Presenting Jamaican Folk Songs on the Art Music Stage: Social History and Artistic Decisions

Byron Gordon Johnson

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PRESENTING JAMAICAN FOLK SONGS ON THE ART MUSIC STAGE: SOCIAL HISTORY AND ARTISTIC DECISIONS

by

Byron Gordon Johnson

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

December 2010
ABSTRACT

PRESENTING JAMAICAN FOLK SONGS ON THE ART MUSIC STAGE: SOCIAL HISTORY AND ARTISTIC DECISIONS

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Jamaican folk songs have become a definitive characteristic of Jamaican culture. They are exemplars of a culture whose music reflects the lifestyle of most of its citizens. In modern times, their beauty has been showcased in local and foreign performances which exposes an element of the country to the world. Additionally, the arrangements of these songs by Jamaican composers like Noel Dexter and Peter Ashbourne have aided in their renaissance in modern times. This also attests to their high entertaining quality which most audiences have come to appreciate. To this end, this research analyzed the arrangements by Noel Dexter and Peter Ashbourne.

However, in colonial times, the songs’ function and purpose were two-fold. First, they were used as a mode of communication between slaves and their masters, as well as among the slaves themselves. Secondly, they were used to enhance religious aspects of worship and praise. Additionally, the colonial system created a stratified society in which the white masters were superior to the enslaved Africans. This permeated every aspect of the colonial society and was especially noticeable in the disparity in social conditions between the whites and the slaves. Colonialism also enabled the imposition of European culture on society. Overtime, the slaves perceived that the European culture was better than theirs, and they fashioned their social habits after their masters’. The resultant was their viewing their African ancestry with shame and overtime abandoning its traditions.
This research explored the transition of Jamaican folk songs from the slave fields to the art music stage. In so doing, it investigated colonialism and slavery as factors that influenced these songs’ usage in communication, entertainment, and worship. It also explored independence as a catalyst in the creation of a new identity for Jamaicans and, in so doing, investigated the cultural policies of successive Jamaican governments coupled with the concerted efforts of the artisan class, especially musicians in producing Jamaican artifacts that are representative of the people. To this end, the research provided detailed analyses on the music of Noel Dexter and Peter Ashbourne as well as biographical profiles.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am especially grateful to my voice professor and committee chair, Dr. J. Taylor Hightower, for being a great mentor and for his keen insight throughout my doctoral experience. Special thanks go to the members of my committee, Dr. Maryann Kyle, Dr. Edward Hafer, Dr. Joseph Brumbeloe, and Dr. Larry Smith, for their much needed criticism and instruction on my research. Special thanks are also in order to Dr. Kimberley Davis and Dr. Gregory Fuller for their tremendous support and counsel over the years. Thanks are also extended to my accompanists Amanda Virelles and Libby Vanatta for collaborating with me on my doctoral voice recitals.

I am deeply grateful to Noel Dexter and Peter Ashbourne for their advice, support, and numerous conversations on their music and on Jamaican music in general. I am also grateful to Mr. Dexter for lending me original documents and essays from the Music Unit at the University of the West Indies that proved extremely valuable to my research. Sincere gratitude goes to the late Hon. Professor Rex Nettleford, Vice-Chancellor Emeritus of the University of the West Indies, for the suggestions he gave on my dissertation topic and for providing me copies of his articles which were unavailable in some libraries. Heartfelt thanks are extended to Mr. Winston Ewart, former director of the Jamaica School of Music, for providing me recordings from the Folk Music Research Unit. Sincere thanks are also extended to Jamaican musicians, Dawn-Marie James, Dr. Richard Beckford, and Dr. Hope Davis, who have been close mentors of mine throughout the years.

This journey could not be done without the undying love and support of my family members. In this regard, special thanks go to my parents Selbourne and Gloria
Johnson, my sister Mrs. Althea Herron, and my relatives Mavis Swann, Jonquil Swann, Douglas Powell, Enez Powell, and Joyce Rodwell.

I am also grateful to my close circle of friends, Ramian Reynolds, Kevin and Allanda Campbell, Mark Roper, Daland Jones, Darryl Harris, Patricia Ramirez, Trevor Smith, Richard Sawyer, Jim Pickett, Sandy and Alice-Carol Gray, Aston Allen, Jane Butler, Kalani Hoffman, Robert Anderson, and Devon Liburd, for their words of encouragement and support. Special thanks are extended to Alice-Carol Gray for her editorial input on this research.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Jamaica is one of the few countries whose government and citizens have, with some success, negated the belief that the European metropole was the epicenter of high culture and, in so doing, has removed the notion that it was superior to cultures from Africa and the Caribbean region. This is a major accomplishment when one considers Jamaica’s colonial past. For over three centuries Jamaica was a colony of Britain, then the largest global economic power. The main purpose of a colonial economy was to provide goods and services to the metropolitan power. Slavery, a natural extension of that system was implemented in the colonies to enable the effective running of this economic model. Unfortunately it came with costly social repercussions. Three hundred years of subjugation by the British masters made the African slaves and their descendants assume that the British culture was superior. Additionally, there were social disparities between the lifestyles of the Europeans vis-à-vis that of the Africans. The British lived a lifestyle of civility. They had decent places of residence, entertainment centers, and other social amenities befitting a civilized society. The slaves in contrast lived in abject poverty, in pallid squalor and were denied the basic amenities that were considered a standard for civilized living. According to Olive Lewin, “Jamaica was a British colony for over three hundred years until independence was achieved in 1962. This fact has not only affected Jamaica’s history and culture but it has also had sociological, psychological and educational effects, some of them negative. Cultural manifestations such as language, religion, methods of socialization and the creative arts have been greatly influenced, as
the ideas and values of Britain were imposed through both formal and informal education. One negative result of this has been the development of a belief in the superiority of cultural expressions of other societies, particularly those of the former colonizers, and the inferiority of the indigenous traditions.”

When Jamaica gained independence from Great Britain on August 6, 1962, it was a culmination of a nationalistic effort that began in the 1940s. By 1962, Jamaicans became more aggressive about addressing their own needs and re-creating a new national identity. Their perception of what constituted a civil lifestyle had started to evolve. Nationalism, in the young nation state continued to grow, especially during the 1970s where this movement was arguably at its zenith. There was a willingness to address the educational curricula that initially focused on Europe. The British export model that was instituted in the colonies was considered impractical as it focused on the learning of European cultures and institutions and very little on Jamaica and the Caribbean region. Jamaica, since 1962, underwent a significant transition from a colonial to a post-colonial paradigm which can be seen in the lifestyle of the citizens. This change was apparent in music where, prior to independence, most Jamaicans saw European music as worthy of scholarship and relegated folk music at the base of the totem pole. Since the 1970s, a multi-cultural approach towards incorporating various forms and styles of music and challenging the prominence of European music has occurred.

This dissertation provides historical and social perspectives on the evolution and transition of folk songs from their origin in the cane fields to a more formal concert

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setting. Social and musical factors that have contributed to their burgeoning success and longevity since independence are discussed. These factors include the cultural policy implemented and maintained by successive Jamaican governments and the willingness of musicians to arrange these songs for a specific audience, along with the willingness of classically trained Jamaican singers to program them in recitals. The latter is especially important as it enables the exposure of these songs to foreign audiences. The folk arrangements and compositions of Messrs. Dexter and Peter Ashbourne will be analyzed in terms of their treatment of prosody, rhythmic variations and syncopations, use of harmonies, and the piano’s role as the primary accompanying instrument.

Most of the scholarship related to these songs has focused on choral arrangements, rather than their manifestations as art songs for the concert stage. Pamela O’Gorman’s essay “From Field to Platform: Jamaican Folk Music in Concert” is the sole exception in this regard. This research provides information on aspects of Jamaican music that is considered symbols of patriotism and nationhood. Most noticeable are the use of patois, African-oriented religions, and the mento rhythm. Patois is a creolized language that is an amalgamation of European and African languages. In colonial times, its primary function was to provide a communiqué between master and slave and among the slaves themselves. However after the cessation of slavery, patois was viewed pejoratively and considered a sign of illiteracy if used in formal situations. African-oriented religions like Myal, Pukkumina, Kumina and Revival were incorporated in the Christian religion which was indoctrinated in the slaves by their masters. Folk songs were used in worship both in the African rituals and eventually in Christian churches. The folk
arrangements by Mr. Dexter are religious in nature. The mento style originated in
Jamaica and is used in song, dance, and instrumental music. Music composed in the
mento style is relatively slow, uses a quadruple time, and has a syncopated rhythmic
pattern where the fourth beat is always accented. The folk songs that were used as work
songs were normally in mento form.

Chapter II discusses slavery and colonialism as key factors which facilitated the
slaves perceiving the European culture as superior to the various cultures from Africa.
This resulted in them viewing themselves and their African ancestry negatively and
instead, showing a penchant for the Eurocentric ideal. The writings of Sherlock and
Bennet, and Ivy Baxter attest to this.²

Additionally, the creolization process which enabled the creation of a new
language to facilitate communication between master and slave and also between slave
and slave is discussed. Patois, the resultant hybrid of European and African languages, is
used in Jamaican folk songs. Here, we will also focus on the functions of folk songs
during slavery times as a multi-purpose vehicle for communication, for assisting the
slaves as they worked in the fields, as well as for entertainment and worship.

Chapter III focuses on the perceptual changes of Jamaicans towards their ancestry
that resulted from nationalism and independence. Both these factors as vehicles for
cultural development as well as the creation of a new national identity will be discussed.
The government’s role especially during the 1970s in creating cultural institutions - the
Jamaican Schools of Art, Music, Dance and Drama - designed towards the preservation

²Ivy Baxter, The Arts of an Island (New Jersey: Scarecrow Tree Press, 1970), 65; Philip Sherlock
of the Jamaican culture is discussed. The establishment of the Folk Research Unit in 1962 is essential to the discussion. Of import are the essays by two former Jamaican Prime Ministers; Edward Seaga and Michael Manely. Mr. Seaga outlines the Folk Music Research Unit’s importance to the preservation of folk music in Jamaica, while the books written by Michael Manley addressed the institution building process that was specifically geared towards cultural development. Additionally, the efforts of the artisan class who had a desire to incorporate their African heritage in their artwork and, in the case of musicians, showcasing them on stage are discussed. These social changes facilitated the transitioning of folk music from the fields to the concert stage. This chapter addresses this transition.

The biographical profiles on Noel Dexter and Peter Ashbourne are found in Chapter IV. Their upbringing and significant milestones which have influenced their musical careers are highlighted. Their folk compositions are a testimony that this idiom has successfully transitioned from the field to the concert stage.

Chapters V and VI are analyses of the songs by the aforementioned composers. These chapters provide a detailed analysis of their use of prosody, traditional western tonalities and twentieth century harmonies, and syncopated rhythmic patterns that show an interesting amalgamation between the folk and classical idioms. Also, the piano’s role and its juxtaposition between interpretive partner and as an accompanying instrument are explored.
CHAPTER II
FOLK MUSIC IN COLONIAL JAMAICA

Although Jamaica has entered its forty-seventh year as an independent nation, much of its socio-political structure such as its political and educational system and banking practices and mercantile laws, are borne out of the four centuries of European colonialism. Colonialism occurred in two segments, first by Spain (1494–1655) and then by the British (1655–1962), the latter having the greatest impact on modern Jamaica. This chapter will consider the strong correlation between colonialism and slavery and its influence on the negative perceptions of Afro-Jamaicans towards their ancestry especially as it pertains to Jamaican folk songs.

By the time Britain claimed Jamaica from Spain, slavery had been a long-standing practice on the island. The native Tainos, who were initially enslaved by the Spaniards, had become extinct as a result of the brutal acts of the conquistadors and the European diseases that accompanied the Spanish slave ships. Slavery continued under British rule until its emancipation in 1834; however, full emancipation did not occur until 1838 with the cessation of the apprenticeship system. This system was established between 1834 and 1838 throughout the colonies that forced freed slaves to work as apprentices on their former masters’ estates and receiving a minimal wage for their labor. British dominion in Jamaica took place in two stages. First was the plantation system that was the process of apportioning land into private estates or plantations, that was worked on by enslaved Africans who were considered their masters’ property. This system by design ensured the

3Baxter, 64.
efficiency of supporting the economy of mainland Britain, as well as maintaining a social order between master and slave on the estates. Because a steady supply of slaves was needed on the estates, the plantation system also enabled the perpetuation of the slave trade. The second stage of British dominion occurred when Jamaica became a Crown Colony. This was a system of governance where the island’s political system consisted of a Legislative Council, and a House of Assembly, both under the purview of a British governor; and the legal structure was modeled after English common law and country courts. Under the façade of lobbying for the interests of the island citizens, this system favored the interests of the British whites and socially elite, while the vast majority of the black population remained impoverished and under represented. As affirmed by Nettleford⁴, the crown colony enabled the infiltration of Eurocentric ideas, concepts and conventions in every aspect of society on the island and the relegating of African traditions to a lower standard.

Slavery and colonialism led to new social and cultural dynamics requiring assimilation to the culture of the captors. As it pertains to their language, it occurred in two stages. The first stage was the absorption of African languages which occurred by virtue of the forced migratory patterns by slavery. Enslaved Africans were grouped not by tribes but en masse and were led to re-establish themselves on foreign soil. The amalgamation of traditions, languages, cultures and tribal habits all in the name of co-existing effectively removed any hope of preserving a tribe’s unique culture. The second stage occurred inter-racially between Africans and whites, as a process of language

creolization which began by the early eighteenth century. According to Sherlock and Bennet, “It served the colonisers’ primary purposes of giving instructions, doing business and indoctrinating others in European superiority and African depravity; but it also provided the African with a base for creating his own language, Jamaica talk. They did this without the inspiration of psalmists and prophets, knowing only that they had to find ways of communicating, of fashioning a new language quickly, and they did. There was no Jamaica talk in 1700 but by 1800 the folk had ‘an English learned incompletely with a strong infusion of African influence.’”

The resulting hybrid, Jamaican Creole or Patois, provided a medium through which both slave and master could communicate as well as being the best way as noted by Baxter “the highest common factor of communication among the slaves themselves.” It was this highest common factor that provided the impetus for the development of Jamaican folk songs during slavery.

Jamaican slaves used folk songs for both communication and entertainment. Because the slave-masters abhorred talking while the slaves executed their diurnal activities, the slaves needed to find alternative methods of communication. Singing and drumming were encouraged as they salved their temperament and gave the illusion of a speedier passing of time. Some songs conveyed messages; others provide social commentary, as Olive Lewin notes, “even ridiculing the master and the man with the whip…An innocent sounding song could announce a prohibited meeting which had to be

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5 Sherlock and Bennett, 195.
6 Baxter, 158.
a closely guarded secret.” Folk songs were incorporated into every aspect of the slave’s life; they were used in the work and social-environs as well as in religious practices. In colonial times, African religions had a very strong influence on Afro-Jamaicans. Music and singing were strong staples in African religious practices. It was believed that music enabled spiritual ablutions, permitting the person to rid his body of any negative actions and situations that occurred during his lifetime. These negative elements were necessary as they provided lessons to put the soul in good stead for the after-life. Religious folk songs usually detailed the suffering of the slaves and also alluded to the afterlife which they saw as their Great Escape. As Lewin puts it:

It did not matter that the destructive emotions were caused by the sustained subhuman treatment meted out by the master and their agents, who were sometimes referred to as “young souls.”…Songs about souls that had passed through suffering and hardship boosted the morale of the slaves.

Assimilation from a cultural and social view and the necessity of Jamaican folk songs in assisting the citizenry in adapting a more creolized and integrated society consequently came with a great psychological price tag. The subhuman treatment of blacks by their captors, coupled with the disparity in living conditions between both races factored greatly in this unbalanced equation. Because slavery furnished the British coffers while ensuring proper functioning of the island’s plantocracy, it was essential that the white master keep the inferior black slave in a subjugated role. Enslaved Africans were considered primitive, uneducated, uncivilized, and even inhuman; they were property.

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7 Lewin, 56.

8 The influence of African religions and their amalgamation with Christianity is mentioned in later chapters and will not be expounded upon at this juncture.

9 Lewin, 58.
The slaves’ lifestyle reflected the view held of them by their masters, which was in direct contrast with the European lifestyle that their masters enjoyed on the island.

Over the years, the Africans began to view their ancestry and slavery with shame. Even when Jamaica moved from the plantation system to crown colony, the perception that Africa was inferior and uncivilized persisted. This negative view, as purported by Richard Hart, is arguably colonialism’s greatest legacy:

The historical legacy of self-denigration was only partly attributable to the objective circumstances of generations of enslavement and cruel exploitation. It was also the contrived effect of a system of education andindoctrination designed to promote a loyalty to the prevailing imperialism and an acceptance of the domination of whites over blacks.\(^\text{10}\)

The years of subjugation had effectively caused a change in the way Afro-Jamaicans, direct descendants of slaves, viewed themselves and their ancestry.

As Jamaica became industrialized, its society evolved. Kingston, a large shipping city was now the island’s capital and was the center for commerce and trade. Many of the citizens migrated from the rural areas to its streets in search of more lucrative jobs and in so doing, relied less on folk elements and African traditions and more on the acquired Western European culture. This did not occur uniformly throughout the island. Those residing in urban areas abandoned their African traditions faster than those living in the island’s interior, which were isolated from the effects of urbanization and were therefore able to maintain and preserve their African heritage. Ultimately, African traditions were relegated to a subordinate position to its European counterpart and were frowned upon by

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blacks who saw the disparity between their lifestyle and that of their European masters. As such, the freed slaves, fashioned themselves after the mannerisms of the whites because slavery shamefully reminded them of an unpleasant past. According to Lewin, “they didn’t like to talk about slavery or Africa and tried desperately to identify their background and their social, economic and cultural progress with Europe.”

Rex Nettleford pens it differently:

> the mixture has produced a Creole culture in which European and African elements persist and predominate in fairly standard combinations and relationships with things European gaining ascriptive status while things African were correspondingly devalued, including *African racial traits.*

These “things European” to which Nettleford alludes, are the British export models of education, religion (Christianity), the system of government, the legislature, the armed forces and the mercantile system.

This mindset that Europe was superior had repercussions that permeated every aspect of society. When the freed slaves were being educated, a strong emphasis was placed on curricula focusing on Europe. They were knowledgeable in European history, literature, geography and music. Where music was concerned, a higher concentration of study was spent learning English hymns, old English folk tunes and very little notice was given to African music. This preference for a Eurocentric education remained unchanged for decades in the island. Lewin gives a synopsis of her own music education experience as a child in the 1930s:

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12 Nettleford, 174.
Our senior boys sang rousing music like “Soldiers’ Chorus” from *Faust*, and the girls revelled in singing Brahms’ “Lullaby” and other ladylike songs. Voices combined for hymns or anthems in two to four parts, as well as for ‘Ye Mariners of England’, “Land of Hope and Glory” and other British national songs that had to be prepared for the King’s Birthday and Empire Day each year.\(^\text{13}\)

How complete this psychological shift was considering that the demography of the population by the 1800s had changed drastically. Whereas two centuries earlier, slaves accounted for less than 40% of the population, by the nineteenth century over 80% of the population was black. Assimilation was therefore complete. The citizens no longer saw themselves as direct descendants of Africa. The result of Europe and Africa meeting on foreign soil created, “New challenges to aesthetic sensibilities, and a re-ordering of priorities with respect to creative artistic activity, patterns of kinship, novel orientations in divine worship, distinctive attitudes to political authority and variations on the modes of production, distribution and exchange.”\(^\text{14}\)

Finally, the importance of African traditions shifted significantly over the four-plus centuries of colonial rule. Colonialism and slavery were the main factors which enabled the evolution of socio-cultural practices among the enslaved Africans and their descendants. A new language was created to meet the needs of this colonial society, and, this creolized language, patois, was used on the plantations as a mode of communication, both by master and slave. It played a pivotal role in folk songs, which was one of their creative outlets for artistic expression. Folk songs were used to provide domestic entertainment for the slaves, but were also used to transmit coded messages to slaves on

\(^{13}\) Lewin, *Rock It Come Over*, 6.

neighboring plantations. Additionally, they were an integral component in divine worship. The slaves’ reliance on their African heritage waned with increased exposure to the European culture, which led to the freed slaves adopting the cultural habits of their British masters. Colonialism and slavery inevitably enabled the denigration of African traditions and the exaltation of the European culture as the perceived standard of civilization.
CHAPTER III
POST-COLONIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING FOLK MUSIC IN JAMAICA AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Jamaica’s independence from Great Britain on August 6, 1962, represented a culmination of social and cultural change steeped in the tenets of nationalism that swept through the Caribbean in earlier decades. This chapter concentrates on two additional factors that have contributed to the perceptual changes of Jamaican folk forms in the post-colonial era. These factors are the implementation of cultural policy by the Jamaican government and the artistic changes that occurred among members of the artisan class. These actions by both government and citizens alike were significant as they *inter alia* were the impetus for the citizenry accepting its Afro-centric origins with pride.

In the early twentieth century, the various European colonies in the Caribbean region began to voice their contempt towards colonialism and the imperial powers under which they were governed. Concerns were raised about the need for self-determinacy and government, as well as the disparity between the social conditions of the blacks and whites. There were numerous episodes of civil unrest in the island which led to Jamaica gaining independence from Britain. There was increasing disgruntlement among Jamaicans who believed that the political system and social infrastructure were established and operated solely with the British imperialists in mind; and the results of the fact finding Moyne Commission provided incontrovertible evidence that supported the claims of the local citizenry in this regard. The Royal (Moyne) Commission under Lord Moyne’s directive was a commission of inquiry appointed by the crown on August
5, 1938 to investigate the socio-economic conditions in several of the British colonial islands. The islands in question were Barbados, British Guiana (Guyana), British Honduras (Belize), Jamaica, the Leeward Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Windward Islands. Unlike previous Commissions of Enquiry that tried to validate the actions of the colonial administration and prove that the social unrests were wrongful acts by the citizenry; this commission showed:

the recognition by the Colonial Office, for the first time, that the unrest in the West Indies was neither the work of agitators, nor blind protest, but the expression of a more fundamental malaise in the region as a whole - and, by way of corollary, that a regional programme rather than mere island palliatives was required for its solution.\(^{15}\)

Further, the last waning years of colonialism only served to perpetuate the polarization between blacks and whites. The government favored the upper middle class and this was obvious through the policies that were implemented. The authorities discouraged industrialization and manufacturing, incorporated systems of taxation that overwhelmed the poor and relieved the wealthy, and denied educational opportunities to the lower class that were black. Also, a class system was created that relegated blacks at the base of the social structure. Sherlock and Bennet allude to the fact that Jamaica needed to radically change its modus operandi as no national unity existed:

The British Crown was the only symbol of unity. For the upper and middle classes it represented protection and the preservation of privilege. For the working class it meant persistent poverty. The chief dividing factor was race, but Euro-Jamaica masked this fact with a ritual of pretence…No one who is progressive talks about racial consciousness. Up to the 1900’s there was little sentiment of national unity and little that could be described as a Jamaican culture. How could it have been otherwise when for two centuries and up to the abolition of the slave trade freshly arrived Africans were separated from each other and distributed to

different plantations? Or when many Euro-Jamaicans saw Britain as home and Jamaica as a place of exile?\textsuperscript{16}

The citizens were divided not only along racial lines but also along class divisions; in essence, two Jamaicas existed. More importantly, the entire social and political system reflected the vast chasm between the social classes. The education system by providing opportunities to the white upper class only served to perpetuate social and economic differences. The link with educational opportunity was clear. “The social system was largely regulated by the educational institutions of the colony. Consequently, the financially well-entrenched white minority could easily dominate the social and economic scene, while insisting that a free society existed without a legal basis for racial discrimination.”\textsuperscript{17} From a social perspective the arts failed to reflect the images and philosophy of the citizens. The artisan class was a struggling community whose works received very little support from the populace. Up until the late 1930s, there were no institutions created to support the development of local art. Coupled with this were the content that the artists chose to either draw or use in poems. As Michael Manley observed, Jamaican poets spoke of “daffodils and snow neither of which are noticeably a part of the Jamaican scene.”\textsuperscript{18} This observation is important for it attests to the social psychology present at that time. In spite of the nationalistic efforts by some, despite the

\textsuperscript{16} Sherlock and Bennett, 389.


social unrests, and the stark disparity between the living conditions of the whites and blacks; there was a collective psychological thought which pervade the society in the belief that they should not embrace their African memes. The lack of cohesion between the social classes, a necessary element towards unifying the country was the end result of this great social, racial and economic divide.

Recognizing the need for social and economic reform, the Jamaican government created institutions geared toward addressing the deficiencies in the nation state. As such, several institutions were established to develop a new cultural awareness among Jamaicans; primarily Afro-Jamaicans, including the Jamaica School of Music, the Jamaica School of Art, the Jamaica School of Drama, and the Jamaica School of Dance. However, Jamaica was so steeped in the tenets of British imperialism that these institutions were ineffective at creating change. Initially, these schools curricula mirrored the curricula found in European schools. Nowhere was this more evident than at the Jamaica School of Music which was built in 1961 and for its first ten years had a curriculum fashioned after the music schools in Britain:

In the beginning, then, the only music taught at the Jamaica School of Music was in the European “classical” tradition. All the staff except one, were imported from Britain and the system of training was no different from that in the Royal College or the Royal Academy.19

It was not until 1976, a period of heightened nationalist cultural change when these institutions were amalgamated to form the Cultural Training Center (CTC), that they became increasingly effective in addressing the creation and preservation of a new

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Jamaican identity in the arts. Its purpose was two-fold. First, it created a system to document, nurture, develop and preserve the Jamaican culture. Secondly, in so doing, the CTC provided the catalyst necessary for integrating the “two Jamaicas.” As Nettleford points out, the CTC was “a tertiary-level educational complex designed to provide the country with a cadre of trained cultural agents, art teachers and creative arts practitioners as well as to foster field research and analysis.” This commitment towards field research and analysis is evidenced by Olive Lewin’s research on Jamaican folk music that is housed at the Folk Music Research Unit (established in 1966) at the Jamaica School of Music. This music unit was the initiative of anthropologist and former Jamaican Prime Minister Edward Seaga, then Minister of Finance and Culture in the nine year old nation, who saw the need for the documentation and preservation of Jamaican folk music and traditions. According to Seaga:

> It is necessary, therefore to create a central pool of material where firstly the researcher can go for further information, but also where the creative artist can go, so as to be able to get his material which he uses as a point of departure in the creative process, to enable him to create in the performing arts, material which properly reflects the folk basis of his performance.\(^\text{21}\)

But why should a government place such emphasis on establishing institutions that inculcate a new social awareness and thinking among its citizens? The answer to this lies in the importance for accomplishing cultural parity. Four centuries of colonial rule had served to create two types of culture in colonial Jamaica, high culture and low culture


and by extension, high art and low art. Jamaicans viewed the arts and culture of Europe as high art, while folk forms and Africana were perceived as low art. So thorough was the colonial system in enabling as Nettleford purports “one set of migrants (the Europeans) as the prescribed superordinate power over another set of migrants (the Africans) brought involuntarily and kept in a carefully nurtured captivity,” 22 that it created the ethos of “white Europe good, black Jamaica bad” mentality which did not auger well for a burgeoning independent nation. It was inevitable; the mindset of Jamaicans had to change in the post-independence era.

The arts can facilitate social transition as citizens use their imagination and intellect to change their perceived state of existence. It is “the mirror through which a society perceives itself; and it is a mirror that must be held up to young societies constantly if they are to achieve a sense of their separate identity in the world. Clearly, therefore, the development of the latent artistic talent of a society is important to its growth and critical to the process of psychological transformation with which we [the government] are concerned.”23 The arts draw on every facet of Jamaican life in terms of religions, dances, customs, and languages. Religious themes are centered on Christianity and also African religious cults as Pukkumina, Kumina, Ettu, Maroon, Revival and Goombey. Most cults incorporate dances that are integral to several parts of the ceremony and worship. These cults “demonstrate the African-inherited tendency to integrate song, dance and instrumental accompaniment in the musical event. Broadly speaking, they


adhere to shamanistic and spiritist concepts inherited from African ancestors, in some cases with a mixture of Christian beliefs.” Change is therefore accomplished by the creation of art forms that reflect the social happenings and lifestyle of the citizenry. Additionally, the arts and society are so inextricably bound that they both facilitate the creation of a new nationalistic ideal. Jamaicans cultivated the arts to be more involved in determining their history and future. Now, post-independence, Jamaicans could answer the proverbial question “who are we and why are we here?” from the inside and not through the eyes of Europe. By establishing these institutional cultural frameworks, Jamaicans now had the ability to create a new identity via the creative arts. Using the Jamaica School of Music as a prime example, O’Gorman notes that by 1977 Jamaican folk music and the study of same was “considered germane to the training of all its students” Which contrasts with her observation of the music school in the 1960s that I previously made reference to, where the curriculum mirrored those from the Royal Schools of Music in London. At that time, folk music was noticeably absent from the curriculum.

However, change did not occur solely in the country’s administrative arm of government. It also occurred through the activities of courageous individuals, especially those in the creative arts, who were willing to think outside the parameters of colonialism. Of significance is the research by the American Frederick Cassidy and Robert B. LePage of Great Britain. Their studies on the creolized languages in the United

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24 Lewin, _Rock it Come Over_, 147.

States, England, and Jamaica are of great import as it occurred in an era when little scholarship on non-traditional languages was done. The acceptance of the Jamaican Patois as a genuine twentieth-century language stems primarily from their extensive research. Their scholastic efforts gave credence to the fact that cultural development needs the support of analysis and research. The artistic contributions of Louise Bennet, a renowned poet, whose literary works in patois coupled with her international performances in the vernacular have not only received critical acclaim worldwide, but they have also provided enough material for scholarly research on the Jamaican language.

Similar changes were occurring simultaneously in the music world, for example, the emergence of several music groups and individuals performing folk music to large audiences both locally and overseas. Groups like the Frats Quintet and Cudjoe Minstrels in the pre-independence era certainly paved the way for groups like the Jamaican Folk Singers, The National Dance Theatre Company (NDTC) Singers, The University Singers and the Carifolk Singers to emerge in the post independence era. The Jamaican Folk Singers founded by ethnomusicologist Olive Lewin is arguably Jamaica’s premier folk exemplar to emerge after independence. Their contributions to the preservation of folk music are significant and are correlated to the extensive research done by their founder for the Folk Music Research Unit. Additionally, their performances provided opportunities for other groups that emerged after them. According to Nettleford, the Jamaican Folk Singers:

was the custodian and transmitter of much in the storehouse of the Olive Lewin collection, started for the government-established Jamaica Folk Music research.

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26 Frederick Cassidy and R.B. LePage are the authors of *Jamaica Talk*, and *A Dictionary of Jamaican English* respectively.
Unit in the mid-1960’s. The singers are artistes in the spirit of the Olympics, bringing distinction to their art and the country on tours abroad and through recordings, which clearly serve as guide for smaller and more recent ensembles with a feel for choral theatre…As a major contributor in the transmission of Jamaica folk music from field to stage, the Jamaican Folk Singers have had a strong impact.27

Pamela O’Gorman also mentions the Jamaican Folk Singers and their pioneering efforts that have proven to be catalytic in this transition from field to the concert stage. Of great import is her mentioning that “We should not underestimate the impact which the Jamaican Folk Singers had when they first appeared on the Jamaican stage. Here, for the first time since the Frats Quintet, folk song was treated with the kind of respect that was given to classical music.”28 In essence, the Jamaican Folk Singers were able to establish parity between the folk and classical genres.

Other prominent groups began to emerge like the National Chorale of Jamaica, who, along with the University Singers, performed mostly Western European classical music in their fledgling years, an indication of the strong British music education influence in Jamaica. In later years however, both groups especially the University Singers began to perform choral arrangements of folk songs. This is significant as the performances by these groups were heavily patronized by Jamaica’s social elite that still clung to their British upbringing. It also indicates a major shift in social thinking, that it was no longer taboo to perform and indentify with one’s African ancestry. In all areas of the arts there was the emergence of a new national pride in things Jamaican. The


Jamaican choral music scene was very vibrant providing much needed creative outlets for artistic expression. Additionally, these groups were also accomplishing three feats. Firstly, they were keeping the folk tradition alive in the Jamaican society. Secondly, their performances were exposing the younger generation to their rich heritage, and thirdly, they enabled musicians to compose and/or arrange folk songs for future performances and in so doing, added new literature to the repertoire of printed folk music available.

The ensemble performances of folk music coupled with the evolving attitudes of Jamaicans regarding their African heritage enabled the emergence of solo artists who were willing to perform Jamaican Folk Songs in a recital setting. This transition is huge as it represents a concerted effort in creating a unique blend of contrasting styles between the music of Western Europe and the folk style of Afro-Jamaica. Additionally, the majority of classically trained Jamaican musicians and singers lived and performed overseas, which meant that their target audience was primarily comprised of non-Jamaicans. Thus their ability to expose Jamaican music to alien nationalities was great.

Equally great were the composers who were willing to arrange in this genre. Musical pioneers like Olive Lewin of Jamaican Folk Singers fame and Noel Dexter, musical director of the University Singers, have carved a niche for themselves with their arrangements for solo voice and piano. The efforts of these musicians cannot be overstated. Both were adults when Jamaica gained independence and have seen firsthand the evolution of the Jamaican society. Mr. Dexter alluded to the fact that arrangements of Jamaican folk songs were lacking in his youth and that society even up to the late 1950s was highly intolerable of Afrocentric forms and music. As he states:
Everything had to reflect Europe as this was considered high art and folk forms were considered low art and primitive. Even in the 1950’s and 1960’s after Independence, some Jamaicans still looked on folk music in a pejorative manner. Things have changed since then, now, people want to hear folk music; we are no longer ashamed or, as ashamed of our ancestry. These words have been echoed by Peter Ashbourne, the modern flag bearer of Jamaican folk compositions (some of which will be analyzed in later chapters) who has noticed an increasing sense of national pride by Jamaicans over the years. Essentially, Jamaica has transitioned from a colonial to a post-colonial paradigm where music is concerned. This is due to the reverse of cross-culturalism or métissage taking place. Whereas, in colonial times, métissage resulted in the creation of a hybrid culture that perceived the cultural practices of Europe as superior and those of the native bred as inferior; in the post-colonial era, the reverse has occurred. This is evidenced in Jamaica in the music education curricula which now draw on both European and Jamaican forms in the teaching of music in schools. Such was not the case in the early 20th century where, as she points out music, “like other parts of education, ignored or neglected the vibrant Afro-Jamaican musical traditions of the majority and constructed an image of European classical music as being part of ‘high culture,’ the epitome of good taste and cultivation, commandeered by a tiny majority.”

In essence, the transition then is significant as it reflects the cultural awakening of the Jamaican society in the appreciation of things that reflected them. This cultural renaissance enabled those aforementioned musicians to

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29 Noel Dexter, telephone interview with composer, 9 April, 2008.


31 Hickling-Hudson, 38.
arrange folk songs initially for choirs, and then, eventually, for the classical recital; a notably European art form.

There are aesthetic and artistic differences that must be made when performing in a recital setting. Most choral groups in Jamaica performing in the folk idiom rely more on movement and the augmented vocal sound in their portrayals of the song. In a recital setting, movements are reduced to poignant gestures that augment the soloist’s vocal presentation. The types of instruments used are also different. Most Jamaican choral folk ensembles show a preference for a drum and either a guitar or banjo for basic accompanying purposes. Sometimes the drum plays a significant role in the rhythmic enhancement of some songs. But, the choral voice is more superior in this regard. In a recital setting, the piano is the preferred instrument, usually serving two roles. First, in a subservient role as an accompanying tool to the voice and secondly, being a character in some songs. Great effort is placed on the collaborative qualities between singer and pianist to ensure good artistic cohesion. In the works of Messrs. Peter Ashbourne and Noel Dexter neither voice nor piano is superior, instead both are integral composites in a symbiotic relationship which when good cohesion is attained results in a unique presentation. Because of this, the piano is seminal to the recital arrangements of folk songs. It provides the rhythmic qualities that hand clapping, drumming or dancing would accomplish in a choral ensemble. Additionally, preludes and postludes are included allowing the songs theme to be firmly established prior to the vocal entry, and, interludes provide a unique interplay between both voice and piano that are absent in chorale works.
Prior to 1962, Jamaica was not a nation state, and was therefore obligated to the political dictates that emanated from the European metropole. At that time the Jamaican society had a strong penchant for the Eurocentric lifestyle and its cultural aesthetic. Additionally, Jamaicans saw themselves as British citizens because on paper they were. It is therefore not surprising that there was a collective lack of interest in the pursuit and preservation of art forms whether visual or aural which reflected the African traits of Jamaicans. However, the actual and the expected were never in sync. The disparities in lifestyles and economic wealth between the locals and the Europeans created a social divide which fed nationalist desires among the locales that resulted in independence and the birth of a new nation.

Independence served as a catalyst in enabling a nationalistic desire towards the creation of a new cultural aesthetic that reflected the lifestyle and the ancestry of Jamaicans. The cultural polices implemented by succeeding governments, coupled with the pioneering efforts of the Jamaican artisan class, especially those in music have helped to document indigenous and creolized art forms of the Jamaican people. This has also allowed the birth of new dimensions in the folk genre. This is first seen with the emergence of ensembles willing to perform folk songs and other folk forms in concerts vis-à-vis a domestic locale. Where folk songs are concerned, this rejuvenation enabled a plethora of choral groups to add new music to their programs that Jamaicans could relate to. When notable Jamaican composers embarked on arranging these songs for solo voice recital performances, it represented yet another quantum leap in the new cultural aesthetic. Their efforts represent an amalgamation of both European and Jamaican folk
forms into a cohesive unit that rely on each other to work. How these units function symbiotically will be discussed in the chapters that analyses the compositions of Noel Dexter and Peter Ashbourne.
CHAPTER IV

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES

Noel Dexter

“Mr. Dexter has helped Jamaican audiences to listen to music in a different kind of way. He is definitely a seminal contributor to cultural development and to artistic expression.”

-- Professor Rex Nettleford, The University Singers Concert Season 2002

Such superlatives have been used by many Jamaicans to describe the musical and artistic efforts of Noel George Dexter, one of Jamaica’s leading choral directors and one of that country’s premier arranger of folk songs. He was born on December 21, 1938 in a rural village in Portland, Jamaica; and received his formal education in that parish. He attended the Titchfield High School in 1952 where he successfully sat the University of Cambridge’s external exams; receiving the Cambridge School Certificate (C.S.C.) in 1956 and the Cambridge Higher School Certificate (C.H.S.C.) in 1958. Upon graduating from Titchfield, he moved to the capital city of Kingston and taught at Ardenne High School as a pre-trained teacher for six years before entering the University of the West Indies (U.W.I.) in 1964 to read for a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics, which he received in 1967.

Dexter’s involvement in music began in his young years when he played the pianoforte and the pipe organ for church. The desire to learn music was not an option for him; his parents felt that learning an instrument would provide the necessary polish that befitted a gentleman. As a university student, he joined the University ‘UWI’ Singers and remained a member of that organization after completing his baccalaureate degree. The
year 1970 marked the beginning of Dexter’s formal music training when he entered the Jamaica School of Music to prepare for the Trinity College of Music external examinations in which he was successful. Upon its completion he earned the Licentiate Diploma in Class Music Teaching in 1971. He was also among a handful of scholars who were selected from the Caribbean and Latin American region to participate in a jointly sponsored program by the Organization of American States (OAS) – Department of Cultural Affairs and the Instituto Interamericano de Etnomusicologia y Folklore receiving at the course’s end a Diploma in Musicology and Folklore Studies. Further studies were done at the Royal School of Music in London where he received a Certificate in Church Choir Training in 1980. Post 1980, he has participated in several summer programs offered by Westminster Choir College where he worked with vocal pedagogues like Scott McCoy, James Jordan and Helen Kemp.

Mr. Dexter’s involvement in choral directing began in 1962 when he founded the Kingston Singers and stayed at that organization’s helm for 25 years. They gave performances in Jamaica, and during their most productive years, gave concert tours in the Bahamas, Grand Cayman and the United States. Over the years, group interest waned as the choristers became more involved in other areas of their lives. In 1987, the members of the group agreed to an amicable dissolution. However, Dexter does not regard his sojourn with the Kingston Singers as his professional entry into the choral directing world. In his opinion his professional ingression as a choral director began by accident in 1977 when he joined the faculty of the University of the West Indies as Director of Music and by happenstance became head of the UWI Singers. In his own words:
When I joined the staff of the University as Director of Music in 1977, the Singers [UWI] as it were then invited me to take over the group and I have been doing that ever since. It so happened that when I came on staff, I wanted to do a choir of my own as choral music is really a part of me, a part of my whole life. And, the Singers felt that we should not have too many groups competing...doing the same sort of style [thing]. So they invited me as captain and I have been doing that.

Over the years, under his tutelage, the UWI Singers have grown to become the premier music exemplar of the university. They have travelled extensively performing in Jamaica, the Caribbean, North America, and Europe. Additionally, Mr. Dexter over his nearly four decades as director has effectively changed the primary focus of the group from a strict classical repertoire to include a wider variety of styles and genres. As he observes:

The whole style of the repertoire, those things have changed...When I was a student, we had only 16 singers, in terms of numbers in one thing, we had four people to each part. The repertoire consisted of 16th Century European music...madrigals and motets. We [today] have a program which is far more varied. We started adding in my time, gospel songs, and we started singing songs from Jamaican musicals, mainly the pantomimes, in addition, we found that we could use a lot of things from our traditional heritage. So we started doing suites with Revival, one year we even did something with Rasta [ras ta fari].

Mr. Dexter has also served in the capacity of music educator, which is another area that showcases his talents. He has taught music at various educational levels ranging from early childhood education when he taught at Mona Preparatory and Ardenne High School. At the tertiary level he was a music lecturer at Mico Teacher’s College and the United Theological College of the West Indies. His knowledge on folk music has made him a sought after clinician both locally and internationally. Locally, he has conducted workshops for the Jamaican Cultural Development Commission and the Ministry of Education. In the Caribbean region he has conducted workshops for the National

32 “Noel Dexter: 25 Years and Counting.” DVD.

33 “Noel Dexter:25 Years and Counting,” DVD.
Foundation for the Arts in Barbados, the Ministry of Education in the British Virgin Islands, the School of Music at the University of the US Virgin Islands, the Dominican Department of Culture and the Barbados Council of Churches.

Inasmuch as Mr. Dexter has excelled as a conductor and choral director, pianist/accompanist and educator, the field of composing reveals yet another dimension to his musicianship and artistry. The first opportunity to compose music occurred in 1962 when another musician, Lloyd Hall invited Mr. Dexter and his group the Kingston Singers as guest performers at his music festival. This was independence year and Jamaican nationalism was high, and the desire for something identifiably Jamaican was great. As Mr. Dexter recalls:

My first experiment of writing the Psalms was for a St. Cecelia Festival at Scott’s Kirk [church]. Lloyd Hall invited me [and the Kingston Singers] to perform as the guest choir. When he sent me the program and asked me to perform something on there, it was all European music. I felt the program needed something more of a different nature to make it interesting. I wrote Psalm 23 and Psalm 150 and they were very well received. After that we were composing hymns, anthems, songs on their own and in a Jamaican rhythmic style.  

Over the years his reputation as a composer has grown. His usage of the Jamaican elements such as the mento rhythm, syncopations and the creolized language or patois in his pieces gives them a strong and distinctly Jamaican flavor. Two of his compositions O Lord, we are Ready and For the Decades Past were commissioned pieces. The first for the Churches of Christ “Hymn for World Convention” in 1983 and the latter by the Anglican Diocese of Jamaica and Grand Cayman to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of St. Luke’s Church in Kingston, Jamaica in 1987. Dexter has also composed new

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34Noel Dexter, telephone interview with composer, 22 February, 2010.
music for Jamaican musicals known as pantomime and has won numerous awards for his theatrical efforts. Where solo compositions are concerned, his first arrangement was *Mi Alone* which he composed for the Jamaican soprano June Thompson-Lawson who wanted additional material for her recital. His collection of songs for solo voice is small. In addition to *Mi Alone*, he has two other arrangements *All De Seven Rivers* and *On Dat Great Day*.

Over the years, Noel Dexter has received several awards for his contribution to music and cultural development in Jamaica. Among his list are the five Jamaica Music Industry Awards (JAMI) that he has received; three for concert performances by the UWI Singers and two for his compositions for pantomime productions. In 1979, the Institute of Jamaica awarded him the Silver Musgrave Medal for his contributions to Jamaican art and culture. In 1990, he was conferred the Commander of the Order of Distinction (O.D.), the fourth highest national honor by the Jamaican Government for his outstanding music contribution. Noel Dexter, however, considers the Vice Chancellor Award (1995) from the University of the West Indies (U.W.I.) and the Pelican Award (1996) from the U.W.I. Guild of Graduates as his most treasured gems.

Peter Ashbourne

Peter Ashbourne-Firman is arguably one of the best Jamaican musicians of his generation. He is comfortable as a performer as well as a composer and is equally at ease in classical and non-classical genres. Born on July 14, 1950, he believes his birthplace was Kingston, Jamaica, but is dubious of this fact as both he and his sister were adopted by Thelma Ashbourne. He attended St. Hugh’s Preparatory School and became the
youngest student to attend Wolmer’s High School for Boys when he matriculated at seven and a half years old in 1957. However, the academic rigors of achieving a high school education required his staying there for 12 years, as he quips “apparently I was bright [smart] then, but it didn’t take long for high school to straighten me out.” He graduated from that school in 1968 after being successful in both the ordinary and advanced level external exams from the University of Cambridge.

Ashbourne’s first introduction to music occurred very early in his youth; he recalls being declared a genius by the renowned British musician Dr. Harold Dark, then an examiner for the Royal School of Music whom Ashbourne met at age nine. He had a natural proclivity for the piano and violin, the latter he studied privately with highly acclaimed music teacher Doris Livingstone under whose tutelage he took the licentiate exams in violin performance (LRSM) offered by the Royal Schools of Music and received that degree at age seventeen.

During the summer of 1969 while transitioning from high school to enter the University of the West Indies to read for a Bachelor’s degree in Sociology; Ashbourne worked as an intern for Federal Records in Kingston, as an assistant to the Artist and Repertoire Person. He considered his time there as enjoyable, that the work was easy to accomplish and that he learnt a lot about the pop music world. He says: “this is fun, there was not a whole lot of discipline…it came easily for me. I am operating in pop music and I already have an LRSM [performance degree] on the violin. So [with] the amount of technical knowledge I had, I was already over qualified for the type of pop music they

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His natural abilities at music however were not fully realized yet. Ashbourne attended the University of the West Indies for two years and admitted that studying the social science and science subjects at the tertiary level least interested him. Realizing her son’s waywardness and his natural music abilities, his mother applied on his behalf to Boston University, and in the fall of 1970, he began his music studies there. He was not happy at that institution, and after studying there for two weeks, he transferred to Berklee College of Music. His love for electronic music and atonality were fed during his sojourn at Berklee. In 1974, he graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in composition from that institution.

Upon graduating, Mr. Ashbourne returned to Jamaica to work at the newly formed African-American Department at the Jamaica School of Music. His supervisor was the highly acclaimed American Jazz trombonist Melba Liston. Unfortunately, there were several under-currents that affected his working at the music school. Firstly, his supervisor, Liston, was intimidated by Peter and other young colleagues, who, though lacking the practical experience that she had amassed over the years, were seen as potential threats for her position. Secondly, Liston and the principal of the School of Music had irreconcilable differences which led to the cessation of her employment with the school. Ms. Liston eventually returned to the United States.

Where composing is concerned, Ashbourne is comfortable in both classical and commercial music. His commercial music endeavors have their incipient foundation with his internship at Federal Records and grew when he composed advertising jingles for the

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electronic media. Since 1970, Peter has composed over six hundred jingles and from the mid-1970s through the 1980s, he has consistently captured over sixty percent of the electronic media jingle market. He attributes his success in commercial music to his training and his versatility:

> with the jingles I discovered that not only was it a source of income, but I found I could do it. Not everybody can do jingles you know, and especially [in] those days, you had to hop around with styles. It would be some fox-trot melody one day and it would be whatever the modern thing was then, and then the next time it would be a half classical thing. So you would be hopping around with styles, you would be doing pop this minute and a classical thing the next.  

Among the list of satisfied clients are Air Jamaica, Sherwin-Williams Paints, Appleton Rum, Red Stripe Beer, Coca Cola and Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Since 1975, Ashbourne has composed, performed and arranged music for the stage. He has over nine original compositions, and is a sought after composer for the pantomimes staged by the Little Theater Movement (LTM), and dance music for the National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica (NDTC). Some of his original music compositions for the stage include three pantomimes - *The Witch* (1976/1977), *Johnny Reggae* (1978/1979) and *Ginneral B* (1983/1984), and two dance pieces - *Two Drums of Babylon* (1980) and *Puncie* (1985). In the classical music arena, Ashbourne has eight published compositions and several unpublished shorter works for chamber groups. Four of his compositions, *Jamaica Suite* (1981), *Avia* (1986), *Alleluja* (1995) and *Ring Games and Jubilee* (2003) were commissioned by the American Wind Orchestra, the University for Music in Graz, Austria, the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation and the European Union Chamber Orchestra respectively. His last major composition was *Five Songs for*  

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37Peter Ashbourne, telephone interview with composer, 6 January 2009.
High Voice and Piano that was completed in 2005. This last effort in addition to Jamaican Suite, Alleluja and Ring Games and Jubilee are all based on Jamaican folk forms. He recalls a childhood experience that in retrospect has influenced his use of Jamaican folk forms in his classical compositions:

My aunt is a music teacher. She discovered my music talent and I ended up playing the piano. On that piano my aunt relaxed the rules. So I could play a folk song on the piano but not a pop song. The folk songs were a little bit second class music. Independence comes along and in 1963, Eddie [Edward] Seaga [former Minister of Culture] started this festival and they had a category for violin. I entered this category and one category which required all competitors to perform a folk song. I put together this medley of folk songs and won first prize. That same folk song medley became the basis for that string quartet piece [Folk Suite for String Quartet] many years later on.  

His cycle for high voice and piano will be analyzed in succeeding chapters.

As a performer, Peter Ashbourne has formed several ensembles over the years. He has collaborated with other musicians in both the classical and pop music genres. He is the brainchild of two chamber music ensembles - Pimento Ensemble and Musixa Xaymaca. In the pop music arena he has formed groups like The Peter Ashbourne Affair and a jazz ensemble called Ashes. His musical expertise has been drawn on by the Prime Minister of Jamaica for the Prime Minister’s Gala Concerts for the years 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2005. His last major feat was being the musical director, composer and conductor for the opening ceremonies of the International Cricket Council’s Cricket World Cup which was held in Jamaica in 2007.

Over the years, Mr. Ashbourne has been the recipient of several awards. In 1992 he received a special award by the Advertising Agency Association of Jamaica for his

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38 Ashbourne Interview, 24 March, 2010.
significant contributions to Jamaica’s advertising media. His musical talents have been recognized by his peers on two major occasions, the first in 1993 when he won the JAMI Award for his song *The Winds of Hope* and in 2002 he won the Jamaica Federation of Musicians Award for Best Instrumental Album. In 2004, his musical efforts earned him the Prime Minister’s Award for Excellence in Music.

As an educator, Peter has been a lecturer at the Edna Manley College since 2001. He has conducted workshops and seminars at several universities overseas. His knowledge and expertise on Jamaican popular music has been recognized in international academic circles. Since 1986, he has conducted workshops on Jamaican Art Music, Reggae Music, and the Development of Jamaican Pop Music for the University of Southern Maine, and the University for Music and Dramatic Arts in Graz, Austria.
CHAPTER V

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SONGS BY NOEL DEXTER.

Jamaican folk songs of a religious nature that were used in a worship setting fell into three main categories:

1) Hymns and choruses,
2) Songs used particularly for movement in certain types of cult groups, and
3) Soul songs which can be used in any area.

The three songs provided by Noel Dexter for analysis - Mi Alone, On Dat Great Day and All de Seven Rivers – are religious Jamaican folk music. To understand them requires a brief explanation of two of the six religious cult groups that exists in Jamaica - Revival and Pukkumina; the others are Myal, Kumina, Zion and Ras Tafari.

Pukkumina, or Pocomania, is regarded as a religious cult in Jamaica, although those associated with its practice say otherwise. Its closest counterpart in terms of ideas and ceremonial rituals is the Revival cult which amalgamates Christianity and African religions. Pukkumina’s hierarchical structure consists of officers and members with distinct roles and duties. The head of the group is known as the shepherd(ess) and (s)he supervises several officers who perform ritual acts that pertain to the calling of “the spirits” and attending to the members in which these spirits possess. This cult incorporates the use of preaching and biblical readings in their rituals.

Music is used not only to augment the devotional aspects of the service, but it is the primary mode of communication. The service or meeting commences with singing that is interspersed with preaching until select members become possessed or “get into
spirit.” The songs used are very tuneful, varying in tempo and tone over the evening’s duration. They are either in a slow 4/4 time or a faster 2/2 time. The former is usually sung in the embryonic stage of the evening while the faster 2/2 tempo is preferred as the evening progresses.

The largest African-Christian cult in Jamaica is Revival. Its tenets encompass the practices of Pukkumina and Zion (another religious cult) and a lot of the rituals practiced by both the Roman Catholic Church and the European Baptist missionaries. The emphasis on the rite of baptism by the Baptist church proved especially appealing to the Revivalists as it paralleled the water rites of African cults. The Revivalists believed that this was an effective way of ridding the body of evil spirits. The ceremonies performed by the Revival sect also relied heavily on music and movement. Songs that were usually performed contained melodic, harmonic and rhythmic improvisations. Most songs and choruses show the unique blend of African and Western influences in that, the songs were mostly adaptations of Western style hymn tunes with their harmonic, and melodic content showing an affinity of same, albeit, the treatment of meter and prosody is based on African-Jamaican speech patterns. Lewin states:

> demonstrates the strongly African-Jamaican treatment given to these Western metric schemes, with much syncopation against contrasting rhythmic patterns provided by the instrumental and body percussion accompaniment.\(^{39}\)

With this brief introduction on the Pukkumina and Revival cults it is now appropriate to focus on the songs of Noel Dexter.

All De Seven Rivers

Chorus
All de river dem was bank to bank
All de river was down
All de river dem was bank to bank
All de seven rivers

Verse 1
Some come from Rock Hall, Some come from Gayle
Some come from Bog Walk, All de seven rivers

(Chorus)

Verse 2
Some come from Buff Bay, Some come from Vere
Some come from Yallahs, All de seven rivers

(Chorus)

Vocal Range f⁴ - a b₅
Tessitura a b⁴ – c⁵

The song’s text should not be taken in a literal sense. It is metaphorically referring to a huge Revival meeting. The “rivers” in this case refer to the people making the sojourn from various towns over the island such as Bog Walk, Vere, Gayle, etc. Care should be taken to adhere to the prosodic requirements of the song, especially where the meter and syncopation are concerned. The composer follows closely the rhythmic speech patterns of patois which gives credence to the accentuation of “off-beats” becoming the tonic stress of certain measures. This is especially seen in the first line of the refrain “All de river dem was bank to bank” that shows an emphasis placed on the second subdivision of beats 1 & 2 as can be seen at measures 5 and 6 (Example 1).
Example 1. “All de Seven Rivers,” mm. 5-6

Where diction is concerned, care should be taken not to close certain vowels of some of the words such as “river,” “down,” and “all.” It is suggested to maintain broader vowel sounds especially on these words without compromising vowel height and depth. An outline is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>IPA (English)</th>
<th>IPA (Patois)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>river</td>
<td>['rivə]</td>
<td>'riva]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>down</td>
<td>[daʊn]</td>
<td>dɔŋ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all</td>
<td>[ ɑl]</td>
<td>al ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The accompaniment is very simple, revealing a harmonic language that lacks any complexity or dense tonal structures. Dexter uses very simple harmonic language and chord progressions in the accompaniment. The simplicity of the song’s accompaniment ensures that the piano is always in a supportive role to the voice. It also ensures that the vocal line can be expressive sans unnecessary embellishments taking place.
On Dat Great Day

Refrain:
On dat great day, on dat great day
Den a how we a go walk wid God, on that great day

Verse 1
Satan put on ‘im long white boot,
swear to kin ‘im a go ketch man soul.
But a how we a go walk wid God, on dat great day.

(Refrain)

Verse 2
Wat a weep-in, wail-in, nashin of teet,’
An dem dat have no teet’,
De gum gwine haffi talk.
Den a how we a go walk wid God, On dat great Day.

“On Dat Great Day” is a revival song which focuses on the happenings of Judgment Day. An understanding of the text is very important as the singer will be required to subtly use nuance in each verse. The refrain, “on dat great day” is quite celebratory and should be sung with great proclamation. The composer in adhering to the prosodic requirements of the Jamaican dialect uses syncopated rhythms in the vocal line. This can be seen wherever the words “on dat great day” are sung, where; the second half of beat 2 is stressed as seen in the paired measures 6-8 (Example 2).
Example 2. “On Dat Great Day,” mm. 6-8

Similarly, the 8th notes in measure 14 which changes the meter of that measure follows the normal speech patterns of patois. The last verse shows a variation in the first line where, the syncopated rhythm changes from to.

In the former the second half of beat 2 was emphasized but this is replaced with the emphasis occurring on the word ‘great.’

The verses are to be sung at a slower tempo and in a quasi-parlando style to convey the pensive questioning of the singer. The accompaniment which is usually more involved during the refrain is reduced to provide chordal support when the verses are sung. This allows the singer to treat the verses as a recitative.

Whereas the opening refrain and that which follows verse 2 are the same, the last refrain however, is slightly different. The key of the song up to that point is F major, but the last refrain now begins in the dominant key of B♭ major, which results in not only a
tessitural change but certainly the melody being sung at higher pitch levels. This emphasizes the heightened celebratory level present, as well as provides a good climax on the last $B\flat$. The accompaniment has a march-like feel in the left hand, while the right hand has a syncopated rhythmic pattern, with the 8th notes of beat 4 emphasized (Example 3).

Example 3. “On Dat Great Day,” mm. 37-54
The octave doubling in the left hand at measures 46-51 is to emphasize the approach of the climax.
Mi Alone

Text
Mi alone Mi alone inna de wilderness
Mi alone mi alone inna de wilderness
Forty days and forty nights inna de wilderness
He was tempted by de devil inna de wilderness
He was tempted by de devil inna de wilderness
Forty days and forty nights inna de wilderness
Son of man son of man inna de wilderness
Son of man son of man inna de wilderness
Forty days and forty nights inna de wilderness

Vocal Range:  g#\(^4\) - g#\(^5\)
Tessitura:  g#\(^4\) - g#\(^5\)
Key:  E major

Although the text alludes to a purely Christian context, this song as mentioned by Ivy Baxter is borne out of the Pukkumina or Revival group tradition.\(^{40}\) It is normally sung by the shepherd and accompanied with hand clapping or humming by the congregation.

A detailed analysis of the text shows a very subtle transition from the suffering shepherd to that of Jesus which occurs at verse 2, where the singer sings in the third person “He was tempted by the devil inna de wilderness” instead of the first person as seen in the first line of verse 1.

The composer uses the melody of the second half of the verse “forty days and forty nights inna de wilderness” as the main thematic element in the introduction (Example 4a). This is also used again in measures 51-54 at the song’s closing, again, reiterating the number of days that Christ was tempted (Example 4b).

\(^{40}\)Baxter, 186.
Example 4(a). “Mi Alone,” mm. 1-4

Example 4(b). “Mi Alone,” mm. 51-55

The singer should ensure that the text is effectively communicated. The first verse should be sung in a relatively quiet voice since the singer at this point assumes the role of the shepherd.
Verse 2 should reflect the character change as the singer is now drawing parallels of the shepherd’s lament to that of Jesus’ trials by the devil. The increase in intensity is evident not only in the vocal line, but also in the accompaniment. Whereas minimum chord support is apparent in the first verse, the accompaniment becomes more involved in the second verse especially in the right hand. Additionally, the tempo change is noted by *con moto* at measure 22. The third and final verse should be performed with wild abandon. The modulation on a C chord or F major $V^6_5$ chord to F major at measure 38 (Example 5) provides harmonic intensity that is new to the song. Additionally, the upward shift in key by a semitone from E major to F major allows the vocal line to assume a declamatory role.

Example 5. “Mi Alone,” mm. 36-39

The broad markings on the notes of the vocal line further indicate that this verse should be sung dramatically. This is maintained through the climatic apex at measure 45 until
the fermata at measure 47 (Example 6). The final eight measures should be sung in a reflective state. The sustained C at measures 54-55 should be sung reticently (Example 4b).

Syncopated patterns tend to be on the words “inna di wilderness,” which translates to “in the wilderness” in English. The tonic stress occurs on the second syllable of the word “inna” although in spoken patois the word is pronounced [ina], from a pedagogical standpoint it should be sung [Ina] thus enabling the singer to maintain proper pharyngeal space and consistent vowel definition.

At measure 45, it is very important that neither singer nor accompanist begin the ritardando until after the word “man” and the 2nd chord are sung and played respectively (Example 6).

Example 6. “Mi Alone,” mm. 44-47
Fi Mi Love

Text:
Fi mi love have lion heart
Strong and everlasting only fi yu
Fi mi love will never die
Shining like the sunshine only fi yu.

If we part and never meet
Though we part and never meet
Fi mi love is like a king a reign
Strong and everlasting only fi yu.

Vocal Range: d\textsuperscript{4} – g\textsuperscript{5}

Tessitura: g\textsuperscript{4} – g\textsuperscript{5}

Key: C major

Tempo: Moderato (M.M. quarter note = 105)

The text of the song is one of reassurance and affirmation. In Jamaican tradition, it embodies the notion that the bonds of love and friendship when firmly established by friends will remain intact in spite of a physical separation due to time and space. The song establishes a mood of gentility and as such; the accompaniment is used only to support the voice. The piano accompaniment imitates the exquisite lyricism of the vocal line which moves in conjunct motion and avoids wide intervallic leaps.

This song is in a modified strophic form of A B A the lines “If we part and never meet again, though we part and never meet again, fi mi love is like a king a reign”
comprising the B section. The motif for “strong and everlasting only fi yu” is used in fragmentation throughout the piece first in a sequential chromatic pattern in the prelude in measures 1-6 and then as points for new material in various measures throughout the composition (Example 7).

Example 7. “Fi Mi Love,” mm. 1-5

(Measure 6)
The second half of the verse “only fi you” is used as a link between the verses and the refrain. Additionally it serves as a recurring motif to reinforce the main thematic element of the text, that the singer’s love remains unchanged and will always be eternally given. Also, because the song is so short, Ashbourne felt it was necessary to find creative ways to extend the music to avoid it becoming monotonous. As he states “by the time I got to this one [Fi mi love] I said to myself, ‘Jesus, how can I do this without it sounding like another ordinary version?’ This is a little bit of pushing the envelope a little…using the original tune in fragments to do new things and keep the interest alive.”41

Ashbourne uses the piano in a very supportive role here; it is always subservient to the voice, never overshadowing it. The accompaniment imitates the rhythmic patterns of the vocal line especially at the end of phrases and is especially poignant at measures 14 and 23 (Examples 8a and 8b).

Example 8(a). “Fi Mi Love,” mm. 11-15

\[\text{Example 8(a). “Fi Mi Love,” mm. 11-15} \]

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41 Peter Ashbourne telephone interview with composer, 7 January, 2009.
In the first verse, the accompaniment is kept very simple. Here, Ashbourne uses only the root of each chord to establish a sense of tonality as the music moves from a IV chord in measure 10 to the I chord measure 14. The character of the accompaniment changes and a stronger presence is felt at measures 42-45. At this point the accompaniment establishes a declamatory feel simulating the lion’s roar in the bass, while the singer reiterates passionately that his love has the strength of a lion by way of a rapidly ascending vocal line. The dynamic markings also suggest a heightened state of excitement starting with a $p$ and $mp$ in the accompaniment and voice respectively, moving through a crescendo to forte in both parts (Example 9).
Example 9. “Fi Mi Love,” mm. 40-47

At measure 46 the chromatic progression of parallel 9th chords are reminiscent of a Debussian approach to tonality.

The piano interludes are also places of interest that depict the composer’s creativity. He uses fragments of the melody to link stanzas together as well as establishing a change of mood; this can be seen at measures 32-41. The tonality at measures 32-33 is centered around D major as seen by the suspension of that tone throughout the G major arpeggiation. A change occurs at measure 36 where bitonality is evident. The right hand is playing the notes of the diatonic scale E major – E, F#, G#, A, B while the left hand is playing the D major diatonic scale of D, E F#, G, A B, C#. Here, Ashbourne possibly was alluding to a change of mood at this point. All sense of a tonal center is further diminished by the presence of quartal chords at measures 38-39. The short interlude at measures 52-53, shows a similar trend of using quartal chords to
obscure the tonal center, thus effectively changing the atmosphere of the song (Example 10).

Example 10. “Fi Mi Love,” mm. 36-39 & 52-55
Liza

Text:

Ev’ry time me ’memba Liza, water come a mi eye.
When mi memba mi nice gal Liza, water come a mi eye.
Oh come back Liza, come back gal, water come a mi eye.

When mi look upon Sarah daughter, when mi look upon Vie
And mi memba mi nice gal Liza, water come a mi eye.
Come back Liza, come back gal. Dry the cry from mi eye.
Come back Liza come back gal, water come a mi eye.

Vocal Range e flat⁴ – g⁵
Tessitura b flat⁴ – g⁵
Key E flat major
Tempo Slowly and expressively

This song’s text is embodied with an overwhelming sense of sadness and loss.
Liza is gone and more than likely, she has died; and the singer mourning her death is now in a lachrymose state. There is a haunting and a hollowness that can be heard in the words “Come back Liza, come back gal, water come a mi eye” which the music draws on throughout this piece.

The song is in a modified strophic form with the vocal line starting a perfect fourth higher in the second stanza. Perhaps, Ashbourne at this point wanted to depict the lamentations of the singer on the words “when mi look upon Sara’s daughter, when mi look upon Vie, and mi memba mi nice gal Liza, water come a mi eye;” again being reminded that his own child is gone. Additionally, higher pitch levels are indicative of the unsettled nature of the singer.
A characteristic of Ashbourne’s vocal compositions is that the preludes of his songs usually contain fragments of the melody. This song has that trait where, the piano introduces the vocal line in the first three measures. This can be seen in Example 11 at the end of the paragraph where there is a descending chromatic line in the bass which begins on the second beat of measure 2 and continues through to measure 5. This chromatic descent is used to augment the extreme sadness that has encapsulated the singer (Example 11).

Example 11. “Liza,” mm. 1-5

Ashbourne adheres strongly to the prosodic requirements of the Jamaican patois which is evident where the stresses are placed on the words. Tied 8th notes, as can be seen at measure 8 on the word “come,” or at measure 10 on the word “memb,” or, an 8th note tied to a dotted quarter note on the word “time” in measure 6 are important as he is imitating normal speech patterns in patois (Example 12).
This is even more evident in the refrain “come back, Liza, come back gal” where the words underlined are the ones requiring the stress and Ashbourne notates them with a long-short, long-short, short-long-long pattern. The song’s refrain at measures 15-16 is typical of this rhythmic motif (Example 13).
Evidence of word painting can be seen where the composer uses modally-borrowed chords to add depth and color to the word “water” which in this case are the singer’s tears. This can be seen at measure 12 (refer to Example 12) where he inserts a \( \text{ii}^{04} \) chord and at measure 31 (Example 14) where he uses a \( v^7 \) chord in lieu of the usual dominant seventh \( V^7 \) chord.

Example 14. “Liza,” mm. 30-33
Long Time Gal

Text:

Dis long time gal mi neva si yuh, come mek mi hol’ you han’
Peel head john crow siddung pon di tree top,
Pick off di blossom, Mek mi hol’ you han,’ gal mek mi hol’ you han’.

Dis long time gal mi neva si yuh, come mek mi walk an talk.
Peel head john crow siddung pan di tree top,
Pick off di blossom, mek mi walk an talk gal, mek mi walk an talk.

Mek wi wheel an tun till wi tumble dung, mek mi hol’ yuh han’ gal,
Mek wi wheel an tun till wi tumble dung, mek mi hol’ yuh han’ gal.

Vocal range: \[ e^4 - g^5 \]

Tessitura: \[ g^4 \text{-} g^5 \]

Key: C major (no accidentals present) but tonality meanders to G major

Tempo: Quarter note = 100

When one reads this text, it is possible to deduce a festive atmosphere that is full of merriment and gaiety throughout. This song addresses friends reacquainting themselves and enjoying the pleasures of their company. Due to this festive atmosphere, the singer will discover greater ease in vocal delivery by treating the song as one would a recitative and not by trying to “sing” it. This is a difficult task to accomplish as the main objectives of good singing should not be compromised, however, this is more a character piece as it describes a scene and as such relies more on the spoken word as against vocal lyricism.
The singer will therefore find the greatest challenge to be the mastery of the dialect as broader vowels—a pre-requisite in speaking Jamaican patois—are required, more so than what is used in classical singing. Great care should be taken not to have overly tall vowels as that would be misinterpreted as a formal singing approach or style. Therefore broader vowels should be encouraged, although, without compromising proper tonal placement and vowel formation.

The composer ensures that the vocal line adheres to the prosodic requirements of the text. This results in a plethora of syncopated rhythms occurring by emphasizing unstressed or secondary beats. For instance, phrases that end on the words “see yu” places the tonic stress on the last beat instead of the first, an example of this can be seen at measures 3-4. On the words “come mek me hol’ you han’” the emphasis would be placed on the word “come” in traditional English, however, in patois it is placed on the verb itself “mek” meaning “to allow or to let.” The composer accomplishes this by using a 16\(^{th}\) note followed by an 8\(^{th}\) note followed by another 16\(^{th}\) note rhythm which is seen throughout the piece, the first evidence of this is at measure 3 (Example 15).

Example 15. “Long Time Gal,” mm. 3-4
Similarly, the secondary syllable of the word “blossom” is stressed and the composer has an accent mark on that syllable every time the word is sung. This can be seen each time it appears at measures 8, 16, and 34. Example 16 is taken from measure 8:

Example 16. “Long Time Gal,” mm. 7-8

A singer not accustomed to Jamaican dialect may find it difficult to emphasize secondary stressed syllables. A good strategy to overcome this is by first speaking the words correctly in rhythm and in strict tempo to establish fluency of both the vocal line and the complicated rhythmic patterns.

The festive atmosphere is first introduced in the first nine measures of the song’s accompaniment. Interestingly, the composer uses a minimalist approach to camouflage tonality in the first two measures as the right hand plays a set of 16\textsuperscript{th} notes that are not centered on C major, the song’s key. Instead the f sharp suggests that he is using the Lydian mode at this point. This creates an ostinato effect which obscures any sense of tonality until the vocal entry on the last beat of measure 2 (Example 17). The composer alludes to this fact by saying “It was deliberate. I got an idea to try a minimalist approach,
at least in the beginning, that is how it came about. You choose the notes carefully; it took me a while to get the notes right but it works.” 42

Example 17. “Long Time Gal,” mm. 1-2

Because this song is a character piece, the piano is more involved than in some of the composer’s slower, more lyrical songs. Often, the left hand in the bass has unusual syncopated rhythms that contrast with the vocal line as they are played on the offbeat. The composer makes this clear to both accompanist and singer alike by the accent marks on those notes in the bass. An example of this (see Example 18) can be seen at mm. 11 where the tied notes in the left hand are accented on the offbeat and gives rhythmic variety to the vocal line.

42Ashbourne Interview, 7 January 2009.
Another area of interest occurs before the first modulation where a sequential interplay between voice and piano occurs at measures 19-20; here the accompaniment moves chromatically at measure 19 and this is repeated a minor 3rd higher at measure 20 (Example 19).
Example 19. “Long Time Gal,” mm. 19-26
The composer incorporates syncopated hand clapping rhythms to echo the same rhythmic motif found in the accompaniment. This not only adds variety to the song as it is unexpected but also gives an air of merriment to the piece that is not introduced so far. This first occurs at measure 31 and again in the final measure 48 where the accompaniment is echoed with hand clapping which leads to a very unusual yet interesting climax. Examples 20(a) and 20(b) outlines measures 31-32 and 48 respectively:

Example 20(a). “Long Time Gal,” mm. 31-32
Example 20 (b). “Long Time Gal,” mm. 47-48
Banyan Tree

Text:

Moonshine tonight, come mek we dance and sing
Moonshine tonight, come mek we dance and sing
Mi da rock so, me da rock so under Banyan tree

Ladies mek curtsy, gentleman mek bow
Ladies mek courtsy, gentleman mek bow
Mi da rock so, me da rock so under Banyan tree

Den we join hands and dance around and round
Den we join hands and dance around and round
Mi da rock so, yuh da rock so under Banyan tree

Vocal range: $d^4 - g^5$

Tessitura: $f^#4 - f^#6$

Key: D major

Tempo: Quarter note = 93

This song’s text is based on a social commentary of a festive gathering taking place under a Banyan tree. The Banyan tree has Asian and West African origins and figures greatly in this song as a central meeting place for social gatherings.

Typical of his songs that focuses on social happenings; the piano introduction sets the overall atmosphere that pervades throughout this composition. Here in the introduction at mm 1-5 the left hand has the European Waltz rhythm which is repeated for the first 53 measures. These five measures tend to be quite celebratory. The ascending pitches in the right hand at measures 5-6 followed by the ascent of the
borrowed chords climaxing with a pregnant silence at measure 8 only serves to underline the impending excitement of the dance which is to come as depicted in Example 21.

Example 21. “Banyan Tree,” mm. 1-16

The first two verses are set in standard triple meter and are void of any syncopation. The words at this point although written in patois follow British English speech patterns. These verses should be sung in a very formal classical style. Vowels should not be modified as would be required when speaking or singing in the vernacular.
The big contrast occurs at measure 54 with the changes in meter and tempo (as noted by the composer) and also with the introduction of syncopated rhythms that are first heard in the piano and then heard in the voice where the speech pattern changes to imitate the Jamaican dialect. At this point, the 4\textsuperscript{th} beat becomes the stressed beat in the accompaniment, replacing the oom pah pah waltz rhythm that was previously there. This rhythmic change is very subtly done and alludes to a type of Jamaican dance known as mento (Example 22). According to Olive Lewin:

Mento is the music of Jamaica. It is Jamaica’s indigenous dance, song, and instrumental style. The music is relatively slow, in quadruple time, and its most characteristic feature is the accent in or on the last beat of each bar.\footnote{Lewin, 	extit{Rock it Come Over}, 103.}
Additionally, the vocal line in the last verse and refrain “me da rock so, you da rock so” now imitates the speech of Jamaican patois in terms of rhythm and stress. When a contrast is made between the chorus for verses 1 and 2 and that for verse 3, one clearly sees differences in rhythm as it pertains to speech and piano accompaniment. Examples
23(a) and 23(b) compares the chorus of verse two from measures 39-46 with measures 66-69 of verse three respectively.

Example 23(a). “Banyan Tree,” mm. 39-48

Chorus from verse 2
Example 23(b). “Banyan Tree,” mm. 66-71

Chorus from verse 3

From an interpretative view, since the composer has introduced folk elements in the third verse it then behooves the singer to follow suit. A stronger Jamaican accent at this point would be effective in enhancing the song’s aesthetics. A return to the Western style is preceded by a grand arppeggiated $\text{V}^7$ chord at the half cadence at measure 93 (Example 24). The coda at measures 94-97 uses the rhythms and meter of the traditional waltz style seen in the first two verses (Example 25).
Example 24. “Banyan Tree,” mm. 91-93

Example 25. “Banyan Tree,” mm. 94-97
Nobody’s Business (but my own)

Text:
Solomon granpa gawn a Ecuador, lef’ him wife an pickney out a door
Nobody’s business but him own.
Solomon granma swear she naw go beg, tief weh all bra’ Sammy fowl an egg
Nobody’s business but she own.

Chorus:
Nobody’s business, business, nobody’s business business, nobody’s business but me own.
Nobody’s business, business, nobody’s business business, nobody’s business but me own.

If ah married to a Nayga gal, An’ ah lef her for a Chiney one
Nobody’s business but me own
If me even old like Taggoram, An’ me wan’ fe pose as twenty one
Nobody’s business but me own

Chorus:
Nobody’s business, business, nobody’s business business, nobody’s business but me own.
Nobody’s business, business, nobody’s business business, nobody’s business but me own.

Form          Strophic

Vocal range:    d⁴ - A flat⁵

Tessitura:          d⁴-d⁵

Key:              G major

Tempo:          Quarter note = 108, bright and moderately fast

This is another song that deals with social commentary. It is filled with humor, jest and mischief and should be sung with wild abandon. The piano introduction (Example 26) in measures 1-3 has fragments of the vocal melody and rhythm. Here, the song’s melody is
played in octaves possibly to hint at the comedic nature. The main emphasis in the song is the vocal line. It should have a parlando style about it which requires the singer to approach it more like a recitative and not like a traditional art song. All aspects of classical singing should be limited to enable the natural beauty of the words to be heard.

Example 26. “Nobody’s Business,” mm. 1-3

Where the accompaniment is concerned, the piano’s role is two-fold. First it serves as a support to the voice when the verses are being sung; this can be seen by the scarcity of chord usage at measures 4-5 (Example 27a) and 8-9 (Example 27b).

Example 27(a). “Nobody’s Business,” mm. 4-5
Second, the piano accompaniment becomes more involved and character like at the chorus. The appoggiaturas on the words “Equador” and “outa door” can be likened to a gesture of astonishment or surprise that one gives when gossip is relayed. Similarly the chromatic move in measure 8 on the third beat in both hands could be likened to the Grandmother’s quipping about her domestic scenario.

At the chorus, the piano assumes the mischievous character of the narrator. Ashbourne accomplishes this with the syncopated 8th notes in the right hand which enters on the second half of each beat. The notes in the left hand are played on the first 8th note of each beat which results in the right hand’s always entering on the second subdivision of each beat. This results in a dance rhythm that is not only very complex but also interwoven with the vocal line, Example 28 illustrates same.
Example 28. “Nobody’s Business,” mm. 12-18

There is a coda which commences on the third beat at measure 27 where the piano doubles the voice on the word “business” for emphasis (Example 29). The chord clusters in measure 29 on beats 2 and 3 serves to reiterate the singer’s uttering.
The last set of words is notated by small crossings in lieu of 8\textsuperscript{th} notes which suggest that the singer can actually speak them in a declamatory style. This of course is optional and is left to the singer’s own personal taste.

Example 29. “Nobody’s Business,” mm. 27-31
CHAPTER VII

WHO ARE WE AND WHY ARE WE HERE?

On August 6, 2010, Jamaica will celebrate forty eight years of independence from Great Britain. Independence was an agent for catalytic change which whetted the appetites of the culturally curious who were desirous of answering the question “Who are we and why are we here?” This pursuit necessitated the alteration of the long-held misconception and insecurities that Jamaicans held of their African heritage, and in so doing, changed their negative impressions of folk forms as had been represented in art, literature, drama and music. Whereas citizens of colonial Jamaica considered the European culture and music a higher expression of art that should be emulated; contemporary Jamaicans now view their African ancestry with dignity and pride. The European lifestyle is no longer considered superior to the Afro-Jamaican memes. Jamaicans are now more willing to embrace their African traditions and ideals, and presently, an interesting amalgamation between both cultures exists. This unique cultural blend is an indication that Jamaica has effectively transitioned from a colonial to a post-colonial paradigm that has resulted in cultural parity where neither culture is superior nor inferior to each other.

Where Jamaican folk songs are concerned, their function and purpose has changed as well. During slavery they served a multiplicity of roles. For instance, work songs, served an illusory role, for they gave the impression that the menial tasks were less burdensome when the slaves sang as they worked. Other songs had coded messages in them that announced clandestine meetings and other activities. Still yet, some songs were
of a spiritual nature, and were present in African religions such as Kumina, and Pocamania, as well as in Revival - an act of Christian worship. Essential to their functionality was the Jamaican dialect or Patois; which is an amalgamation of English and African languages. In modern Jamaica, there exists a unique blend of British and African traditions. Although English is the official language as a matter of formality, patois is often heard in informal conversation, and is used interchangeably with its standardized counterpart.

In crafting a new cultural identity, successive Jamaican governments have played an integral role in the establishment of governmental institutions that are geared towards the preservation and integration of Jamaican art forms in society. Of note were the creation of the Jamaican Schools of Art, Dance, Drama and Music, which now constitutes the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts. And equally significant was the establishment of the Folk Music Research Unit at the Jamaica School of Music that was borne out of this process. Then, its main goal was recording Jamaican folk music for preservation purposes since that genre belonged mostly to the oral tradition. Today, that research unit has proved an invaluable resource for musicians and scholars in ethnomusicology.

Along with government policies, the pioneering efforts of musicians and music groups performing folk music both locally and globally assisted in removing the local stigma that Jamaica’s African heritage was primitive and unworthy. Musicians such as Olive Lewin, The Frats Quintet and the Jamaican Folk Singers paved the way for the formation of later music groups like the Carifolk Singers and the University Singers; who
have continued the trend of promoting Jamaican music both domestically and internationally. This continued exposure has resulted in further transitions taking place, especially in the classical arena where classically trained musicians have started to compose and arrange folk songs for the recital stage. These are evident in the works of Messrs Noel Dexter and Peter Ashbourne.

Both composers incorporate the piano as the main accompanying instrument in their pieces. Mr. Ashbourne’s compositions however, reveal his penchant for greater involvement of that instrument, especially in his character songs such as Nobody’s Business, Banyan Tree and Dis Long Time Gal, where it becomes an interpretive partner to the voice. By comparison, the piano in Mr. Dexter’s songs serves a subordinate role to the vocal line. These contrasting accompanying styles are also indicative of the categories in which each composer has placed his compositions. Mr. Dexter considers his songs as arrangements of existing folk melodies and because of this believes that they are not original pieces per se and are therefore folk arrangements. For him, the melody is of paramount importance and he believes that the piano and harmonic material should enhance the original folk tune. By comparison, Mr. Ashbourne views his compositions as art songs, where, he uses the existing folk tune as compositional material for his songs. Whereas Noel Dexter favors a simple chordal harmonic progression; Peter Ashbourne’s songs show his preference toward a complex harmonic structure and modern tonalities. Both composers adhere to the prosodic requirements of the songs’ text by favoring syncopated rhythmic patterns in the vocal line whenever it was required. Additionally,
sacrosanct to Ashbourne’s character songs is the Jamaican mento rhythmic pattern which he incorporates in *Banyan Tree, Nobody's Business* and *Long Time Gal*.

It is the hope of this writer that this research will enable a better understanding and appreciation of Jamaican folk songs and folk music in general. Additionally, the analysis of these songs via culture, linguistics, prosody, diction, and their historical context should serve as a performance guide for singers and musicians. This research supports the charge issued by the late Prof. Rex Nettleford, Vice-Chancellor Emeritus of The University of the West Indies, on the development of Jamaican music in the modern age:

Music, in the sense of art-music ingrained in Eurocentric impulses, must continue to liberate itself from the prejudices of ages…It is a challenge for the common approach to music to liberate itself from the misperceptions of ages. We need to ask ourselves why the violin should be superior to the steelpan or the drum. Music teachers must find new ways of teaching music; composers should be more adventurous. And none of this means closing our windows to the world. Rather, it means reaching out to join in the now universal search for new definitions, new forms, new statements about the real world and mankind. We will be better able to get our own creative potential in perspective and stop lauding mediocrity which is foreign and taking for granted the excellences that indigenous effort can produce. Such have been the challenges in Independence!44

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APPENDIX A

RECITAL PROGRAMS

The University of Southern Mississippi
School of Music Faculty Artists

SAMERATA CONCERT SERIES

"Mozart at 250"

Serenade 12 in C minor, K. 388
Patricia Malone & Mary Kay Young, oboes;
Gregory Oakes & Wilbur Moreland, clarinets;
Kenneth Ortlepp & Barbie Yan Horn, French horns;
Kim Woolly & John Bivins, bassoons

Sonata in C for Four Hands, K. 521
Lois Leventhal & Joe Brumbeloe, piano

Flute Quartet in C, K. 285b
Danilo Mezzadri, flute; Jorge Gonzalez, violin;
Hsiaopei Lee, viola; Alexander Russakovksy, cello.

Ave verum Corpus, K. 618
Kerrin Hightower, Beth Everett, Byron Johnson & J.Taylor Hightower, voices;
Danilo Mezzadri, flute; Patricia Malone, oboe; Gregory Oakes, clarinet;
Kenneth Ortlepp, French horn; Kim Woolly, bassoon

Marsh Auditorium, Monday, February 6, 2005 at 7:30 pm
No admission charge; free-will scholarship donations accepted at the door
The University of Southern Mississippi
College of Arts and Letters
School of Music

presents

The Southern Opera and Musical Theatre
Company and Mississippi Opera's production of

La Traviata

Opera in Three Acts

Music by
Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto by
Francesco Maria Piave

Mannini Performing Arts Center Auditorium
November 3, 2005, 7:30 p.m.
November 5, 2005, 7:30 p.m.

Producer Maryann Kyle
Director Alan Mann
Music Director/Conductor Jay Dean
Asst. Music Director/Chorus Master Beth Everett
Choreographer Ricardo Robinson
Lighting Designer/Stage Manager Matthew MacKinney
Director of Operations Ashley O'Shields
Production Assistants Michelle Chapman
Rocio Tamez,
April Hill, Molli Davis
Costume Coordinator Jess Thomas
Technical Director John Austin Firth
Assistant Stage Manager Charlie Woodward
Fly Rail Crew Chief Hunter Graybeal
Piano Accompanists Amanda Virelles
Alan Martinez
CAST

Violeta Valery .................. Marsha Thompson
................................. April Hill
Flora Bervoix .................. Patricia Ramirez
..................................... Rocio Tamez
..................................... Leslie Hippensteel (cover)
Anna ......................... Hilary Ginther
................................. Tania Leal
..................................... Brook Oglesby (cover)
Alfredo ......................... Victor Khododad
Germont ...................... Scott Bearden
Gastone ....................... Daland Jones
................................. Byron Johnson (cover)
Baron D'Anthony .............. J.T King
Marquis D'Obigny ............. Nick Webb
..................................... Adam Riser (cover)
Doctor Grenville ............. Taylor Hightower
..................................... Adam Riser (cover)
Servant ....................... Jaime Jimenez
Gypsy Dancer ............... Meghan Stewart
Matador Dancer ............. Lesley Shannon

CHORUS

Bethany Ammon
Alanna Brenneis
Michelle Chapman
Molli Davis
Andrea Gabrielse
BradGilmore
Hilary Ginther
Leslie Hippensteel
Jaime Jimenez
Byron Johnson
Lauren Johnson
J.T King

..................................... Tania Leal
..................................... Brook Oglesby
..................................... Ashley O'Shields
..................................... Patricia Ramirez
..................................... Adam Riser
..................................... Lesley Shannon
..................................... Allanda Small
..................................... Meghan Stewart
..................................... Rocio Tamez
..................................... Wimberly Thomas
..................................... Robert Vethman

BACKSTAGE CREW

Geoffrey White, Eddie Castuera,
Thomas Holman and Aaron Hodges
 UNIVERSITY SINGERS
Lauren Brandon and Alanna Brennise, conductors
Kim Cargile, pianist

Sopranos I
Hannah Depuis
Lauren Johnson
Shannon Mylander
Lauren Strauss
Wynberly Thomas

Sopranos II
Krystal Barton
Jennifer Caruso
Candids Grae
Margaret Jordan
Mary Nahmen
Jessica Penn
Ashley Sanders
Shawna Shuchfield
Mary Streightlow
Christine Zimmer

Alto I
Jodie Baker
Brandon Childs
Charlie Crotch
Andrea Gabrielle
Kory Hutton
Casey McAplin
Aly Rawls
Kelli Simpson
Crystal Tushstone

Tenor I
Dakota Dean
Matthew Furches
Dustin Kilby
Robert McGill
Bijel Morgan

Alto II
Hillary Gladar
Leslie Higginson
Mary Robin
Crystal Smartphone
Stoney Stair

Tenor II
B.J. Cheston
Cordelia Hills
Robert Kelly
Andrew Lusin
John Osterly
Carla Stigliano
David Vincent
Herman Wilson

Bar I
Divas Ayers
Calvin Bridges
David Hawkins
Joe Humphreys
Carla Johnson
Ocean Pittman

Bar II
Andrew Glose
Andrew Timoff
Nick Webb
Matt Welch
Andrew Whitley
Lee Williams

CONCERT CHOIR
Beth Everett and Jeffrey Murdock, conductors
Aaron Looke, pianist

Sopranos I
Amanda DeSaro
Sasha Adkison
Mary Beth Murphy
Brooke Ogburn
Cari Wolfens
Margaret Wilhelm
Emily Young

Sopranos II
Davide Ely
Tula Beverett
Kiana Eubanks
Elizabeth Lee
Baird Norman
Rafael Satterfield
Melodie Selig

Alto I
Rebecca Billiard
Bridget Bowes
Shanika Bowell
Colleen Browning
Dena O'Dell

Tenor I
Aaron Hodges
Mark Moore
Frazier Solomon
Geoffrey White

Alto II
Cyndle Batson
Carrie Ceikel
Whitney Cook
Emily Godbee
Rotina Russell
Amara Thorne
Heather Whittemore

Tenor II
Eddie Cantar
Bryon Robinson
Robert Vehman
Alex Wagner

Bar I
Breanna Bokros
Rachel Burtin
Lauren Byrd
Hanna Lamon
Samantha Schoderer

Bar II
Charles Bridges
Cliff Brown
Trinity Bryant
Best Lusardi
Daniel Schoderer

CONCERT CHOIR
Beth Everett and Jeffrey Murdock, conductors
with
Kim Cargile, piano
Aaron Locke, piano

UNIVERSITY SINGERS
Lauren Brandon, conductor
Alanna Brennise, assistant conductor

University of Southern Mississippi
College of Arts and Letters

Choral Activities

Thursday, April 6, 2006
7:30 PM
Main Street Baptist Church
PROGRAM

University Singers

O Clap Your Hands (1973)
Lauren Johnson, conductor

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
He that shall endure from Elijah
Alanna Breenes, conductor

Felix Mendelssohn
He, watching over Israel from Elijah
Lauren Brandon, conductor

Cantate Domino
Andrea Gabrielse, conductor

Hans Leo Hassler (1548-1612)
The Moon is Distant from the Sea (2004)
Matthew Welsh, conductor

...a Stranger yet (2001)
III. Bring Me the Sunet
Kenneth Neufeld

Zum Cali (1977)
Israel Folk Tune
Arr. Maurice Goldman

Rockin’ Jerusalem (2002)
Arr. Damon H. Dunbridge
Lauren Brandon, conductor

Simple Gifts (1987)
John Rutter

Jubilate Deo - O be joyful (1976)
Barbi Van Horn, horn
Joseph Handy and Quintus Wrighton, trumpets
Sean Dyke, trombone
Chris Cline, bass trombone
Brian Hasty, tuba

Be Music, Night (2005)
Jeffrey Murdock, conductor

Walk A Mile (2000)
Beth Everett, conductor

Petite messe solennelle
Kylie
Gloria
Laudamus te
Gratias
Qui tollis
Cum Sancto Spiritu
Ritournelle
Sanctus
Agnus Dei

Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868)

Shaker Tune
Arr. Rand Claussen

Michael Pink

Bradley Ellingboe

Pepper Choplin
Arr. Mark Hayes

PAUSE

April Hill, soprano
Rocio Tamez, mezzo soprano
Byron Johnson, tenor
Arlandra Harvey, bass
Aaron Locke and Kim Cargile, pianos
Jonathan Kilgore, harmonium
Beth Everett, conductor
The University of Southern Mississippi  
College of Arts and Letters  
School of Music  

Doctoral Recital  

Byron Gordon Johnson, tenor  
Assisted by  
Amanda Virelles, piano  
David Histing, guitar  

December 1, 2006 at 6:00 pm  
Frank E. Marsh Auditorium  

Come Again: Sweet Love Doth Now Invite  
My Thoughts Are Wing’d With Hope  
Now, O Now, I Needs Must Part  

John Dowland  
(1563 – 1626)  

Dichterliebe  
Im Wunderschönen Monat Mai  
Aus meinen Tränen sprießen  
Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube, die Sonne  
Wenn ich in deine Augen seh’  
Ich will meine Seele tauchen  
Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome  
Ich grolle nicht  
Und wüßten’s die Blumen, die kleinen  
Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen  
Hör ich das Liedchen klingen  
Ein Jungling liebt ein Mädchen  
Am leuchtenden Sommerragen  
Ich hab im Traum geweinet  
Allnächtlich im Traume seh’ ich dich  
Aus alten Märchen winkt es  
Die alten bösen Lieder  

Robert Schumann  
(1810 – 1856)  

Les Gars qui vont à la fête  
*Miroir Brûlants*  
Tu vois le feu du soir  
Je nommerai ton front  
Les Chemins de l’amour  

Francis Poulenc  
(1899 - 1963)  

from *Petite Messe Solennelle*  
Domine Deus  

Giachino Rossini  
(1792 – 1868)  

This Recital is in partial fulfillment of the Doctorate of Musical Arts degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy. Mr. Johnson is a student of Dr. J. Taylor Hightower.  
Please turn off any electronic devices. The artist will pause to admit latecomers.
University of Southern Mississippi
College of Arts & Letters
School of Music

Southern Miss Guitar Presents:

“Guitar Gala III”

Back-to-Back Evening Concerts with Guitar
Friday, December 1st, 7:30pm, Marsh Auditorium: Studio Solo Recital
Saturday, December 2nd, 6:00pm, Marsh Auditorium: GA Studio Solo/Studio Chamber Recital

Saturday Program

From Estudios sencillos..............................................Leo Brouwer
  Number 6
  Number 7

  Kaila Hunter

Bachianas brasileiras No. 5: Aria..................................Heitor Villa-Lobos

    Carlos Feller, flute
    Carlos Casilla, guitar

Three Lute Songs..................................................John Dowland
    My Thoughts are Wing’d with Hopes
    Come Again: Sweet Love Doth Now Invite
    Now, Oh Now, I Needs Must Part

    Byron Johnson, tenor
    David Histon, guitar

Sarabande for Six Guitars (2005).................................Matthew Van Brink

    Jason Hubert, Clifton Brown, David Hawkins, David Histon, Andrew Lucas, Benjamin Bivens

AA/EOE/ADA
CARMEN

presented by
The University of Southern Mississippi
College of Arts and Letters
School of Music

SOUTHERN SYMPHONY  MISSISSIPPI ORCHESTRA

JAY DEAN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Mississippi Opera

ALAN MANN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

and

SOUTHERN OPERA AND MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

MARYANN KYLE, GENERAL DIRECTOR

Thursday, April 12, 2007, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 14, 2007, 7:30 p.m.
Mannoni Performing Arts Center Auditorium
CAST

Carmen   Fenlon Lamb (April 12)
          Hilary Gisler (April 14)
Don José  Daniel Holmes
Escamillo  Oziel Garcia-Ornelas
Micaela  April Hill (April 12)
          Allanda Small (April 14)
Frasquita  Susan Ruggiero (April 12)
          Pamela Jones (April 14)
Mercedes  Patricia Ramirez
El Dancairo  Daland Jones
El Remendado  Marshall Richards (April 12)
          Ronald Laitano (April 14)
Zuniga  Nicholas Webb
Morales  J. T. King

CHORUS SOUTHERN PRO MUSICA – CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Tinyke Badenhorst  Kayla Bayte
Brooke Ogleby  Andrea Gabrielise
Krysten Coffman  Elena Kokkinomagoulos
Khara Molshbee  Rocío Tamaz
Mary Beth Murphy  Dakota Dauner
Melanie Selig  Byron Johnson (Don José Understudy)
Caitlyne Shirley  Daniel Lewis
Meghan Stewart  Scott Thomburg
Wimberly Grace Thomas  Ludwig Alvarado
Kristin Walk  Aaron La France
Emily Young  Brandon Sigler
Bethany Ammon

Founder/Director – Ms. Vivian Hurley
Accompanist – David Benson
Rehearsal Accompanist – Dorcas Hawkins

Heather Bayes  Katherine Kline
Rachel Bayes  Britney Parker
Lafie Elise Bennett  Andee Schuman
Maggie Chancellor  April Talley
Danielle Gregory  Jordan Williams
Lindsey Hawkins  Kevin Williams
Allison Justus

PRODUCTION STAFF

Dr. Alan Maro  Stage Director
Dr. Jay Dean  Music Director
Dr. Maryann Kyle  General Director
Ms. Kim Cargile  Assistant Music Director
Ms. Vivian Hurley  Southern Pro Musica Founder/Director
Ms. Amanda Virelles  Repetiteur
Ms. Alan Martinez  Assistant Repetiteur
Mr. Ronald Laitano  Production Assistant
Mr. Gregory Montague  Technical Director
Ms. Elise McDonald  Stage Manager
Ms. Molli Davis  Case Personnel Manager
Dr. John Michael Lopinto  Marketing and Public Relations
The University of Southern Mississippi
College of Arts and Letters
School of Music

Doctoral Recital
Byron Gordon Johnson, tenor
assisted by
Allanda Small, soprano
Amanda Virelles, piano

November 19, 2007 at 4:00 pm.
Frank E. Marsh Auditorium

Vaga luna, che inargenti
Ma rendi pur contento
L'esule

Vincenzo Bellini
(1801 – 1835)
Gioacchino Rossini
(1792 – 1868)

From Stabat Mater
Fac, ut portem Christi mortem

Antonín Dvořák
(1841 – 1904)

Du meines Herzens Krönelein
Befreit
Seidem dein Aug’

Richard Strauss
(1864 – 1949)

From Manon
En fermant les yeux

Jules Massenet
(1842 – 1912)

PAUSE

Claire de Lune

Montparnasse

Gabriel Fauré
(1845 – 1924)
Francis Poulenc
(1899 – 1963)

Hermit Songs
At Saint Patrick’s Purgatory
Church Bell at Night
St. Ita’s Vision
The Heavenly Banquet
The Crucifixion
Sea- Snatch
Promiscuity
The Monk and His Cat
The Praises of God
The Desire for Hermitage

Samuel Barber
(1910 – 1981)

Jamaican Folk Song
Liza

arr. Peter Ashbourn
(b. 1950)

Bahamian Folk Song
Run Gal

arr. Clophas R. Adderley
(b. 1955)

This Recital is in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy. Mr. Johnson is a student of Dr. J. Taylor Hightower.

Please turn off any electronic devices. The artist will pause to admit latecomers.
About the Artists

Dr. Kimberly Davis is a nationally and internationally recognized performing artist, with performances in Bermuda, Brazil, France, Hawaii, Mexico, and Spain. Davis has several touring programs of specialized music that consist of either French Melodee, Classical, and Romantic art songs, and a repertoire that is based on her research of African American female composers and arrangements titled, A Spiritual Journey & Contemporary Songs, a full concert of spirituals, art songs, and folk arrangements by African American composers and also a lecture recital named „Sung by the Mouths of Children" performed with one of the notable composers of her research, Jacqueline B. Hainline. Davis holds a doctorate in vocal performance and pedagogy and is an associate professor of music, teaching voice and voice-related studies at The University of Southern Mississippi. She is an active member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, serves on the Executive Board of the Mississippi Music Teachers Association (MMTA) and is also a member of the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois, the African American Art Song Alliance, and the National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM). Davis is an active adjudicator and clinician in this region, nationally, and internationally. She is also actively involved with the House of S stringent, an after-school program and outreach program of The Southern Miss Center for Human Rights and Civil Liberties that serves underserved youth with studies in the Humanities and the Arts in Poland's Crossing.

Dr. Elizabeth Moe, noted for her “sensibility” and “generous imagination” (La Suite, Geneva, Switzerland), her recent performances include Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Quebec, and Denver. Winner of the Ma Phi EPN International Competition and several national competitions including the National Federation of Music Clubs Biennial Auditions, Elizabeth has also been recognized for her collaborative work by the Music Academy of the West and the National Association of College Women Musicians and the University of Southern Mississippi. She is on the faculty of the University of Southern Mississippi. She is an active member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, serves on the Executive Board of the Mississippi Music Teachers Association (MMTA) and is also a member of the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois, the African American Art Song Alliance, and the National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM). Davis is an active adjudicator and clinician in this region, nationally, and internationally. She is also actively involved with the House of S stringent, an after-school program and outreach program of The Southern Miss Center for Human Rights and Civil Liberties that serves underserved youth with studies in the Humanities and the Arts in Poland’s Crossing.

Dr. Charles L. Johnson received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His specialty research and teaching interests are African American Literature (esp. 19th and early 20th century), Southern Literature, African American Women Writers (especially from the 19th century), Feminist Theory, and Cultural Studies. Johnson’s research and teaching interests cover major historical events (e.g., slavery, the Civil War, industrialization, Reconstruction, the rise of Jim Crow, and “The Great Migration”) and cultural movements (e.g., abolition, women’s rights activism, and the development of progressive ideologies, “the New Negro” and “the Black Woman’s Era”). His articles about the South, Southern Studies, and African American Studies were published in An Encyclopedia of African American Literature (Greenwood Press, 2005). He is currently working on a book manuscript that examines African American protest literature and racial politics in the South during the early Jim Crow era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Ryon Johnson, tenor, a native of Spanish Town, Jamaica received his early music training under Trevor Beresford with whom he studied the piano. His formal voice training began in 1994 when he received a scholarship from the National Choral of Jamaica to study voice with Pauline Forment-Watson at the Jamaica School of Music. He eventually went on to study with Winston Ewart, Director of Studies at the Jamaica School of Music, under whom tutelage he successfully passed the Royal Schools of Music Examinations in Voice with distinctions. Johnson has been active on the operatic stage performing the roles of Monterone and Tamino in Mozart’s Magic Flute, Elder Gobaten in Floyd’s Susannah, and has also appeared as a soloist and choir member with the Mississippi Gospel Choir on their tours of Spain in 2003 and 2005. Mr. Johnson and received his Masters of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Southern Mississippi under the tutelage of Dr. Kimberly Davis and is currently a doctoral candidate in voice and studies with Dr. J. Taylor Higginson.

Larry Nave, a native of Middle Tennessee, joined the faculty at The University of Southern Mississippi in 2006 as an instructor of clarinets and Graduate Coordinator for the School of Music. Mr. Nave has a B.M. in piano performance from Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee, a M.M. in voice pedagogy from the University of Wisconsin. Designated a National Certification Teacher of Music, he serves on the Mississippi Music Teachers Association Board of Directors. In 2008 he attended the International Wind/Ensemble Conference in Amsterdam. Mr. Nave is an active accompanist and has appeared in recitals throughout the United States.
Celebrating a Great Woman
Miss Olena McCarty

Born on March 7, 1908, in Wayne County, Mississippi she moved to Hattiesburg, Mississippi as a child. In the sixth grade, her aunt (who had no children of her own) was hospitalized and later needed home care, so McCarty quit school, never to return.

She would later become a washerwoman, a trade she would continue until arthritis forced her to quit in 1994. It was while working, making little money that she opened her first savings account at First Mississippi National Bank, and over fifty years opened several other accounts at various banks.

Over time, the bank personnel noticed McCarty’s accumulated savings, and began to assist her in future estate planning, as well as being unofficial guardians for her. (It was the bank who convinced her to purchase an air conditioner for her house.)

With the assistance of a local attorney (for whom she had done laundry) and the bank’s trust officer, using slips of paper and dimes (to represent 10% shares), McCarty set out the future distribution of her estate. She set aside one dime (10%) for her church, one dime (10%) each for three relatives, and the remaining six dimes (60%) for Southern Miss. She stipulated that the funds should be used for students, preferably those of African American descent, who could not otherwise attend due to financial hardship.

McCarty drew global attention after it was announced in July 1995 that she had established a trust through which, at her death, a portion of her life’s savings would be left to the University of Southern Mississippi’s (USM) to provide scholarships for deserving students in need of financial assistance. The amount was estimated at $150,000, a surprising amount given her menial occupation.

In 1998, she was awarded an honorary degree from USM, the first such degree awarded by the university. She received scores of awards and other honors recognizing her unselfish spirit, and President Bill Clinton presented her with a Presidential Citizens Medal, the nation’s second highest civilian award, during a special White House Ceremony. She also won the United Nations’ coveted Avicenna Medal for educational commitment.

On September 26, 1999, Olena McCarty died leaving her mark as USM’s most famous benefactor.

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The Art Songs and Arrangements of Notable 20th Century African American Female Composers: An Examination of Their Musical Style
A Masters Thesis

Dedicated to Miss Olena McCarty
(1908-1999)

103rd Birthday Honoring
March 7, 2008

Programme

Run Gal (Bahamian Folk Song) by George Smalls

Arranged by C. R. E. Alderley

Nobody’s Business (Jamaican Folk Song) by George Smalls

Arranged by Peter Ashbourne

Mr. Johnson and Ms. Venus

Arranged by C. R. E. Alderley

Song to the Dark Virgin (Hughes) by Langston Hughes

Arranged by C. R. E. Alderley

Feet O’ J estle (Hughes) Two Songs

Arranged by Peter Ashbourne

M’chie Banjo (Jamaican Folk Song) by Joe Zawinul

Arranged by Peter Ashbourne

Seven Color Songs by John Coltrane

Arranged by Camille Thorton

Love, Let the Wind Cry . . . How I Adore Thee by Eubie Blake

Arranged by C. R. E. Alderley

Watch and Pray (Hughes) Two Songs

Arranged by C. R. E. Alderley

Misused Man (Hughes) by Langston Hughes

Arranged by Peter Ashbourne

Three Dream Portraits by John Cage

Arranged by C. R. E. Alderley

The Negro Speaks of Rivers (Hughes) by Langston Hughes

Arranged by C. R. E. Alderley

Songs for the People (Haring) by David Haring

Arranged by C. R. E. Alderley

I Want to Die While You Love Me (folk)

Arranged by C. R. E. Alderley

This Little Light of Mine by Alfred G. Lemen

Arranged by C. R. E. Alderley

O Where the Saints Go Marchin’ In . . . In Bright Mansions

Arranged by C. R. E. Alderley

Don’t Feel No-Ways Tired

Arranged by C. R. E. Alderley

She Sat Down . . . for Freedom (Haitian/ Public Domain)

On Consciousness Streams (Haitian)

Thou Alone Canst Inspire (Beethoven)

On Consciousness Streams

My Good Lord Done Been Here

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Black History.com
By College of Arts and Letters
School of Music

Doctoral Recital

**Byron Gordon Johnson, tenor**
assisted by
**Libby Vanatta, piano**

October 27, 2008 at 4:00 pm.
Frank E. Marsh Auditorium

*By thy Banks Gentle Stour*
William Boyce
(1711 – 1779)

*If with All your Hearts*
*From Elijah*
Felix Mendelssohn
(1809 – 1847)

*Dans un bois solitaire*
W. A. Mozart
(1756 - 1791)

*Der Nußbaum*
Robert Schumann
(1810 – 1856)

*Das Verlassene Mädlein*
Hugo Wolf
(1860-1903)

*Bußlied*
L. V. Beethoven
(1770 - 1827)

*Twilight Fancies*
Frederick Delius
(1862 - 1934)

*Jamaican Folk Songs*

*Mi Alone*
arr. Noel Dexter
(b. 1937)

*Banyan Tree*
arr. Peter Ashbourne
(b. 1950)

*Nobody’s Business*

This Recital is in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy. Mr. Johnson is a student of Dr. J. Taylor Hightower.
Please turn off any electronic devices. The artist will pause to admit latecomers.
Doctoral Lecture Recital

Byron Gordon Johnson, tenor
Libby Vannata, piano

Friday May 1, 2009
6:00 p.m.

Frank E. Marsh Auditorium

Peter Ashbourne’s *Five Songs for High Voice and Piano*

1. Lecture

2. Recital

Five Songs for High Voice and Piano

Banyan Tree
Liza
Nobody’s Business
Fi Mi Love
Long Time Gal

Peter Ashbourne
(b. 1950)

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts in Vocal Performance.

Mr. Johnson is a student of Dr. J. Taylor Hightower.
The artists will pause to admit late comers. Please turn off all cell phones, pagers and other electronic devices.
NOEL DEXTER
14 University Crescent, Kingston 6
Jamaica, W.I. Tel: 876-373-7740

March 15, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

This certifies that Byron Johnson has my permission to perform my unpublished arrangements of the following spirituals in a public performance.

Should you have any queries, please feel free to contact me at the information above.

Sincerely,

Noel G. Dexter
May 4, 2010

Byron Johnson
118 College Drive #5632
Hattiesburg
MS 39406

Dear Mr. Johnson,

This certifies that you have been given my permission to include my unpublished arrangements of the following songs in your doctoral dissertation:

Mi Alone
On Dat Great Day
All De Seven Rivers

Should you have any queries, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely

[Signature]

Noel G. Dexter
Dear Byron,

This letter serves to authorize your use of selected compositions by Peter Ashbourne for the purposes of analysis and performance in your doctoral dissertation. The selected works are as follows:

- Nobody's Business
- Liza (Wata Come a Me Eye)
- Long Time Gal
- Fi Mi Love (have Lion Heart)
- Banyan Tree

Regards,

Peter Ashbourne
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