ON INTEGRATIVE INQUIRY:
TOWARD A COMMON SCHOLARSHIP

Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., Director

In the summer 1990 issue of CBMR Digest, I stated that the CBMR would “work to open the field of black music research to interpretive scholarship, a scholarship that invites the posing and testing of analytical and speculative hypotheses, that invites cross-disciplinary dialogue.” At the time I did not realize what the extent of this work would be. But recent study has revealed provocative and pregnant ideas and possibilities that invite black music to move beyond standard musicological and ethnomusicological research by focusing on the threads that link together music and the various other humanistic disciplines, and to develop new modes of inquiry that will reveal the common threads of African-American, Latin American, European, and Europe-derived intellectual, cultural, and artistic knowledge and activity. In this intellectual adventure, the field should draw from African-American literature, history, theater, visual arts, and dance; from African-American studies; from Latin-American and Caribbean studies; from the general fields of philosophy, sociology, criticism, and folklore; and from American cultural studies in general. In doing so, the combined expertise and imagination of scholars from the humanistic and artistic disciplines will be called upon in a search for and exploitation of commonalities that reside on the verges of these fields, while respecting their proper boundaries and the specific properties of the products. The process has already begun.

Black Music and Europe-Derived Analysis

In my article “Ring Shout!” (Floyd 1991), I commented upon the work of scholars in African-American literature in identifying traditions and strategies that facilitate new modes of inquiry, and I indicated that the field of music had much to learn by applying the theoretical insights of these scholars to the study of African-American music. I concluded by pointing out that “analysis” is an activity that was developed as a way of examining chiefly Europe-derived works of music, and that although such activity can shed some light on works from the African-American tradition, there are many elements of African-American music that Europe-derived analysis will not uncover. For those, I concluded, a more specifically culture-derived approach is indispensable, an approach based on the following elements: (1) a system of referencing drawn from Afro-American folk music; (2) a tendency to make performances occasions in which the audience participates, in reaction to what performers do, which leads in turn to (3) a framework of continuous self-criticism that accompanies performance in its indigenous cultural context; (4) an emphasis on competitive values that keep performers on their mettle; and (5) the complete intertwining of black music and dance. These elements combine to create, foster, and define an artistic “field” that contains the foundational elements of calls, cries, and holers; call-and-response devices; additive rhythms and polyrhythms; heterophony, pendular thirds, blue notes, bent notes, and elisions; hums, moans, grunts, vocables, and other rhythmic-oral declamations, interjections, and punctuations; off-beat melodic phrasings and parallel intervals and chords; constant repetition of rhythmic and melodic figures and phrases (from which riffs and vamps would be derived); liminal distortions of various kinds; musical individuality within collectivity; game rivalry; hand clapping, foot patting, and approximations thereof; and the matronomic pulse that underlies all African-American music. These and all musical tropes that I subsumed under the master musical trope of Call-Response.

With regard to these tropes, provocative questions have arisen: Can they, or something like them, be applied also to inquiry into the other black cultural disciplines? After all, African-American poetry, like music, is driven by the myths, rituals, and tropes of the culture. What of dance, theater, and the visual arts? Do the tropes of Call-Response, or something like them, appear in all of the black arts? To what extent is it possible to formulate a common mode of inquiry, a single scholarship, for all African-American cultural studies—one that makes possible true interdisciplinary inquiry while also ensuring proper and appropriate recognition of the traditional boundaries and particularities of the various disciplines?

Various scholars already have been applying a variety of cross-media associations and critiques to black artistic products. Consider, for example, Richard J. Powell’s formulations in The Blues Aesthetic: Black Culture and Modernism (1989); aspects of Edmund Barry Gaither’s essay “Heritage Reclaimed” and Robert Farris Thompson’s “The Song That Named the Land” in Black Art—Ancestral Legacy (Dallas Museum of Art 1989); Sterling Stuckey’s hypothesis, in Slave Culture (1987), about the ring shout being the source of African-American cultural products; Henry Louis Gates’s application of vernacular critical processes to the analysis of formal literary products in Continued on page 2
On integrative inquiry, continued

The *Signifying Monkey* (1988); and my own "Ring Shout" article, which applies Stuckey's hypothesis and Gates's theory to works and performances of black music.

In addition, philosophical and religious studies recognize, comment upon, and have relevance to such interdisciplinarity. Works such as John Mbiti's *African Religions and Philosophy* (1970), W. G. Abraham's *The Mind of Africa* (1962), and Wole Soyinka's *Myth, Literature, and the African World* (1990) seek and explain relationships among cultural fields, explore the mythic and ritual foundations of some aspects of black culture, and make cross-modal and cross-disciplinary associations in order to explain artistic events and phenomena. These books and others recognize that the various artistic disciplines have in one way or another always been interdependent. The realities of such interdependence have been clear throughout the history of African-Americans.

But there has been no attempt to develop a comprehensive mode of inquiry that will make possible serious and significant artistic dialogue among scholars from all of the black cultural disciplines. The intellectual potential of such an approach seems promising and provocative, for, in spite of the obvious differences in medium among the black artistic products, they all are rooted in a single tradition whose myths, rituals, and cultural memory inform, drive, and provide interpretive strategies for their products. Music's interdependence the other disciplines can be easily demonstrated in the following discussion.

**Dance**

"Pas Ma Le," "Black Bottom Stomp," "Charleston," and "Georgia Grind" are not only names of early twentieth-century African-American dances, they are also the titles of musical compositions. Other early dances—such as the slow drag, bombashay, grizzly bear, walkin' the dog, bull frog hop, messin' around, shimmy, hoochie coochie, eagle rock, and Lindy hop—all require accompaniment by particular kinds of music, and some of these names are also titles of some of the songs that accompany them. More contemporary dances—such as the hucklebuck, twist, Watusi, funky chicken, pony, boogaloo, bump, and popcorn—were created by black musicians, and some of them also have music-tie counterparts, e.g., "Twist and Shout" and "Wah Watusi." A number of twentieth-century black composers and song writers have actively participated in this music-and-dance process: Jelly Roll Morton ("Black Bottom Stomp"), James P. Johnson ("Charleston"), Chubby Checker ("The Twist"), and Rufus Thomas ("Funky Chicken"), among many others.

Over the centuries, black dance bands, such as those of Sy Gilliat and Frank Johnson in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, respectively, through those of James Reese Europe, Fletcher Henderson, and Count Basie in the second through the fifth decades of the twentieth century, to those of the Commodores, Sly and the Family Stone, and Prince, for example, in the 1970s and 1980s, have been highly regarded.

In the concert world, Katherine Dunham, Pearl Primus, and Alvin Alley have been among the most celebrated leaders of
dance troupes; and the titles of their concert works reveal their
debt to black music: Dunham's Le Jazz Hot, Island Songs, and
Carib Songs; Primus's Hear the Lamb a' Crying, Strange Fruit,
The Negro Speaks of Rivers, Motherless Child, and Steal Away;
and Alley's Blues Suite, Roots of the Blues, Mingo Dances,
and The Moocher. Other examples of the blending of dance and
music in the concert world, this time by composers, are William
Grant Still's ballets La Guiablesse and Sahdji and the dance
numbers in Scott Joplin's opera Treemonisha, especially "Slow
Blowed de Horn."

The historical interdependence of black dance and black
music is clear and unmistakable, for, in their joining, dance
becomes the physical realization of the music—its material
manifestation—and the music the sonic manifestation of the
dance.

Visual Art

The black visual artists have consistently portrayed black
musicians and black music-making. Examples include paint-
ings such as Aaron Douglas's Rise, Shine for the Light Has
Come (1930), Archibald Motley's Blues (1929), Malvin Gray
Johnson's Orphan Band (1934), Lois Mailou Jones's The As-
cent of Elegy (1932), John Biggers's Mideight Hour (1956),
and Romare Bearden's collage New Orleans Ragging Home
(1974); sculptures such as Marion Perkins's The Musician (c.
1950); and relief carvings like Daniel Plessy's When the
Sharecropper Daughter Do a Dance (1970). Black visual artists
have also captured the rhythms, nuances, and impulses of
black music, as exemplified, for example, in paintings such as
James Phillips's Ancestral Dream (1985–86) and Untitled
(1974), Sargent Johnson's Lenox Avenue (1958), Osmond
Watson's Revival Kingdom (1969), Charles Sears's Pilgrims
for Sale (1972), and Palmer Hayden's Bal Jeunesse (c. 1927).2

The cross-influences between black music and black visual
art manifest themselves in artists' use of bold, explosive tonal
palettes, zig-zag patterns, and geometric designs that evoke
and recall jazz; in strong, complex, rhythmic patterns that recall
various black-music genres; and in imagery, postures and
gestures, musical performances, and iconographic narratives
that describe musical processes, events, and activities. Jitter-
bugs (1942), by William H. Johnson, embraces painting, dance,
and music, reflecting these rhythmic, gestural, postural, image,
and narrative properties in a most provocative way.3

Similarly, the visual arts have influenced gesture and me-
lodic pattern in black music, which makes use of the sonic
imagery of angular melodies, riffs, and other devices to convey
the patterns and gestures painted and sculpted by black visual
artists. In many ways, processes employed in the black visual
arts are visual equivalents of the tropes of Call-Response.
Where such processes are used, art becomes the pictorial
realization—iconographic manifestation—of the music, and the
music the sonic manifestation of the picture.

Poetry and Literature

African-American poetry, like African-American music, has
its off-beat accents, call-and-response phrasings, riffs, licks,
cries and hollers, vamps, and multimetric configurations. Lang-
ston Hughes privileged jazz and the blues in his Harlem Ren-
aisance writings; and the literary figures of the sixties wrote
poetry that celebrated it. Other writers theorized about its value,
and most became conversant with the prowess of the genre's
most notable practitioners.

Gwendolyn Brooks's poems "Queen of the Blues" and "of De
Witt Williams on his way to Lincoln Cemetery," both included in
her A Street in Bronzeville (1946), treat, in the first instance, the
life of a blues singer and, in the second, the nature of African-
American life itself with the use of a spiritual text at the end:
"Swing low, sweet chariot, Nothing but a plain black boy."

Although Richard Wright's Native Son makes no significant
mention of music, Bessie,igger's girl, is a character whose
"speech and life-style embodies in no simple way the spirit of
the blues," according to Edward A. Watson, for whom "Bessie's
blues are an extension of the earthly complaint in the tradition
of Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith." Bessie's speech—in her
"songs"—treats "characteristic blues themes" (Watson 1971,
168, 171). In this way, Wright achieved a subtle wedding of
literature and certain structural properties of black music.

Amiri Baraka's Blues People (1963), Black Music (1967),
and The Music (1987), A. B. Spollman's Four Lives in the Bebop
Business (1970), and Albert Murray's Stomping the Blues
(1976) are examples of writings about jazz and the blues by
prominent literary figures; and Addison Gayle's The Black Aes-
thetic (1971) contains writings about African-American music
by several contributing authors. More recently, Houston Baker's
Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature (1984) and the
blues poetry of a variety of other writers speak to relationships
between literature and the blues and among poetry, African-
American music, and African-American culture.

These are only a few examples of a vast literature that treats
or references African-American music, relationships between
literature and African-American music, and the relationship
of music and literature to black culture. Music, similarly, has been
dependent on black literature and poetry. William Grant Still,
in his song cycle Songs of Separation, sets works by five black
poets: Paul Laurence Dunbar, Langston Hughes, Countee
Cullen, Ama Bontemp's, and Philleps-Thoby Marcellin. Howard
Swanson and Margaret Bonds each set to music Hughes's The
Negro Speaks of Rivers; T. J. Anderson, In his Variations on a
Theme by M. B. Tolson, sets poems from Tolson's Harlem
Gallery and Libretto for the Republic of Liberia; David Baker,
Through This Vale of Tears, sets poems by Mali Evans, Solomon
Edwards, and Charles Hines; and Wendell Logan set Robert
Hayden's collage poem, Runagate Runagate, to music.

Theater

In his article "Black Theater in Search of a Source," Paul
carter Harrison (1974) sought to establish a source of inspira-

1. Held in the collection of Professor and Mrs. Earl T. Hooks, Nashville,
Tennessee.

2. Most of the works listed here can be seen in Harlem Renaissance: Art of
Black America (1987) and Black Art—Ancestral Legacy: The African Impulse in
African-American Art (1989). Lenox Avenue can be seen in Free With Our

3. Jitterbugs can be seen in The Blues Aesthetic (Powell and Andrews 1989, 47).
tion for black theater, exploring and identifying the black church as a paradigm for the form. In the introduction to his anthology _Totem Voices_ (1989), Harrison points out that, in the 1960s, a secular evocation of the spirit of black music was contained in the drameurgy of black playwrights, rescuing black theater, he says, from the constraints of realism. He goes on to say that only in the sixties did black theater develop a literature defined by the black aesthetic, citing among other channels of development Douglas Turner Ward's _Negro Ensemble Company_, which "undertook the most significant cultivation of the literature" (Harrison 1989, ii). In _Totem Voices_, Harrison has anthologized eight plays as exemplars of the genre: Wole Soyinka's _The Strong Breed_, Papa Cari's _Shango de Ima_, Derek Walcott's _Tris-Jean and His Brothers_, Zakes Mokokeng's _A New Song_, Ntizakhi Shange's _For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf_, Charles Fuller's _Zooman and the Sign_, August Wilson's _Ma Rainey's Black Bottom_, and Harrison's own _American Gothic_.

These and other plays that exemplify the black experience have in common the evocation of African-American cultural memory, and they either make essential use of black music or contain elements of it. At the least, the semantic value of black music and the musical articulation of black speech and gesture in black dramaturgy reveal common assumptions and common modes of performance. In black musical theater, there is a complete merger of the two genres, this successful integration going back at least as far as the 1980s when black actors, musicians, and playwrights began writing and producing their own shows beginning with Will Marion Cook's _A Trip to Coontown_; and it was intensified in the Harlem Renaissance when numerous musicals—including _Shuffle Along_, _Rang Tang_, _Running Wild_, and _Brown Buddies_—took Broadway by storm.

Theater—particularly musical theater—incorporates, potentially at least, all of the black art forms, and we might look to it as a frame in which initial inquiries for a common scholarship might take place.

**Latin-American/Caribbean Music**

The black presence in Latin-American and Caribbean musics can be felt through the frequent call-and-response structure, the inexorable continuity of the beat, the complex rhythms, and the sense of myth, possession, and rapture in the repetitive structure of these musics. The musics of Latin America are fraught with African-derived musical characteristics and practices, including, most particularly, additive rhythm, hemiola, polyrhythm, and call-and-response phrasings, all of which are demonstrated on the LP album _Blanco y Negro: Hispanic Songs of the Renaissance from the Old and New Worlds_.

Between 1700 and 1800, in the Minas Gerais region of Brazil, numerous black composers were writing and performing music in the Western European concert tradition. The three greatest composers to emerge from the last-mentioned movement were José Emerico Lobo de Mesquita (ca. 1740–1805); José Mauricio Nunés-Garcia (1767–1830), composer of _Requiem in D Minor_ (1816); and Antonio Carlos Gomes (1835–1896), who composed, among other works, _Il Guarany_ (1870). These composers, as well as the more than two hundred other black composers in Brazil, had been influenced and taught by composers of the European musical tradition. But the formal compositions of nineteenth-century nationalist composers in Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, and other countries contain elements of Afro-Latin folk music, musical techniques, and musical procedures (e.g., dance rhythms, singing, use of native instruments, and other performance practices). Taking musical practices from the _negros_, _negriñas_, _guineos_, and _negrillos_ of Latin America, these nationalist composers built extended works in the Western European musical tradition.

Further syncretisms were made when the characteristics and performance practices of Latin-American and Caribbean music were transported to North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and manifested themselves in "putting juba," "jurer," and other folk practices, in early slave songs, and in forerunners of ragtime music. Peter Nárváez (1978) has posed the provocative hypothesis that Mexican-American musicians may have influenced some of the itinerant Afro-American blues street singers of the Southwest, this influence being evident in the style, instrumentation, technique, and ritual elements of the music.

Latin American music probably played a small role in the development of jazz. It is well known that Jelly Roll Morton early recognized a "Spanish tinge" as "the essential ingredient that differentiated jazz from ragtime" (Roberts 1979, 39); and New Orleans jazz history is dotted with names such as Manetta, Marrero, and Perez, and others of Mexican extraction were prominent in early black New Orleans brass bands and jazz ensembles. Manuel Manetta, Lawrence Marrero, and Manuel Perez were born in New Orleans but may have had Spanish parents or grandparents (notwithstanding that the names could have resulted from colonization rather than immigration).

In the 1930s Juan Tizol of Puerto Rico played in the Duke Ellington band (for which he wrote "Perdido" and "Caravan") and Machito, Chano Pozo, and other Afro-Cuban drummers were featured in bebop combos. In the 1950s Afro-Latin dances such as merengue, mambo, and cha-cha-cha came into vogue. Later, salsa emerged from the barrios of major cities; reggae became a world music; and, on the current popular scene, contemporary Latin music, performers, and recording companies—together commonly referred to as _La Onda Latina_—have made a significant impact on American musical culture. So the infusion of Afro-Latin and Afro-Caribbean performance practices into world music has continued and accelerated.

But the nature, extent, and specifics of the infusions and influences from Latin-American and Caribbean musics remain insufficiently researched and, in some cases, unexplored. We know almost nothing, for example, about the nature and extent of the contributions Mexican-American musicians may have made to the origin and development of early jazz, and the Latin/Caribbean contributions to other New Orleans music, such as rhythm & blues and zydeco. The unique music of New Orleans Mardi Gras Indians also remains unexplored. The influences of African, Latin American, Caribbean, and United States black music on each other—particularly through the


5. This took place during the greatest musical activity that ever occurred in Latin America, according to Francisco Curt Lange (1967), who first wrote about this movement and who has been restoring and publishing many of the musical compositions from the period.
Negro spiritual, ragtime, and carnival musics—and relationships among the musics of Europe, the United States, and Latin America and the Caribbean need to be precisely determined. Who were the more than two hundred black composers in seventeenth-century Brazil mentioned by Lange? How did they emerge and what was their culture like? What influence, if any, did they exert on Brazilian and world music? Who were the black street musicians mentioned by Narváez? How did they emerge and what influences did they exert on Mexican and United States music? And, most particularly for present purposes, how do Latin-American and Caribbean musics relate to the artistic continuum of all of the black arts in the United States?

A Common Scholarship

The black cultural disciplines of dance, art, poetry and literature, theater, and Latin-American/Caribbean studies all have elements that relate to each other, and all relate in some way to black music. Music, in fact, might serve as the baseline discipline in our quest for integrative scholarship. But the Europe-derived aspect of the intellectual equation must also play its role in the quest.

Europe-Derived Analytical Procedures

In the search for analytical and interpretive strategies appropriate to black artistic expression, we are ever cognizant of the fact that the exclusive use of African-American hermeneutic strategies, without reference to the Western-European side of the artistic and philosophical equation, will result in incomplete analysis, that other, specifically contemporary approaches to Europe-derived analysis have much to offer African-American interpretive strategies.

In music, for example, Lawrence Kramer’s Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1990 (1990) relates literary theory to European musical products of the nineteenth century. Kramer’s remarkably Gates-like hermeneutic demands that the critic “allow musical and non-musical materials to comment on, criticize, or reinterpret each other as well as to repeat each other” (Kramer 1990, 17), recognizing that the music itself should “help produce the discourses and representations of which it is also the product.” Both Kramer’s and Gates’s thinking rely on tropes and troping—what, in Gates’s hermeneutic and lexicon, is Signifying(s)—and both insist that the interpretive criteria of critics should come from within the works being examined.

Mark Evan Bonds’s (1991) study of musical form contributes another perspective from the Europe-derived side of the equation, focusing on the musical work as oratorical metaphor. This metaphor suggests another—that of the rhetorical turn.” Literally speak of “turns of phrase,” and contemporary theorists speak of “linguistic turns,” both of which serve rhetorical functions in the verbal arts (Rorty 1967; Nelson et al 1987) and can be applied as well to music, dance, and the visual arts.

Peter Kivy, in The Cored Shell (Kivy 1989), develops a theory of expression that takes into account the facts that (1) “we perceive some similarity between the features of . . . music and the features of human behavior that characteristically accompany human emotions as their expressions” (Kivy 1989, 149); (2) we make the conventional associations between specific musical qualities of a work with the extra-musical ideas that they typically represent; and (3) we hear music as analogues to

“speech, utterance, gesture, bodily movement, and so on” (Kivy 1989, 58), that is, as emotional icons resembling vocal, gestural, and postural expressions.

In Sound and Semblance: Reflections on Musical Representation (1984), Kivy writes of “structural adjectives” that allow us to speak of “long, or sustained notes, jagged rhythms, parallel motion, imitation, one line following another, rising and falling figures, harmony, and so on” (Kivy 1984, 62–63). Cross-modal associations, migrating across perceptual boundaries, effect semantic change, “metaphoric transfer” (Kivy 1984, 63), since they are used literally in one perceptual mode and figuratively in another (i.e., we say that lines “move” and refer to instrumental lines as “voices,” potentially adding to the representational matrix “the element of pun”). (Kivy 1984, 83).

How is it that we read in music events that are expressive of the emotions? Kivy explains that “there are identifiable behavioral and linguistic routines and gestures generally associated with the garden-variety emotions” (Kivy 1990, 176), and we read musical events that are suggestive of these routines and gestures as bearing the emotions associated with them.

Our search for a common scholarship might integrate the study of African-American music and culture with European studies and Latin American and Caribbean musics vis-à-vis Gary Tomlinson’s parallax idea, for example, a concept of knowing in which all vantage points yield a real knowledge, partial and different from that offered by any other vantage point, but in which no point yields insight more privileged than that gained from any other. It represents, in other words, a knowing in which none of our vantage points grants us a claim to any more singular status than that of being an other among others. It suggests that our knowledge is fundamentally indirect, not a knowledge of things in themselves but a knowledge of the negotiations by which we make things what they are. Parallax also configures the most effective means to gain knowledge in a decentralized cosmos: the deepest knowledge will result from the dialogic that involves the largest number of differing vantage points. Knowledge is a product of differing displacements of reality perceived from different viewpoints rather than a singular, authoritative perception (Tomlinson 1991, p. 240).

Tomlinson’s parallax recalls, for me, Bakhtin, in whose architecture the subject is the interlocutive or dialogic self. Holquist (1990, xxvi) explains it best: “The interlocutive self is one that can “change places with another—that must, in fact, change places to see where it is. A logical implication of the fact that I can see things you cannot, and you can see things that I cannot, is that our excess of seeing is defined by a lack of seeing: my excess is your lack, and vice versa. If we wish to overcome this lack, we try to see what there is together. We must share each other’s excess in order to overcome our mutual lack.”

The scholarship of Kramer, Bonds, Kivy, and Tomlinson have implications for the development of a common scholarship for black artistic expression. What other formulations without and within African-American studies have promise for contributing to such a scholarship? It is hoped that this essay will serve as at least one point of departure for the exploration of common properties among the black cultural arts, to which end we encourage thought and research on the questions listed above.
During September 30—October 3, 1993, the CBMR will hold its National Conference on Black Music Research, at which meeting these questions and others will be discussed by an interdisciplinary round table of scholars and artists. We hope to see you there.

References


LENOX AVENUE TO FOCUS ON INTEGRATIVE STUDIES

As a part of its new focus on integrative studies, the CBMR will inaugurate a new annual periodical titled Lenox Avenue: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Artistic Inquiry. This new journal will be devoted to integrative scholarship and will be dedicated to seeking and exploring the commonalities between and among the black artistic expressions—music, dance, art, poetry and literature, and theater—including those of Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. It will encourage and cultivate the codification of the elements of a common scholarship in those areas of research.

Edited by Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., the first issue will be published in January 1995. Submissions are welcomed and should be sent to Dr. Floyd at the Center for Black Music Research, Columbus College, 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605-1995. The deadline for articles submitted for consideration for the first issue is May 15, 1994.

Subscription information will be included in a future issue of CBMR Digest.
“Perhaps black culture attains its most complete expression in dance. Within its limitless manifestations are embodied black music, poetry, body language and modes of worship. It is at once the internalization of everyday events and the externalization of the drama which takes place within. For black people, dance is a music performed upon the instrument of the human body. It expresses their ethos, their concept of theater, and defines their place in the world. Always functional, it is used in the same way as speech: to convey emotions, to tell a story, to extol the wonders of Nature and the spirits which control it.

—Julio Finn, *The Bluesman*

“[Archibald] Motley’s multiplicity of compositional elements, their interruptions and their reintroductions are not unlike the ‘riffs’ and ‘stop-time’ of a fellow New Orleans-born Chicagoan, jazz legend Louis Armstrong. . . . Both Archibald Motley and Louis Armstrong were able to create a sense of rhythmic intrigue through improvising and syncopating against a fairly structured format. For Armstrong, the format is established by the basic melodic scheme and the ever-present beat of his rhythm section, whereas for Motley, his visual departures struck across an implied system of anticipated shapes and recurring intervals. The attenuated, but persistent changes in Motley’s *Blues* have a counterpart in Armstrong’s musical virtuosity in that for both artists, the issue at hand concerns ‘feeling’ the beat, rather than seeing or hearing it.”

—Richard J. Powell, *The Blues Aesthetic*

“Langston Hughes’s twelve-part poem, *Ask Your Mama* [is made up of] twelve sections, but it is meant to be read against the traditional black melody of ‘Hesitation Blues,’ which is transcribed and printed as a preface to the poem. The poet himself imitates the dozes in its use of witty puns, in its urge toward a narrative. . . . Hughes’s poem is a wonderful synthesis of the Afro-American blues tradition, the formal poetic tradition, and the black vernacular tradition, rendered into one literary structure by a rhetorical strategy taken from that mode of Signification known as the dozes. Indeed, the poem can be described as one extended Signifying(n) riff.”

—Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey*

**COMING EVENTS**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

1993

April 1–3  Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization
Center for Latin American Studies
University of Florida, Gainesville
Telephone: 904-392-0375

May 12–15  National Meeting of the Association of Recorded Sound Collections
Bismark Hotel
Chicago, IL
Contact: Brenda Nelson-Strauss,
312-435-8129

September 30–October 3  1993 National Conference on Black Music Research
The Fairmont Hotel
New Orleans, Louisiana

1994

January 5  Deadline for submission of articles for *Lenox Avenue: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Artistic Inquiry*

“[Aside from] Jamaica, Haiti, and the Bahamas, where the black arts flourish. . . . Granada . . . has vodun temples . . . and the ambiance of St. Martin inspired Romare Bearden to produce works imbued with that island’s local culture. . . . Trinidad is home to Geoffrey Holder . . . [whose] famous ballet, *Banda,* is a powerful testimony to his roots, as are his paintings. . . . Third generation Haitians who live in Dominican Republic continue to uphold their customs, [and] there is carnival which is celebrated all over the islands and which brings out the splendor of Afro-Caribbean creativity.”

—Ute Stebich, *Black Art—Ancestral Legacy*
1993 National Conference on Black Music Research

The Center for Black Music Research will hold its 1993 National Conference on Black Music Research at the historic Fairmont Hotel in New Orleans, September 30–October 3, 1993. The 1993 Conference will continue the highly successful series of prior CBMR conferences by presenting new research dealing with the music of the locales in which the meeting is being held. Five sessions will be devoted to aspects of New Orleans music that were not treated during the 1987 New Orleans meeting. Of special interest will be a live performance in Armstrong Park by the famed Olympia Brass Band.

The 1993 Conference will also feature sessions dealing with two new areas of Center concern and investigation: (1) the application and implications of modern critical theory to the study and analysis of black music, and (2) the CBMR Integrative Studies Program. Two conference sessions will be devoted to papers dealing with critical theory, continuing the endeavors begun by the Center in the fall 1991 issue of Black Music Research Journal. A round table session, including as participants Dwight Andrews, Veve Clark, Edmund Barry Gaither, Paul Carter Harrison, Richard Long, Rex Nettleford, Richard Powell, Jon Michael Spencer, Robert Farris Thompson, Maureen Warner-Lewis, and Olly Wilson, will constitute the first public event in the Center’s Integrative Studies Program.

The conference will also feature a performance at the Orpheum Theater by vocalists Hilda Harris, Bill Brown, and Donnie Ray Albert and members of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, all conducted by Michael Morgan. The performance will include Olly Wilson’s Visions and Truth: A Song Cycle and works by four New Orleans composers—Camille Nickerson, Sidney Lambert, Edmond Dédé, and Samuel Snaer.

Conference registration materials will be mailed during the coming weeks. Conference room rates at the Fairmont Hotel are $92 per night (plus tax) for single, double, triple, and quad rooms—please observe the housing reservation deadline on the hotel reservation card as the conference room block can not be increased and lodging in New Orleans is normally sold out.

Make your plans now to attend the 1993 National Conference and be prepared to return your registration form and hotel reservation cards by the indicated deadlines.

“[I]n works such as [James Phillips’s] Bazu (1974), formal elements take on the quality of black (African or Afro-American) music with its improvisational character. By color and shape, accents, and crescendos, jazzlike percussive effects are conjured... It is a visual equivalent of the impetus behind jazz, soul, and ‘julu’ music.”

—Edmund Barry Gaither, Black Art—Ancestral Legacy
Given here is a brief list of books and articles which are recommended as introductory materials for the kind of integrative study the CBMR is advocating. The editor welcomes suggestions for items to be included in future columns.


"Why the pull towards transcendence, towards spiritual and private symbols? Because of the Old Time Religion. Henry Dumas was right; North is dense African, California, too. Wherever blacks transmute modern media with their lyric voices, you sense the stress of the spirit. You hail a vision, flowing from Kongo and Angola, to Charleston and New Orleans, and from Congo Square, to everywhere. That big-hearted power that Stanley Crouch traces from back-home blues to the jazz of Albert Ayler the consciousness he says filtered through the Delta to Black America at large, parallels the vital rise of transcendence and spirit-possession as elements of African-American art."

—Robert Farris Thompson, Black Art—Ancestral

"The polyrhythms in African-American music, in which no one main beat subordinates the others, is paralleled by the theme of individual expression in Black women's quilting. Black women quilters place strong color and patterns next to one another and see the individual differences not as detracting from each piece but as enriching the whole quilt. This belief in individual uniqueness is illustrated by the value placed on personal expressiveness in African-American communities."

—Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought

"Aesthetics ... is more than a philosophy or theory of art and beauty; it is a way of inhabiting space, a particular location, a way of looking and becoming. It is not organic. ... ."

Whatever African-Americans created in music, dance, poetry, and painting, etc., it was regarded as testimony, bearing witness."

—bell hooks, Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics.
INTegrative STudies and Multimedia Computer TECHNOLOGY: A HYPOThESIS
Samuel A. Floyd, Jr.

In our search for a scholarship common to the black cultural arts, the developing multimedia computer technology seems to have potential as a convenient, efficient, effective, and powerful tool of scholarship—a tool by which the common properties of the arts and disciplines might be compared, conceptually integrated, and manipulated in ways that will reveal their commonalities and complementarities.

The term “multimedia” most commonly refers to the integration of sound, video, and text through computer hardware and software in a way that facilitates controlled use of the mix of information. Multimedia allows users to retrieve combinations of sound, visual, and textual information in various combinations, still and moving. In the communications and teaching fields, multimedia is used to enhance the learning process by deepening and broadening the learning experience in ways that cannot be achieved by more traditional means. An example of a multimedia program is *Multimedia Beethoven: The Ninth Symphony*, which displays the score, shows the work’s structure, and plays the music while allowing the user to move at will from one part of the work to another.

Multimedia is commonly thought of and promoted as a presentation and educational tool. Can this communications medium be adapted to high-level, integrative research in our field? Will scholars one day be able to create their own specialty databases of sound, video, and text, analyze and organize retrieved combinations, and write scholarly documents, all at the same desktop computer? Add remote information retrieval tools, database analysis software, and research organizer programs (such as *SquareNote*) to the mix and we would have the possibility of organizing, storing, processing, and styling scholarly documents. Combined with multitasking, multimedia would make possible the quick comparison and comprehension of data from the modalities of sound, video, and text; the interactive, on-screen processing of the information derived from these modalities; and the rendering of scholarly analyses and conclusions in scholarly format. Can and will multimedia development kits be designed to process and render scholarly documents?

The potential for collaboration between and among scholars from disparate disciplines is particularly intriguing for integrative studies. Multimedia can enhance our abilities to transcend specialized thought.

Select Bibliography

“[Aaron Douglass’s series of four panels entitled *Aspects of Negro Life*] begins with a rather stereotypical portrait of life on the African continent, complete with tribal music and drums. . . . The final panel returns to the theme of music, as a jazz musician, saxophone in hand, stands atop the coffin of a wheel. . . . The jazz musician, Douglass’s emblem of . . . freedom, would also become a leitmotif in the work of black American artists such as Romare Bearden and the photographer Roy DeCarava.”

—Mary Schmidt Campbell, *Harlem Renaissance: Art of Black America*

“Negro spirituals and hymns were the forms [Augusta] Savage . . . symbolize[d] in [her sculpture] *The Harp*. Inspired by the lyrics of James Weldon Johnson’s poem ‘Lift Every Voice and Sing,’ *The Harp* . . . depicted a group of twelve stylized black singers in graduated heights that symbolized the strings of the harp.”

—Ragnina Perry, *Free Within Ourselves*
NEW ORLEANS CONFERENCE
ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE

Historically, the Center's National Conferences on Black Music Research have included performances that elucidate the musical and cultural attributes of the geographic area in which the meeting is being held. The 1993 New Orleans conference will continue this tradition by sponsoring a performance at the Orpheum Theater on October 1. The performance, co-sponsored by the CBMR and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, will be conducted by Michael Morgan and will feature solo performances by mezzo soprano Hilda Harris, tenor William Brown, and bass-baritone Donnie Ray Albert—all members of the Black Music Repertory Ensemble—and violinist Rachel Jordan and trombonist Daniel Cloutier, both members of the Louisiana Philharmonic. The instrumental ensemble will be comprised of other members of the Louisiana Philharmonic.

Repertoire

Rescue Polka Mazurka

Creole Songs

Michieu Banjo
Chère, Mo Lemmé Toi
Fais Do Do
Dansé Conni Connêl

Featuring Hilda Harris, mezzo soprano

"Gloria" from Mass for Three Voices
Featuring Hilda Harris, William Brown, and Donnie Ray Albert

Mephisto Masqué: Polka Fantastique
Featuring Daniel Cloutier, euphonium

Three Negro Songs
Swing Along
Exhortation (A Negro Sermon)
Rain-Song

Featuring Donnie Ray Albert, bass-baritone

Intermission

La Jota Aragonesa
Featuring Rachel Jordan, violin

Jamaican Dance

Allegro moderato
Andante moderato
Allegro

Of Visions and Truth: A Song Cycle
I've Been 'Buked
Lullaby
Kef
If We Must Die

Featuring Hilda Harris, William Brown, and Donnie Ray Albert

"Normally, we give them harps, but in Dizzy's case, we made an exception."

Henry Payne reprinted by permission of UFS, Inc.
As a device for communal participation, call and response is most often associated with sacred ceremonies, the preacher calling his flock to testify—or at times with the hue and cry of politicians exhorting their constituents during rallies. However, the technique can also be found in the communal response to the high pitch of talking drums in Nigeria or to the deep resonance of the Candomble drums in Brazil, even in Max Roach’s shimmering vibraphone on the high-hat cymbals in response to the tom-tom, or in the ‘tradin’ fous’ that extends the musicians’ improvisational exploration of a tune, an objective also of interest to the griot and rapster storytellers, whose voices may slide up and down the various pitches and timbres to execute the call and response of multiple personas in a single voice. Nor should we overlook the sometimes intricate elaboration of questions and answers in children’s games, or the coded, nonsensical utterances exchanged by men and women in that public display or propriety call ‘signifyin’.

—Paul Carter Harrison, Totem Voices

**INTEGRATIVE STUDIES NAME DATABASE**

If you would like to receive a regular basis information about and announcements of events related to the Center’s Integrative Studies Program, please complete the form below and mail it to:

ISP Database
Center for Black Music Research
Columbia College
600 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60605-1996

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**ISP Database**

Please add my name to the ISP Database and send me information about this initiative as it is available.

Name __________________________

Address _________________________

City/State/Zip ____________________

Telephone ________________________

**INTEGRATIVE STUDY AT THE 1993 NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BLACK MUSIC RESEARCH**

Focusing on the implications of integrative study, a round table discussion will be one of the featured sessions at the 1993 National Conference on Black Music Research, to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, during September 30–October 3. The following questions will be considered:

1. What is the feasibility of the integrative study of the black cultural arts disciplines?
2. What is the feasibility of a common scholarship for these disciplines that would allow for a common view of them while respecting the boundaries of the several disciplines?
3. What are the sources, procedures, and techniques of an integrative-study methodology or methodologies?
4. What are the implications of Latin-American and Caribbean musics for integrative study and the implications of the latter for the former?
5. What is or ought to be the relationship between critical theory and integrative study?
6. What will a common scholarship contribute to
   a. scholarship in general,
   b. the humanities,
   c. higher and secondary education, and
   d. humanity in general?

The round table participants will be as follows.

- Dwight Andrews (Emory University), Music
- Vavae Clark (University of California at Berkeley), Caribbean Studies, Dance
- Edmund Barry Gaither (Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists), Visual Arts
- Paul Carter Harrison (Columbia College Chicago), Theater
- Richard Long (Emory University), English, Black Cultural Studies
- Rex Nettleford (University of West Indies), Caribbean Studies, Dance
- Richard Powell (W.E.B. Du Bois Institute, Harvard University), Visual Arts
- Jon Michael Spencer (African and Afro-American Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Music
- Robert Farris Thompson (Timothy Dwight College), African and African-American Arts
- Maureen Warner-Lewis (University of West Indies), Linguistics, Caribbean Studies
- Olly Wilson (University of California at Berkeley), Music

Additional information about the conference can be found on pages 8 and 11. We look forward to an exciting and stimulating discussion.