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## Spiritual Roots and Classical Fruits: A Stylistic Analysis and Performance Guide of Selected Spirituals and Art Songs by Jacqueline Hairston

Phillip Lewis Newell Harris

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SPIRITUAL ROOTS AND CLASSICAL FRUITS: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS AND  
PERFORMANCE GUIDE OF SELECTED SPIRITUALS AND ARTS SONGS BY

JACQUELINE HAIRSTON

By

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Bachelor of Music  
University of California, Irvine  
2012

Master of Music  
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2014

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of the requirements for the

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# ABSTRACT

## **Spiritual Roots and Classical Fruits:**

**A Stylistic Analysis and Performance Guide of Selected Art Songs and Spirituals by**

**Jacqueline Hairston**

By

Phillip Harris

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*Spiritual Roots and Classical Fruits* is the title of Jacqueline Butler Hairston's first and only CD. Hairston is an American born composer and arranger who has proven herself as a prolific writer of vocal music, most notably in the genre of spirituals and art songs. The Charlotte, North Carolina native brings a wealth of experience to composition through her southern roots in spirituals and her formal classical training at The Juilliard School of Music, Howard University and Columbia University.

The goal of this document is to introduce and present solo vocal music of Hairston's with an emphasis on harmonic structure, text, interpretation, performance practice, musical setting and overall form. Known primarily as a prolific arranger of spirituals, particularly her Christmas spirituals for Kathleen Battle, Jacqueline Hairston has equally established herself as a prominent composer in the art song genre. Her compositional style mimics the essential traits of Black American music coupled with modern and traditional European classical techniques. Her non-arranged music runs the risk of being overshadowed by the popularity of her spirituals. Consequently, this writing will provide detailed insight to her gift for non-sacred music as well.

An essential aspect of Hairston's music ties into performance practice. A detailed exploration of how her pieces should be performed and direct insight into the composer's intent serves a critical role in the entirety of this study. The totality of this research is gathered from my interactions as a student of Jacqueline Hairston, multiple interviews with her and interviews from her close associates. Moreover, it is my hope that this exposure of her work will engage and excite more discussion and performance of her music in recital, concert and church halls.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All my gratitude and thanks goes to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for, “I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.” My parents have always been an everlasting rock of support throughout my life and there are not enough words that can express my love and appreciation for all they have done and continue to do for me.

I am thoroughly grateful for my advisor, Dr. Alfonse Anderson, who has served as a championed mentor and voice teacher for me during my time at UNLV. Another special thank you to my committee: Professor Nate Bynum, Professor David Weiller, Professor David Loeb, Professor Rachel Anderson and Dr. Linda Lister. Your time and persistent attention to the completion of this document has served me very well.

I would not have been successful without the selflessness of several mentors who have guided me along the way in the additional preparation, information and planning for this document. First, to Dr. Darryl Taylor, who introduced me to Black American art song as an undergraduate student; that introduction was immeasurable. Secondly, to my family at the University of Michigan, where my interest in this subject was further sparked thanks to: Dr. Willis Patterson, Professor George Shirley, Dr. Scott Piper and Professor Daniel Washington. Third, additional thanks to mentors who added wonderful insight into Professor Jacqueline Hairston: Dr. Albert Lee, Dr. Susheel Bibbs, Dr. Robert Sims, Dr. Louise Toppin, and, Dr. Candace Johnson

I am most humbled and grateful to have been connected to the great Jacqueline Hairston loosely from birth. I am glad that I became your student at fifteen years old and that we have formed an unforgettable musical connection over the past thirteen years. Thank you for offering

countless hours of your time to answering questions through email, phone calls, and video recordings as I have sought to inquire more about your incredible life. You have inspired me and inspire many others, and for this, we are eternally grateful for you. While this is only a snapshot of your achievements and accomplishments, it is my hope that this work will be well received by all.

# DEDICATION

To my inspiration: Jacqueline Butler Hairston  
and the late great, David Tigner

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This document will enlighten the singer, voice coach, voice teacher, and music scholar on a portion of the body of work from Jacqueline Butler Hairston. Known primarily as a prolific arranger of solo and choral spirituals, Hairston is equally at home in the art song genre as will be evident from the song cycle feature. Her compositional style derives from a strong background in spirituals mixed with the formal training of European classical music. More importantly, this document will be informative for someone interested in the compositions of a very capable, yet, lesser known Black American female composer. The primary goal is to expose the public to the music of a gifted living American composer by highlighting her unique writing style in two vocal genres: the spiritual and the art song. Furthermore, acquiring knowledge of her might intrigue the minds of those looking to program and perform works by Black American composers, Black American female composers and women composers.

The following body of work outlines prominent vocal compositions of composer and arranger Jacqueline Hairston. Born and raised on the spiritual, which derived from the music of the African experience, Hairston, in her artistry, paints a vivid picture of her musical expressionist color with early American folk music, the spiritual. While she may be best known for her spiritual arrangements, this document will explore music text settings of Harlem Renaissance writer, Countee Cullen in the song cycle, *The Countee Cullen Trilogy*. This cycle displays a more unpredictable style of writing for Hairston, as she makes a creative use of text painting and collaboration between the pianist and singer. While the influence of the Black American idioms is present in this cycle, she also adds an additional layer of the influence of twentieth century music, particularly her writing for the accompaniment.

Most of her vocal compositions are arrangements of spirituals and four of her over thirty-five solo spirituals will be analyzed. The spirituals in this document cover a wide variety of musical arrangements. The first spiritual was arranged as a challenge from tenor William Brown to add elements of contemporary gospel into a traditional spiritual. The result included a soul stirring combination of the basic elements of the spiritual infused with modern contemporary gospel elements. The second song explored is a revised melodic version of the traditional “Nobody Knows the Trouble I See” as arranged for Jenifer Cable. The third song highlights her ability to create an innovative duet arrangement of “Ride on Jesus,” and the fourth song, “Three Generations Medley,” accentuates the power of the communal spiritual

Because this is the first substantive writing on Jacqueline Hairston, a suggested performance practice guide for all featured works will be offered. The information provided should serve to guide coaches, singers and singing teachers on how to perform Jacqueline Hairston’s music. The comments are derived from my experience performing her music, my observations of others performing her music, and lastly, but most importantly, notes from the composer herself. The culminating experience after review of the document should serve as an important introduction to her and her music.

Jacqueline Hairston has a unique affinity for arranging and composing compositions for specific singers. Nearly all selected works featured in this document were written “expressively”<sup>1</sup> for singers with whom she has a special connection. Her most famous ongoing musical collaboration is with soprano, Kathleen Battle. However, the pieces here feature some of her lesser known, but still equally musically satisfying collaborations with William Brown,

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<sup>1</sup> Hairston often writes, “expressively” at the beginning of many of her vocal pieces.

Jenifer Cable, Jester Hairston, Robert Sims, Benjamin Matthews, William Warfield and Carl DuPont.

An understanding of text serves a critical part in both the spiritual and the art song setting. Identifying how the composer brings out the texts' meaning harmonically, melodically and rhythmically is imperative to their performance. Hairston sits with and speaks through the text until it musically speaks to her.

The most important aspect of performing a piece by Jacqueline Hairston, whether an art song, spiritual, orchestral or piano work, is to ensure that it is done so with feeling. Most, if not all, of her songs indicate, at the top of the music, "espressivo" or "expressively." The Baroque era of European Classical music was interested in music that moved the soul with a certain *affect*. Similarly, because these songs and Hairston's musical background is so deeply rooted in spirituals and the music of the Black tradition, they must be communicated in such a way that it stirs the deepest part of one's soul.

## CHAPTER TWO: BIOGRAPHY

Jacqueline Butler Hairston was born Jacqueline Arnelle Butler in Charlotte, North Carolina on December 18, 1932 to Ethel Jamison Butler and George Tucker Butler, Sr. Her father was an auto mechanic shop manager and her mother was a teacher.<sup>2</sup> She began formal piano lessons in elementary school and showed an early interest in composition and the spiritual. Identified as a child prodigy, while a student at West Charlotte High School, she spent summers attending the Juilliard Preparatory Division for advanced high school students<sup>3</sup>.

When she graduated from West Charlotte High School in 1950, as the valedictorian, Hairston attended a school that was well suited to groom young black music talent, Howard University. Her private piano teacher was Cecil Cohen. She also had the privilege of calling Thomas H. Kerr, Jr. Camille Nickerson and Todd Duncan “professor.” She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education and a piano minor in 1954 and continued her study at Columbia Teachers College in New York city where she earned a Master of Arts in music and music education in 1959. While a student at Columbia, she met her cousin, by marriage, Jester Hairston. From their initial meeting, they formed a lifelong music partnership that would last until his passing in 2000.

In the 1960s, Hairston served as a minister of music in her hometown of Charlotte, taught music lessons at the First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte School of Music and was a member of the Charlotte Oratorio Guild. During this time, she also accepted a position of Assistant Professor of Music at Johnson C. Smith University where she remained until 1973.

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<sup>2</sup>Email from Jacqueline Hairston, March 14, 2017.

<sup>3</sup>Hairston, interview by author, January 14, 2017.

Hairston relocated to California in the summer of 1973 where she assumed the position of music professor at Merritt College, Laney College and later, Mills College and Wisdom University. While a professor and recently appointed minister of music at Church by the Side of the Road in Berkeley, California in 1975, she honed her creative skills arranging choral spirituals for church worship and her choir associated with Merritt College, *The New Traveling Voices*.

The 1990s proved to be a very lucrative time for her. She completed her first song cycle<sup>4</sup> and arranged spirituals for prominent musicians, perhaps none more prominent than Kathleen Battle. Kathleen Battle commissioned two spiritual arrangements of Hairston's to be performed at Carnegie Hall in 1993. Three years later, Ms. Battle commissioned Hairston to write several more Christmas spirituals which were recorded with guitarist Christopher Parkening<sup>5</sup>.

A diverse musician who frequently crosses genres, Hairston has mentored or worked with illustrious figures that include Kathleen Battle, Alice Walker, Grace Bumbry, Denyce Graves, Benjamin Matthews, William Brown, Hilda Harris, Hale Smith, Odetta Holmes, Robert Sims, Darryl Taylor, Louise Toppin, Olly Wilson, The Hawkins Family, Dwayne Wiggins from *Tony! Toni! Toné*, Maxine Jones from *EnVogue* and American Idol finalist, Latoya London - to name a few. One of Hairston's greatest mentors was her brother, Dr. George Butler, who was a record executive at Sony and Blue Note Records. He was also responsible for signing Wynton and Branford Marsalis.

Select organizations' performances of her music include: The London Philharmonic, The Dallas Symphony, The Baltimore Symphony, The San Francisco Women's Philharmonic, The Metropolitan Orchestra of Lisbon, The Oakland Youth Chorus, Andre Kostelanetz Orchestra,

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<sup>4</sup>*On Consciousness Streams*, 1990.

<sup>5</sup>*Angels Glory*. Kathleen Battle and Christopher Parkening. Sony Classical Records 1996, CD.

Oakland Symphony Chorus, Oakland Symphony and The Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir. Hairston has won countless awards and distinctions which include: Charlotte Woman of the Year,<sup>6</sup> and Howard University's highest distinguished postgraduate award. She served as the first female composer-in-residence for the Negro Spiritual Scholarship Foundation and received other awards such as The Living Legend Award presented by the Oakland Alliance of Black Educators, The African Diaspora Sacred Music Living Legend award from California State University Dominguez Hills, The Jefferson Award presented by San Francisco Channel 5 for preserving the Negro Spiritual, and she has been inducted into the Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame<sup>7</sup>.

Hairston has been invited to conduct her music at Carnegie Hall on two occasions (2012, 2016) and is a highly sought-after lecturer and presenter on the music of the African Diaspora. A recording artist, in 2009, she released an instrumental album entitled, *Spirituals Roots and Classical Fruits: A Healing Harvest*. She continues to perform, coach singers, teach piano and frequently receives commissions for works to be premiered across the country including a recent premiere of Jester Hairston's SATB arrangement of "Nobody Knows the Trouble I See Lord." A perfectionist and frequent lover of new ideas and challenges, she still resides in California and receives frequent commissions for pieces and constantly revises older pieces when newer singers perform them.

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<sup>6</sup><https://charlottewoman.omeka.net/exhibits/show/charlotte-woman-of-the-year/women/woman>  
<sup>7</sup>[jbhproductions.com/biography.htm](http://jbhproductions.com/biography.htm), accessed December 22, 2017.

## CHAPTER THREE: SELECT SPIRITUAL ARRANGEMENTS

### THE SPIRITUAL

“Black spirituals were an identifiable genre of sacred music, indigenous to the slave South, which expressed African Americans’ emotional and sacred yearnings in an extraordinary manner.”<sup>8</sup> The spiritual, early American folk music, was born in the cotton fields and on plantations of the south-eastern part of the United States. Many were a blend of the music from Africa with the Baptist and Methodist hymns from America.

Typically, folksongs are created by the nonprofessional musicians, altered by other singers and passed along from one generation to the next by oral transmission. In the process, the music is adapted to the taste of both those who sing and those who listen. The changes that take place become part of the original song and inevitably, the music takes on a different form than it originally had.<sup>9</sup>

The African-American form of music with the greatest impact in the nineteenth century was the spiritual, a religious song of southern slaves, passed down through oral tradition. “The texts were usually based on images or stories from the Bible, but they often carried hidden meaning of the slaves’ yearning for freedom.”<sup>10</sup> While the origin of the spiritual is unknown, the creators of them were, without a doubt, the enslaved Africans who were forcibly brought to America in chains. Out of the unspeakable horror of slavery came about one of the most expressive forms of music.

Hairston was first introduced to spirituals as a child in grade school<sup>11</sup> and her connection to them has remained poignant throughout her life. She has a special affinity for arranging

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<sup>8</sup>Burton W. Peretti. *Lift Every Voice: The History of African American Music*. Roman & Littlefield: Lanham, MD, 2009., 28.

<sup>9</sup>Eileen Southern. *The Music of Black Americans* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1997) 184.

<sup>10</sup>J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 786.

<sup>11</sup>Hairston credits Mrs. Gordon as the first teacher who sparked her interest in spirituals.

spirituals for specific singers and then revising them when a new person sings them. She gets to know a singers' voice before she writes for them ensuring that she at least feels musical inspiration and connection with the singer.

“Nobody Knows the Trouble I See Lord” and “I Don’t Feel No Ways Tired” were both written between 1989 and 1990<sup>12</sup>, a particularly fruitful compositional period for the composer. In 1989, Hairston completed an arrangement of “Balm in Gilead” for her friend, Susheel Bibbs, which was premiered on March 12, 1989. The following year, Bibbs premiered Hairston’s first song cycle “On Consciousness Streams” in 1990 with text by the composer, Ludwig van Beethoven and Howard Thurman. The remaining two spirituals, “Ride on Jesus” and “Three Generations Medley” were arranged in the middle and later part of the 1990s. In 1998, Hairston was the music director and organist for the East Bay Church of Religious Science in Oakland and was a composer in residence at the Negro Spirituals Foundation in Orlando, Florida. These experiences with sacred music, spirituals, had a great influence on the final two spirituals explored in this study.

The following selections are but a few of her spirituals. These spirituals have been chosen not only for their beauty and diversity, but also because they are not published in any anthology, hence, providing insight to material that is not widely accessible. While most of her spirituals are solo arrangements, the selected spirituals include an assortment of solo, duet and trio spiritual arrangements: “Nobody Knows the Trouble I See Lord,” “Ride on Jesus,” “Three Generations Medley,” and “Don’t Feel No Ways Tired.” These spirituals highlight her remarkable ability to use old musical traits of Black American music style in new and innovative ways for the

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<sup>12</sup> Provided by Dr. Susheel Bibbs, a long time musical partner of Hairston’s.

contemporary listener. It is imperative to explore a closer look into the elements of Black American Music in order to better understand the significance of Hairston's spirituals.

## ESSENTIAL TRAITS OF BLACK AMERICAN MUSIC

Hairston's compositional devices rely heavily upon the music from the African Diaspora.

Among the many traits of African-American music that have been traced back to Africa are:

1. Alternating short phrases between a leader and the group, called, *call and response*;
2. Improvisation, usually based on a simple formula that allows wide ranging variation
3. Syncopation
4. Repetition of short rhythmic or melodic patterns
5. Multiple layers of rhythm, with beats in some instruments (hand clapping or foot stomping) and off beats in others
6. Bending pitches or singing from one pitch to another
7. Moans, shouts, and other vocalizations<sup>13</sup>

Many of these devices are frequently used in nearly all of Hairston's vocal and instrumental compositions. The following music examples of her selected spirituals will display many of these characteristics. It is this foundation upon which Hairston composes and while the use of these styles are frequent, she consistently uses them in unique ways. Furthermore, it is not only this basis upon which she writes, but it is upon the influence and inspiration that she receives from the universe that allows her to be a richly diverse composer and arranger.

### “DON'T FEEL NO WAYS TIRED”: (GOSPEL-INFUSED SPIRITUAL)

I am seeking for a city, Hallelujah (repeat)

For a city into the Kingdom, Hallelujah (repeat)

There's a better day a comin', Hallelujah (repeat)

I don't feel no ways tired

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<sup>13</sup>J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., W.W. Norton & Company: New York, 2010, 201.

Come too far from where I started from;  
Nobody tol' me the road would be easy;  
I don't believe He brought me this far to leave me.  
I don't believe He's brought me this far  
I can't believe He's brought me this far  
I won't believe He's brought me this far to leave me.<sup>14</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

This is probably Hairston's most well-known spiritual arrangement. It is available in multiple keys and can be purchased from the composer or through Classical Vocal Reprints, where it was published in 2001. "Don't Feel No Ways Tired" was commissioned by tenor William Brown in 1990. Before commissioning this, Brown had commissioned Hairston to write "A Change Has Got to Come" in 1979 which he recorded with the London Philharmonic. Ironically, part of the melody from Hairston's "Don't Feel No Ways Tired" is an excerpt from gospel legend James Cleveland's song by the same name released in 1979. Brown approached Hairston with the challenge of writing a spiritual with a gospel twist. "He [William Brown] said, 'I want to commission you to do an arrangement of "Don't Feel No Ways Tired," and he had only heard the melody at the time. "I want you to add a tinge of gospel," he said."<sup>15</sup> This song combines two songs, the spiritual, "I am Seeking for a City" and the gospel song, "I Don't Feel No Ways Tired." The idea of the gospel infused spiritual is noteworthy for Hairston.

At the time of this composition, she had held the post of Minister of Music at Church by the Side of the Road in Berkeley, California for fifteen years before composing this spiritual.

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<sup>14</sup> Jacqueline Hairston, "Don't Feel No Ways Tired," published, 1991.

<sup>15</sup> Hairston, Video Interview January 14, 2017.

Without being familiar with James Cleveland's arrangement, and only going from the melody recording she received from William Brown, Hairston arranged the piece.

## PERFORMANCE GUIDE

Song: "Don't Feel No Ways Tired"

Key: C Major (Original Key: F Major)

Range: G2- E4

Duration: 4 minutes and 30 seconds

Form: AABB with coda

Instrumentation: Voice and Piano

The writer believes this is Hairston's most complex spiritual arrangement to perform because there is an expectation of versatility in both spirituals and gospel required to perform it. Most importantly, a very expressive singer and pianist must perform this piece. Both need to be well-versed in classical style and basic elements of gospel music and for this reason, I rate the level of difficulty: medium-difficult. The suggested level of difficulty is medium-hard because of the multiple repeats, a mixing of genres, and sustained tessitura at the end with an optional high note that is usually expected in performance.

Every melismatic note on a single syllable must be sung purposefully with energy and not merely because the composer has written notes on the page. Consequently, every note in the outer and inner voices of the piano must not merely serve the role of a passing tone, but rather as part of the story telling. It is acceptable to embellish in either the piano or the vocal line at any point if it comes from an authentic place of commitment derived from the text. However, I do not recommend a completely over-embellished song which would take away the composer's arrangement, but I do however, advocate for occasional improvisation. If there is a rolled chord

sustained over more than a half note duration, and particularly when repeated, the pianist has the right to continue to arpeggiate the chord in a higher octave with different inversions and added octave rolls of chord tones or acceptable non-chord tones when appropriate. Above all, and most importantly, it is highly recommended that both the singer and pianist embellish if they feel comfortable during any repeated section.

The most critical part of the song comes in the final three measures of the piece. Hairston's final repetition of "I don't believe" is critical because it contrasts with the following complimentary phrases "I can't believe," and "I won't believe." The emphasis must be given to the changing word in each of the three sentences as well as provide room for potential improvisation on the repetition of, "this far." Hairston has provided two optional ending notes, most notably an Eb4 for a bass-baritone and the option of a Gb4, perhaps for a baritone. (Figure 3.1) It serves as a moving recital closer when expressed with great emotional intensity.

Figure 1 “DON’T FEEL NO WAYS TIRED,” MM. 43-47 (Variation and Sequence of Repeated Idea)

The musical score is written in bass clef. The vocal line includes the following lyrics: "lu - jah. I don' be-lieve He brought me this far, I can't be - lieve He brought me this far, I won't be-lieve He brought me this far to leave me!". The score includes performance instructions such as "(with increasing fervor)", "allargando", "ten.", "sf", "fff", "m.s.", and "ff (follow singer's lead)". The piano accompaniment consists of chords and rhythmic patterns that support the vocal line.

## BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPIRITUAL AND GOSPEL MUSIC

While gospel music was derived from the spiritual, it is imperative to identify the similarities and differences between the two. Sometimes the lines become blurred in modern presentations of spirituals. The following list describes important similarities and differences between gospel and spiritual music.

1. Gospel texts are subjective and hortative. The poems generally center on a single theme, which is stressed through the repetition of phrases. The subjects are wide ranging, such as conversion, salvation, yearning for spirituality, etc. Spiritual text are group-oriented and tend to tell stories about Biblical events and figures, especially of the four

Gospel books of the Bible and the old Testament. Its theme and subjects are similar to those of the spiritual.

2. Gospel songs have instrumental accompaniment, which as ‘integral part of the performance as is the singing, and in like manner equally an expression of the folk.’ The spiritual is sung *a capella*.

3. Gospel has a characteristic rhythm intensity because of its marked syncopation and percussive instrumental rhythm.

4. Gospel uses strophic forms, verses and refrains, and, like white gospel, its songs tend to be sixteen or thirty-two measures in length. Spirituals typically consist of one strain repeated again and again, as, a, a, a, a, etc; or of two strains as in a b patters.

5. Gospel melody, with its flatted thirds and sevenths, is related to blues; the spirituals use “bent tones” only occasionally.<sup>16</sup>

It should be noted that these characteristics traditionally apply to 1920s and 1930s gospel music during the beginnings of the style. Hairston readily admits that her background is in spirituals, classical and popular music, not gospel music. However, her experience playing in several churches in Charlotte, North Carolina and Berkeley, California informed her knowledge of gospel music before she began composing regularly. Most importantly, the contribution of her gospel style can be credited to a former student of hers. While teaching at Merritt College, a talented student in her choral group, The New Traveling Voices, helped her with gospel piano while she taught him to read music.

## TEXTUAL MEANING

Before an analysis of the music can occur, a closer look at the text must be explored.

“The most important factor of African music seems always to have been the text.”<sup>17</sup> This spiritual text, like many, is biblically inspired. From the book of Hebrews, chapter eleven, verse ten, with the subject being “Faith in Action,” the New International Version says about Abraham: “For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder

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<sup>16</sup>Eileen Southern. *The Music of Black Americans* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1997) 459-60

<sup>17</sup>Hildred Roach. *Black American Music: Past and Present*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Malabar, FL: Kreiger Publishing Company, 1992), 9

is God.” Many spirituals recount Biblical stories and applied it to practical lives. At a very old age, Abraham was called by God to do things he did not think he could do, yet, God was merely testing his faith.

While the meaning of the text is straightforward, the delivery and interpretation of its simplicity should not be overlooked. Sometimes singers take text for granted when it is paired with precise pitches and rhythms. Very often, the text takes a back seat because other musical factors like vocal technique and proper diction take precedence. Background research on the text and the author, if known, and how to communicate the story play a vital role in the delivery of songs, particularly folk music like a spiritual. “Music in the African tradition is functional. Consequently, the melody of a song often serves chiefly as a vehicle for the text, and it is constantly adjusted to fit, even as the singer extemporizes from one verse to the next.”<sup>18</sup> The significance of understanding the text and how to express the text as a communicative story is equally as important as the notes, rhythms and phrases to which the composer has set it.

The text for, “Don’t Feel No Ways Tired” is spoken in first person, and the spiritual connection to God is immediately referenced with the use of “Hallelujah,” which in Biblical format is indicated as the highest form of praise to God. “Hallelujah” usually serves as an affirmation of previous text. “Embellishment of the text takes the form of interpolating extra words between the phrases or at the end of lines of texts or wherever the singer can fit words in the music. Such phrases as, ‘Yes, Lord,’ ‘Help me, Lord,’ ‘Oh, yes, and Hallelujah,’ are commonly used interpolations.”<sup>19</sup> Despite the oppression from slavery, the initial statement and the overall mood of the piece is joyful. The “city” that is being referred to is Heaven. However, spirituals very often had coded messages for the utterance of something directly related to their

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<sup>18</sup>Eileen Southern. *The Music of Black Americans*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), 209.

<sup>19</sup>Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), 477.

happiness was not allowed to be heard by slave masters. “The city into the Kingdom” could be a reference to Heaven or a reference to escaping slavery. The final verse looks to the future. The “better day a comin’” symbolizes their immense faith in God. “There is *faith*- faith that someday slavery, or sorrow, will be no more. Slaves know that Jesus will come to save them just as God sent Jesus to save the world from sin. Closely associated with faith is optimism.”<sup>20</sup> Because of this faith, they know that they can carry on despite their dire circumstance.

The next stanza exudes optimism and determination. Despite the current pain brought about, the oppressed people still have hope for tomorrow. No excuses are given, nor pity is asked for regarding their dire circumstance. There is no regular rhyme scheme or alliteration in the use of this text, but only the use of prose to effectively represent authentic feelings of the enslaved people. However, no use of the text is greater than in the last two verses. This is the only use of a not necessarily a rhyme with “easy” and “leave me,” but rather a matching of vowels. At the same time, the two verses unify the meaning of the song: “Nobody told me the road would be easy,” however, “I don’t believe He brought me this far to leave me.”

The following section highlights the influence of gospel music in Hairston’s writing style for this spiritual with a “gospel twist.” The 1920s and 1930s saw an emergence of a new song genre, gospel music. Black music scholar John W. Work points out, “the style of singing spirituals and the type of song have not disappeared...only passed into another type of singing and song.”<sup>21</sup> The musical texture varies from the first stanza to the second stanza as the song shifts from the traditional spiritual to more gospel infused music.

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<sup>20</sup>ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Quotations are from Work, “Changing Patterns, reprint in RBAM, pp. 281-90.

## SIMPLICITY

The first stanza is set simply. The primary area of simplicity refers to the text setting “Generally, but not always, the opening verse of Negro folk songs tend to be syllabic- that is, there is one note for each syllable.”<sup>22</sup> The simplicity of the music is incorporated rhythmically primarily with blocked chords in the accompaniment with syncopation on the “and” of many downbeats. Another element of simplicity is reflected in the left-hand bass note rhythmic pulse. The half notes are almost indicative of walking movement as they are consistent throughout the first part of the song. The consistent two beat left-hand pattern indicates a walking pace indicating the forward and persistent mindset of the enslaved Africans to continue to pursue the quest for freedom through the Underground Railroad or through their continued and steadfast faith in God.

The second element of simplicity is communicated with the pentatonic scale. The five notes, C, E, G, A and B are exclusively used to communicate this folk melody. Its use melodically is also important because Hairston uses the melodic structure in ascending and descending fashion. This highlights the element of variation and contrast that is prevalent in Black American music. Because of this pentatonic melody, based upon folk tradition, this initial part of the song could be sung a capella, as the spiritual was initially originated, without the support of other instruments. And because of this element, the piano serves merely as support or accompaniment to the melody. This melody can exist as a monophonic composition; however, the contrasting B section can be linked to the infusion of gospel music into the traditional spiritual for a number of reasons.

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<sup>22</sup>Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), 201.

## USE OF PEDAL POINT

Hairston frequently uses a pedal point as a harmonic tool to contrast consonance with dissonance.

A pedal point, often shortened to simply pedal, is a bass note that is sustained for a number of measures. Its name derives from the bass notes played with the pedals on an organ. Since dissonance usually occurs between the pedal note and the chords above it, one might consider the pedal a form of melodic dissonance.<sup>23</sup>

In the key of C major, she begins with a C major chord with a flat five over an A-flat bass note. The following chord is not resolved, but the dissonance is expanded with the second inversion D half-diminished seventh chord. Both tonalities use the A-flat in the bass, or a flat sixth to prolong the arrival of the dominant of C major, G. Measures 1-2 make use of a longer pedal point on the dominant of C major, by way of a V 6/4 chord in measure one which leads to a G suspended chord finally tonicizing C major halfway through measure 2 with the G dominant seven chord. This cadential 6/4 cadence, with the use of the pedal point in measure one and two, is popular in many styles of music. The longing, or delay, for a consonant chord can be directly related to longing for freedom that the slaves so desperately wanted (Figure 2).

Figure 2 “DON’T FEEL NO WAYS TIRED” MM. 1-4 (Piano introduction and pedal point)

The musical score for measures 1-4 of the piano introduction is presented in a grand staff format. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/C minor), and the time signature is 4/4. The bass line (bottom staff) features a sustained A-flat pedal point (A-flat) in the left hand. The treble line (top staff) contains chords and melodic fragments. The first measure is marked 'Expressive' and 'mf-f'. The second measure is marked '\* (1st verse mf 2nd verse f)'. The final measure is marked 'I am There's a' and 'mf-f'. The score includes a repeat sign at the beginning of the first measure and a fermata over the final measure.

<sup>23</sup>Robert Gauldin. *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 170.

## USE OF IMPROVISATION

The skill of improvisation is necessary for successful performance of this piece and many of Hairston's spiritual arrangements. She is a firm believer in "allowing the improvisatory mind to take control"<sup>24</sup> during a performance, especially when a section is repeated. Like the Baroque *da capo* arias of Handel and Vivaldi, not only does Hairston expect embellishments on repeating sections, but the style of music often requires it. Hairston, following closely with the traits of the music of the African Diaspora supports embellishment and personal connection particularly with the spiritual.

Her relatively lenient approach to embellishment in her spiritual came from not only her understanding of Black American music, but also her connection with soprano Kathleen Battle. Ms. Battle began performing Hairston's music in 1993. During studio recording session of her music a few years later, Ms. Battle would call Mrs. Hairston asking to adjust certain parts of her Christmas spirituals. "I couldn't say no to her. At that moment, I realized that the interpretation of these pieces is very personal. Since that correspondence, I often write, 'expressively' at the beginning of many of my songs."<sup>25</sup> In a more recent interview, Hairston further elaborates on how she connects with singers and her insistence upon each singer making a piece personal.

I like when the singer can tell me what they want with an arrangement, not in terms of the melody, because usually the melody is already set, but in terms of the *feeling* of the song. The expressionism of the song. That's what allows me to write for them and I have to have heard them in order for me to do something for them.<sup>26</sup>

The influence of gospel with the spiritual, as in this piece, adds an additional improvisatory element. Frequent and acceptable improvisatory techniques include the use of blue

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<sup>24</sup>Hairston video interview with author, January 14, 2017.

<sup>25</sup>Interview with Friends of Negro Spirituals, June 30, 2007.

<sup>26</sup>Hairston, Video Interview with author, January 14, 2017.

notes, additional syncopation, and added notes of the melody that fit within the chord. A suggested improvisation by this piece was discovered when the composer was rehearsing the song with soprano Henrietta Davis. Hairston recalls, “I wrote, ‘Nobody told me’ with the word nobody on beat one, but when Henrietta Davis repeated the section, she said ‘nobody’ off of the beat.”<sup>27</sup> This subtle use of improvisation was pleasing to Hairston and followed suit with the notion of improvisation and feeling. While this is an acceptable, and suggested practice based upon the stylistic history of this repertoire and the approval of the composer, it is equally important that a performer learning this piece should learn the music as written and then deviate from that, but only when organically inspired. “According to recommended practice, hymns and Negro Spirituals may be embellished if desired, but to a limited degree.”<sup>28</sup> As it relates to performance practice, the use of improvisation may be most effective during the repetition of the melody, like the return of the A section in a *da capo* aria.

The second part of “Don’t Feel No Ways Tired” is indicated by the composer as, “stress syncopated Gospel style, slower.” This marking is indicated in both the piano and voice. In the second part of the song, it becomes more of a collaborative song rather than an a capella derived pentatonic spiritual solely based upon the voice. The piano plays an equal role in the collaboration of the work, which contrasts with the first part of the song. The composer’s indication of “lively” in measure 22 is inspired by what the piano accompaniment contains. This musical change continues until the end of the song. The musical textural change is not done in a vacuum. It helps to set up the optimistic text that is to come, “I don’t feel no ways tired.” In other words, the singer is not giving up because he or she has overcome too many obstacles to not succeed.

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Eileen Southern. *The Music of Black Americans*, 477.

## HARMONIC GOSPEL INFLUENCE

The harmonic expectation for gospel style piano can be quite demanding for the musician. Hairston's experience playing in multiple churches, her formal training in piano and her collaboration with the legendary gospel "Hawkins Singers" increased her acumen of gospel to make her writing style more authentic when William Brown asked for a "tinge of Gospel." When writing in this style, it is important to apply embellishments. A brief description of suggested gospel piano style is provided below.

Use augmented tonic and dominant chord dominant chords; dominant chords; secondary dominant chords; diminished triads; dominant, augmented and diminished seventh chords; ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords; chordal inversions; and altered chords. Flattened thirds, sixths, and sevenths are common. Use them. The common cadences appear in black music, but deceptive ones are frequently used. V-vi, V-IV, and V-V7/ii-V7-I are common. Delayed chordal resolutions and chord pedals are also very common.<sup>29</sup>

While the piano part does not have the melody, it does, however, play a vital role from a textural and rhythmic standpoint; it is a form of call and response. The piano livens the tempo in measure 22 (Figure 3), but it is soon halted with a fermata on the dominant in measure 25. The vocal line then responds slower, but in a more emphatic rhythmic fashion than the previous piano part. The voice begins without any accompaniment as if the piano is truly listening, the voice creates a musical response to the piano interlude (Figure 4). The jagged rhythms in the piano of measure 26 reflect obvious syncopation, but more so, they reflect the happiness and optimism that has been communicated throughout the entire piece. The jagged rhythms do not last long, as they soon become more stable in measure twenty-seven. Both the left and right-hand piano part serve as an equal partner to the vocal line. This type of communal collaboration was an essential part of early Black music.

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<sup>29</sup>Songs of Zion, ed. by J Jefferson Cleveland and Verolga Nix (Nashville, 1981), p.xiv.

Because the first part of this song, “I am seeking for a city” is based upon a folk melody, it can exist without accompaniment. However, the second part is derived from Gospel music. “They [black churches] added a new dimension to that musical repertory in supporting the singing by using a piano or melodeon and tambourines. Frequently, there might also be drums and other percussion.”<sup>30</sup> In this song, Hairston creates her own rhythm section with the use of the piano. The harmonic function is solidly established through the faster harmonic rhythm of this section. The syncopated eighth, sixteenth and sometimes even quarter note pulses in the left-hand anchor the song from the percussive or drum standpoint while the singer carries the melody and text (Figure 5)

Figure 3 “DON’T FEEL NO WAYS TIRED” MM. 22-24 (Musical texture change in piano)



Figure 4 “DON’T FEEL NO WAYS TIRED” MM. 26-27 (Gospel infused section)

*mf* (Slower - Gospel style)

I don't feel no - ways tired.

*mf* (Stres syncopated Gospel style, slower)

<sup>30</sup> Eillen Sothern. *The Music of Black Americans*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (W.W. Norton & Company: New York), 456.

Figure 5 “DON’T FEEL NO WAYS TIRED,” MM. 28-30 (Active piano reflecting gospel influence)

The image shows a musical score for the song "Don't Feel No Ways Tired". It consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in bass clef with lyrics: "Come too far from where I start-ed from; \_\_\_ No-bod - y tol' me, \_\_\_ the". The middle staff is the right-hand piano part in treble clef, featuring a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and eighth notes. The bottom staff is the left-hand piano part in bass clef, featuring a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and chords. The music is in a 4/4 time signature and reflects a gospel influence through its active piano accompaniment.

“Don’t Feel No Ways Tired” is often considered to be one of Hairston’s most popular spiritual arrangements because it combines the traditional elements of African music with a more modern gospel feel attributed to pioneers such as Thomas Dorsey, The Hawkins Family and James Cleveland. A further exploration of this document will unveil the developed and varied style of her music writing in this genre particularly with the next arrangement.

## “NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I SEE LORD”: MINOR PENTATONIC BASED SPIRITUAL

### INTRODUCTION

“Nobody Knows the Trouble I See” is a popular spiritual with the first musically notated version by Henry Thacker Burleigh. “Following the success of *Deep River* in 1917, Burleigh arranged and published nearly a dozen more settings of African-American spirituals in the same

year, including *Nobody Knows de Trouble I've Seen*.<sup>31</sup> Jacqueline Hairston's arrangement of "Nobody Knows the Trouble I See Lord" was written for Jennifer Cable in March of 1989.

Someone brought her [Jennifer Cable] to me because she had been invited to be a guest at the San Francisco Christmas Concert and she wanted a different spiritual plus a different arrangement of that spiritual. I had a vision about an experience I had had with Jester Hairston, who wanted me to finish an SATB spiritual arrangement he started but hadn't finished, Nobody Knows the Trouble I See Lord, He challenged me to finish it, so we could say the arrangement was done by Jester and Jacqueline Hairston. Of course, I started on it, but being a great procrastinator, had not finished it. Years later, after having moved to CA ('73), this piece came to mind when Jennifer asked me for a different spiritual arrangement. I then turned my attention to creating a solo arrangement taken from the concept that was to have been the completion of the SATB arrangement.<sup>32</sup>

This arrangement is a hidden gem of an informal tag team of Jacqueline and Jester Hairston and the musical result combines the pain of the text with an equally jarring minor pentatonic melody.

#### Textual Meaning

The text is clear in reiterating the connection those enslaved had to God. "Nobody knows the trouble *they* see," not even the other slaves themselves. Only Jesus, who suffered and bled on the cross, understands their pain. After all, "For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."<sup>33</sup> In giving of His life, Jesus was the sacrificial Lamb for all the sins of the world and suffered an unspeakable death.

Nobody knows the trouble I see, *Lord*

Nobody knows the trouble I see

Nobody knows the trouble I see *Lord*

Nobody knows *like* Jesus

Brothers will-a-you pray for me; sisters will-a-you pray for me

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<sup>31</sup><https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200185372>, accessed, December 9, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Email from Hairston to author, December 27, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> John 3:16 (King James Version).

Mothers will-a-you pray for me and help me to drive old satan away.<sup>34</sup>

The second stanza of text makes several strong Biblical connections related to driving “Old Satan away.” Ephesians 6:11 says, “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”<sup>35</sup> James 4:7 says, “submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”<sup>36</sup> Finally, I Peter 5:8 says, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”<sup>37</sup> Similarly to most text of spirituals, this has a double meaning. Satan means the spirited opposite of God, but to the slaves, Satan could have most directly meant the slave master. The reference to Satan in these spiritual songs was a popular coded message.

## PERFORMANCE GUIDE

Song: “Nobody Knows the Trouble I See Lord”

Key: C Minor, Low Voice (Additional Key: E-flat minor, high voice)

Range: Bb2-G#4

Duration: 4 minutes and 30 seconds

Form: ABABA

Instrumentation: Voice and Piano

The level of difficulty is medium-difficult as it requires supreme legato with occasional long vocal phrases in sections with marked *portamenti* as in measures 12-13 (Figure 6). An often-overlooked challenge in this piece is the rare moment of vocal rest. There are, in fact, no rests in the vocal line once singing begins. It is pure singing for four full pages. The presentation

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<sup>34</sup> Jacqueline Hairston, “Nobody Knows the Trouble I See Lord,” published, 1990.

<sup>35</sup> *The Bible*. (New International Version).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*.

of this arrangement, unlike the standard arrangement, already melodically and harmonically inserts the “trouble” or pain that is experienced by the interpreter with the use of the minor pentatonic scale. This contrasts with the more traditional major pentatonic use of this spiritual. The word “Lord” should be sung with no hint of an “r” at all. The sound should mimic an approximate American southern dialect. It should be sung in a reflective manner without losing the glimmering light of hope that God will still protect them despite the difficulties. The point of delivery is of the utmost importance: contrasting the troubled world of slavery with steadfast faith in praising God through the pain. It must be communicated in such a way that the greatest emotional apex of the song is reserved for the final measures of the piece after the modulation, “Glory, Hallelujah!” Lastly, because this song is so heavily based upon the minor pentatonic scale, it is advised that there be no improvisation that might hinder this already adjusted familiar melody. The improvisatory nature is already in the adjusted melody. However, in performance, the composer has added additional arpeggiated chords and added notes that serve as a countermelody within the tonality and complement the vocal line.

Figure 6 “NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I SEE LORD” MM. 12-13 (Portamento singing)

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The top system is a vocal line in treble clef, and the bottom system is a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The vocal line starts with a portamento (indicated by a slur over the notes) and then becomes fortissimo (f). The lyrics are: "Je - sus. — Broth - ers will - a you". The piano accompaniment features arpeggiated chords and a countermelody in the bass line. The dynamic marking for the piano part is mezzo-forte (mf).

### Inspiration for Minor Pentatonic Melody

“Spirituals, which have no known composer, and were passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition allow one to get away with changing and adjusting the melody without getting in trouble for it.”<sup>38</sup> Instead of taking an already familiar melody and rearranging the harmonic structure, as typical of most spirituals, Jacqueline Hairston drew on the inspiration of her cousin, Jester Hairston. In his teachings of the spirituals around the world, Jester Hairston taught a non-traditional form of this spiritual to a male choir in Bamako, Mali. Rather than the familiar pentatonic major melody, Ms. Hairston introduces the minor pentatonic version of the melody passed on to her by Jester Hairston. The culminating result was Jacqueline Hairston’s added piano accompaniment and final arrangement.

Another scale sometimes found in common-practice music is the familiar pentatonic or five note scale...Pentatonic scales that employ only the natural pitch classes may also be constructed with the notes D-F-G-A-C and E-G-A-B-D. This scale is considered a five-note subset of the diatonic seven-tone scale. Perhaps humanity’s primal tonal collection, it can be found in various civilizations throughout the world. Its absence of tonal tension is not surprising, since it lacks both a tritone and a minor 2<sup>nd</sup>, two intervals usually required for resolution.<sup>39</sup>

In reference to the spiritual, “most melodies use the tones of the major or pentatonic scales, which tend to produce bright cheerful melodies. The slaves’ singing rarely was bright and cheerful; it was generally described as plaintive, mournful, or wild.”<sup>40</sup> Because there is no exact reference for this song and its folk tradition, it can be inferred, based upon this interpretation, that this melody of the piece could be a more accurate melodic presentation from a textual standpoint rather than the popular major pentatonic melody. “The pentatonic scale has five

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<sup>38</sup>Hairston Video Interview with author, June 3, 2017.

<sup>39</sup>Robert Gauldin. *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), A9-10.

<sup>40</sup>Eileen Southern. *The Music of Black Americans*

possible modes with the major and minor mode being the most common.”<sup>41</sup> This reversed version of the melody, as a minor pentatonic, instead of a major pentatonic, gives a haunting feeling of the experience from slavery that the more traditional arrangement does not.

### PIANO INTRODUCTION AND THE SONG’S SENTIMENT

The introductory piano melody begins in minor and leads the listener down the path of sorrow based upon the text and harmonic tone, It is quickly juxtaposed with joy when the melody identified with the text of “Jesus” arrives on a major tonality. This type of joy from those enslaved in America is often linked back to the Biblical stories of the book of Exodus from the Old Testament. Despite their bondage, the enslaved people generally had a deep faith and belief that God would deliver them from their sorrow, either in life or death.

The introductory piano music sets up the ethereal mood of the entire piece. The first two measures are in C minor while the following two measures are in the more hopeful and relative major, E-flat, tonality. The piano begins with the refrain in the top line of the accompaniment and is immediately syncopated, a key trait in the music of Hairston derived from the music of Black Americans. This eerie introduction serves as a template for the remainder of the piece comparing major and minor tonalities with “Lord” and “Satan.”

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<sup>41</sup>Robert Gauldin. *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), A9-10.

Figure 7 “NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I SEE, LORD,” MM.1-4 (Piano introduction)

The musical score is for a piano introduction in G major, 4/4 time, marked 'Andante (Espressivo)'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff begins with a melody in the right hand, marked 'mf' and 'legato'. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment, with several measures marked 'ped.' (pedal). The score includes various musical notations such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Jacqueline Hairston’s version of “Nobody Knows the Trouble I See Lord,” which can be attributed to Jester Hairston, is a stirring rearrangement of the commonly known contrasting major pentatonic song. It might be an interesting comparison to pair this arrangement in recital with that of H.T. Burleigh or even a similar version like that of D.N. Price. Likewise, an arrangement like this could be performed in concert as a tribute to more contemporary versions of spirituals by arrangers like Dr. Shawn Okpebholo and Damien Sneed. The following spiritual provides more of the composers’ originality with a uniquely composed spiritual melody in duet form.

### “RIDE ON JESUS”: DUET SPIRITUAL

Ride on, Jesus ride on, King Jesus.

Ride on conquering King, I wanna go to Heav’n in the mornin’.

If you see my sister (brother), just tell her for me:

I’m gonna ride my horse on the battle field,

I wanna go to Heav’n in the morning.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Jacqueline Hairston, “Ride on Jesus,” published, 1992.

## INTRODUCTION

“Ride on Jesus” demonstrates Hairston’s ability to arrange a spiritual for more than one voice. She is known primarily for her solo arrangements but has also penned many choral arrangements published with the Albert McNeil Choral Series. “I wanted a different arrangement other than the known spiritual, “Ride on King Jesus, and this new melody just came to me. It was not designated for any specific singer.”<sup>43</sup> This analysis will highlight a spiritual duet arranged by Hairston for baritone and soprano or mezzo-soprano. This work is only published in one key and is available from Classical Vocal Reprints.

## PERFORMANCE GUIDE

Song: “Ride on Jesus”

Key: D-flat Major

Vocal Range: Baritone, Db 3-D4, Soprano: Db4-G5.

Duration of Song: 2 minutes and 40 seconds

Form: Through-composed

Instrumentation: Baritone, Soprano or Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

This vocal selection is one of a few duet spirituals that exist by Jacqueline Hairston. The female part can be sung by either a soprano or mezzo-soprano. The soprano singing this arrangement should not be a coloratura, where her strengths are usually toward the top of and above the staff, but perhaps a lyric or spinto soprano. Much of the voice part sits on the staff and just above which might also better suit a lyric mezzo-soprano. I suggest a metronome marking of 102 beats per minute for the quarter note as an interpretation of Hairston’s

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<sup>43</sup>Hairston Email to author, December 27, 2017.

“moderato” marking. The piano introduction should be played with a spirit of jubilation particularly each low D-flat in m.1 and m.3 to establish the tonal center. The right hand piano melody should be confidently played with a slight tenuto marking on beat three of m.1 and m.3. Beat 3 should stand out to highlight the enharmonic spelling of the B dominant seven chord. The pickup eighth notes in the right-hand piano line of mm. 1 and 3 should propel the music back into tempo. It is important for the pianist to treat the opening measures as belonging to the original melody. The A-natural as part of the fourth beat of m.2 should shockingly and quickly draw us out of tonality before it is resolved on the downbeat of the next measure. The quarter note melody of measure 4 should establish a strict time so that the voices can enter in one accord with the piano. The pedals mark in the music should be strictly followed. The diction should be relaxed with no rolling of “r’s” and soft beginning and ending consonants. The composer purposefully removed the “g” from “morning” to indicate more of an authentic southern dialect. In the same light the words, “brother” and “sister” should not have final “r’s. The second syllable of both words should be an English unaccented schwa. Intonation for the voices is of great importance as there are times of unison contrapuntal singing. The singers and pianist must be able to freely move from strictly metered sections to more rubato recitative like sections, especially during the text, “if you see my brother (sister)” to allow time for the call and response which is so imperative to Black music. Every “blue note” in the vocal line, especially flat thirds and flat sevenths, should be prevalent and only communicated because of emotional intent. The most difficult part of the piece is rhythmically coordinating the ending “go” section. This should be in precise strict time to achieve rhythmic precision; however, it must appear to be improvised. The spoken part is to be performed with just as much emphasis and energy as the singing. “We want to go to Heaven” was in the original score, but the revised version from 2015 includes,

“Who wants to go to Heaven?” If the first option is selected, there should be emphasis on the word, “Heaven.” For the second option, the emphasis should be on the word, “who.” The insertion of speech in spirituals is not uncommon. “A song might move from speech like sounds through ranges of the musical compass to screaming and yelling, all within the confines of a single performance. Or a singer might jump from speech to a melody or yell and vice versa.<sup>44</sup>” This reiterates the essential nature of the communication of text, whether it sung or spoken to be the determining factor in the performance of this music.

### TEXTUAL EXPLORATION

“Ride on, Jesus” is a spiritual that is not specifically based upon Biblical text, but it does, however, reflect common sentiment among the slaves. The text reflects the character of someone who serves as a cheerleader or encourager. For this duet, each person is encouraging the other. This spiritual has a popular coded message in it which is the literal interpretation of going to Heaven after death paired with the figurative interpretation of freedom from slavery.

Hairston makes use of the textual meaning musically in multiple ways by using call and response and variation. Because there are two singers involved, the example of call and response is quite apparent in the use of text and melody. Measure 21 demonstrates the baritones’ call, the initial statement, with the soprano’s congregational response, the answer, in m. 23. This encounter depicts the interplay of feeling and emotion needed when performing music of this genre. Not only is this expressed through the interjection of, “oh, yes,” but it is also expressed musically through the modulation suddenly to A major (Figure 8).

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<sup>44</sup>Eileen Southern. *The Music Black of Americans*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (New York: W.W Norton & Company), 203

Figure 8 “RIDE ON JESUS,” MM. 21-23 (Call and Response through brief modulation)

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Soprano, Bass, and Piano. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The Soprano part begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "O yes!". The Bass part begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "If you see my sis - ter, Jus' tell". The Piano part features a rhythmic groove with syncopated sixteenth notes and double dotted notes, marked with asterisks. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and accents (>).

### RHYTHMIC GROOVE

Hairston makes use of a familiar compositional “rhythmic groove<sup>45</sup>” in this piece. A form of syncopation, she ties the last beat of successive sixteenth notes to a sixteenth note followed by many others that follow. Rather than a syncopation based upon eighth note subdivisions of the beat, she creates an even greater intensity with the use of sixteenth note syncopations in mm. 34-35. This is then further emphasized with double dotted notes in the right hand. This rhythmic organization is paired with a direct call and response between the voices on the text “ride.” This rhythmic groove Hairston creates is a form of text painting, perhaps imitating the sound of feet running or a train leaving by way of the Underground Railroad. This rhythmic groove can also be identified in other pieces of Hairston’s writing. A similar device is found in her arrangement of “My Good Lord Done Been Here” (Figure 9). Hairston makes use of the sixteenth note subdivision syncopation in what she calls a “rockin,’ shoutin,’ feel” in mm 1-2. The accents Hairston uses in “Ride on Jesus” in mm. 34-35 can also be referenced with a “rockin, shoutin’,

<sup>45</sup>Jae Ahn-Benton interview by author, December 13, 2017.

feel” because of the accents in the vocal line and the syncopation of the accompaniment (Figure 10).

Figure 9 “MY GOOD LORD DONE BEEN HERE,” M. 1 (Rhythmic Groove)

(Dynamics left to singer's discretion)

(Rockin', shoutin' feel)

*mf*

Figure 10 “RIDE ON JESUS,” MM. 34 (Rhythmic Groove)

“Ride on Jesus” demonstrates a glimpse into Hairston’s ability to write for more than just the solo voice. A key element of this piece lies in the interplay between the singers, it should be similar to that of a pastor and his congregation and vice versa. This element is further expanded with the following trio spiritual.

## THREE GENERATIONS MEDLEY: (QUODLIBET SPIRITUAL)

Run, Mary Run

I got a right to the tree of life.

Way over in Beulah Land

I said, way over in Beulah Land

We gon' have a good time

Way over in Beulah Land.

Wade in the water

Wade in the water, children

Wade in the water

God's gonna' trouble the water.<sup>46</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

Jacqueline Hairston met baritone Robert Sims through a family friend in the 1990s.<sup>47</sup> During their meeting, Sims informed Hairston that he was part of a group called “Three Generations” which also included baritones William Warfield and Benjamin Matthews. Sims asked Hairston to write a piece for the trio and one of the pieces written for them was a spiritual on a quodlibet theme of three spirituals: “Run, Mary, Run,” “Beulah Land,” and “Wade in the Water.” The score is only available from the composer at JHairs Production. The level of difficulty is easy-medium because of its repetitive nature and folk like melody. The piece was finished in 1999 and a revised choral version was written for and recorded by the Oakland Youth

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<sup>46</sup> Jacqueline Hairston, “Three Generations Medley,” unpublished, 1999.

<sup>47</sup> Robert Sims, Interview by author, January 4, 2016.

Chorus in 2011. This section will explain the quodlibet and how Hairston arranges a spiritual for a trio of singers of the same voice type. A brief but important analysis of the text will occur to gain a better clarity of the overall meaning.

## PERFORMANCE GUIDE

Song: “Three Generations Medley”

Key: D minor

Vocal Range: G2-Eb4

Duration: 3 minutes

Form: Theme and Variation

Instrumentation: Three Baritones and Piano

Hairston begins with her signature, “rhythmic groove” in the piano in the first measure (Figure 11). The quarter note should spiritedly be around 56 beats per minute. This will allow a slow and confident marching tempo for clear rhythmic and text clarity. Every tied rhythm, which indicates syncopation, should be slightly accented for intensity. Each strong quarter note of the piano left-hand should be carefully juxtaposed with the syncopation of the right hand. The vocal line in measure eight may be sung down an octave as William Warfield did for a recording of the piece.

The song is crafted for three baritones. While three lyric baritones can sing it, the blend may be better with “Wade in de Water” being sung by a dramatic baritone or bass-baritone. “Beulah Land” should be sung by lyric baritone or maybe even a Verdi baritone as much of it sits higher in the baritone passaggio. “Run, Mary, Run” can be sung by either a heavier or lighter voiced baritone.

Figure 11 “THREE GENERATIONS MEDLEY,” MM. 1-2 (Rhythmic groove inserted in piano)



### QUODLIBET AND COMMUNAL SINGING

This trio spiritual epitomizes the closest connection to the communal singing of the slaves on the plantation in the southern United States. “Audience participation increased the improvisatory nature of the spirituals, with the result that tens and even hundreds of versions of a single text idea exist.”<sup>48</sup> Hairston’s communal singing may be more musically sophisticated and coordinated than its original intent; however, this arrangement imitates early forms of group singing. This quodlibet arrangement of three spirituals carefully woven together may not exactly replicate what was sung, but it still reiterates the idea of communal singing as the cornerstone of life during American slavery.

The slaves often sang together as they returned from the field to their quarters at the end of the day, particularly on plantations where the gang system was in use and all of them would have stopped work at the same time. The songs were carried through the gathering dusk to the ears of the white residents in the big house, conveying a message of hopelessness and despair, even though the words of the songs were unintelligible at so great a distance.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup>“American Negro spirituals.” In *the Columbia Encyclopedia*, by Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University. 7th ed. Columbia University Press, 2017. [https://search-credoreference-com.ezproxy.library.unlv.edu/content/entry/columency/american\\_negro\\_spirituals/0](https://search-credoreference-com.ezproxy.library.unlv.edu/content/entry/columency/american_negro_spirituals/0), accessed December 15, 2017.

<sup>49</sup>Eileen Southern. *The Music of Black Americans*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company: 1997,) 166

While this blending of spirituals message is not hopeless, the collective singing demonstrated through the composer's arrangement serves as a modern-day adaptation to early spirituals. A quodlibet is "a composition in which well-known melodies and texts appear in successive or simultaneous combinations."<sup>50</sup> A famous early music example of this is found in the finale of Johann Sebastian Bach's, "Goldberg Variations." Bach uses the same melody in multiple voices, whereas Hairston uses multiple melodies at the same time.

A quodlibet is not attributed to African-American music only, it is attributed to any combinations of melodies that will fit together. Even if it's based off of the diatonic scale, it does not matter, as long as each motif has the same number of measures, usually four or eight in my case. The first motif must be at least that long before it goes to the next motif.<sup>51</sup>

Hairston is no stranger to composing quodlibets. Notable arrangements include "Echoes of Jester Hairston" which premiered at Carnegie Hall in 2012, "You (and I) Can Talk" which premiered at Carnegie in 2016 and a melody of spirituals that included, "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah," "Do Lord, Do Remember Me" and "Woke Up This Mornin' with my Mind", premiered by the Oakland Symphony and the Oakland Symphony Chorus. In fact, a choral arrangement of the "Three Generations Medley" was written for the Oakland Youth Chorus to sing. "I love the challenge of turning one song into another genre. That's probably the biggest height of my arranging to this day, and that's also where improvisation comes into play."<sup>52</sup>

Each of the three spiritual melodies in the piece total exactly four measures in common time. In these patterns of four, Hairston creates the quodlibet. What is equally important is picking pieces that not only fit rhythmically but also within the harmonic context as the melody and rhythm must coexist together. These spirituals, "Wade in the Water," "Way Over in Beulah,"

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<sup>50</sup><http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000022748>, accessed December 16, 2017.

<sup>51</sup>Hairston video interview by author, January 14, 2017.

<sup>52</sup> Hairston, Video Interview January 14, 2017

and “Run, Mary, Run” are derived from the minor mode. Staying true to her African roots, Hairston also finds three spirituals that make use of the minor pentatonic scale. The piano sets up a four-measure introduction with the first three measures in 4/4 and the last measure in 2/4.

In relation to the pentatonic scale and the quodlibet, as long as pentatonic scale, whether in major or minor, has the same root, it can be paired to fit. Wade in the water is in a minor key. The relative minor is a third below the relative major. You have to use your mind and ear and say, ‘what are the notes of the major key of it?’ If Wade in the Water fits the bill, it can be paired with any other pentatonic piece, even if it’s in major. Of course, they have to share the same key signature. The other part that makes it fit together is that the melody has to have the same number of measures in the motif.<sup>53</sup>

The first spiritual enters as a four-bar solo, “Run, Mary, Run” and the next solo, “Way Over in Beulah Land” enters as another four-measure solo. The third motif, “Wade in the Water” begins as a solo and after four measure the first two spirituals appear simultaneously. In following suit with the pattern, after another four measures, all three voices enter to create the complete quodlibet (Figure 12).

Figure 12 “THREE GENERATIONS MEDLEY,” M. 21 (Full quodlibet beginning)

Run, Mar - y, run! \_\_\_\_\_

Way o - vuh in Beu - lah - lan', \_\_\_\_\_ I said,

Wade \_\_\_\_\_ in de wa - duh; \_\_\_\_\_

Hairston has written many quodlibet settings, particularly in the choral music genre. The combination of rhythmic drive, pentatonic melodic content, and textual meaning make this an

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

exciting recital closer or encore for lower male voices. Her continued prowess writing for the lower male voice is exhibited in the next song cycle and features completely contrasting material to explore.

## CHAPTER FOUR: COUNTEE CULLEN TRILOGY

### ART SONG

An art song is a musical composition that usually consist of a single voice and piano and is attributed to the European Classical tradition. An art song is also a musical setting of poetry or some other literary work.

When I write Art Songs, I envision my former, tough Howard Univ. professors (Mark Fax, Cecil Cohen and Thomas Kerr) who were different in their approach to art music. Because I had a good composition instructor (Evelyn White), and I was especially gifted in Theory, I began to rely on the rules of good writing, even though I did not consider myself a contemporary style writer. My initial thought about art music was that it was dissonant, nonsensical and strange. But because I'm a romanticist, I try to make my art songs less strident, but lean more toward unpredictability in the melodic direction, and with balanced harmonies plus unique chordal structures. I also listen to music from the Impressionistic period for ideas (ex. Debussy), yet I'm drawn to Black woman composer Undine Smith Moore's writing in this vein; I suppose, in a certain sense, I'm a copyist.<sup>54</sup>

Throughout this exploration of style and music, certain stylistic traits of Jacqueline Hairston have been highlighted in her arrangements of spirituals. Although she has made her name most prominently as an arranger of spirituals, she also writes uniquely well in the art song genre. Many traits of Black American music- syncopation, call and response, theme and variation and use of the pentatonic melody are carefully woven in her spirituals. Excitingly, some of these traits are also transferred in this art song cycle; however, other elements of modern compositional style are incorporated as well. The use of extended tertian harmonies throughout the cycle, modulation to distant keys, parallel harmony, chromatic root movement, and frequent unresolved seventh chords are all musical techniques demonstrated in this cycle. The element of unpredictability is prominent throughout the work and exhibits a contrast of music writing style when compared with her spirituals. Nonetheless, its communicative musical power, when paired

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<sup>54</sup>Hairston email to author, December 27, 2017.

with the text, expresses the meaning of the song in a moving way in the same fashion as her spirituals.

I feel like my writing in this realm comes from some inner source or channel that I cannot fully explain. Then I leave it be under the guise of it being in that specific art-song idiom I described earlier on: unpredictable, strange, questionable, etc. When you ask, what do I expect from the performers singing my art songs, my response is one that contemporary composer Dr. Olly Wilson gave me when he was Chancel at UC Berkeley, and while coaching me on writing orchestrations. His words were, *IMAGINATION IS KEY!* That is what I expect from interpretive singers: FULL-HEARTED IMAGINATION!<sup>55</sup>

## SONG CYCLE COMMISSION

*Countee Cullen Trilogy* is a song cycle that was written in 2016. It was commissioned by Carl DuPont, bass-baritone, an assistant professor of voice at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte<sup>56</sup>. It was premiered in the same year in Montana and recorded in January of 2017. Dupont recalls the initial stages of the collaboration, “I began to read through some of Cullen’s poetry and gave her [Jacqueline Hairston] seven or eight poems I thought I could interpret well. From those options, she chose three poems to set.”<sup>57</sup> The cycle includes the poems “Pagan Prayer,” “For a Poet” and “Foolish Heart.”

## COUNTEE CULLEN

Countee Cullen was born May 30, 1903 in New York City.<sup>58</sup> A New York University and Harvard alumnus, Cullen was a very noteworthy writer, novelist and playwright of the Harlem Renaissance. Cullen’s “informal education was shaped by his exposure to black ideals and yearnings, his formal education derived from almost totally white institutions and influences. This dichotomy heavily influenced his creative work, literary criticism, particularly because he

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<sup>55</sup> Email from Jacqueline Hairston, December 27, 2017.

<sup>56</sup>The commission was funded by the University of Charlotte, North Carolina Chancellor’s Diversity fund.

<sup>57</sup>Carl DuPont, Interview by Phillip Harris, October 15, 2017

<sup>58</sup><https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/countee-cullen>, accessed December 15, 2017.

did extremely well at the White-dominated institutions he attended and won the approbation of White academia.”<sup>59</sup> Some of his writing style is not reflective of the typical writing of the Harlem Renaissance, however, the sentiment is very similar. He proved to be a writer widely accepted by multiple cultures and backgrounds. In a book review about his life, an author observed the following about him:

Cullen has been recollected in contrast to the radical People’s Poet Langston Hughes because Cullen initially claimed that he wanted to be a poet, not a Negro poet. Hughes memorialized this moment in his seminal essay “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (1926), which in turn positioned Cullen in the African American canon as a conservative poet and a member of W. E. B. Du Bois’s Talented Tenth—the elite 10 percent of African American men who would lift up the rest of the race.<sup>60</sup>

Cullen’s first book of poetry, *Color* (1925), was published the same year as Alain Locke’s *The New Negro*, and in his early adult years, after graduating from Harvard with a master’s degree in English, Cullen was a major figure during the Harlem Renaissance<sup>61</sup>. Cullen wrote the poems featured in this document for varied people and usually for significant meaning. “In 1927, Cullen published, *The Ballad of the Brown Girl* and *Copper Sun*.<sup>62</sup> Representative of Cullen's philosophical development in this period is the multifaceted "Heritage," a poem that summarizes his ambivalent relationship with Christian and pagan cultural constructs.” “For a Poet” was dedicated to John Gaston Edgar and in 1928, “Foolish Heart” was one of the many poems dedicated to Cullen’s painful break-up with his wife. "Foolish Heart" was a poignant example of Cullen's painful reflection.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Christine Montgomery. “*And Bid Him Sing: A Biography of Countee Cullen*.” Book Review. *The Black Scholar Journal*, Vol. 44, 2014.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup><http://faculty.georgetown.edu/bassr/heath/syllabuild/iguide/cullen.html>, accessed December 19, 2017.

<sup>63</sup>[http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/bic1/ReferenceDetailsPage/ReferenceDetailsWindow?failOverType=&query=&pr odId=BIC1&windowstate=normal&contentModules=&display- query=&mode=view&displayGroupName=Reference&limiter=&currPage=&disableHighlighting=true&displayGroups=&sortBy=&search\\_within\\_results=&p=BIC1&action=e&catId=GALE%7CIWBWOR039476616&a](http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/bic1/ReferenceDetailsPage/ReferenceDetailsWindow?failOverType=&query=&pr odId=BIC1&windowstate=normal&contentModules=&display- query=&mode=view&displayGroupName=Reference&limiter=&currPage=&disableHighlighting=true&displayGroups=&sortBy=&search_within_results=&p=BIC1&action=e&catId=GALE%7CIWBWOR039476616&a)

Cullen's work as a novelist and writer left behind a legacy that inspired a generation of artist which included writers and musicians. His poem, "Yet I Do Marvel" is one of his best-known works and Black American composers Robert Owens, Adolphus Hailstork and Andre Meyers have set his poems to music.

"PAGAN PRAYER"

Not for myself I make this prayer,  
But for this race of mine that stretches forth  
From shadowed places.  
Dark hands for bread and wine  
For me my heart is pagan mad.  
My feet are never still  
But give them hearths to keep them warm  
In homes high on a hill  
Our Father, God; our brother Christ  
So are we taught to pray,  
Their kinship seems a little thing  
Who sorrow all the day.  
Our Father, God; our brother Christ  
Or are we bastard kin,  
That to our complaints your ears are closed.  
Your doors barred from within?

Our Father, God: our brother Christ  
Retrieve my race again  
So shall you comfort this black sheep.  
This pagan heart. Amen<sup>64</sup>

“Pagan Prayer” reflects both the sentiments of a non-believer in Jesus Christ and one who struggles with consistent belief in Him. “Pagan Prayer” is a piece, on the surface, for the heathen, or non-believer as revealed by the definition. However, a deeper look at the text expresses the sentiments of many Black Americans during the time of Jim Crow who were losing faith in the social and political climate of America due to severe racial injustice. More poignant, is the fact that Countee Cullen perhaps struggled with religion, as evident of the text in this piece.

Countee Cullen is my favorite poet of the Harlem Renaissance, despite not falling into the traditional norms of a many other common Harlem Renaissance poets and writers. I love his poems because of their classicism, always referencing something beyond the Harlem Renaissance, but still keenly depicting how life exists.<sup>65</sup>

In the rebellious heart of anger, the poet expresses a disdain for Christianity that he perceives to be hypocritical underneath an underlying current of universal brotherhood.

## PERFORMANCE GUIDE

Song: Pagan Prayer

Key: Bb Major

Vocal Range: Bb2-Eb4

Form: AB with Coda

Duration: 3 minutes and 15 seconds

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<sup>64</sup> Jacqueline Hairston, “Pagan Prayer,” unpublished, 2016.

<sup>65</sup> Carl DuPonte, Interview by Phillip Harris, October 15, 2017

A previously agreed tempo must be arranged prior to the onset of the vocal line in the first measure. The composer has marked the quarter note as receiving 80 beats per minute which the performers should try to follow to the best of their ability. The true indication of the tempo is not firmly established until the moving notes on beat 4 of m. 1 and beat 1 of m.2. The interjections of “oh” and “ah” are not in the original text, but the composer inserted them as a means of expression. They must be sung from the mindset of a person confused and desperate for answers. The [o] vowel should remain as pure as possible, so the diphthong occurs at the last possible moment. The breath mark between ‘oh” and “ah” should be noticeable with the use of a slight glottal for the purposeful textual emphasis (Figure 13) It is important that this song constantly moves forward and does not become too slow. The frequent blocked and rolled chords underneath a moving melodic line leave some aspects of the tempo purely up to the singer. The contrasts of syncopation including moving eighth notes and blocked and rolled chords in the piano, should be noticeable in the distinction between rhythmic stability and instability.

Despite the drastic change in texture in both the piano and voice during the B section of the song, the tempo should not increase, but the intensity should. The intensity should remain for the repeat section. During the transition out of the B section, the composer’s instruction of “with added reverence” should be applied through a different and more emphatic interpretation of the repeated text. The final text of “this pagan heart” will naturally rise in dynamic level because of the rise in vocal line. This must also be matched with the piano with deliberate octaves in the right hand. Finally, the ending “amen” section should be sung inwardly or with the musical marking of “sotto voce.” This song is deceptively difficult to sing and is almost aria like in its form. It begins in the middle voice and travels a bit lower while still hovering near or just above the first *passaggio* for a baritone or bass-baritone. The second section sits in the second

*passaggio* and the repeat must be sustained with energy. The remaining phrases are long but filled with emotion. For these reasons, I believe this song to be medium-difficult.

## THE USE OF THE A-NATURAL

“Pagan Prayer” ends in Bb major however, the chord is never fully tonicized until the penultimate measure. Hairston makes use of the A-natural as dissonance, the subtonic of Bb major and the supertonic of G minor in much of the piece as a device to illustrate the conflicting feelings of a person who is struggling with religion and spirituality or the person who struggles with how one should think versus the reality of life. This dichotomy of feelings is interpolated in the harmonic equation. The A-natural is the first vocal note heard in the piece and it also serves as an extended harmonic function, a minor ninth sonority. While it may be harmonically implied from a music theoretical aspect that the leading tone of A makes stronger pull to Bb major, Hairston plays with the harmonic expectation of the listener by never fully providing a cadence in Bb major until the end. This musical technique serves as tool to accentuate the feelings of uncertainty and instability.

The repeated note “A” is persistent in its use at times, but it does not take on the same harmonic function every time it is heard. In measure 10, it serves as a sharp eleven for the Eb major seventh chord. Both times this striking harmony is used on the word, “race” and on the first syllable of “never.” The coloration of the harmony on these words is, in my estimation, no accident by the composer. The upper extension of the ninth and sharp eleven on those words speak to the harsh reality of injustice for people of color and the reality of questioning a higher power during very difficult times.

## USE OF RHYTHM

Hairston uses rhythm in the voice and piano line in various ways to further illuminate the idea of a struggle between how one is expected to feel and the reality of how one may truly feel. A pagan is “a heathen, or one who has little or no religion and who delights in sensual pleasures and material goods: an irreligious or hedonistic person.”<sup>66</sup> From the beginning of the piece, the rhythm is unsteady because of the initial syncopation in the piano from the dotted quarter to the eighth note which is tied over, creating a syncopation. This is paired with the vocal line that enters after a quarter rest and immediate sixteenth rest. This creates a very unsettling rhythm which accurately reflects the poems meaning.

There is a frequent use of the juxtaposition of the strong and weak beats, further driving home the idea of contrast and conflicting feelings. “In quadruple meter the odd-numbered beats are strong (1 and 3), whereas even-numbered beats are weak (2 and 4). Beat 3, however, is weaker than beat 1.”<sup>67</sup> Throughout the piece, beat one is emphasized and sustained with a half note or dotted half note. Where beat three is usually the second strongest beat in the measure, it is not emphasized, but instead, beat four is given a consistent quarter note just before the next downbeat. This instance happens in several measures to solidify the feeling of feelings of uncertainty.

Another pivotal point of rhythmic instability happens when the text changes to the outward cry and question of God and religion, “Our Father; God our brother Christ, so are we taught to pray.” While the instability in the rhythm has occurred regularly in both the vocal and piano line until now, in this section, beginning in measure 28, the rhythm and texture completely

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<sup>66</sup><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pagan>. Accessed on December 18, 2017

<sup>67</sup>Miguel Roig-Francolí. *Harmony in Context*. McGraw-Hill: Boston, 2003.

changes. The jagged rhythms of the left hand are persistent in their repetitious pattern of strong beats alternating with sixteenth rests on the weaker beats of two and four. This jagged rhythm is matched with continuous syncopation in the right hand on the off-beats of beats one, two, three and four (Figure 14)

Figure 13 “PAGAN PRAYER,” M. 1-4 (Use of interjections and establishing tempo)

The musical score for Figure 13 consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats. It contains the interjections "Oh!", "Oh", and "Ah!" with horizontal lines indicating the duration of each. The middle staff is the right hand of a piano accompaniment in treble clef, and the bottom staff is the left hand in bass clef. The piano part features a complex, syncopated rhythmic pattern with frequent rests and accents, particularly in the left hand.

Figure 14 “PAGAN PRAYER,” M. 28 (Rhythmic instability)

The musical score for Figure 14 shows measure 28. It has three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in bass clef with the lyrics "Our Fa - ther, God, our Broth - er,". The middle staff is the right hand of a piano accompaniment in treble clef, and the bottom staff is the left hand in bass clef. The piano part continues with the same jagged, syncopated rhythmic pattern as seen in Figure 13.

“Pagan Prayer” reflects vacillating feelings for anyone who struggles with how life should be juxtaposed with its reality. Its hybrid between the tonalities of G minor and B-flat major make it an interesting harmonic piece particularly when paired with Cullen’s text.

## “FOR A POET”

I have wrapped my dreams in a silken cloth,

And laid them away in a box of gold;

Where long will cling the lips of the moth,

I have wrapped my dreams in a silken cloth

I hide no hate

I am not even wroth

Who found the earth’s breath so keen and cold;

I have wrapped my dreams in a silken cloth<sup>68</sup>.

“For a Poet” is a meaningful piece for anyone who has protected anything of value from something or someone that might impede upon what is precious to them. The opening line points to the preciousness of the dream by the explanation of it being wrapped in a silken cloth. These dreams being wrapped in a silken cloth is not enough; they must be further cared for by being put away in “a box of gold.” The repetition of the phrase “I have wrapped my dreams in a silken cloth” is an indication of how precious these dreams are. There is no mention of these dreams coming out of this box or being unwrapped. The underlying message is that these dreams are so special that they are not able to be accepted now by the world and Hairston’s setting of the poem at the end indicates satisfaction with the dreams being withheld.

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<sup>68</sup> Jacqueline Hairston, “For a Poet,” unpublished, 2016.

## PERFORMANCE GUIDE

Song: “For a Poet”

Key: Db Major to Bb Major

Vocal Range: Ab2-Eb4

Form: Through-Composed

Duration: 2:14

Hairston does not indicate a tempo marking as she frequently omits it in the score to allow “interpretive freedom for the performers.”<sup>69</sup> Carl DuPont recommends establishing a tempo that keeps the song moving forward. In my performance of this, I have found a comfortable tempo around 66 beats per minute. This tempo allows the text and music to be communicated expressively while still being reflective. A critical aspect of the piece relies on the careful attention to distinguishing the rhythmic “two against three” feel between the voice and piano. The pianist regularly operates in mostly triplets but the singer must subdivide in eighth notes to achieve the proper polyrhythm. A little more time can be taken in measure 11, with the reiteration of text and the change in the piano musical texture. The slight rubato should go back into tempo in the following measure (m. 12) with the triplet piano figure. The next area of rhythmic attention that should be carefully rehearsed is on “wroth” in measure 15. The piano and voice should not be rhythmically in sync. The singer must keep constant triplets and the pianist must listen well enough to come in just after the group of triplets. The following measure, 16 and 17 can be taken out of tempo as in a recitative. The syncopation on “box” in measures 27 and 28 should be brought strongly to indicate the importance of the “box of gold.” This song is of

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<sup>69</sup> Jacqueline Hairston, Video Interview with author. January 14, 2017.

medium-difficulty because of the distinct attention to whole and half steps melodically while creating the rhythmic duality of drupels and triples.

## TWO AGAINST THREE

“For a Poet” demonstrates a repetitive use of polyrhythm, or “the superimposition of different beat groupings.”<sup>70</sup> This constant battle between two opposing meters is reflective of the inner battle the poet has between holding in the dreams that are meaningful, or allowing them to be exposed to the public. The battle of two and three exists between the voice and piano for most of the song. However, she occasionally deviates from this rhythmic motif, most notably in measure 15 on the word, “wroth,” meaning anger. The contrasting rhythm lends to brief feelings of resentment which are reflected in the piano and voice. The two against three feeling is deliberately broken as the piano reflects the true feelings of the singer with the dotted eighth and sixteenth rhythm against the triplet in the voice. (Figure 15)

Figure 15 “FOR A POET,” M. 15

<sup>70</sup>Robert Gauldin. *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 318.

## NON-SEQUENTIAL CHROMATIC VOICE LEADING

“Chromaticism need not always be associated with the devices of sequence, parallelism, or contrary motion.”<sup>71</sup> Hairston frequently uses this technique of non-sequential chromatic voice leading frequently to end her songs. This technique was also used in piano music by Chopin and Beethoven. A perfect illustration is the ending of, “For a Poet.” The vocal line continually rises as the bass note in the piano descends chromatically. The adjustment of one note in the piano during this passage serves as a countermelody inserted as a call and response to the vocal line. This pattern sets up a modulation to closely related key, from E-flat to B-flat major. (Figure 16)

*Figure 16 “FOR A POET,” MM. 27-28 (Non-sequential chromatic voice leading in piano with rising vocal line)*

The image shows a musical score for the piece "FOR A POET" in E-flat major, 4/4 time. It consists of three staves: a vocal line in the top staff, a piano right-hand part in the middle staff, and a piano left-hand part in the bottom staff. The vocal line has lyrics: "box, \_\_\_\_\_ in a box, \_\_\_\_\_ in a". The piano accompaniment features a descending chromatic bass line in the left hand and a more static right hand. A crescendo marking is present above the vocal line and the piano right hand in the second measure of the excerpt.

The tonic prolongation at the end of the piece, as led by the piano, reminds the listener of the unwillingness to share the dreams. The brief moments of syncopation and the rhythmic variation must be keenly highlighted throughout the piece. The song incorporates subtly in both the music and text. It is the job of the performers to be aware of this and communicate the text earnestly in both the voice and piano accompaniment.

<sup>71</sup>Robert Gauldin. *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), 713.

## “FOOLISH HEART”

“Be still, heart, cease those measured strokes;

Lie quiet in your hollow bed;

This moving frame is but a hoax

To make you think you are not dead.”

Thus spake I to my body’s slave

With beats still to be answered;

Poor foolish heart that needs a grave

To prove to it that it is dead.<sup>72</sup>

Foolish Heart was written by Countee Cullen just after the divorce from his first wife. The two distinct narratives are vital to the understanding of the poem. The first part is a short soliloquy as marked by quotations, whereas the second stanza of the poem is introspective. To begin, the poet speaks inwardly trying to assuage the feeling of despair or figurative death from heartbreak. The second part, or introspective part of the poem, sheds light to the unanswered questions of the heart and the metaphoric grave to house its sorrow. However, cleverly, Hairston shifts the tonality from minor to major by the end of the piece indicating hopefulness and a ray of light for this foolish heart.

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<sup>72</sup> Jacqueline Hairston, “Foolish Heart,” unpublished, 2016.

## PERFORMANCE GUIDE

Song: “Foolish Heart”

Key: E minor

Vocal Range: C3-E4

Form: Through-composed

Duration: 1:55

“Foolish Heart is enigmatic”<sup>73</sup> most notably because of the ambiguity of the time signature. Despite the discrepancy of it being in 6/8, or possibly 3/4, the performer should pay attention to the suggested metronome marking of the dotted quarter receiving 64 beats per measure. Hairston, rarely incorporates this in her music and when it is, it should receive great consideration. The left-hand of the piano in the opening measures should shape the phrase with use of the pedal. The stop of the beating of the heart in measure two, as indicated by the repetitious eighth notes, should be abrupt and painful in its musical expression. The vocal line enters in a comforting but persistent manner. The word, “be” should not be punched or sung too loudly in effort not to over shine the more important words of the phrase, “still” and “heart.” The second note on, “strokes” should be sung smoothly and not accented. This second note shows the irregularity of the beating heart as the rhythm is reflected in an irregular place. The piano left-hand “beating” in measure 14 should come out strongly to contrast with the sustained single note in the vocal line. Adversely, it should be just as strong when it switches to the right hand in the following measures. A color change in the voice can be applied for expressive purposes in measure 20 on the word, “dead” to bring meaning to the key change. The beating of the heart, represented by dotted eighth and sixteenth notes in the piano at measure 26 should exaggerate

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<sup>73</sup>Carl DuPont Phone Interview with author, October 15, 2017.

the irregular beating and unsteadiness of the heart. The final two measures can be slightly improvised dependent upon the singer and pianist. The “oh” of the penultimate measure can be sung in time as indicated or the “oh” can be sung in the silence during the piano fermata. This, in my opinion, is the hardest song of the cycle. The tessitura is higher than the previous two songs and the portrayal of two narratives with the piece is difficult to portray. The harmonic language is the most complex of the cycle and each key change should be prevalent, but without hindering the forward motion of the piece.

### BEATING OF THE HEART

The beating of the heart is consistent in the rhythm with the use of frequent eighth notes in 6/8 time. The beating is most recognizable in the E minor chord outline of the first page. The beating of the heart is never a regular consistent pattern. It usually alternates between the voice and piano line. This further reflects the instability of the emotional nature and beating that his heart has taken to experience this point of grief (Figure 17). It appears the beating of the heart initially stops in the piano between measures 18-20 as the text points to the body that houses the heart as a temporary disconnection from reality, “to make you think you are not dead.” While the beating ceases in the piano, the vocal line imitates the beating to substitute for it not being present in the piano (Figure 18).

A more direct reference to the beating of the heart is communicated between the voice and piano in m. 26 and m. 28. This communication between the voice and piano can be directly linked back to call and response. In doing so, Hairston devices a way to paint the text of the song in the piano line as opposed to more traditional word painting.

Figure 17 "FOOLISH HEART," MM.1-3 (Beating of the heart in the piano)



Figure 18 "FOOLISH HEART," MM. 18-20 (Beating of the heart between the voice and piano)

## HARMONIC USAGE

This song makes use of frequent modulations. The song begins in E minor followed by a chord that makes use of the leading tone of the fifth scale degree of that key- A-sharp. The A-sharp functions as the third of the seventh chord that is an F-sharp seven half diminished seventh chord. E minor returns and the next chord uses the same bass note with a different sonority, a C dominant seven chord. This time, an enharmonic use of the A-sharp is utilized in the C dominant seven chord as a B-flat. The next point of harmonic interest happens with the use of quartal harmony in the right-hand of the piano which leads to a series of unresolved seventh chords. The

modulation to a distantly related key on the word, “dead” is created by a tritone leap in the voice and a mostly half step intervallic movement from an A minor ninth chord to a first inversion of G-flat major ninth chord. The sonority was created by bass note movement of a half-step from A to B-flat. She also makes use of a harmonic technique most often associated with Debussy, parallel harmony. The parallel harmony is used in the piano to respond to the unanswered beats of the heart. The final A major cadence is prepared by a subtonic harmony, G major to A major in what creates an optimistic ending for the otherwise broken heart.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Hairston's compositional style cleverly blends the essence of the title of her CD: *Spiritual Roots and Classical Fruits*. Jacqueline Hairston's songs are an essential part of modern vocal art music that merit a worthy place in current anthologies of songs and spirituals. The use of improvisation, syncopation, theme and variation, repetition and contrast, and the pentatonic melody make her pieces distinctly American based. Furthermore, her sensitivity to singers and expressive interpretation, and use of parallel harmonies, non-sequential chromatic voice leading, and interactive piano accompaniment parts establish her as a gifted American composer of song among other great composers of the twentieth and twenty-first century.

Her spiritual arrangements, which total over seventy, include vocal genres that include solo, duet, trio, chorus a capella, chorus with solo, as well as chorus with orchestra. "Don't Feel No Ways Tired" uses her background in spirituals and incorporates the gospel influence she received later in life as a tribute to traditional and neo-gospel music. The minor pentatonic arrangement of "Nobody Knows the Trouble I See Lord" is an arrangement attributed to her cousin, Jester Hairston. The pentatonic use of the melody is often a trait used in most folk music. "Ride on Jesus" demonstrates her ability to create a dual melody based upon spiritual text while "Three Generations Medley" makes use of the quodlibet and communal singing which was popular as an activity on the plantation during slavery in America.

The Countee Cullen trilogy, emphasizes her ability to set poetic text outside of folk music. As a pianist first, the use of word painting through the piano, allowing it to serve as an equal partner with the voice demonstrates her compositional gift while remaining true to her first musical interest, the piano. This song cycle shows a harmonic and textual sophistication that contrast greatly with the spiritual folk writing that is generally musically simplistic in its origin.

I write on my arrangements that you have my permission to do your interpretation of it because there may be things that come to the performers that I might have missed. I *love* it when I tell singers, ‘use your own discretion.’ My marking may say soft here or loud there, but I’m leaving it up to your discretion. I’ve given that to every singer whom I’ve arranged anything for.<sup>74</sup>

This explanation by the composer of how she writes her music is quite selfless and profound. Often, composers believe in having complete control over the performers who present their work and it is generally the standard for a performer to abide by meticulous details on the page. Hairston’s approach can be liberating for the musician who enjoys the idea of spontaneity or frustrating for those who only go by what is in the printed music. I have found that sense of jubilation and frustration when rehearsing her music with some pianists who may or may not be as familiar with the style. Because she believes in leaving some of the discretion up to the performers for expressive purposes, a prodigious responsibility of emotional connection is expected for the music to be effectively communicated. The original spirituals, or folk music, were not written on paper. Hairston takes an innovative or perhaps a more authentic approach, by giving the performers a certain amount of liberty when presenting her music allowing the personal connection to emanate in performance. Above all, it is her intent that her music not just be heard but felt and experienced from the soul.

Jacqueline Hairston is an American treasure whose music has proven itself worthy in standard repertoire, concerts and recital halls. “She has a gift for lyricism and finding the internal musical pulls that satisfy the deep emotional ties of word and sentiment. Her love of popular culture, her strong spiritual self, her work with metaphysical energy, and her abiding positivity all inform her unique musical perspective.”<sup>75</sup> Her music has a healing power that is contagious and emanates from her soul to all who know her and experience her music. She continues to

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<sup>74</sup>Hairston, interview by author, January 14, 2017

<sup>75</sup>Darryl Taylor email, August 7, 2017.

inspire as she teaches, performs, writes and mentors this generation. This study is designed to spark interest and enlighten music enthusiasts on some of her specific works. As the first in-depth writing on Hairston, it is my hope that this document will serve as only a tiny splash in the vast ocean of her talent further cultivating an immediate need to share her music through performance, recording and scholarship.

## APPENDIX: GLOSSARY

**blue notes** - A concept used by jazz critics and musicians from the early decades of the 20th century onwards to theorize African American music, notably in Blues and Jazz, to characterize pitch values perceived as deviating from the western diatonic scale.<sup>76</sup>

**chromatic** - occurring unexpectedly or by chance.<sup>77</sup>

**contrapuntal** - A style of musical composition employing two or more simultaneous but relatively independent melodic lines<sup>78</sup>

**diphthong** - Monosyllabic speech sound (such as the vowel combination at the end of *toy*) that starts at or near the articulatory position for one vowel and moves to or toward the position of another<sup>79</sup>

**dominant chord** - With reference to a given tonality, the chord consisting of a major triad built on the fifth scale degree with an added minor 7th; the dominant 7th of C major (or minor) is G–B–D–F.<sup>80</sup>

**downbeat** - The explicit or implied impulse that coincides with the beginning of a bar in measured music, by analogy with the downstroke in conducting.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup><http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.unlv.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-1002234425?rskey=3Q15Lg&result=1>, accessed February 1, 2018.

<sup>77</sup><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/accidental>, accessed February 1, 2018.

<sup>78</sup><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/polyphony>, accessed February 1, 2018

<sup>79</sup><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diphthong>, accessed February 1, 2018.

<sup>80</sup><http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.unlv.edu/grovemusic/search?q=Dominant+chord+&searchBtn=Search&isQuickSearch=true>, accessed February 1, 2018.

<sup>81</sup><http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.unlv.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000008105?rskey=VqmAti&result=1>, accessed February 1, 2018.

**improvisation** - The creation of a musical work, or the final form of a musical work, as it is being performed. It may involve the work's immediate composition by its performers, or the elaboration or adjustment of an existing framework, or anything in between.<sup>82</sup>

**lyric baritone** - Designed to sing the major roles in the lyric theater, roles in operas by Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini and a great deal of the French operatic literature.<sup>83</sup>

melisma- a group of notes or tones sung on one syllable in plainsong<sup>84</sup>

**sonority** - producing sound.<sup>85</sup>

**spinto soprano** - A soprano who needs both dramatic vocalism and sustaining capabilities in high

**tessitura** - A term used to describe the part of a vocal (or less often instrumental) compass in which a piece of music lies – whether high or low, etc. The tessitura of a piece is not decided by the extremes of its range, but rather by which part of the range is most used.<sup>86</sup>

**Verdi baritone** - Must have a powerful, rangy instrument with size and power that competes with full orchestral sound, authority in complex ensembles and upper range capable of brilliance and power.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup><http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.library.unlv.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000013738?rskey=WuKHKh&result=1>, accessed February 1, 2018.

<sup>83</sup>Richard Miller, *Securing Baritone, Bass-Baritone and Bass Voices*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 9-10.

<sup>84</sup><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/melisma>, accessed February 1, 2018.

<sup>85</sup><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sonorous>, accessed February 1, 2018.

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