C. Thi Nguyen of ASA. Additionally, thanks go to my parents, Dr. Lee Jenkins and Dr. Prudy Costa, for many years of editorial assistance.

BIOGRAPHY:

Christopher Jenkins, Associate Dean for Academic Support at Oberlin Conservatory, is an educator, administrator, and violist. At Oberlin, he is Conservatory Liaison to the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Previously, he was Deputy Director of the Barenboim-Said Music Foundation in Ramallah, Palestine, and Dean of the Sphinx Performance Academy, the Sphinx Organization's summer music program for minority youth. At the time of publication of the second edition of this bibliography in 2020, he is enrolled in the DMA program in Viola Performance in the Cleveland Institute of Music, while earning a PhD in Historical Musicology at Case Western Reserve University, concurrently.

For questions or corrections, please contact chris.jenkins@oberlin.edu.