

The Eva Jessye Afro-American Music Collection of the U. of M. School of Music presents

BLACK AMERICAN COMPOSERS

A SERIES OF VOCAL MUSIC



October 13, 1977 ~ 8:00 p.m. ~ Rackham Aud.

Art by Songs
by

Black Female Composers

Dorothy Rudd Moore
Florence Price *Margaret Bond*

~ Admission Free ~

Hermit Moore - Cellist

Willis Patterson - Bass

Jacqueline Paige Green - Soprano

Program

Etta Moten Barnett

The Role of the Black Female Composer

Dorothy Rudd Moore

Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death
I had No Thought of Violets of Late
Joy
Some Things Are Very Dear to Me
He Came in Silvern Armour
Song for a Dark Girl
Idolatry
Youth Sings a Song of Rosebuds
Invocation

Jacqueline Paige Green, Soprano
Diane Bischak, Violinist
Charles Lloyd, Pianist

Florence Price

Night
Songs to a Dark Virgin

Willis Patterson, Bass
Sylvia Olden Lee, Pianist

Margaret Bonds

Dream Portraits
Minstrel Man
Dream Variation
I, Too

Claritha Buggs, Soprano
Charles Lloyd, Pianist

Dorothy Rudd Moore

No Images
Weary Blues

Willis Patterson, Bass
Kermit Moore, Cellist
Charles Lloyd, Pianist

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Dorothy Rudd Moore

Born in New Castle, Delaware

Now living in New York City

Dorothy Rudd Moore was an honor graduate of Howard University, where she was a composition student of the late Mark Fax. She later studied with Nadia Boulanger and Chou Wen Chung. After settling in New York she became one of the founders of the Society of Black Composers and has taught at New York University and Bronx Community College. She is a published poet as well as an accomplished singer. Her chamber music and art songs have been performed throughout the United States, Europe, and South America. Her First Symphony was given its world premiere by the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. She is married to Kermit Moore, a well known cellist, for whom she has written a variety of works.

Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death employs the texts of seven black poets. It was premiered May, 1976, in the Alice Tully Hall.

"No Images" is from one of her most significant compositions, *From the Dark Tower*. It is a work in eight parts using the poems of seven black poets. "No Images" is a poem by Waring Cuney.

Based on a poem by Langston Hughes, *Weary Blues* is set for baritone, cello, and piano. The essence of the blues is offered at the start of the work by the solo cello. The piano enters, portraying a black man playing the blues on an old piano, illuminated by gas light. The baritone, who assumes the role of the pianist, is given 12-bar blues material distinct from the melodic ideas of his accompaniment. He then returns to the role of a narrator, letting the cello mirror his melodic line while the piano continues its melancholy theme. The work ends with the opening theme of the cello, this time accompanied by the piano.

Florence Price

1888-1953

Born in Little Rock, Arkansas

Florence Price settled in Chicago and was the first black woman to receive recognition as a composer. A graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, she studied further at Chicago Musical College, The American Conservatory in Chicago, and at the University of Chicago. In addition to being a composer she was a pianist, an organist, and an educator. Her works include symphonies, concertos, overtures, chamber music, sonatas, art songs, and arrangements of spirituals. Her *Symphony in E minor* won the Wannamaker Prize in 1932. The following year it was played by the Chicago Symphony — the first time a major American orchestra had performed a symphony by a black woman composer. During the early 1930's she was the soloist when her *Piano Concerto in One Movement* was played by the Detroit Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, and the Chicago Women's Symphony. Probably *Three Little Negro Dances* for chorus and orchestra, her spiritual arrangements, and some of her songs have had the greatest number of performances.

The text of *Night* is a poem by Louise C. Wallace. *Songs To Dark Virgin* is by Langston Hughes.

Margaret Bonds

1913-1972

Born in Chicago

A composer-pianist, Margaret Bonds earned the B.M. and M.M. degrees from Northwestern University and later studied at Julliard. As a child she was an accomplished organist. She received encouragement in composition from Florence

Price and from the National Association of Negro Musicians, which gave her a scholarship. Her composition teachers include William Dawson and Roy Harris. She has written several scores for stage works in addition to concert works. Her best known compositions are *Migration*, a ballet; *Spiritual Suite for Piano*; and *Dream Portraits*. Among the awards she has received are a Rosenwald Fellowship, a Roy Harris Scholarship, and a Wannamaker Award.

The texts of *Dream Portraits* are three poems by Langston Hughes.

Invited Honored Guests to Tonight's Concert

Etta Moten Barnett

lecture-recitalist, former concert artist, actress, and radio personality

Charles E. Handy

brother of the deceased W. C. Handy, representing the Handy Brothers Music Co., Inc.

Dr. Eva Jessye

donor of the Afro-American Music Collection

Sylvia Olden Lee

opera coach and accompanist at Curtis Institute

Katherine Handy Lewis

daughter of W. C. Handy, current President of the Handy Brothers Music Co., Inc.

Dorothy Rudd Moore

renowned composer, soprano, poet

Kermit Moore

cellist, conductor, composer

Future Concerts of this Series

1978 Winter Term—Concert II: "Choral Music by Black Composers"

1978 Spring Term—Concert III: "Spiritual Compositions by Black Composers"

1978 Summer Term—Concert IV: "Art Songs by Robert Owens, Howard Swanson, and others"

Special guest artists will appear in these concerts

Acknowledgements

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The Eva Jessye Afro-American Music Collection, Dr. James Standifer,
Director

The University of Michigan School of Music, Dr. Allen Britton, *Dean*

The Office of Student Services, Henry Johnson, *Vice-President*

The Office of Academic Affairs, Dr. Richard English, *Associate Vice-President*

The Affirmative Action Program, Dr. Gwendolyn Baker, *Director*

The Institute of Gerontology, The University of Michigan, Lila Green,
Program Coordinator

Dorothy Rudd Moore

Sonnets on Love, Rosebuds, and Death

1. I Had No Thought of Violets of Late

I had no thought of violets of late, the wild, shy kind that spring beneath your feet in wistful April days, when lovers mate and wander through the fields in rapture sweet. The thought of violets meant florists' shops and bows and pins, and perfumed papers fine, and garish lights, and mincing little fobs and cabarets and songs, and dead'ning wine ... So far from sweet real things my thought had strayed, I had forgot wide fields, and clear brown streams: The perfect loveliness that God has made, wild violets shy and Heaven-mounting dreams. And now unwittingly, you've made me dream of violets, and my soul's forgotten gleam.

2. Joy

Joy shakes me like the wind that lifts a sail, like the roistering wind that laughs through stalwart pines. It floods me like the sun on rain-drenched trees that flash with silver and green. I abandon myself to joy, I laugh, I sing. Too long have I walked a desolate way, Too long stumb'ld down a maze bewilder'd. Joy shakes me like the wind that lifts a sail, like the roistering wind, I abandon myself to Joy!

3. Some Things Are Very Dear to Me

Some things are very dear to me. Such things as flowers bathed by rain or patterns traced upon the sea or crocuses where snow has lain. The iridescence of a gem, the moon's cool opalescent light, Azaleas and the scent of them, and honeysuckles in the night. And many sounds are also dear like winds that sing among the trees or crickets calling from the weir, or Negroes humming melodies. But dearer far than all surmise are sudden teardrops in your eyes.

4. He Came in Silvern Armour

He came in silvern armour trimmed with black. A lover come from legends long ago with silver spurs and silken plumes ablow, and flashing sword caught fast and buckl'd back in a caven sheath of Tamarack. He came with footsteps beautif'ly slow, and spoke in voice meticulously low. He came and Romance follow'd in his track. I did not ask his name. I thought him Love. I did not care to see his hidden face. All life seemed born in my intaken breath. All thought seemed flown like some forgotten dove. He bent to kiss and raised his visor's lace. All eager-lipped I kissed the mouth of Death.

5. Song for a Dark Girl

Way down South in Dixie huhn (Break the heart of me) huhn, They hung my dark young lover to a cross-roads tree. Way Down South in Dixie (Bruised body high in air) I asked the white Lord Jesus what was the use of prayer. Way Down South in Dixie (Break the heart of me) Love is a naked shadow on a gnarled and naked tree.

6. Idolatry

You have been good to me, I give you this: The arms of lovers empty as our own, Marble lips sustaining one long kiss and the hard sound of hammers breaking stone. For I will build a chapel in the place where our love died. And I will journey there to make a sign and kneel before your face, and set an old bell tolling on the air.

7.

Since men grow diffident at last, and care no whit at all, If spring become, or the fall be past, or how the cool rains fall, I come to no flower but I pluck, I raise no cup but I sip, for a mouth is the best of sweets to suck; The oldest wine's on the lip. If I grow old in a year or two, and come to the querulous song of "Alack and aday" and "This was true, and that, when I was young," I must have sweets to remember by, some blossom saved from the mire, some death, rebellious ember I can fan into a fire.

8. Invocation

Let me be buried in the rain in a deep, dripping wood, under the warm wet breast of Earth where once a gnarled tree stood. And paint a picture on my tomb with dirt and a piece of bough of a girl and a boy beneath a round, ripe moon eating of love with an eager spoon, and vowing an eager vow. And do not keep my plot mowed smooth and clean as a spinster's bed, but let the weed, the flow'r, the tree riotous rampant wild and free grow high above my head.

Margaret Bonds

MINSTREL MAN

Because my mouth is wide with laughter and my throat
is deep with song,
You do not think I suffer after I have held my pain
so long.
Because my mouth is wide with laughter, you do not
hear my inner cry?
Because my feet are gay with dancing, you do not
know I die, you do not know I die.

DREAM VARIATION

To fling my arms wide in some place in the sun,
To whirl and to dance till the white day is done,
Then rest at cool evening beneath a tall tree
While night comes on gently, dark like me,
That is my dream.
To fling my arms wide in the face of the sun,
Dance! Whirl! Whirl! till the quick day is done,
Rest at pale evening; a tall, slim tree
Night coming tenderly, black like me;
Night coming tenderly, black like me.

I, TOO

I, too, sing America, I am the darker brother,
They send me to eat in the kitchen when company comes;
But I laugh and eat well and grow strong,
Tomorrow I'll sit at the table when company comes.
Nobody'll dare say to me "Eat in the kitchen" then.
Besides they'll see how beautiful I am
and be ashamed.

Florence B. Price

NIGHT

Night comes, a Madonna clad in scented blue.
Rose-red her mouth and deep her eyes,
She lights her stars, and turns to where,
Beneath her silver lamp the moon, upon a couch of shadow
lies
A dreamy child, The wearied Day.

Florence Price

SONGS TO THE DARK VIRGIN

Would that I were a jewel, A shattered jewel,
That all my shining brilliants might fall at thy feet,
Thou dark one.
Would that I were a garment, A shimmering silken garment
That all my folds Might wrap about thy body, Absorb thy body,
Hold and hide thy body,
Thou dark one.
Would that I were a flame, But one sharp, leaping flame
To annihilate thy body, Thou dark one.

Dorothy Rudd Moore

WEARY BLUES

Droning a drowsy syncopated tune
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon
I heard a Negro play.
Down on Seventh Avenue the other night
By the pale dull pallor of an old gaslight
He did a lazy sway. He did a lazy sway to the tune o' those
Weary Blues.
With his ebony hands on each iv'ry key
He made that poor piano moan with melody,
Oh Blues!
Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.
Sweet Blues!
Coming from a black man's soul. Oh Blues!
In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan
"Ain't got nobody In all this world.
Ain't got nobody but ma-self,
I'w gwine to quit ma frownin' And put ma troubles on the shelf."
Thump, thump, thump went his foot on the floor.
He played a few chords then he sang some more.
"I got the Weary Blues And I can't be satisfied.
Got the Weary Blues, And can't be satisfied. I ain't happy no mo
And I wish that I had died.
And far into the night he crooned that tune
The stars went out and so did the moon,
The singer stopped playing and went to bed
While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.
He slept like a rock, or a man that's dead.