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Coming Events
SEPTEMBER 23–26
College Music Society Fifty-Third National Conference
Minneapolis, Minnesota
contact cms@music.org

NOVEMBER 4–7
American Musicological Society/Society for Music Theory Joint Annual Meeting
Indianapolis, Indiana
contact ams@ams-net.org

NOVEMBER 11–14
Society for Ethnomusicology Fifty-Fifth Annual Meeting
Los Angeles, California
contact semconf@indiana.edu

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Cover photo: Richard Stanz (see article on p. 4).
The CBMR continues to influence the field and develop and disseminate exciting work through its programming, publications, and research initiatives. For example, production is wrapping up on the first disc in the CBMR's new Recorded Music of the African Diaspora series (see article on page 6). The Center worked with Grammy-award-winning sound engineer Eric Arons and Albany Records, an independent label with a long history of championing the music of black composers (of all idioms). This disc is significant for many reasons but chief among them is that it contains the first recordings of these significant pieces by important, living, black composers. The Center is delighted and honored to have been able to play a role in increasing access to these works.

CBMR Director of Research Kenneth Bilby and I recently attended a series of events in Lecce, Italy, announcing and celebrating the official opening of CBMR/Europe at the University of Salento (see article on page 7). That institution will be largely autonomous from the Chicago CBMR, but its opening is an important milestone in the CBMR's twenty-seven-year history, and it speaks to the continued value and necessity of its mission broadly speaking.

In other news, the CBMR hosted a panel on black music and spirituality on April 13 as a part of Columbia College Chicago's Critical Encounters 2010: Fact & Faith (see article on page 6). And finally, during September 23–25, 2010, the CBMR will host the second in a new series of annual symposia called Genius without Borders. The series contributes to Chicago's history as a black music capital but also redefines the history of African-American music for new generations and new audiences. This year's event examines the musical legacy of Michael Jackson.

So I'm happy to report that the Center continues to support new scholarship and programming. It is not, however, immune to the challenges brought about by a lagging economy. The CBMR faces many of the same difficulties currently experienced by other institutions and organizations of higher learning. However, we are inspired by this challenging financial climate to think about new and innovative ways to build on the Center's strengths.

To me, a key strength of the CBMR has always been the generational, disciplinary, and background diversity of its constituency. Historically, the CBMR has been an institutional home not only to music scholars but also to academics whose disciplinary backgrounds include anthropology, performance studies, music education, Africana studies, diasporal area studies, American studies, history, sociology, and linguistics, among other areas of inquiry. And not only to academics per se but also to music teachers, practicing musicians and composers, dancers, students of all ages, and interested community members. It's important that at any CBMR conference an undergraduate music theory student might have the opportunity to talk with an established black composer like Otis Wilson and that the CBMR has created a space in which public scholars and community elders are so thoroughly a part of the conversations that produce institutionalized knowledge. I am proud of the fact that the CBMR serves as a physical and virtual home for such a group. It reflects and reproduces community values that are key to successful black expressive culture in the first place. And in the words of one member, "it has allowed work on the subject of black music to thus accelerate in its advancement."

However, we at the CBMR have had varying levels of success over the years encouraging and sustaining that kind of robust involvement. It's particularly difficult to do so at a moment when the traditional model of large-scale, national conferences is so difficult for many of us (producers and attendees) to fulfill. So I'm thinking a lot right now about alternative, innovative, and responsive ways the CBMR can serve and interact with its constituency. We want to recenter that robust diversity of disciplines, backgrounds, and experiences and create mutually beneficial ways for energized constituencies to become committed members. For, even as a diverse constituency has continued to play a key role in accelerating the advancement of the CBMR's work, I predict it will be the ideas and energy of a committed membership that will help move the work forward in the future.

We at the Center are working to ensure that there are multiple points of entry for those who would be involved with and contribute to its work. For example, we are engaged in website restructuring and expansion, guided by a vision for the website as a way to offer extensive services and resources to users of all ages and academic backgrounds. The website will serve as a hub of interrelated and interactive web of media, and we are also working to increase the number of collection-specific finding aids available online. The Center's mission statement has been subtly reworded to reflect the higher level of constituency involvement to which we aspire:

Founded at Columbia College Chicago in 1983, the Center for Black Music Research is the only organization of its kind. It exists to illuminate the significant role that black music plays in world culture by serving as a nexus for all who value black music, by promoting scholarly thought and knowledge about black music, and by providing a safe haven for the materials and information that document the black music experience across Africa and the diaspora. (italics added)

The reworded version features more streamlined and aspirational language and has the potential to communicate more clearly to more people not only what the Center does but why it exists.

Ultimately, clear, multidirectional communication is a goal in and of itself. The Center will continue to work on innovative ways to increase engagement and dialog with and among constituents. A healthy circulation of ideas and new work—even during years without national conferences—is key to our success in challenging times and beyond. I urge you to renew your membership and I heartily invite your input. Be in touch!

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CBMR Celebrates Donation of Stamz Collection and Release of Book

On February 1, the CBMR hosted a special event that combined a book release and signing party with the public announcement and celebration of the donation of the Richard E. Stamz Collection.

Before his passing in 2007 at the age of 101, legendary Chicago radio and television host Richard E. Stamz decided that his collection should be donated to the Center for Black Music Research, where it could be accessed and used by students, radio enthusiasts, and researchers. Stamz was known as “The Crown Prince of Soul” and dubbed himself “The Crown Prince of All Disc Jockeys.” His long-running radio show Open the Door, Richard was a musical and cultural mainstay of radio programming in Chicago. Phyllis Stamz, Richard’s daughter, has fulfilled her father’s wish by working with the CBMR to move the collection to the CBMR Library and Archives.

Patrick A. Roberts, associate professor of educational foundations and inquiry at National-Louis University in Chicago, has researched and authored a new book about Richard Stamz titled Give ’Em Soul, Richard: Race, Radio, and Rhythm and Blues in Chicago, published by the University of Illinois Press. Roberts collaborated with Stamz beginning in 2000 to produce the book, which is based on years of personal interviews.

The event, held on the Columbia College Chicago campus, was attended by members of the Stamz family and members of author Patrick Roberts’ family, old friends and colleagues of Stamz’s, contemporary producers and radio personalities, students, and members of the general public. Hosted by Richard Steele, cohost of Eight Forty-Eight on Chicago Public Radio, the program included presentations by CBMR Executive Director Monica Hairston, Stamz’s daughter Phyllis Stamz, and author Roberts, who discussed the history of his involvement with Stamz, screened a short video documentary of Stamz’s career, and read passages from the book. Several attendees gave reminiscences of their friendships and professional relationships with Stamz.

A highlight of the program was a live reenactment of an Open the Door, Richard broadcast, which featured advertising scripts and public announcements from Stamz broadcasts in 1961 and 1962, interwoven with several tunes from Chicago Top-30 hit lists from the same period. The reenactment was designed, produced, and hosted by Wes Adams, a senior radio major at Columbia College and student programming assistant at Columbia’s radio station WCRX. All materials that were used in this reenactment were drawn from the Richard Stamz Collection.

The Richard E. Stamz Collection, including nineteen boxes of papers, master tapes, photographs, and other materials, are due to arrive at the CBMR Library in April.

Stamz’s daughter Phyllis Stamz, his granddaughter Dawn Harrison, and event emcee Richard Steele.

Photo by Braxton Black.

Patrick Roberts, author of Give ’Em Soul, Richard!

Photo by Braxton Black.
CBMR Wins Second GRAMMY Preservation and Access Grant

The GRAMMY Foundation® has awarded the CBMR one of nine grants given in 2010 to recipients in the United States, Canada, and the Dominican Republic. The CBMR’s grant will help preserve and make accessible to the public a unique collection of in-depth interviews with 100 important Jamaican studio musicians, arrangers, and vocalists. The collection was donated to the CBMR by its owner, CBMR Director of Research Kenneth Bilby, who conducted and assembled the interviews as part of an oral history project on Jamaican music funded by a Guggenheim fellowship during 2004–2005. It consists of 142 audio cassettes (194 hours) containing interviews with the individuals who created the genres of ska, rocksteady, and reggae during the 1960s and 1970s and reveals in great detail how these new forms actually emerged and what their creators thought about the creative process.

There is no doubt that Jamaica has produced some of the most influential music in the world. Beginning in the 1960s, American and British pop, rock, and jazz clearly began to show Jamaican influence. Those who made reggae-influenced recordings during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s ranged from the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and Led Zeppelin to Paul Simon, Bob Dylan, and the Eagles; from Stevie Wonder to the Staple Singers; from Barbara Streisand to Herbie Mann; from Jack DeJohnette to the Art Ensemble of Chicago; from Patti Smith and Bad Brains to the Clash and the Police. Since then Jamaican genres such as ska, reggae, dub, and dancehall, as well as various offshoots such as reggaetón (not to mention hip-hop), have spread across the entire globe, and their influence has increased exponentially.

Despite an outpouring of journalistic writing on Jamaican popular music since Bob Marley’s ascent, the history of this music remains poorly documented. Those who actually created these sounds—the studio musicians of Kingston during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s—have been largely bypassed in the writing of this history. But it is precisely in the memories of these pioneers—most of whom have yet to receive the credit they deserve—that the deeper cultural significance and more personal meanings of this history reside.

The interviews document many of those who participated in the birth of Jamaican popular music, some internationally known, but many of them session musicians whose stories have been almost entirely ignored. Whereas previous coverage of Jamaican music has often emphasized the important roles played by producers, sound system operators, and engineers, this collection focused on the studio instrumentalists and arrangers who were indisputably at the center of the creative process. They, after all, were the ones who actually created new musical styles—who played, experimented, jammed, arranged, collaboratively composed, and forged new genres in the studio setting.

Bilby, whose professional involvement with Jamaican culture spans more than thirty-five years and who has an intimate acquaintance with Jamaican traditional music through long-term research, was able to elicit much new, highly detailed information on the distinctive cultural soil out of which ska, rocksteady, and reggae grew and the particular pathways through which ongoing cultural nourishment took place.

Funds from the GRAMMY Foundation® grant will support the digitizing and basic cataloging of the 142 audio cassettes, which will be converted to digital files and transferred to new media to ensure both long-term preservation and accessibility. The digital collection will be made available to researchers and the larger public and will become an invaluable resource for the historiography and understanding of a music that has had a global impact scarcely imagined by those who decades ago brought it into being.

Jamaican session guitarist Alva Lewis, who was interviewed for this collection, photographed at Tuff Gong Studios in Kingston, 2005. Lewis played with the Upsetters on some of the earliest reggae recordings, including classic songs by Bob Marley and the Wailers. Photo by Ken Bilby.
This is the second preservation and access grant the GRAMMY Foundation® has awarded to the CBMR. The first, awarded in 2005, supported the digitization and cataloging of the Sue Cassidy Clark Collection, which contains recorded interviews with significant African-American musicians such as Jerry Butler, Al Green, Isaac Hayes, the Impressions, B. B. King, Gladys Knight, Little Richard, Wilson Pickett, Smokey Robinson, the Staple Singers, Sly Stone, and Stevie Wonder. The GRAMMY Foundation Grants Program cultivates the understanding, appreciation, and advancement of the contribution of recorded music to American culture. The Foundation supports programs and activities that engage the music industry, the cultural community, and the general public and thus addresses the ongoing need for resources to safeguard our cultural legacy and fund new discoveries at the crossroads of music and science.

Recorded Music of the African Diaspora Series Update

The first release in the new CBMR/Albany Records Recorded Music of the African Diaspora series, which was announced in the last issue of *CBMR Digest*, has been delayed until early this summer. The CD will feature the Center's New Black Music Repertory Ensemble, conducted by Leslie Dunner and Kirk Smith, in performances of Mary D. Watkins's *Five Movements in Color* and Olly W. Wilson's *Of Visions and Truth: A Song Cycle*. The CD (TROY2000) will be available at www.albanyrecords.com, www.amazon.com, or www.arkivmusic.com.

This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional funding from the Parsons Family Foundation and the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation.

CBMR Presents a Symposium on Black Music and Spirituality

On April 13, in conjunction with the Critical Encounters initiative at Columbia College Chicago, the CBMR presented a symposium that explored issues surrounding black music and spirituality. Critical Encounters is a college-wide initiative intended to synchronize conversations between the school and the community, in an ongoing dialog, around a central socially and culturally relevant issue, each academic year. This year's theme is Fact & Faith. The panel included Tammy Kernodle (Miami University), Emmett Price III (Northeastern University), and Melvin Butler (University of Chicago) and explored the diverse and complex intersections of fact, faith, and experience through various realizations of black music. Panelists addressed topics that extended beyond the associations that gospel music would bring to this theme. Less common tangents that invoked other genres and styles such as jazz, hip hop, and Caribbean music were highlighted as was the music of artists such as Mary Lou Williams, John Coltrane, and Tupac Shakur. The panelists also displayed a practical knowledge of the topics engaged, offering performances based on improvisation and reinterpretations of spiritual songs. CBMR Associate Director of Research Horace Maxile assembled the panel and served as moderator.

CBMR Travel Grants

The CBMR is pleased to announce its most recent grant recipient, John A. Alston III. Alston is pursuing his master's degree, and his project, "The Morehouse College Glee Club: A Century of Song," will document the history of the ensemble in preparation for a monograph that will be a part of a centennial celebration. Alston will also investigate the ensemble's connections to other cultural and musical organizations such as the National Association of Negro Musicians. The Morehouse College Glee Club, founded in 1911, is one of the longest-standing ensembles of its kind and has maintained an outstanding reputation for decades.

CBMR travel grants of up to $1,000 are awarded on a competitive basis to applicants who demonstrate the ability to launch and complete a scholarly or performance-based research project based on the CBMR's collections. The grants are supported with funds that have been given to the Center in honor of CBMR founder Samuel A. Floyd Jr. and in memory of Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson. Scholars, composers, conductors, and musicians, educators, graduate students, and independent researchers residing or attending school beyond commuting distance of the Center for Black Music Research (more than 100 miles) are eligible to apply for this grant. Researchers in all genres of black music are encouraged to apply as interests ranging from concert music to gospel to jazz criticism have been explored through this grant.

Applications are accepted twice yearly and must be postmarked or received by September 1 and February 1. Additional information and application forms are available at www.colum.edu/cbmr/Library_and_Archives/CBMR_Travel_Grants.php. Or call 312.369.7559 to request information.
“Honeyboy” Edwards Plays in CBMR Library and Archives

On March 17, the members of the Bo Diddley Track of the American Society on Aging/American Gerontological Society visited the CBMR for a tour and a peek at their collection, which includes recordings of presentations by older blues musicians, posters, and other materials from their sessions. They invited the venerable bluesman David “Honeyboy” Edwards to play.

Web News

The CBMR is pleased to announce that we can be found on Facebook! Become a fan and receive news and updates on the CBMR’s activities and events as well as information related to the field of black music.

The CBMR is also working toward building a new search-and-browse interface for its archival collections. As a result of these endeavors, expanded information about the collections and more extensive descriptions and biographical notes are now available on the Library and Archives web pages. In addition, downloadable PDF files of complete and detailed finding aids are now available online for some collections. More will be added regularly.

CBMR Goes International: European Affiliate Opens in Italy

On March 8, a new research center called CBMR/Europe was officially inaugurated at the University of Salento in Lecce, Italy. The new center was conceived by Professor Gianfranco Salvatore, who is on the music faculty of the university. Inspired by the wide-ranging work done at the CBMR in Chicago over the years, Salvatore proposed to create an extension of the center in Europe that would focus on the study of African musical and cultural influences in Europe, and in particular the Mediterranean region, from antiquity to the present—a relatively new field of inquiry. Planning for CBMR/Europe began in 2006, in collaboration with Samuel Floyd Jr., who founded the original CBMR at Columbia College in 1983. The project was formally approved by both centers' parent institutions in 2008 through an agreement signed by Columbia College Provost Steven Kapelke and the Rector (president) of the University of Salento, Domenico Laforgia.

The launching of CBMR/Europe was marked by a news conference attended by faculty, students, members of the Italian press, and the general public. Representing the University of Salento were Rector Laforgia, Professor Lucio Galante. Also present, representing CBMR/Chicago, were Executive Director Monica Hairston and Director of Research Kenneth Bilby. Rector Laforgia, Professors Salvatore and Galante, Hairston, and Bilby made formal statements and took turns answering questions. Following the press conference, there was a screening of a new documentary film by Professor Salvatore titled In Search of the Unknown: The Art, Science and Mystery of Improvisation.

David “Honeyboy” Edwards.
Photo by Janet Harper.

Members of the Bo Diddley Track with “Honeyboy” Edwards.
Photo by Janet Harper.
The first project brought to fruition under the aegis of CBMR/Europe, the film explores the complexities of musical improvisation, acknowledging its widespread historical occurrence (for instance, in European classical music before the nineteenth century) but focusing on the contemporary improvisational practices of musicians based in the Puglia region of southern Italy who work in African or African-influenced genres such as jazz, Senegalese (Mande and Wolof) epic song, and Jamaican reggae and dancehall music.

The following day, Hairston and Bilby were given a tour of CBMR/Europe's new headquarters in Lecce—an eighteenth-century church belonging to the University of Salento, the Chiesa di Santa Maria dell'Alto, which is being renovated and converted into a series of new spaces including offices, library, archives, and a large and beautiful performance hall. Also present for the tour was Professor Stefano Zenni, president of the Società Italiana di Musicologia Afroamericana in Chieti and a founding member of CBMR/Europe. That evening there was a special inaugural performance at the new headquarters by the Afromediterranean Orchestra, directed by Salvatore Pino Minna and Roberto Ottaviano. This experimental ensemble draws on various local and regional musical expressions such as the tarantella and the Renaissance-era moresca, combining these with jazz and other African and African-influenced folk and popular genres, along with a strong improvisational component, to produce a unique musical blend.

The inaugural events received wide coverage in the local and national press, reflecting much excitement about this new initiative in a part of Europe with a strong tradition of serious critical writing on jazz, blues, and other forms of black music.

Although CBMR/Europe's mission will continue to be focused on pioneering research on Mediterranean traditions affected by the African diaspora during various periods of European history (including the ancient world, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance and Baroque eras), the new center will also encourage the ongoing study of more recent African and Afro-American (including Caribbean and Latin American) cultural influences and musical contributions of various kinds in both Italy and other parts of Europe.

Gianfranco Salvatore at the inaugural performance of the Afromediterranean Orchestra (top photo). CBMR Executive Director Monica Hairston, CBMR/Europe staff member Gianpaulo Chiriaco, and Stefano Zenni visiting the Mediterranean crossroads of Otranto, near Lecce (bottom photo). Photos by Ken Bilby.
IN MEMORIAM

The CBMR has lost two former International Advisory Board members and great friends:

Rex Nettleford, a Caribbean cultural icon, died in Washington, D.C., on February 2, a few hours before his 77th birthday. He was in Washington on a fundraising trip for the University of the West Indies, where he taught for forty years, serving as vice chancellor from 1998 to 2004. In addition, Nettleford was the co-founder of the National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica, which he directed until his death. He was also an educator, writer, and scholar who called on the people of the Caribbean to look to their African roots for inspiration. In addition to serving on the CBMR’s International Advisory Board, Nettleford was a participant in the Center’s Interarts Initiative.

Hale Smith, one of the country’s foremost composers, died in Freeport, New York, on November 24, 2009, at the age of 84. A graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music, he was known as a master arranger and orchestrator who combined serialism and modern sonorities with jazz in his own compositions. He served the Center’s Black Music Repertory Ensemble as a member of its Artistic Advisory committee from the BMRE’s inception in 1987. As the ensemble’s chief arranger, he brought to life historic pieces by black composers for the group’s instrumental forces. He also served on the Center’s International Advisory Board. A program titled An Evening of Music by Hale Smith will take place on May 17, at seven o’clock, at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City.

Ghanaian ethnomusicologist Willie Anku died in Ghana on February 1, at the age of 60, after an automobile accident. Anku received his Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from the University of Pittsburgh in 1988. He returned to Ghana to teach and was director of the School of Performing Arts at the University of Ghana at the time of his death. He was an expert on West African music who had published a twovolume study and an article in the Center’s Black Music Research Journal.

Cecil Valentine “Sonny” Bradshaw, Jamaican jazz trumpeter and bandleader, died in Jamaica on October 10, 2009, at the age of 83. He played in Jamaica in various groups, served as musical director of the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation, formed a radio big band, and introduced bebop to Jamaica. He also worked through the Jamaican Federation of Musicians to gain reforms, including a four-hour worknight, and founded the Ocho Rios Jazz Festival to feature expatriate Jamaican musicians. He was awarded Jamaica’s Order of Merit for his services to music.

Robert “Squirrel” Lester, second tenor with the rhythm and blues vocal group the Chi-Lites, died in Chicago on January 21, at the age of 67. The Chi-Lites were popular in the 1970s with eleven hits, including “Have You Seen Her?” and “Oh Girl.” They received a Pioneer Award from the Rhythm and Blues Foundation in 2000.

Rhythm and blues singer Teddy Pendergrass died on January 13 in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, at the age of 59. His career began with the soul group Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes, but as a solo act for producers Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff at Philadelphia International Records, he became a rhythm and blues sex symbol. His career was temporarily halted by paralysis after an automobile accident, but he returned to record and eventually to perform his signature romantic soul ballads and to become an advocate for people with spinal-cord injuries.

John Storm Roberts, a longtime friend of the CBMR, died on November 29, 2009, in Kingston, New York, at the age of 73. Roberts was a journalist, radio producer, and world traveler who discovered and issued recordings of traditional and popular music. His seminal book Black Music of Two Worlds (New York: Praeger, 1972) was among the first to give serious attention to contemporary African popular music and to link it with black music in the Americas. He followed it up with two other books, The Latin Tinge (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) and Latin Jazz (New York: Schirmer, 1999). During the 1980s and 1990s his record label and store Original Music was a primary source for recordings of “world music.”

Trinidadian guitarist Nearlin “Lynn” Taitt died on January 20 in Montreal, Canada, at the age of 75. Taitt worked as a much-sought-after session musician during a critical period in Jamaican music in the 1960s. He is credited by some as the inventor of the Jamaican genre known as “rocksteady,” a transitional style that led to the birth of reggae. He recorded with virtually every Jamaican singer during the 1960s and contributed greatly to the international popularity of Jamaican music.

Reggae musician Yabby You (Vivian Jackson) died on January 12, at the age of 63. He is known for his near-apocalyptic mixing of Christianity and political commentary. After several roots reggae hits in Kingston in the 1970s (including “Conquering Lion” with a chorus that gave him his nickname), he became a successful producer of other reggae artists.
Organ Works by African-American Women Composers Featured in Sounds of the South Loop Recital

On February 21, organist Carol Ritter presented a recital of organ works by African-American women composers at Second Presbyterian Church of Chicago. Featured were works by Florence Price, Sharon J. Willis, Undine Smith Moore, Evelyn Simpson-Curenton, and Eurydice V. Osterman. Ritter’s diverse program included traditional hymn settings, pieces inspired by African-American folk songs and spirituals, and other works that were not as easily tied to an immediate religious or cultural program. Among the works programmed were Price’s Variations on a Folk Song, Willis’ We Shall Overcome: Suite for Solo Organ, and various arrangements of hymns such as Moore’s Variations on Nettleton (Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing), Osterman’s Poor Wayfaring Stranger, and Simpson-Curenton’s O Come, O Come Emmanuel.

CBMR Associate Director of Research Horace Maxile served as narrator for the recital and presented a brief introductory lecture that offered historical and social contexts for the composers and their works. Maxile’s comments on the composers and the pieces were also interpolated throughout the program. Ritter serves as director of music/organist at Second Presbyterian Church and also works for the College Music Society as a production editor for College Music Symposium. She holds the Associate Certificate with the American Guild of Organists and a D.M.A. in organ performance from the American Conservatory of Music. Many notes for the program were adapted from her dissertation, “Organ Music Written by African American Women.”

Staff Notes


Head Librarian and Archivist Suzanne Flandreau attended the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Mexico City in November 2009. Her last year as SEM treasurer is 2010. She also attended the meeting of the National Recording Preservation Board at the Library of Congress in December.

Executive Director Monica Hairston attended the annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology in Mexico City as an SEM Council member.

On February 20, CBMR Catalog Librarian Janet Harper represented the CBMR at the fourth annual “In the Mix” diversity recruitment open house at Columbia College Chicago. Sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the event attracted over two hundred prospective students and their families. During the fall 2009 semester, Harper gave a presentation on the history of Chicago gospel music to a Black Arts in Chicago class in the African and Black Diaspora Studies Program of DePaul University. After the lecture, the students and their professor were given a tour of the CBMR by Suzanne Flandreau.

In February, Associate Director of Research Horace Maxile presented a brief lecture and served as narrator for an organ recital that featured the works of African American women composers (see article above). In March, Maxile was a featured lecturer for a concert that celebrated the musical legacy of Wiley College. The lecture, titled “Wiley College’s Musical Legacy: Some Musicological Considerations,” explored the tenures and works of composers associated with Wiley College. Special emphases were placed on Frederick Tillis and Edward Beaty, as they were featured composers in the concert program. Other figures such as William Henry Smith and James Ingram Fox were also discussed. This program, organized by Maxile and the music faculty at Wiley College, is the beginning of an anticipated initiative that will explore the musical legacies of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

Morris Phibbs, Deputy Director, delivered a eulogy for Horace C. Boyer at a memorial service that celebrated Boyer’s life and gospel music career on April 25 at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Boulder, Colorado. He also was guest conductor of performances by a massed choir of three works arranged by Boyer.
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The Center for Black Music Research acknowledges the support of the following people and institutions, who through their membership in the CBMR Associates Program, contribute to its continuing growth and success.

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Trumpeter and educator William Butler Fielder (1938–2009) was a Meridian, Mississippi native and a musical king maker. "Prof," as he was affectionately known, hailed from a musical family. His mom, a Fisk Jubilee Singer, played violin and piano; his dad played cornet; his older brother, Alvin, played drums.

Al recalls, "At age 9, Bill studied piano and soon switched to my dad’s 1920 CG Conn cornet. Mother made sure Bill had private lessons with William Davis, a Jackson State professor who played in Cab Calloway’s band with Dizzy. Bill attended Toogaloog Prep, a private boarding school, where the good habits he learned from my parents and Davis were reinforced. Dad wanted Bill to become a physician, but Mother supported Bill’s desires. Bill was a dedicated master musician."

Prof briefly attended Tennessee State University (TSU) then transferred to Chicago’s American Conservatory of Music, where he earned a master’s degree. His goal was to join the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO). In 1957, he arrived at Orchestra Hall, introduced himself to Adolf Herseth, CSO’s principal trumpet, and played the Haydn concerto from memory.

Herseth fondly remembers, "Bill was a very advanced student with an open mind who worked diligently and consistently absorbed as much as he could mentally, physically, and spiritually to create the best music possible." Prof’s auditions landed him in the first chair of CSO’s Civic Orchestra’s trumpet section. Prof spent his college days learning the “Chicago sound” from Herseth; from Vincent Gigowicz—his primary teacher and CSO’s assistant principal trumpet; and from Arnold Jacobs, CSO’s principal tuba. At the core of the big round “Chicago sound” are diaphragmatic breathing, consistent air flow, and increased mouthpiece bore. Years later in lessons and master classes, Prof taught air flow and embouchure concepts by holding a sheet of paper against a wall—from several arm’s length away—using air blown from his lips (often while tonguing a tune).

Prof’s college nights were spent jamming in a home that his parents bought for him and Al at 5941 South Sangamon. The Sangamon flat was the site of jam sessions that attracted local jazz musicians and groups that passed through Chicago: from Sun Ra—in whose band Al was the drummer—to Art Blakey, Bill Lee, Jack DeJohnette, Betty Dupee, Shirley Scott, Booker Little, and others. When Prof joined Sun Ra’s band for a West Coast tour, he met Freddy Hubbard (who later studied with Prof), Wes Montgomery, Alonzo “Bobby” Johnson, and Lee Morgan—who was responsible for Blakey offering Prof a job. Prof’s mother made him turn down the Blakey gig to finish school.

After graduating, Prof taught in historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in Tennessee, Mississippi, Texas, North Carolina, and Alabama. His students at Alabama State included percussionist Michael Adams and trumpeter Dr. George Shaw. Prof was Adams’ percussion ensemble director. Adams observes that

A few rehearsals were devoted to the downbeat of the first measure in a composition. Prof was not satisfied with the sloppy attack of the first note. He was determined to make us sound like an ensemble. As a result Prof made lifelong enemies and friends.

Often Prof came to our dorm and woke us up to listen to CSO recordings of Mahler. He taught us how to listen, exposed us to orchestral and jazz literature, and made me a better musician and drummer.

Shaw remembers,

My world consisted of Enterprise, Pinckard, and Ozark, Alabama. Prof taught us that while we were deficient, we didn’t have to remain so. He was a proper gentleman who taught us etiquette, how to thrive, set up a routine, and strive for perfection. I had the same lesson for four years because I did not master page one.

Prof encouraged me to play bass and get me bass work. Before gigs he’d say, “Go have some fun; hit ‘em hard; wish ‘em well, cause you can’t suck ‘em [notes] back.”

After undergrad he drove me to Wayne State, met my teachers, and helped set up my master’s program; he did the same

Prof Fielder. Photo by Anja Christin Nielsen.
for my doctoral program at Oklahoma. For my dissertation, at Prof’s suggestion (instead of doing library research) I interviewed Eddie Harris, Clark Terry, Dizzy, Mitt Hinton, Lionel Hampton, Cab Calloway, et al. Later these guys came to Long Beach City College and did concerts with me. They helped me gain credibility, thanks to Prof.

Prof returned to TSU as assistant band director. A colleague, Professor Johnny Lane, recalls,

At the first rehearsal Prof collected the brass mouthpieces, threw them away, and had each player buy a specific Bach mouthpiece. He took a drill and increased the bore of each mouthpiece. Instantly the band sounded ten times its actual size!

Prof wore a jacket and tie and demanded the same of his students. As a result, I set a dress code for percussion students that included brief cases to carry sticks, music dictionaries, manuscript paper, and scores. Like Prof, I had students copy excerpts as a way of learning them.

Under Prof’s tutelage, Dr. Leon Richard was the youngest member of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra when he was still an undergrad. Richard believes,

Had Prof not come into our lives, we would be lost. All our achievements can be traced to Prof. He exposed us to classic readings, writers, and thinkers. Concepts Prof learned from Herseth, Cichowicz, and Jacobs are not taught in the academy. I loved his generosity, dedication, and love for music. He elevated black students, often at the price of being mistrusted by HBCU’s that were preoccupied with marching band; versus Prof’s holistic approach.

Prof inspired me to earn a doctorate, teach at Kentucky State, and play with the Lexington Symphony Orchestra. He taught me that “Trumpet is the mirror of the mind; everything has a concept that stems from a mental approach.” Everything we do affects the music we create and vice versa.

Shaw University colleague, Professor Larry Ridley inspired Prof to move with him to Rutgers, where he spent thirty years teaching students who are forging careers as jazz and classical musicians. Prof’s protégés include Thara Memory, Wynton Marsalis, Terence Blanchard, Danny Harper (Church Hill Downs jamb sessions), Mitchell Hollie, Tyree Blanton, Phillip Harper (a trumpeter living in Amsterdam), Daniel Kassteets (Louisville Symphony Orchestra), Terrell Stafford (Temple University, Carnegie Hall Big Band), Sean Jones (Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, principal trumpet), Professor Derrick Gardner (Michigan State University), Ralph Peterson (trumpeter, drummer), Jeff Rupert and Eric Wright (University of Central Florida), Michael Mossman (CUNY, Queens), Anja Christin Nielsen, and Lee Hogan.

Prof was known for his words of wisdom and scholarly reading. Jessie Robinson regarded Prof as “a complete work who exposed us to mysticism, which led to my first trip to Egypt.” Dr. Travis Heath (Northeastern Illinois University) remembers Prof saying, “Air in the trumpet should be executed like a bow

on the violin.” Prof turned Danny Harper on to Maurice Andre and insisted that he read The Third Eye.

Daniel Terence Harper, Danny’s son, studied with Prof and was among Prof’s last students at Rutgers. The younger Harper began playing drums at age two and later switched to trumpet. Like generations before him, Harper ate dinner with Prof almost every night. “Prof ate, slept, and breathed music, trumpet and learning. He expected a lot from me because of who my dad is. Prof was like a grandfather to me. He was very intense and strict. The four-and-a-half years I spent with him are legendary.”

Prof’s memorial services were held on October 13, 2009, at Rutgers’ Kirkpatrick Chapel. A concert followed at Nicholas Music Center, then an event called “Jammin’ for Prof” at Steakhouse 85. Featured protégés and colleagues included Wynton Marsalis and Columbia College Chicago’s Jon Faddis. Marsalis remarked, “Prof took me under his wing at age thirteen and mentored me until the day he passed.”

Before he died, Prof took stock of his life with this writer. Prof’s legacy includes The Complete Book of Jazz Improvisation (1980, with Howard Harris); his debut headliner album, A Love Progression (1985, 2010, Prescription label); Baroque Duets with Wynton Marsalis and Kathleen Battle (1992, PBS); clinic on Hummel Concerto with Wynton Marsalis (Morristown, N.J., 1995); Jazz Experience (New York’s UPN, WWOR-TV, 2000); and a feature on Lionelle Hamanekia’s 2002 CD, Jazz Bouquet.

Prof performed with Duke Ellington, B.B. King, Mulgrew Miller, Cedar Walton, Kenny Barron, Philly Joe Jones, Frank Foster, Charlie Rouse, and others, as well as with COSO’s Chicago Civic Orchestra and the Nashville Symphony Orchestra. Prof served multiple duty teaching jazz trumpet, classical trumpet, jazz history, and harmony at Rutgers.

Rutgers music department vice chair and chair of brass Dr. Scott Whitener holds Prof in the highest esteem:

He was my best friend: a great artist and wonderful teacher whom I knew twenty-eight years. Life will never be the same without him. Prof had an encyclopedic knowledge of jazz and classical music literature, history, and theory. (I believe he had a photographic memory.)

Prof was one of the most optimistic people I know; even in the face of serious obstacles: asthma from birth, devastating glaucoma at age thirty-two, losing his teeth a decade ago, and lung cancer.

Prof never received credit for being the first trumpet player in history to play classical and jazz at the highest level. He was a pioneer who showed this could be done. A brilliant line of students will carry Prof’s example forward, showing and telling their students what he gave them. "You may be gratified, but never satisfied."