THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC PROGRAM

present

SYMPHONY IN BLACK

A CONCERT OF MUSIC BY AFRICAN AMERICAN COMPOSERS
CELEBRATING THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

Saturday, October 18, 1997
8:00 pm
Robinson Theatre

This concert is produced by the African American Music Program and affiliated sponsors
Welcome to the University of North Florida. Tonight’s concert, Symphony in Black, celebrates the University’s 25th anniversary. It also pays tribute to both past and recent African American composers of “classical” music. I am especially proud that it offers a special tribute to Jacksonville composers James Weldon and John Rosamond Johnson.

The Department of Music at UNF reflects our institutional commitment to academic excellence. The outstanding work and skills of our faculty and students are evidence by tonight’s concert. We are particularly pleased to welcome the participation of local churches and members of the Jacksonville Symphony in this special event.

Enjoy the concert and thank you for joining us in this 25th anniversary celebration of YOUR university.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC PROGRAM
MISSION STATEMENT

African American music is one of two authentic musics indigenous to North America. The music of African Americans is the most important of the two since it has influenced every type and style of music existing in America today.

While notable efforts have been made throughout America's brief history to preserve its indigenous musics, only in recent years have these musics gained a degree of acceptance and credibility to the extent that they are considered as being a vital part of America's great cultural heritage. The African American Music Program at the University of North Florida represents one approach to celebrate and promote the indigenous folk, religious, popular and art music emanating from the Black experience in America.

Program goals are facilitated through academic course work, concerts, festivals, seminars, workshops, and a variety of outreach programs presented for the educational, civic, and religious communities of Florida's First Coast.
FEATURED GUESTS

The Rev. Rudolph Waldo McKissick, Sr. is a product of the Duval County School System. He is a graduate of Edward Waters College of this City and has engaged in additional study at Tuskegee Institute, Columbia University, Luther Rice Seminary and Princeton University.

He has served the Bethel Baptist Institutional Church as pastor for over thirty-one years. Reverend McKissick is very active in the religious and civic life of Jacksonville, Florida’s First Coast, and the nation. He is a Board member of Edward Waters College, One Church One Child, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews. He is Assistant Dean of the National Sunday School Congress. Rev. McKissick was instrumental in organizing, developing, and supporting the local HELP CENTER FACILITY for drug rehabilitation.

His honors include honorary Doctorate Degrees by Edward Waters and Bethune Cookman Colleges, and the Humanitarian Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Rev. McKissick was selected twice to tour the Holy Land by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and received a meritorious award for sustained leadership services presented by Dr. Martin Luther King.

Rev. McKissick is married to the former Estelle Williams and they have one son, Dr. Rudolph McKissick, Jr., Associate Pastor of the Bethel Baptist Institutional Church.

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The Reverend Davette L. Turk is an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church. She believes deeply in the Ministry of Prayer and Social Justice and has devoted her life in the pursuit of Christian unity. In addition to her ecumenical and social work, Rev. Turk has lectured in more than 100 churches, synagogues, schools, and clubs. She is a Founder and Chair of RECONCILE JACKSONVILLE, an organization devoted to social justice and Christian unity.

Rev. Turk has held a number of ecumenical positions in Florida, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Currently, she is Associate Rector of All Saints Episcopal Church of this City. Her memberships are numerous and include Board Membership on the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Jacksonville Urban League, and the Jacksonville Community Relations Commission.

Rev. Turk is a graduate of LaSalle University (Philadelphia), and has engaged in further studies at General Theological Seminary (NYC), Temple University, Rosemont College, and Villanova University (Philadelphia). She is married to Rev. Richard M. Turk and has two children.

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PROGRAM

I.

Lift Every Voice and Sing ........................................... Words by James Weldon Johnson
Music by John Rosamond Johnson
Arranged by Roland Carter
Transcribed for Orchestra by Lenard Bowie

Afro-American Symphony ............................................. William Grant Still
First Movement — Moderato

Danse Nègre ............................................................... Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

Dr. Lenard Bowie, Conductor

II.

Three Preludes ......................................................... Bunky Green

Dr. Gerson Yessin, piano

Pieces of My Heart (dedicated to Gerson Yessin)
Lamenting
Pictures of E.D.

UNF Anniversary Song ................................................ Bunky Green

Composed especially for the 25th Anniversary
for Chorus, Jazz Ensemble and Piano

• • • • • • INTERMISSION • • • • • •

III.

God's Trombones ...................................................... Sermons by James Weldon Johnson
Music by Roy Ringwald


Featuring in the order of appearance:
Rev. Davette Turk as the Prayer Leader
Rev. Rudolph McKissick, Sr., as the Preacher

Dr. Lenard Bowie, Conductor
Dr. William Brown, Choirmaster
PROGRAM NOTES

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING began as an address by James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938), Principal of Stanton High School of Jacksonville, to celebrate the birthday of Abraham Lincoln. What began as a speech kept leaning toward a poem about the struggles, courage and survival of African Americans through 300 years of slavery. After getting the first verse, Johnson decided that the poem should be set to music. He asked his brother, John Rosamond Johnson (1873-1954), Choirmaster of the Baptist Academy, now Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, to compose the music to his lyrics. John Rosamond completed the music in one afternoon. On February 12, 1890, the song LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING had its world premiere in a performance by 500 Jacksonville Florida school children.

Long after the Johnson brothers had made a permanent move to New York City, Jacksonville school children and church choirs continued to sing the hymn. Soon the song could be heard throughout the nation. The song was later adopted by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as the “Negro National Anthem.”

James Weldon’s lyrics followed standard binary song form while John Rosamund chose to write the music in the popular military march style of the day. Roland Carter crafted a unique concert arrangement of this hymn for mixed chorus in 1978. Tonight's version of Carter’s arrangement was transcribed for Orchestra by Lenard C. Bowie.

Determined to develop a symphonic type of Negro music, William Grant Still (1895-1978) composed the AFRO-AMERICAN SYMPHONY in 1931. It was the first work of its kind by an African American. Still, like other second generation African American composers, drew upon the wealth and diversity of African American culture for their compositional inspiration.

Still’s setting and inspiration for the fist movement of AFRO-AMERICAN SYMPHONY are drawn from the most important musical form and style developed in America to date - the BLUES. The introduction, led by the English horn, projects an air of free improvisation, as it anticipates the first theme in its pronouncement. That figure, taken up and developed into the principal theme by a muted trumpet following a strict 12-bar blues format, launches the movement in earnest. This theme is developed via a set of quasi-variations utilizing traditional African call and response patterns.

The intensely passionate second theme draws its inspiration from Negro spirituals. Following its development, the original blues theme is restated by the trumpet section. The movement closes on a somber note with the bass clarinet recapping the opening statement in a low and solemn voice.

For his success in developing a diverse repertoire of symphonic works from African American folk culture, William Grant Still is honored as the DEAN OF AFRICAN AMERICAN COMPOSERS.
Samuel Coleridge Taylor (1875-1912), son of a West African physician and English mother, demonstrated unusual musical talents by age five. He entered the Royal Academy of Music in London at the age of fifteen where he studied violin. Three years later he won a composition scholarship to study under the great composer and teacher, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford.

Although Coleridge-Taylor’s credits as a pedagogue, violin soloist, and conductor are numerous, he is best known as a composer. His best known works include the trilogy THE SONG OF HIAWATHA and AFRICAN SUITE. DANSE NÉGRE is an orchestral version of the finale to this suite.

DANSE NÉGRE is a good natured, light-hearted, and spirited work. After a brief introductory statement, the first theme, characteristic of a Negro folk dance tune, is stated by the solo flute. The entire first section is based on that theme or on the rhythmic motive of that theme by solo and ensemble sections throughout the orchestra. The middle or contrasting section is set on a theme characteristic of a Negro folk song. The good-natured first theme returns to conclude the work in a rousing finale.

The creative idea that bred the literary life of GOD’S TROMBONES was a long-standing desire of James Weldon Johnson to capture the “primitive stuff of the old-time Negro sermon” in poetry. That creative spark was blown into full flame after hearing a Negro preacher late one night in Kansas City. Johnson states:

“...he was free, at ease, and the complete master of himself and his hearers. The congregation responded to him as a willow to the winds. He strode the pulpit up and down, and brought into play the full gamut of a voice that excited my envy. He intoned, he moaned, he pleaded, he blared, he crashed, he thundered. A woman sprang to her feet, uttered a piercing scream, threw her handbag to the pulpit striking the preacher full in the chest, whirled round several times and fainted...”

Needless to say, Johnson was so fascinated by this exhibition that he decided that very night to complete the poem he set out to write several years prior, THE CREATION.

With the publication and success of THE CREATION, Johnson wrote a series of poems following the Negro sermon format that began with the Creation and ended with the Judgment Day. This collection of poems was called sermons and published under the title GOD’S TROMBONES.

In tonight’s version of GOD’S TROMBONES, Roy Ringwald selected three of Johnson’s seven sermons, surrounded them with prayers and set them to music. All are accompanied by a small orchestra and mixed chorus performing Ringwald’s arrangements of well-known spirituals that capture the spirit and nature of Johnson’s sermons. Dr. William A. Brown, Choirmaster, has enhanced this version by adding a number of extensions, re-harmonizations and substitute arrangements, the most prominent being the finale, IN THAT GREAT GITTIN UP MORNING, arranged by Jester Hairston and transcribed for orchestra by the conductor.
PERSONNEL

**ORCHESTRA**

**Flutes/Piccolo**
- Debra Heller, principal ¶
- Tasha Jones §
- Les Roettges ¶

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- Teressa Fradley §

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**Clarinets**
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- Laurie Zentz ¶

**Bass Clarinets**
- Bill Prince ¶
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Joe Fraden has made a generous provision in his will to benefit the jazz program. We are grateful for his interest and support.

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**Other Upcoming Events**

**Free Admission**

**Oct. 22**  
**Brahms Festival: Concert III**  
The Florida Arts Trio and special guests  
7:00pm • UNF Theatre

**Nov. 4**  
**Big Band Extravaganza on Election Day**  
UNF Jazz Ensembles  
8:00pm • UNF Theatre

**Nov. 10**  
**Reunion of Past Winners** of the Jacksonville Jazz Festival's “Great American Piano Competition”

**Nov. 19**  
**JoAnne Brackeen,** jazz composer & pianist  
*(Sponsored by the Atlantic Center for the Arts)*  
Performance & Lecture  
7:30pm • Blgd. 2/Rm. 1129

**Nov. 21**  
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Dr. Merrill J. Palmer, Director  
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