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Exploring the Intersections Between Gospel Music and European Choral Traditions, Through Selected Works of Isaac Cates, Diane L. White-Clayton, and Raymond Wise

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EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN GOSPEL MUSIC AND EUROPEAN CHORAL TRADITIONS, THROUGH SELECTED WORKS OF ISAAC CATES, DIANE L. WHITE-CLAYTON, AND RAYMOND WISE

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my loving parents. Thank you, Dad, for exposing me to a wide variety of gospel artists and history for as long as I remember. Thank you, Mom, for playing gospel music constantly and on repeat at home for your children. Thank you both for supporting every single step of my education. It is an honor to carry on our family's legacy of music and faith.

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ABSTRACT

This study will explore a variety of musical intersections between the gospel and European choral music traditions, focusing on three gospel composers and their selected works to demonstrate accessible elements of gospel music for collegiate choral ensembles. These musical elements will explore some comparison of styles, examples of where seventeenth through nineteenth century European choral traditions influenced the works of some gospel composers, and appropriate pedagogical techniques for the gospel style. The intersections will be demonstrated with examples from the composer's scores with some comparisons to European choral works. This will include information on each composer's background, examples of how their music education influenced their gospel writing, and insight from interviews with the composers as well as educators who incorporate these styles in their choral rehearsals.

This study aims to serve as a resource for collegiate choral conductors looking for further information on gospel traditions, repertoire and performance practice. For conductors who regularly program European choral repertoire from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, the familiarity of this musical language which they may already possess could create additional opportunity for them to engage with the musical language of gospel music.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, choral conductors in academic settings began to explore the inclusion of gospel choir music in collegiate music programs. Many colleges and universities began to add the gospel choir as a dedicated ensemble, either as a curricular faculty-led ensemble or as an extracurricular student-led group. As this inclusion has continued to rise in academic choral settings, conductors have actively sought accurate guidance on performance practice and research in order to explore the repertoire with their choirs, seeking an approach that is just as informed as the preparation used to teach a mixed chorus Baroque era motet by Heinrich Schütz, for example.

Collegiate choral conductors most often instruct students whose primary choral repertoire exposure in the academic setting is music of the traditional Western canon. In choral repertoire, this often refers to vocal art forms which were established in European countries such as England, Germany, France and Italy, ca. 1450-1900. For modern collegiate students trained in European choral traditions, the aural, written, and overall musical language and vocal technique of the gospel style and tradition can be unfamiliar. However, many gospel writers who received a formal music education of Western music theory and composition, private lessons, and ensemble exposure implemented the influences of European music traditions in some of their gospel music. The works of these

gospel composers may contain some similar structural, vocal and harmonic elements seen in European choral music. For collegiate choral conductors interested in familiarizing themselves and their students with gospel music, they may benefit from exploring gospel works which contain similar European choral traditions.

Purpose of the Study

This study presents musical intersections between the gospel and European choral music traditions. This includes a discussion of three composers and their selected works to demonstrate accessible elements of gospel music for collegiate choral ensembles. These musical elements explore some comparison of styles, examples of where European choral traditions influenced the works of some gospel composers, and appropriate pedagogical techniques for the gospel style. The study includes information on each composer's musical background, examples of how their formal music education influenced their gospel writing, and insight from composer interviews. The composers discussed include Isaac Cates, Diane L. White-Clayton, and Raymond Wise.

Need for Study

Extensive research has been conducted on the history, evolution and vocal techniques of gospel music for several decades by numerous scholars and experts. A small portion of this research has included background information for gospel artists who received a formal music education based in European music traditions. However, there has been little research in exploring more of the musical impact that European training has had on the compositional, vocal, textural and harmonic construction of gospel music. There has

also been little written on the three selected composers for this study, all of whom are all currently active in choral composition, conducting, and higher education at the time of this writing. I intend for this study to serve as a resource for collegiate choral conductors looking for further information on gospel traditions, repertoire and performance practice. This study may particularly aid those who are interested in crossing over from one section of musical traditions to another, such as Predominantly White Institution (PWI) conductors interested in programming gospel repertoire, or Historically Black College and University (HBCU) conductors interested in programming gospel repertoire with traditional European elements. For conductors who regularly program European choral repertoire from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, this familiarity of musical language which they may already possess could create additional opportunity for them to engage with the musical language of gospel music. Repertoire used in this study show examples of a composer's intention to use a particular European compositional trait from seventeenth- through nineteenth-century writing. Other examples demonstrate when writing techniques used by the gospel composer were simply a result their engagement with gospel and European choral music in their musical upbringing.

Methodology/Organization

This study provides a discussion of gospel composers Isaac Cates, Diane L. White-Clayton, and Raymond Wise. Chapter 2 includes their biographical information, musical and educational background, and relevant compositional output. This is supported with content from interviews with each composer about their works, musical influences and writing processes. Chapter 3 focuses on a few relevant selected works by the three

composers, with discussion of applicable pedagogy, rehearsal and performance techniques for conductors as it relates to the intersection of musical styles. Chapter 4 includes a summary and avenues for future study. Appendices include composer interviews, along with suggested gospel repertoire lists of related works, both for works which have published choral scores and those which do not, in the interest of recommending them for publishing.

The primary repertoire focus of this study consists of selected gospel choir works by Cates, White-Clayton and Wise, with the repertoire lists in Appendix A and B to include works by additional gospel composers. Consideration for representative works will be given to compositions with available choral scores. The avenues for future study in Chapter 4 address some related but unpublished gospel works which should be considered for sheet music publishing to increase access for conductors. Today, a number of gospel compositions are available through traditional publishing, transcriptions, or direct purchase from the composer's website and other choral publishing companies. This is the case for the works of Cates, White-Clayton and Wise. Historically, many sacred African American selections stemmed from an oral tradition in their churches, which continue with many modern selections and arrangements. However, many gospel works which may be relevant for this study do not have existing choral scores, or they may have inaccurate transcriptions. Some transcriptions may contain inaccessible voice leading, or lack a written piano accompaniment which would best aid pianists who are not trained in the oral tradition of gospel music.

Delimitations of the Study

The exploration of musical intersections will be limited to gospel choir repertoire with published choral sheet music that is available for conductors to access for their ensembles. This study does not focus on works which have not been transcribed from the oral gospel tradition. The repertoire discussed focuses on African American gospel music, a genre of African American sacred music.[1] Therefore, the study does not focus on the repertoire from sub-genres of gospel music, such as Southern gospel, gospel Blues, Contemporary Christian Music or modern gospel. These elements are beyond the scope of this study.

Related Literature

The following literature review examines texts related to gospel choir music, repertoire, and pedagogical approaches for teaching in academic ensembles. The authors provided conductors with useful strategies for teaching gospel music which can be compared with European choral works. Additionally, in this review, I will evaluate dissertations and books related to the historical background and development of gospel music to further inform conductors of accurate performance practice through the process of analysis.

[1] "Black gospel" or "African American gospel" is typically used in non-U.S. contexts, such as when scholars describe gospel in Japan or Korea, as these gospel traditions refer to "Black gospel music" or "African American gospel music" more so than European Protestant music traditions.

Historical Background of Gospel Development and Repertoire

Dr. Raymond Wise's 2002 dissertation *Defining African American Gospel Music by Tracing Its Historical and Musical Development from 1900 to 2000* has become an influential resource for the study of gospel music development in the twentieth century.[2] The study began with a review of the literature to document the significant musical and historical developments of African American gospel music throughout the twentieth century. It was then developed into a more comprehensive definition of African American gospel music, traced by significant key figures and historical developments which impacted the genre and its integration in culture. Wise used information on gospel within black church experiences, influence of hymnody and spirituals, vocal groups, publishing, and other topics to provide specificity on musical characteristics of how the sound evolved throughout the United States. The study includes a list of tables which detail many gospel development charts in specific styles (Hymn Style, Quartet Style, Classical Style, etc.), gospel music eras and performance styles, and significant historical patterns with each era that connected sacred African American music with other various genres. The detailed material in this document is an excellent study for music students and scholars searching for historical and musical exploration of gospel development in the twentieth century. Furthermore, the tables of gospel music eras and performance styles helped to organize a chronological development of gospel repertoire with European influences for the purposes of this study.

Ethnomusicologist Dr. Mellonee Burnim is a longtime authority of African American gospel music. She presented a review of gospel music research for the *Black*

[2] Wise, Raymond. "Defining African American Gospel Music by Tracing Its Historical and Musical Development from 1900 to 2000." Doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 2002.

Music Research Journal in 1983, "Gospel Music: Review of Literature."[3] Dr. Burnim shared the names and works of several researchers of gospel music, stating that there is no single source from where one can learn the early history of gospel music (pre-dating Thomas Dorsey). Dr. Burnim discussed how at the time, the only sources about the early history of African American gospel were found in articles from contemporary journals and magazines, some of which contained written eyewitness accounts of early twentieth century white Americans observing a musical style they did not understand. Dr. Burnim also listed and discussed five doctoral theses which focused on gospel by the time of her publishing. Her literature review draws attention to the lack of scholarly research for the historical development of gospel music, despite its existence and prominence in culture. This literature review would be beneficial for the pedagogue searching writings on gospel music, although there have thankfully been about 40 years' worth of analyses, writings and studies on gospel music since this article's publishing. Dr. Burnim's article relates to this topic by providing a historical background on gospel music repertoire.

Pedagogy for Singing Gospel Music

Dr. Burnim also contributed to Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin's dissertation, *Developing a Pedagogy for Gospel Singing: Understanding the Cultural Aesthetics and Performance Components of a Vocal Performance in Gospel Music.*[4] This was written as a curriculum project to develop a gospel vocal pedagogy handbook for teachers of both

[3] Burnim, Mellonee. 1983. "Gospel Music: Review of the Literature." *Music Educators Journal 69*, no. 9 (May): 58-61. Accessed March 30, 2022. https://doi.org/10.2307/3396274.
[4] Robinson-Martin, Trineice. 2010. "Developing a Pedagogy for Gospel Singing: Understanding the Cultural Aesthetics and Performance Components of a Vocal Performance in Gospel Music." Doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University.

gospel music, and contemporary commercial music (CCM). She recognized the void of pedagogy resources for gospel singers as opposed to those of standard vocal production. Robinson-Martin's handbook sought to: (1) describe the appropriate vocal techniques for gospel singing; (2) present the cultural aesthetics of gospel singing specifically for the sake of pedagogy; and (3) give pedagogical examples of how to combine vocal techniques with common stylistic traits found in gospel music performance. This third goal relates to the goal of this document, as common vocal techniques associated with singing most European choral repertoire can be identified with some gospel singing techniques. Dr. Robinson-Martin also created a formative evaluation for initial feedback from two gospel experts (Dr. Wise and Dr. Burnim) and two CCM experts (Jeannette LoVetri and Robert Edwin). Finally, she created a summative evaluation given to 14 voice-related practitioners for their feedback as well. She shared that the role of the instructor is to prepare their singers for self-guided musical preparation and interpretation. With this in mind, she used contextual resources to guide instructors towards considerations on pedagogical strategies. This document is especially helpful for vocal instructors, choral instructors, or perhaps early-career graduate students interested in learning more about gospel and CCM vocal pedagogy to add to their instructional practices.

Repertoire and Resources

Arthur Beard III's document, *Trends in the Gospel Music Ensemble Experience: Establishing the Precedent and Need for Inclusion of Gospel Choir Ensemble Experience and Pedagogy into the Collegiate Level Music Curriculum,* was written to articulate the significance of integrating gospel choral ensembles into the collegiate music curriculum

and teaching experience.[5] This document serves as an excellent resource for collegiate music faculty and secondary music teachers considering the benefits of a gospel music inclusion in their course offerings. Beard's writing covered a scope of nineteenth and twentieth century history on gospel music development, including the influence of nineteenth century hymnody and important figures in the mid-twentieth century. Beard presented five research questions to address, such as how the gospel choir experience may equip the lives of collegiate students, or its role in music education advancement. He also presented a hypothesis for each of these questions, using them as a guide for his research. One of the most relevant sources from this document is the inclusion of his table, "Suggested Gospel Choir Repertoire Pedagogical Tool." This table lists several gospel pieces, the composer, the style (Praise & Worship, Spiritual, Traditional, etc.), and a key to accompanying pedagogical statements. The key includes notes such as "learn notes by rote", and "understand the relationship between their own voice and the accompanying instruments." This key can be used for repertoire and guidance of song structure and student learning outcomes. A conductor can assess these outcomes in comparison with those in European choral repertoire when considering song structure, role of vocal textures, interpretation of style, rhythmic complexities, and so on.

Dr. Patrice Turner's article "Getting Gospel Going" in a 2008 publication of the *Music Educators Journal* also provided music educators with gospel performance practice techniques and pedagogical resources.[6] Using the work of gospel music scholars such as

[5] Beard, Arthur D. III. 2021. "Trends in the Gospel Music Ensemble Experience: Establishing the Precedent and Need for Inclusion of Gospel Choir Ensemble Experience and Pedagogy into the Collegiate Level Music Curriculum." Doctoral dissertation, Liberty University.
[6] Turner, Patrice E. 2008. "Getting Gospel Going." *Music Educators Journal 95*, no. 2 (December): 62–68. Accessed April 21, 2022.

Dr. Wise, Dr. Turner included a brief historical context of gospel music development throughout the twentieth century. This includes the relevance of infusing secular music into a sacred form, which musicians such as Thomas Dorsey did frequently due to the influence of his background in blues music. Her focus on gospel development continued with relevant artists of each period, extending to urban contemporary gospel led by Kirk Franklin, Kurt Carr, and Israel Houghton once gospel began to take on a more global sound. As another benefit, Dr. Turner detailed specific vocal warm-ups the educator can use, along with specific gospel songs to use in conjunction with the warm-ups. Each piece is listed with notes for accessibility, such as if it is a unison or SAT-voiced piece, historical context to include in a lesson plan, sections of a piece to use, notes on vocal ranges, and consideration for religious music in a school program. The warm-ups are also notated, with accompanying notes for the music educator on the potential changing of vowels, note values, consonants, and so on. Dr. Turner included tables on how to coordinate a rock/sway movement to songs in duple and triple meters, as well as a table of beneficial gospel performance tips. Her resources to support this article included notes from conferences, magazines, journals, articles on vocal pedagogy, and books on the study of Black music. It is definitely ideal for the music educator, upper-level undergraduate music student or graduate music student who desires to learn valuable performance practice for gospel music in a secondary school setting. Many of the vocal warm-up exercises, meter charts and considerations discussed in her article parallel with typical choral rehearsal practices. For students who typically sing European choral repertoire, these elements play an important role in familiarity of approaching gospel music before applying the styles of this genre.

Summary

Gospel is a dynamic, engaging genre of music that has captivated musicians throughout the many decades of its development. As Dr. Turner suggests, "Gospel music offers music teachers and their students the opportunity to experience an exceptional genre that has deep historical roots in many African American Christian communities in the United States."[7] This study of intersections demonstrates accessible elements of gospel music for collegiate choral ensembles, and it may also help to demystify aspects of the gospel tradition for conductors who are less familiar with the style. Connections drawn between the performance practices and pedagogies of gospel and European choral music can benefit conductors seeking to be more inclusive in their repertoire programming. Through the exploration of these composers and their music, this dissertation is one of few studies to present musical intersections that exist between the gospel and European choral music traditions.

[7] Turner, *Getting Gospel Going,* 62.

CHAPTER 2

THE COMPOSERS: CATES, WHITE-CLAYTON AND WISE

Isaac Cates

Isaac Solomon Cates' musical roles include singer-songwriter, pianist, composer, arranger, conductor, educator, vocal coach, and voting member of the Grammy Recording Academy. Among these many roles, he is especially known for his choral work and gospel writing. Listeners of his music are often able to identify his infusion of classical and gospel music traditions, shaped by sophisticated harmonies, polyphonic rhythms, and complex piano accompaniments. This has led to comparisons with Oscar Peterson, Dianne Warren, Thomas Whitfield, and Richard Smallwood, all strong musical influences of Cates who were also known for combining styles of different musical genres. Early in his career, he was described as a second-generation version of Smallwood, who has also been heralded by many for his blending of classical music in his gospel works since the 1970s.[8] Cates' music has been performed by several vocalists, choruses and orchestras worldwide in schools, churches, and concert stages. Some of these performances have been featured on his YouTube channel, including ensembles such as the Argentina Gospel Choir, Oregon Symphony, the International AME Choir and others.[9] He is also an active clinician,

[8] Shelley, Braxton D. 2017. "Sermons in Song: Richard Smallwood, the Vamp, and the Gospel Imagination." Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 17.
[9] Isaac Cates. n.d. Accessed October 20, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/user/iscbnd/videos.

travelling nationally and internationally to offer guidance for choirs on gospel music techniques and rehearse them on his own music.

Cates was born on January 24, 1985 in Kansas City, Kansas. His relationship with music began at age four when his mother enrolled him in piano lessons. His piano lessons and his upbringing in his Black Pentecostal Baptist church gradually formed his musical influences. Considered a piano prodigy even as a child, Cates appreciated the routine and discipline that came from studying classical piano technique and repertoire. He began taking voice lessons at age 16, and throughout his high school years, he was regularly active singing in high school choirs, performing in recitals, and learning how to write and arrange music. He was also very active singing and playing in his church.

Cates felt as at home with his classical music training as he did with Black church music traditions. As a young man, growing up in these styles both shaped and benefitted his overall musicianship. The dual influences of jazz and classical music were especially strong in the musical culture of Kansas City. In his family's Baptist church, musical offerings for worship often consisted of both modern gospel choir music, which was taught by rote, and choral anthems or concert spirituals, which were taught with published choral sheet music. This meant that several of the church musicians he knew, particularly pianists, often had classical training beyond the gospel tradition, with the ability to read music. However, this did not always mean that these musicians participated in both gospel and classical traditions regularly beyond the worship service. Cates recalled how his upbringing involved the influences of two styles of musical training, particularly in the church culture:

> So we had anthems, spirituals; you had to read music because we would sing a Kirk Franklin song, or back in the day we would sing James Cleveland, Hawkins family; that was more contemporary or gospel. But then we would turn around and sing *Let Mount Zion Rejoice*, or one of the [John] Peterson cantatas. You had to be versed

> pianistically to read that stuff, so it kind of was introduced to me at a very young age. It was kind of the lay of the land. I'm originally from Kansas City, and because of the influences of jazz and classical music in the musical culture here, it's just sort of underneath, or rather, an undertow that's kind of there. Although I was a little bit of an anomaly in that a lot of musicians when I was growing up weren't studying music, especially Black ones, and they weren't studying classical music. And if they were, there was a mindset of "I'm going to go and be a classical musician; I'm not going to still do stuff with church." So for me, I just didn't see a separation in it. I saw just a kinship in the music.[10]

Cates went on to study at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Conservatory of Music from 2004-2008, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Music with an emphasis in voice and piano. His studies at UMKC and his participation in the choral program became highly impactful on his musical interests and compositions. His experiences with choral-orchestral masterworks, such as Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*, Mozart's *Requiem in D minor*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, and J. S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* were especially formative musical experiences. His studies in classical piano also led him to explore the music of twentieth through twenty-first century pianists such as Anthony Burger, Dino Kartsonakis and Marvin Hamlisch, who were known for blending their classical training into the genres they performed. He began to regularly study and absorb the techniques of these musicians, becoming further inspired by their contextual treatments of structure, theme, counterpoint and harmonic development. During this time, Cates began to arrange spirituals and chorales, and set sacred texts to music.[11] He became increasingly inspired by the techniques, structure, and beauty of European choral and symphonic repertoire as he applied himself further as a composer.

[10] Isaac Cates, interview by Bryon Black II, June 7, 2023.
[11] "Meet Isaac Cates." Isaac Cates Music. Accessed June 5, 2023. https://isaaccatesmusic.com/index.php/meet-isaac/.

During his studies at UMKC, Cates collaborated with a colleague in 2004 to form Ordained, a small gospel group made up of skilled vocalists, music educators and worship leaders. They released their first album in 2006, *Take My Life*, under the label ISOL Music. The release of this album led to Cates' successful recording career. At the time of this writing, they have released two additional albums (*Carol of the Bells* in 2014 and *Amazed* in 2022) and several singles (including *Strong Tower* in 2011, *You Are Enough* in 2015, *Strong and Mighty* in 2020, and *It's Working* in 2023). Much of Cates' choral output has been performed by Ordained since their initial album release. In 2019, Cates and Ordained performed for the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) National Conference in Kansas City, including his setting of *Take My Life (Lacrimosa)* on their program.[12] This conference performance led to increased exposure for Cates, Ordained, and his adaption of Mozart's *Lacrimosa* among choral conductors.

Several of Cates' gospel compositions incorporate interpolations of well-known classical and romantic era works. His 2014 Christmas EP, *Carol of the Bells*, features a solo piano setting of "O Come All Ye Faithful" which incorporates the *Adagio cantabile* from Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13*. On his album *Take My Life*, his solo piano setting of "Holy, Holy, Holy" incorporated Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in C# minor, Op. 3, No. 2* before devolving into the hymn. While the majority of his compositions do not include interpolations of existing works, these may serve as more direct examples of Cates' influence of classical works and traditions. The works also demonstrate his love for blending classical and gospel musical styles in the interest of bringing their respective audiences together.

[12] NationalACDA, "Isaac Cates & Ordained." YouTube Video, 4:59. July 19, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1WoL8m8TFc.

Cates' recording projects have earned him several collaborative efforts with other renowned gospel and Christian music artists including Kirk Franklin, Donald Lawrence, Kari Jobe, Vashawn Mitchell, Myron Butler, Mark Hayes, and one of his most significant gospel influences, Richard Smallwood. Artists beyond the realm of gospel music have included Kansas City hip-hop legend Tech N9ne, the Irish vocal group Anùna, and Dr. Craig Hella Johnson and Conspirare. Cates enjoys an international reputation as a gospel musician, having performed in Italy, Switzerland, England, Spain, Australia, Sweden, Norway, Ireland and Germany. His composition *Strong Tower* and his setting of *The Lord's Prayer* in particular have been performed in over 17 countries and even translated into numerous languages.[13] In 2023, Cates completed a commissioned choral work with composer Nicholas Reeves for Dr. Anthony Maglione and the William Jewell College Choirs, entitled *Canon for Racial Reconciliation*. This large choral work fused together music traditions of Black Pentecostal churches and the Russian Orthodoxy, using a combination of scripture and original texts by Carla Thomas which reflect on race relations. Cates conducted the premiere in November 2023, performed by the William Jewell College professional choral ensemble, Cardinalis, and Ordained.[14] He currently serves as the Director of Music Outreach in Worship at Church of the Resurrection, the largest United Methodist Church in the United States with six locations and over 24,000 members.[15] The church has hosted some of Cates' large-scale concerts which have often included

[13] "Meet Isaac Cates."
[14] William Jewell Choir [williamjewellchoir] and Cardinalis [cardinalis_wjc], "World Premiere: Canon for Racial Reconciliation," *Instagram*, August 28, 2023, accessed October 20, 2023, https://www.instagram.com/p/CwgU778rXzy/.
[15] "About Resurrection." Resurrection: A United Methodist Church. Accessed October 16, 2023. https://resurrection.church/about-resurrection/.

performances of his compositions, such as "Affirmations: A Night of Worship" in September 2023.

In speaking with Cates, I have observed three particular motivations that lead his work and artistry. The first is his Christian faith and commitment to following God, which was instilled in him in his youth by his parents and church. He has spoken openly about how his faith in God has played a significant role in both musical inspiration and guidance for his life. "I am a Christian, I'm a believer, I'm a 'Jesus-roller'…So I lift Jesus in my living, my music, my interactions."[16] This is often reflected in the texts he sets, his use of harmonic language to elevate the texts, and the undeniable passion with which he performs, whether he is conducting, teaching in a workshop, singing, or at the piano. The second motivation is his passion for encouraging others through the messages of hope, faith, love and inspiration for which gospel music is well-known. He enjoys sharing music which reflects his beliefs and can also provide a powerful message of hope for all people, no matter what their beliefs may be. One of his recent compositions released in 2023, *It's Working,* is based on Biblical text from Romans 8:28, and includes a vamp with the choir singing "Know that all is working, working for your good; Joy comes in the morning, keep the faith in God." This text is repeated several times throughout the vamp as the sopranos, altos and tenors continue to sing inversions, accompanied by increasing dynamics and driving rhythms from the instrumentation. The feeling of encouragement for the listener to stay strong and move forward in the midst of difficult life situations is certainly palpable through the expression and enthusiasm of Cates and the Affirmations choir in the live

[16] Cates, interview.

concert premiere recording.[17] Cates has frequently turned to the uplifting messages in his works throughout his personal life to help him through personal challenges, just as they have provided solace for others. His third motivation is bringing people together, which he believes is a natural result of a gospel choir. Cates feels that gospel and even the blending of genres "emulsifies – it brings people together. It breaks down the wall of audience and performer; it brings the idea of participation."[18] His work to integrate a gospel choir at Church of the Resurrection, with a predominantly white racial demographic, has played a significant role in bringing together members of their community from different backgrounds. His knowledge of blending traditional European choral techniques with gospel has become a method for unifying singers in church, community and academic settings who are typically more familiar with only one of these traditions.

Diane L. White-Clayton

Dr. Diane L. White-Clayton, affectionately known as "Dr. Dee", is a composer, pianist, conductor, soprano soloist, author, and speaker. She travels extensively as a vocalist and workshop clinician for ensembles throughout the United States. Over the course of four decades, she has composed a wide variety of sacred choral works. She has several anthems and gospel works, arrangements of African, Korean and African American folk songs, an arrangement of the Hatikvah, atonal classical works, and some inspirational sacred songs for solo voice. Her works have been performed in major concert venues including the John F. Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Walt Disney Concert Hall

[17] Isaac Cates, "It's Working (LIVE) - Isaac Cates Feat. Affirmations – Regina Sims, Alicia Saunders." YouTube Video, 10:20. August 1, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQxuCPUersM.
[18] Cates, interview.

in Los Angeles. One of her recent compositions, *Love, The Greatest Gift* for SSA chorus, piano, congas and shakers, was commissioned by conductor Dr. Lori Hetzel and the University of Kentucky Women's Choir, and was premiered at the February 2022 American Choral Directors Association Southern Region Conference in Raleigh, NC. Her most popular work, *Clap Praise* for mixed chorus, mezzo, speaker and piano was published by Hal Leonard in 2017 as part of the Rollo Dilworth Choral Series. The piece gained notoriety among choral conductors when it was performed by Dr. Tony Leach and Penn State University's Essence of Joy Choir at the 2011 National ACDA Conference in Chicago, IL. Dr. White-Clayton acknowledges the use of polyrhythms, choreographed clapping and shouts in the piece which come from African roots, and vocal technique used in the declamatory sections of the piece which are based on European choral traditions.[19] Many of her compositions and performances are known for demonstrating what she describes to be "a mélange of the power of gospel music, the technique of classical music and the colors of jazz."[20] This is present in her own solo performances as well, as Dr. White-Clayton is an operatic soprano, celebrated for her three-and-a-half octave range and her ability to blend operatic and gospel vocal techniques.

She is the founder and CEO of BYTHAX, a company committed to supporting artists in sacred and secular arenas, Christian counsel, mentoring and networking with publishing, workshops, vocal coaching and live performances. BYTHAX stands for "Bringing You Talented, Heavenly-minded Artists with eXcellence!"[21] Through BYTHAX Publishing, she has produced several choral scores, albums, and books which

[19] Dr. Diane White-Clayton, "Clap Praise: The Composer Speaks." YouTube Video, 25:59. March 12, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Q43GyiAFtk&t=1262s.
[20] "Biography." Dr. Diane White-Clayton. Accessed August 28, 2023. https://www.bythax.org/diane.
[21] "Biography." Dr. Diane White-Clayton.

are available for purchase on her website. Scores include choral works (mixed, treble, and tenor/bass voicings), choral-orchestral works, and classical solo vocal literature (for high, medium and low voices). Along with *Clap Praise*, her anthem *Birth of a Promise* is also published through Hal Leonard, and she is additionally published through Zintzo Music. She is also the Founding Director of the professional vocal ensemble, "Dr. Dee & the BYTHAX Ensemble." She has released albums under the label BYTHAX Records featuring both choral and vocal solo performances, including *In Stillness* (2000) and *Live in DC* (2005).

Dr. White-Clayton was born in 1964 into a family of musicians and ministers. She was number five of six children to her parents, Reverend and Mrs. Leamon and Catherine White. Her family was very active in their church in Washington, DC. Similar to Cates, she grew up in an African American Baptist church where worship music traditions consisted of both African American sacred music and European choral music. Her musical training began in church as well. Dr. White-Clayton began singing in their church's children's choir at the age of four, and even formed a vocal trio with her older sisters. She continued singing and began taking piano lessons while remaining active in church music with her family. By age nine, she found herself playing piano for the Sunday School Choir, with about five children gravitating towards her as an unexpected leader of the group. They began singing together, and the group of five children soon more than doubled to 12 children. Her love for composing began very young as well, as she began writing songs at age 11 with a setting of the hymn *Take My Life and Let It Be*. She recalls having always loved composing and arranging songs since her childhood. She began writing songs for the church's Sunday School Choir to sing in worship services, and soon started to transform

them into more complex arrangements, occasionally extending the vocal texture beyond three-part harmony. Dr. White-Clayton recalled how their church and other churches in the Washington, DC area included both African American sacred music and traditional European choral repertoire in their worship services:

> …before the formal education came, it was in my environment. So my church – Baptist church in the city of DC, not unlike a lot of African American Baptist churches, and some other A.M.E. churches as well – we did everything.[22] So it was nothing on a Sunday morning for us to do an anthem, whether it was standard European classical music, or a piece by an African American composer; and we'll do the hymn straight with the pipe organ and three choirs situated in different places that they sang [from], and then we'd shift into some gospel music as the service progressed. So that was my norm, and I thought everybody's church was like that. We did spirituals, down-home spirituals because we had a lot of people from the Carolinas, you know, with the parallel fourth harmonies. We also did classically-arranged spirituals. So it was nothing. My sisters and I were taking classical piano, we learned Fauré…. So that was normal; it wasn't a stretch. It wasn't "oh, they're doing that uppity music." That's what our church did. I was born into that.[23]

Her musical training was enhanced by attending outstanding junior high and high school music programs, despite the Washington, DC public schools being one of the lowest school systems in the country at the time.[24] A significant moment for her was having a high school music teacher who recognized her abilities and requested that she arrange something for their choir. Her teacher also entrusted her to direct a couple of Christmas musicals she wrote while in high school, producing a score, script, and even choreography. The support she received from her teacher and classmates while teaching her music encouraged her to pursue the study of composition at the collegiate level. Following high school, Dr. White-Clayton attended Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri where she studied piano,

[22] A.M.E.: African Methodist Episcopal.
[23] Diane L. White-Clayton, interview by Bryon Black II, August 29, 2023.
[24] White-Clayton, interview.

voice, and composition, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1986. Her collegiate studies provided a more extensive training of Western art music and exposure to various genres. This expanded the influences from which she could draw in her own writing. During her undergraduate studies, her sister, who was also a doctoral student in music theory there at the time, took Dr. White-Clayton to a contemporary art concert one evening which featured four composers in the music department. She recalled this performance being her first exposure to atonal music, and this made a significant impact on her as a young composer. Inspired by this, she continued to absorb the range of possibilities throughout her undergraduate music studies, allowing this to inform her process. She continued her studies at the graduate level, receiving both her Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Music Composition from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1993 and 1998, respectively.

Among Dr. White-Clayton's most valuable lessons from her studies were learning how to develop songs and ideas further, rather than having disconnected motivic ideas. With some of her early gospel compositions during her undergraduate studies, she would initially struggle with writing isolated themes before abandoning them for new ideas. "I had this song called *Thank You* for this really incredible ensemble that I inherited when I started undergrad…So it started, it was pretty, I liked it. But I was so bored so quickly…So development was one of the most valuable tools I learned in studying composition…Let's think about what you already have."[25] Learning how to apply the use of form and structure in composition also assisted her in finding ways to best support and organize the texts she would set in her choral works. Influenced by her exposure to seventeenth through

[25] White-Clayton, interview.

nineteenth century European repertoire for chorus and piano solo, she began to construct her compositions with similar structures, or she would often quote some of these works directly. Her first anthem, *O Sing Unto the Lord* for mixed chorus and piano includes a polyphonic vamp during which she quoted Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" from his *Messiah*, specifically borrowing "Forever and ever; hallelujah, hallelujah!" Dr. White-Clayton has also enjoyed quoting Baroque era compositions and including the characteristics of the style in her writing. She finds there to be an "easy marriage" between baroque music and gospel because of the improvisatory styles that are inherent to these traditions, even if the two genres do not use the same type of improvisation.[26] She discussed baroque polyphony as one of her structural influences, and many of her choral works feature a polyphonic vamp in which each voice part breaks into their own motive that overlaps with the other voices, increasing the textures as each voice part enters with each repeat of the vamp. This was the case with her gospel anthem *Be Thou Exalted*, written in 1992 (which will be discussed further in Chapter 3). Her anthem *Rejoice in the Lord* for mixed chorus and piano incorporates a quote of J. S. Bach's *Prelude in C minor* in the piano accompaniment. Utilizing these quotations of European music repertoire, as well as their harmonic language and progressions, has been a consistent influence in her writing, particularly as a feature for her accompaniments. Many of her piano accompaniments feature a blend of soloistic lines with arpeggiations and functional progressions which can be embellished by the performing pianist as they desire, similar to the functional improvisations that a seventeenth century keyboard player may have approached with provided figured bass.

[26] White-Clayton, interview.

In addition to her composition work, Dr. White-Clayton is an active conductor-educator in Los Angeles. She is currently a member of the Ethnomusicology faculty of the University of California, Los Angeles in the Herb Alpert School of Music, where she directs the African American Music Ensemble. This ensemble explores repertoire by composers of the African Diaspora, including gospel, spirituals, freedom/Civil Rights songs, anthems, hymn arrangements, and other forms of contemporary choral music.[27] She serves as the Artistic Director of the Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers, a touring choral ensemble founded in 1968 by American choral conductor Albert J. McNeil that has attracted global attention for their performances of African American spirituals.[28] She has held several positions at various universities, colleges and churches across the United States, including Artistic Director with the Washington Performing Arts Society; Artist-in-Residence and Assistant Director of African-American Student Development at Appalachian State University; Composer-in-Residence at Indiana University of Pennsylvania; and Vocal Clinician Consultant with the Disney Performing Arts Conservatory in Anaheim, CA. A position of particularly large scope was choral conductor at the 6,000 member Faithful Central Bible Church in Inglewood, CA, where she founded the Sacred Praise Chorale. She also conducted the choir at New Christ Memorial Church in San Fernando, CA under the renowned gospel artist and pastor, Andraé Crouch. Dr. White-Clayton is married to Joe Louis Clayton, a former recording and touring Motown R&B percussionist. He has performed with major artists in Motown including the Jackson

[27] "African American Music Ensemble." UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. Accessed November 8, 2023. https://schoolofmusic.ucla.edu/ensembles/music-of-african-americans/.
[28] "Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers." Singers.com. Accessed November 8, 2023. https://www.singers.com/group/Albert-McNeil-Jubilee-Singers/.

5, Aretha Franklin, Barry White and Marvin Gaye. The couple occasionally performs together on concerts which feature her compositions.

In speaking with Dr. White-Clayton and studying her work, I have observed three motivations at the center of her work and artistry, similar to Isaac Cates. The first is her lifelong faith and belief in God, which has been an important part of her life from her family upbringing in church. In addition to being born into a family of ministers and musicians, even at a young age, she was "always very serious about God."[29] Leading the Sunday School Choir as a child was not only one of her earliest experiences in composing for a practical need, but it was also among her earliest opportunities to express her faith through music. Her settings of scripture and other sacred texts demonstrate her passion for her Christianity, as she uses textures and song structure to elevate the lyrics. The second motivation is her desire to preserve gospel music, and African American music in general. Throughout her faculty appointments, she has always believed in providing an informed and honest education on gospel music for college students, consistently sharing with them the relevance of gospel music throughout history. "A lot of…the college-aged students I teach, they often don't understand the importance of gospel music in terms of the history of American music. American music would not be what it is if gospel music did not exist."[30] Dr. White-Clayton often promotes the importance of gospel music as a genre, encouraging the potential of inclusivity for all people to embrace and perform it, regardless of their level of exposure or racial background. This leads to her third motivation, which is teaching people about gospel through an informed education on performance pedagogy.

[29] White-Clayton, interview.
[30] Mini Movie Mamas, "An Interview with Dr. Dee." YouTube Video, 17:43. August 30, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twr2WIW5mQ8&t=16s.

She regularly serves as a choral workshop clinician and coaches singers with limited gospel singing experience on how to approach the particulars of the style. The most important aspect of gospel coaching for her is encouraging others to sing with an informed and healthy technique. Much of her classical training in voice and composition has formed her educational approach for gospel singing technique, but her foundational pedagogy of healthy singing has been a vital strategy when introducing this style to singers. She also takes great pride in her African American heritage, and the history of how African American music has contributed to American society, influencing a variety of contemporary music styles. In this way, she is able to use her formal education and diverse experiences to educate people of all ages and backgrounds on healthy, appropriate ways to sing gospel music. This, in turn, helps to preserve the style well beyond the walls of the African American church.

Raymond Wise

Dr. Raymond Wise has been an active musician and educator for several decades, engaged in a variety of roles. He is a choral composer, conductor, professor, countertenor, pianist, author, and an ordained minister. His output as a composer is especially prolific, as he has over 680 choral works including original gospel compositions, anthems, art songs, church cantatas for Christmas and Easter, some secular choral works, and several arrangements of spirituals. Dr. Wise has composed works for mixed choirs, treble choirs, tenor/bass choirs, children's choirs, and solos. His works have been published by numerous national music publishers, including GIA, Hal Leonard, Abingdon Press, MusicSpoke, and the United Methodist Publishing House. In 2003, Dr. Wise released the Raymond Wise

Choral Sheet Music Series, through which over 300 of his gospel, spiritual and choral arrangements are available. He has served as a writer/editor for the Raymond Wise Series with Hinshaw Music Publishing. In 2004, he released his anthology *21 Spirituals for the 21st Century*, which contains selected concert spiritual arrangements. His works also appear in African American hymnals such as *Zion Still Sings*,[31] the *Africana Hymnal*,[32] the *Lead Me Guide Me* Catholic Hymnal,[33] and the African American Lectionary, a collaborative project of The African American Pulpit and American Baptist College of Nashville.[34] Dr. Wise has been privileged to perform his compositions in renowned performance halls worldwide, including Carnegie Hall (New York City), the Kennedy Center and National Cathedral (Washington, DC), Berlin Philharmonic Hall (Berlin, Germany), Smetana Hall (Prague, Czechia), and Chamsil Gymnasium Olympic Stadium (Seoul, Korea). Notable major works include his multi-movement *Afro-American Suite: A Song of Freedom* for Bass-Baritone, mixed chorus and rhythm section, and his *Gospel Mass* which, after premiering individual movements, he performed in its entirety for the first time in 2022 with his African American Choral Ensemble at Indiana University Bloomington.[35]

Dr. Wise was born in 1961 in Baltimore, Maryland to C. Dexter Wise, Jr. and Rev. Julia Virginia Wise. He was born into a large family with an extensive background in

[31] Published by Abingdon Press, 2007 as the first publication to include very contemporary Black church music.
[32] Published by Abingdon Press, 2015 as part of the *Africana Hymnal Project* of the United Methodist Church.
[33] Published by GIA Publications, 1987.
[34] A resource which highlights African American ecclesial traditions and moments of the lectionary cycle and allows users to select from several materials for their congregation. Includes hymns, spirituals, gospel anthems, modern songs, and other service music by composers Moses Hogan, Thomas Whitfield, Glenn Burleigh, Richard Smallwood, Nolan Williams Jr., and others. The lectionary uses the African American Heritage Hymnal, A.M.E. Zion Hymnal, the Church of God in Christ "Yes Lord!" hymnal, and others.
[35] Indiana Daily Student, "African American Choral Ensemble to perform Raymond Wise's 'Gospel Mass'", accessed October 31, 2023, https://www.idsnews.com/article/2022/04/african-american-choral-ensemble-gospel-mass-raymond-wise.

ministry and music which dates as far back as his great-grandparents, a musician and a pastor. By the age of three, he found himself singing with his family's gospel singing group, The Wise Singers, along with his five siblings. He began learning piano by age four and writing songs by age nine. The Wise Singers' frequent performances of gospel music also created opportunities for Dr. Wise to engage with established gospel performers at a young age. His great-aunt Pauline Wells Lewis was also a radio promoter of gospel music throughout the 1940s-1970s. She would often host touring gospel performers in her home during their travels, as segregation in America prevented Black artists from being allowed to stay in hotels during this time. As artists such as Rev. James Cleveland, Pastor Shirley Caesar and others came in town to perform, Lewis would call on The Wise Singers to open their concerts. Dr. Wise was unknowingly exposed to what scholar Dr. Horace Clarence Boyer referred to as the "Golden Age of Gospel", a period which saw gospel music's development of distinctive styles and its rise to the concert hall.[36] This exposure to gospel music and artists had a major impact on his musical interests.

In his 2002 dissertation, Dr. Wise noted the greater education and social opportunities afforded to African Americans as a result of the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision and the rise of the Civil Rights Movement.[37] Throughout the 1960s, many young African American students in the Baltimore/Washington, DC area attended Historically Black Colleges and Universities such as Howard University and Morgan State University. Students who studied music became increasingly influenced by the formal music education and training in European

[36] Boyer, Horace Clarence. *The Golden Age of Gospel*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000.
[37] Wise, Raymond. "Defining African American Gospel Music by Tracing Its Historical and Musical Development from 1900 to 2000." Doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 2002, 260.

music traditions. For some young composers who had a background in gospel music, this led to the creation of compositions with elements of both gospel and classical music by the 1970s. Dr. Wise was greatly inspired by Richard Smallwood, Henry Davis, and Mark Payne, all gospel musicians who were classically trained and were beginning to infuse this style in their piano works during this time. He was becoming increasingly active as a gospel musician in church, while learning piano and voice in classical style. While this incorporation of classical influences into gospel music was unique and particular to the Baltimore, Washington, DC and Virginia areas, he recalled how it was not initially welcomed in academic settings:

> I was in a very, very unique environment in that we sang gospel music; but the Baltimore, Washington, DC, Virginia area had several HBCUs and such a heavy focus on classical music as well. And at that point in the 1960s, well, even earlier, gospel music was not accepted in the academy. So, a lot of the students who went to school to study music formally were prohibited from playing gospel music in schools, but yet they played it on Sunday. So they played on Sunday morning, but they couldn't do it during the week.[38]

The influence of Smallwood and his contemporaries at Howard University propelled him to further his musical studies, desiring to merge his classical training with his love for gospel as his heroes had started to do. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Music from Denison University in Granville, OH in 1983. During his undergraduate studies, he studied opera, art and German at the Institute for European Studies in Vienna, Austria in 1982. In 1983, he also completed additional studies in African American history, music, and dance at San Francisco State University, as well as an apprenticeship in the business and recording of gospel music with the Walter Hawkins Corporation in Oakland, CA. Dr. Wise received both his Master of Arts in Music Education

[38] Raymond Wise, interview by Bryon Black II, September 28, 2023.

and his Doctor of Philosophy in Music Education at The Ohio State University (OSU) in 1996 and 2002, respectively. While there, he played a significant role in starting a gospel choir in the OSU School of Music, which continues as an ensemble course available to OSU undergraduate and graduate students at the time of this writing.[39]

As a young musician, Dr. Wise often felt the pressure of not fitting in between his background in gospel music and his traditional classical music training. Some of his gospel compositions contained brief interludes in the piano accompaniment with elements of classical music, or short choral fugues. Many of his compositions were a blend of what felt like very different styles and musical traditions that would appeal to two different types of audiences – one with a traditionally more expressive response than the other. This often confused listeners in Black church settings, who were unsure if they were supposed to respond by clapping or listening quietly. Meanwhile, HBCU institutions continued to discourage students from playing gospel music in the practice rooms in order to keep their focus on their formal music education, and Dr. Wise's professors strongly dissuaded him from this as well. A turning point from this constant frustration would come in the 1970s upon hearing a lecture by Dr. Robert Mitchell Simmons, Dean of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, who would become a mentor for Dr. Wise as he taught at seminaries in Columbus, OH. In one of Dr. Simmons' lectures, his mention of the role of cross-cultural music led to a God encounter and major revelation for Dr. Wise. He recalls:

> One day, he was talking about cross-cultural music, and he talked about how back in the day, two cultures (A, a dominant culture; and B, Black culture) came together. It was just A-B, B-A, two things in the same room; but how the cultures were so mixed that now when they come together, it was something new, and he called that C. The Lord spoke [to me] and said, "That's your problem. You're C." My background is gospel; my training is European classical. What was coming out of me was neither one or the other, but a combination of both. So I go to the B folks,

[39] School of Music, "Jazz Ensembles", accessed November 4, 2023. https://music.osu.edu/ensembles/jazz.

> who will say "Oh, that's nice, but it's too *that*. I go to the A folks – they go "that's nice but it's too *that.*" I was like "Come on, God, what's up?" He says, "I'm preparing you for a 'C-world', a place where people will speak both languages; and when you speak both languages, you become a bridge to bring people together." So that concept of 'C' is something that comes from Dr. Simmons' book, *Good Religion*.[40] He talks about the 'C-musician', and in fact, he quotes me in this book as being an example of a 'C-musician.' So finally, by the mid- to late-80s, I discovered, "wow, I'm unique, or unique in the sense that I'm not different." That was a kind of coming together that perhaps was ahead of my time in terms of people accepting it. But it was a common thing when musicians were trained in both worlds, and they found a way to bring those worlds together.[41]

This idea of a composer using their music to bring different communities together was not uncommon. Robert Nathaniel Dett was famously inspired by Romantic era styles of writing, and often infused African American folk songs and spirituals into his choral and piano compositions. This was notable during the early 20th century, a time in which African American music was not appreciated among the general public and felt like a vestige of slavery among African American people. Dett worked towards changing these impressions by incorporating their folk songs into his art songs.[42] In the same way, Dr. Wise felt he was on a mission to prove the validity of gospel music in academic settings, and to bring elements of his education to gospel audiences to enhance their musical techniques. He set out to do this through his teaching, compositions, and writing textbooks for conductors and educators to increase the accessibility of gospel music and spirituals for musicians beyond the African American churches. In addition to his dissertation on the historical development of gospel music in the 20th century, Dr. Wise has developed and implemented courses in African American gospel music, spirituals, and worship. He formed (or directed)

[40] Simmons, Rev. R. M. 1996. *Good Religion: Expressions of Energy in Traditional African-American Worship*. Laymen Christian Leadership Publication.
[41] Wise, interview.
[42] Ferdinand, Jason M. "R. Nathaniel Dett's 'The Chariot Jubilee': An Instrument for Fostering Racial Harmony." *Choral Journal 61*, no. 5 (December 2020): 24-40. Accessed October 21, 2021.

gospel choirs while teaching at Denison University, Ohio State University, Trinity Lutheran Seminary (Columbus, OH), Columbus School for Girls (Columbus, OH), Trevecca University (Nashville, TN), and Ashland Theological Seminary (Bethlehem House of Bread Program at their satellite location in Akron, OH). He has also collaborated with several colleges nationwide to establish accredited online certificate programs in African American Gospel and Sacred Music to establish programs that will allow practicing gospel musicians and traditional music majors to receive academic training and credentials in gospel music.[43]

In 1985, Dr. Wise founded Raise Productions, a gospel music production company based in Columbus. His goal has been to have an established and accredited Center for the Gospel Arts in which "Gospel Music and The Gospel Arts" can be elevated, instructed, and promoted.[44] Raise established The Center for the Gospel Arts in 1989 to provide educational training for gospel artists and the community. Dr. Wise developed the curricula and texts for this school, which has served over 5,000 students since its opening. Raise partnered with various seminaries and colleges across America, including those previously mentioned throughout Ohio. Raise also established ensembles including the Raise Choir, Raise National Mass Choir, and the Raise Kids. Some of the Raise performing groups have received Gospel Music Excellence Awards, and produced several albums, plays and concerts. Several of the Raise choirs have recorded on their own label in addition to various national gospel record labels. The Raise Choir in particular performs a diverse repertoire of choral music that includes spirituals, choral anthems, hymns, and traditional and

[43] Raise Productions, "Biographical Sketch of the Rev. Raymond Wise, PhD.", accessed September 27, 2023. https://raiseonline.com/raymond-wise.
[44] Raise Productions, "Biographical Sketch of the Rev. Raymond Wise, PhD."

contemporary gospel music. They have performed throughout the United States and abroad in Germany, Portugal, Austria, and Romania; served as the chorus for operatic productions and orchestral works; and provided background vocals for many national recording artists (Tramaine Hawkins, Diana Ross, Yolanda Adams, Luther Barnes, Ron Richardson, and others).[45] Several recordings of the Raise Choirs and other Raise ensembles are available for purchase and download on the Raise Productions website.[46]

Several of Dr. Wise's textbooks and resources are available for purchase though Raise Productions, including:[47]

Vocal Training for the Gospel Singer

Vocal Training for the Gospel Singer II: Moving Beyond the Basics

Gospel Piano Book I and II

The Gospel Companion Book (a piano book for the young beginner)

Our Music Now and Then: A History of Sacred Music (A Survey of Christian Music from the Old Testament to present day African American Gospel Music)

Worship and Music in the African American Religious Experience (Considering African American Worship from a Theological, Philosophical, Cultural, Musical and Practical Perspective

Raise Production Songbooks contain several of Dr. Wise's choral compositions, which can be excellent repertoire companions for educators. Songbooks available include:[48]

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[45] Raise Productions, "Raise Productions Choir Biographical Sketch, accessed November 5, 2023. https://raiseonline.com/raise-choir.
[46] Raise Productions, "Music Downloads", accessed November 5, 2023. https://raiseonline.com/music-downloads.
[47] Raise Productions, "Store: Course Textbooks", accessed November 5, 2023. https://raiseonline.com/course-text-books.
[48] Raise Productions, "Store: Songbooks", accessed November 5, 2023. https://raiseonline.com/songbooks.

Raise Ministries: It's Time to Go

Classic Raise: The Best of Raise Choir

A Raise Christmas

21 Spirituals for the 21st Century

More Gospel Songs for Children's Voices

Gospel Songs, Spirituals, and Anthems for Men's Voices

Gospel Songs for Youth and Teens Voices

At the time of this writing, Dr. Wise is preparing his forthcoming book entitled *What Happened To Gospel Music* published by Cascade press, which traces the historical and musical development of African American Gospel Music from its inception through the present.

Dr. Wise is currently a member of the faculty at Indiana University Bloomington (IU Bloomington), where he serves as Professor of Practice in the African American African Diaspora Studies and instructs courses in African American music. He is the Associate Director of the African American Arts Institute, an IU Bloomington division devoted to the perpetuation and performance of African American music and art.[49] Dr. Wise conducts IU Bloomington's African American Choral Ensemble.[50] Since beginning with the group in 2012, he increased membership from 10 students to over 50 as of the Spring 2020 semester. AACE specializes in singing choral music by African Americans, but opens membership to students of all backgrounds, promoting greater unity and inclusiveness on IU Bloomington's campus. He has also served as an active member of the

[49] Indiana University Bloomington, "Raymond Wise," accessed October 22, 2023. https://aaai.indiana.edu/profiles/wise_profile.html.
[50] Indiana University Bloomington, "African American Choral Ensemble," accessed October 22, 2023. https://aaai.indiana.edu/ensembles/choral/index.html.

national faculty of the Gospel Music Workshop of America (GMWA), American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), National Association for Music Education (NafME), and their respective Ohio chapters. Additionally, Dr. Wise served as the Ethnic and American Music Repertoire and Standards Chair for the Central Region of ACDA and has presented at several regional and national conferences.[51] Amid years of collegiate positions, building Raise Productions, and prolific writing of music and texts, Dr. Wise has remained active as a minister. He had served as a Minister of Music for over 40 years. He was ordained in 2007, and he currently serves as an Associate Minister at Faith Ministries Interdenominational Church in Columbus, where his brother Dr. C. Dexter Wise III is the pastor.

In speaking with Dr. Wise and studying his work, three motivations that lead his work are in common with those of the other two composers mentioned in this study. The first is certainly his faith and Christianity, which has been an unyielding foundation since his youth. As a minister, he shares that he is saved and committed to "'Raising the Word of God Higher' so that lost souls will be led to Christ."[52] This is evident in the texts he chooses to set in his compositions, whether they are selected from scriptural passages, settings of existing gospel pieces, or arrangements of spirituals. He was also born into a family with strong traditions in active church participation, a belief in Christianity, a commitment to God, and singing gospel songs and spirituals as a family in church and for the community. His second motivation has been to preserve gospel music, working to justify its value in academic settings. Dr. Wise received memorable discouragement from teachers who dismissed gospel in his European musical training, saying it was not

[51] The Central Region of ACDA has since become part of the Midwestern Region.
[52] Raise Productions, "Biographical Sketch of the Rev. Raymond Wise, PhD."

teachable for those musicians and educators outside the Black community. He made it a goal to not only disprove them, but to become as well-informed as possible in order to provide gospel resources for these very musicians and educators. In essence, he used the knowledge gained through his degrees in music to create a written pedagogy for the benefit of his colleagues and their students. After generating a strong body of work, he was even granted the opportunity to return to Denison 20 years later to help establish a gospel choir, after having been discouraged from performing gospel music there during his time as a student. His third motivation is a strong desire to bring people together, which has birthed much of the output of compositions and textbooks. His gospel pedagogy was developed in consideration of educators who did not have an upbringing in Black Pentecostal church environments. He has also appreciated being able to use his formal music education and supplementary studies to elevate his work with gospel singers, providing healthy vocal technique that allows the singers greater sustainability for a style that has traditionally been very demanding on the voice. This ability to bring language and technique has helped to create greater accessibility for gospel music and to connect musical communities in a variety of settings worldwide. "His knowledge of both the gospel and classical music genres has enabled him to serve as a consultant and clinician in academic and gospel music settings across the nation and abroad. This ability has enabled him to bridge the musical gap between the gospel and classical worlds."[53]

[53] Raise Productions, "Biographical Sketch of the Rev. Raymond Wise, PhD."

CHAPTER 3

REPERTOIRE ANALYSIS

This chapter will present an analysis of selected works by Cates, White-Clayton and Wise. The selected works contain a variety of intersections between the gospel and European choral music traditions, whether as a result of the composer's intention with the specific pieces or their musical training in these traditions. The selected works will include: *Take My Life (Lacrimosa), The Lord's Prayer*, and *Strong and Mighty* by Cates; *Be Thou Exalted* and *O Sing Unto the Lord* by White-Clayton; and *Glory and Honor* and *Lord, Send Your Spirit* by Wise. The intersections between styles may vary with each work, but many are fairly accessible for collegiate choral conductors who may be interested in programming them. Suggested rehearsal pedagogy will also be discussed for each selection. See Appendix A for details on accessing these self-published works and others by each composer.

Take My Life (Lacrimosa) **– Cates**

Isaac Cates became deeply inspired by Mozart's *Requiem in D minor, K. 626* upon performing it during his studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. As he studied the work further, he was particularly moved by his setting of the "Lacrimosa." Mozart famously penned the opening eight measures before his death in December 1791, and it

was completed by his students based on Mozart's sketches. Cates was also impacted by the meaning behind the text, and how it might relate to the Christian perspective of death. His reflection of these concepts led to a unique interpretation that would shape his setting of Mozart's work, as he pondered the thought of what it would mean to write his own requiem:

> I love the idea of the *Requiem*, and I love the setting. I love the use of it, and the Latin in the Catholic Mass. That just spoke to me specifically, because with "Lacrimosa", we get the derivative of the English word 'lacrimate', which means to cry. And I think it made sense to me because it was this petition for the last rites for the soul. This person has died, and this is like you're giving them up. And the analogy for that impacted me…But more so than that, [for] me as a believer: what it would be like if I wrote my own requiem for myself? But not necessarily about death, but metaphorically: as a Christian, as you get baptized, the whole idea is death of the old man, new creature, right? So much in the Bible talks about new life: "behold, all things have become made new."[54] So…what if this is my death song for my will and not my life, but for my will – my will over my life. So that's why I wrote my English parts, "Come Holy Spirit and stay with me always. Within you, I'll remain, for in you, I'm sustained: master, ruler, redeemer, my savior." But then it says "Where you lead me, I will follow. Where you lead me. I will follow." It's like, "I'm cool with dying."[55]

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Cates released this composition on his first album with Ordained (by the same title) in 2006. While he added live string players for the studio recording, he would later perform the piece with piano accompaniment, adding bass guitar and drum set during the final section.[56] The initial reception of the piece was divisive, particularly his setting of Mozart's opening eight measures. Most of Cates' Black church singers who were not classically trained were confused between the use of the Latin text and the European-based choral sound of the opening section, but they felt comfortable with

[54] 2nd Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV).
[55] Isaac Cates, interview by Bryon Black II, June 7, 2023.
[56] Refer to the original 2006 recording by Cates and Ordained – the full rhythm section is intended to enter at the choral entrance "If today is my last, please forgive me my past, Lord!" Isaac Cates & Ordained. *Take My Life (Lacrimosa)*, on *Take My Life*, 2006. ISOL Music. Streaming audio. 6:19.

the gospel technique and writing as the piece developed. Some classically trained choral musicians initially disliked Cates' treatment of Mozart's writing, critiquing his choice to revoice the choir in a more closed triadic texture moving in parallel motion, rather than Mozart's use of open harmony. His intention was not to necessarily rearrange Mozart's *Lacrimosa* setting, as he considered this piece to be an extension of Mozart's idea. His interpolation of a known classical piece led to further early-career comparisons to Richard Smallwood. Shortly after the release of the *Take My Life* album, Cates put the piece away for several years, not programming it again until preparing for his performance at the February 2019 ACDA National Conference with Ordained. He was impacted by the passing of his mother years prior to this invitation, and had begun writing more worship and gospel music, and less intricate choral arrangements. However, his desire to bring the piece back for the new singers in Ordained and showcase their abilities at ACDA led to a well-received performance. Cates led this performance from the piano, adding frequent embellishments in the gospel style and an extended introduction to enhance the composition. The recording of their 2019 performance was released on both Cates' and the ACDA YouTube channels later that year, attracting over 18,000 combined views as of this writing.[57] [58] The performance has been shared widely online with several educators, musicians and voice pedagogues using it as an example of gospel and classical styles being performed in a composition together successfully. Jaron M. LeGrair, voice teacher and Founder of the Jaron M. LeGrair Studio, analyzed the vocal techniques in this performance from both European choral and gospel traditions, and how they are able to complement

[57] NationalACDA, "Isaac Cates & Ordained." YouTube Video, 4:59. July 19, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1WoL8m8TFc.
[58] Isaac Cates, "Lacrimosa (Gospel version) at ACDA – Isaac Cates And Ordained." YouTube Video, 3:54. September 2, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AT3b_CWeF5A.

each other. “This rich, tall vibrato and these staccato/choppy/glottal moments…this sounds reminiscent of James Hall or Richard Smallwood in essence, which proves my point that Gospel (especially certain choir music) isn’t too far gone from classical/choral music.”[59] [60]

Mozart’s setting of the *Lacrimosa* is in a 12/8 meter, and begins with two measures of “sighing music” for strings, followed by six measures of rhythmically contrasting choral music (see Figure 3.1).[61] The first three words, “Lacrimosa dies illa” are given a lyrical setting, where the following words “qua resurget ex favilla judicandus homo reus” are set to chords rising through an octave and a half. Cates’ setting is in a 3/4 meter, with each grouping of three 8th notes from one beat of Mozart’s 12/8 setting now being placed in quarter notes in a single 3/4 measure. Cates makes no change to the accompaniment in the opening measures, placing the ascending and descending “sighing” theme from the strings in the first eight measures of the piano. This theme is reinforced with the use of octaves in the right hand of the piano (see Figure 3.2).

[59] Gospel artist James Hall is known for writing and performing original gospel choir works, often with influences of classical music and jazz.
[60] Jaron M. LeGrair Studio [jmlegrairstudio], “Voice Teacher Analyzes: ISAAC CATES & ORDAINED x Take My LIFE (LACRIMOSA),” *Instagram*, October 6, 2023, accessed October 6, 2023, https://www.instagram.com/reel/CyEeqfzx1Jq/.
[61] Steinberg, Michael. 2005. *Choral Masterworks: A Listener’s Guide*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 228.

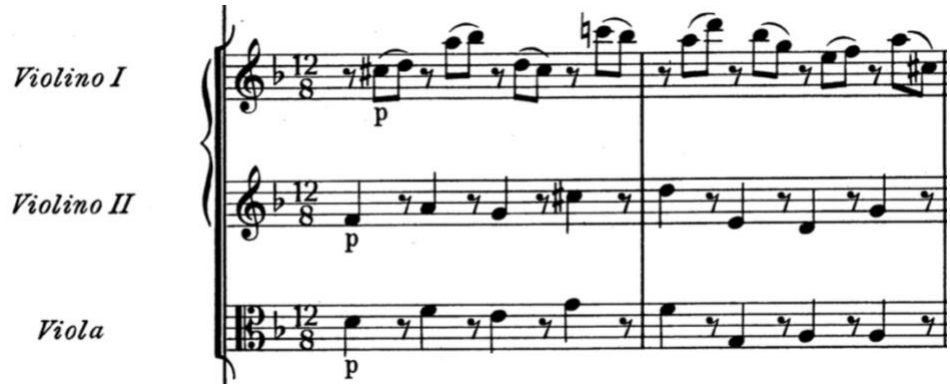


Figure 3.1: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Lacrimosa from Requiem in D minor, K. 626, mm. 1-2.[62]

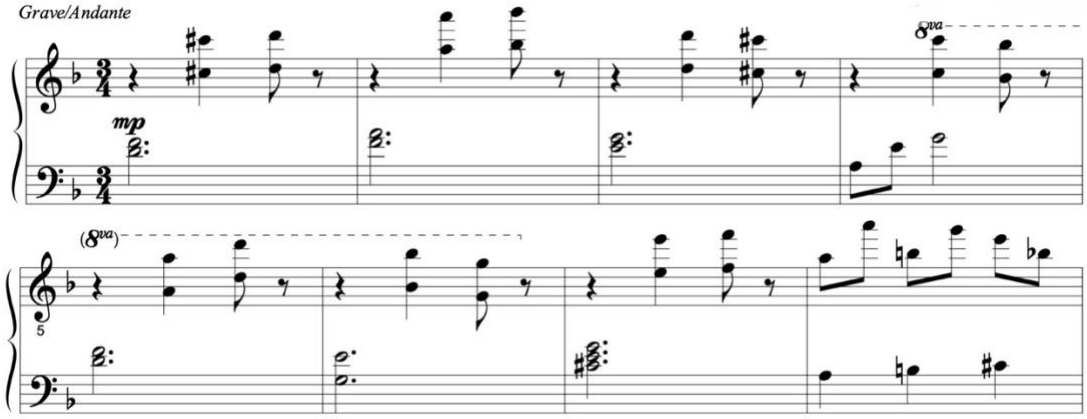


Figure 3.2: Isaac Cates, Take My Life (Lacrimosa), mm. 1-8.[63]

The choir moves in descending and ascending triadic inversions upon their entrance. This triadic harmonic movement is emblematic of traditional gospel choral writing, with the soprano, alto and tenor voices moving in parallel motion and the basses often doubling the bass guitar and left hand of the piano. The text "dies illa" includes an ascending and descending rhythmic decoration, which Cates often performs with added *staccato* articulations on the descending pitches. He maintains Mozart's eighth note setting

[62] Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Requiem, K. 626*, ed. Leopold Nowak (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1965), accessed November 16, 2023, https://imslp.org/wiki/Requiem_in_D_minor,_K.626_(Mozart,_Wolfgang_Amadeus), 111, mm. 1-2.
[63] Isaac Cates, *Take My Life (Lacrimosa)* (ISOL Music, 2009), 1, mm. 1-8.

of “Qua resurget ex favilla”, supported by arpeggiations in the piano accompaniment. Contrastingly, where Mozart’s choral voicing of “Judicandus homo reus” was very open with the outer voices moving in contrary chromatic motion, Cates set this with his closed, direct triadic voicing, staying consistent with this opening section.

The second verse begins with Cates’ original text, “Come Holy Spirit”. The first choral signifier of gospel style is heard with “and stay with me always” in mm. 39-40, as “stay” is sung by the sopranos and altos on a descending eighth note-triplet figure, repeating a pattern in stepwise motion (see Figure 3.3). Omitting the piano for this measure also lets this resound as a sudden break-out moment of an idiomatic gospel sound. This verse continues with the same chords and harmonic progression as the opening verse in Latin, with notable differences as the verse climaxes with “Master and Ruler, Redeemer, my Savior!” The voices are written higher in this phrase, with louder dynamics and fuller note values. The dynamic contrast continues to grow through to the end of this phrase, intensifying the feeling of an outcry to God.

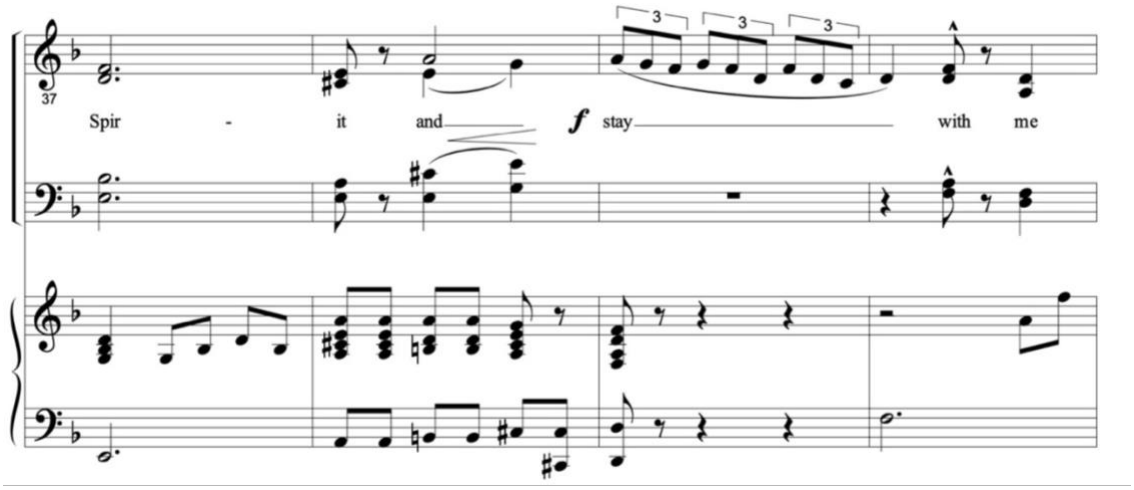


Figure 3.3: Isaac Cates, Take My Life (Lacrimosa), mm. 37-40.[64]

After building this phrase, Cates reduces the texture and dynamic as he transitions into a subdued, intimate sound for the vamp, with the soloist singing "Where you lead me, I will follow." This is where Cates brings together his interpretation of the text, viewing death as a means of surrendering his life and will to Christ. The solo melody is simple, allowing the soloist the freedom to improvise with passing tones and rhythmic alternations as desired without distracting from the given line. This is supported by a repeated circle-of-fifths progression in the piano accompaniment, with one chord per measure: G min–C–F–B♭–E dim–A–D. This progression continues into the eight-measure vamp as each voice enters individually on the soloist's text. Cates also creates rhythmic complexity with added quarter-note duple rhythms in each voice at different points, making two versus three rhythms with the text until all voices end together on "follow" in mm. 74-75. For example, the tenors begin singing in the strong beats of the 3/4 meter, mostly using quarter notes until the second half of the phrase in mm. 72-75 where they sing quarter-note duples with

[64] Cates, *Take My Life (Lacrimosa)*, 3, mm. 37-40.

some ornamentation. The basses also maintain a symmetrical lyricism, avoiding any duples until the final three measures of the phrase. Comparatively, the sopranos and altos alternate singing in either quarter-note duples or regular quarter notes, creating an interplay with their parts crossing each other (see Figure 3.4). The sopranos and altos offer an example here of polyrhythmic passages in gospel music which can be less confusing when heard by rote modeling as opposed to reading the transcribed rhythm.

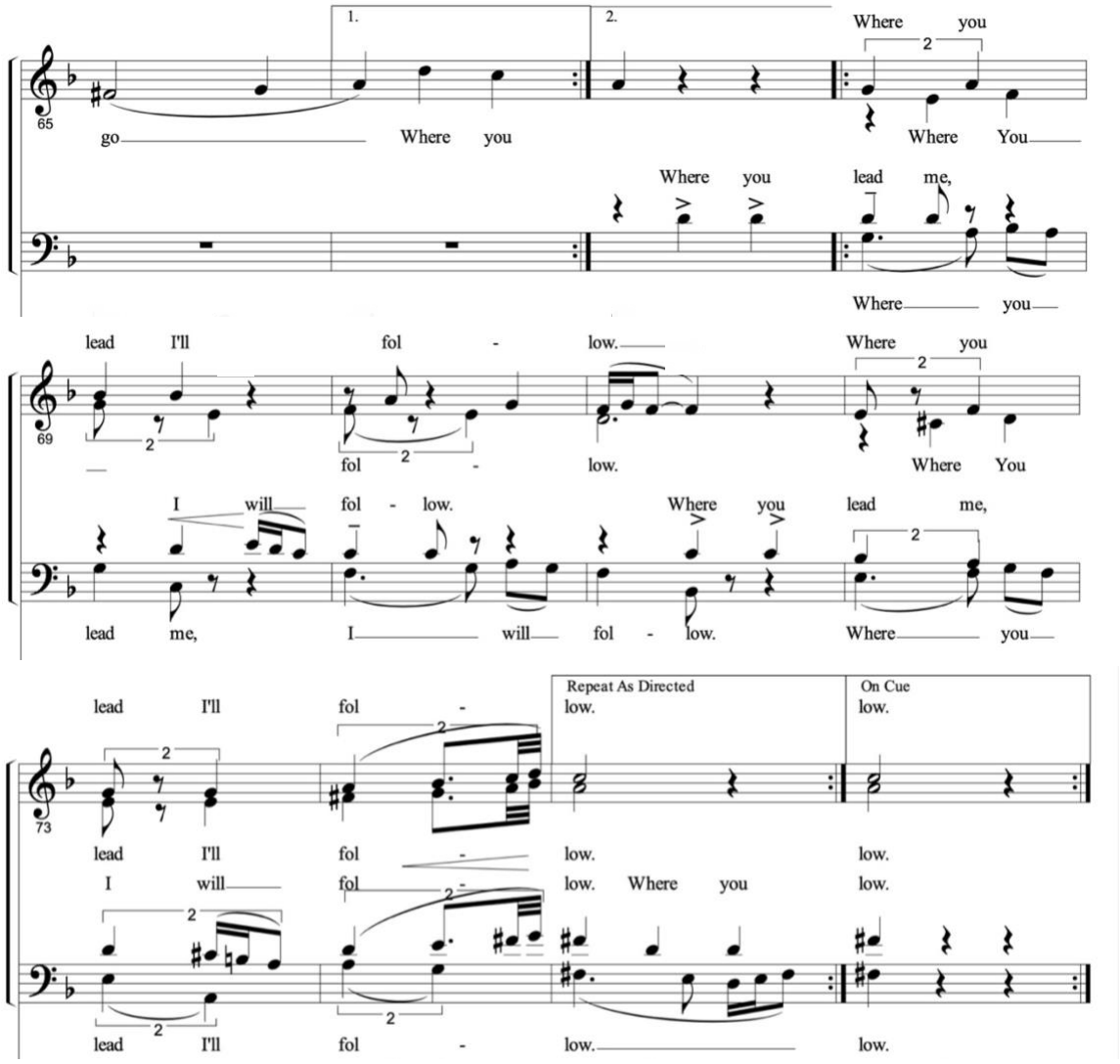


Figure 3.4: Isaac Cates, Take My Life (Lacrimosa), mm. 65-76.[65]

[65] Cates, *Take My Life (Lacrimosa)*, 6-7, mm. 65-76.

Cates transitions into the ending with the choir singing “I will go if You say so”, with diminished seventh chords on “if you” leading into sustained 4-3 suspensions in D minor, with a prolonged resolution to the third of the chord. Cates then inverts the upper three voices twice, with the final inversion resulting in the eventual resolution of the 4-3 suspension in the soprano in a G9–F-sharp9. The following repetitions of “Take my life, take my life Lord!” all end with these suspensions in the tenor. One exception is the final insertion of text, “If today is my last, please forgive me my past, Lord! / Every day’s filled with strife, still I give you my life, Lord!” The second “Lord” chord after this text includes an inversion for the upper voices, with the suspension in the soprano. The repeated 4-3 suspensions are a notable callback to Mozart’s students ending his *Lacrimosa* with a plagal cadence on a D major chord.

Throughout the course of this piece, the style and vocal technique essentially transitions from a European choral sound to a traditional gospel sound. The opening Latin verse should be rehearsed with a traditional classical approach – a *bel canto* singing style, and darker, rounded vowels. As the English text is introduced, singers should begin to relax vowel production for a very forward, open vocal placement. The relaxed, unrounded [ɑ] vowels should involve a middle-arching of the tongue without spreading nor rounding the lips. The intersection of the European choral sound begins to shift towards gospel in mm. 39-40 as the sopranos and altos sing “and stay with me always.” on a descending eighth note-triplet figure. This brief figure is written with the stepwise sequence of a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century melisma, with the intention of the singers employing a brighter modified vowel for it with a contemporary gospel sound. Conductors should isolate this figure by rehearsing it slowly on a neutral syllable (such as ‘deh’), then remove the

consonant, and work towards keeping the movement light. The goals should be to keep each of the notes even, and to approach the line as one movement rather than individual notes. Overall, the transition of vocal technique from *bel canto* to gospel will need to be one of the most prominent focuses for conductors. Above all, conductors should a healthy vocal production with the forward placement of vowels. Singers are encouraged to sing upper pitches in the chest register as they approach the higher sustained pitches on "oh" in the final section; but if they do not have these pitches in their chest register, a healthy production in their head voice may certainly suffice.

Table 3.1: *Take My Life (Lacrimosa)* Conductor's Analysis Chart by Phrase

Measures	**Text**	**Recommended Rehearsal Pedagogy**
Mm. 9-12	"Lacrimosa"	Begin with dark, rounded vowels
Mm. 13-16	"dies illa"	Move into *staccato* notes at mm. 13-14 with the rhythmic decoration and *staccatos* that Cates adds here.
Mm. 17-24	"Qua resurget ex favilla"	Full note values for each eighth note, not a literal *staccato*
Mm. 25-33	"Judicandus homo reus"	Legato, connective singing with building dynamic contrast
Mm. 35-38	"Come Holy Spirit"	More relaxed vocal production, closer to general English Prioritize forward placement of open, forward unrounded [ɑ] vowel with healthy vocal production.
Mm. 39-42	"And stay with me always"	For "stay" descending triplet run for S/A voices, teach notes slowly on a neutral syllable with the [ɛ] vowel, remove the consonant, and then change the vowel at the end to [eɪ]. Keep the movement light!
Mm. 42-50	"Within you I'll remain…"	Maintain openness with relaxed [ɑ] for words such as "I'll", "I'm", and "sustained"
Mm. 51-58	"Master and ruler…"	Vocal falls may be included at the ends of "Master", "Ruler", and "Redeemer", but emphasize an accurate return to pitch at each re-entrance.

Mm. 59-67	"Where you lead me, I will follow" (Soloist)	Select a reliable soloist who is familiar with gospel music styles (and will ideally not need much coaching). They should be able to sing this line freely with some *ad libitum* note decoration, and continue improvising to the end of the piece.
Mm. 68-76	"Where you lead me, I will follow" (Choir)	Work on counting and rhythms with the feeling of 2 vs. 3, especially with S/A voices. May benefit from rote teaching. If conducting in 3, keep the pattern consistent – don't try to conduct each melodic rhythm once each voice has entered.
Mm. 77-90	"I will go if you say so"	Keep vowel and embouchure very open with some relaxed [ɑ] in the vowel production of "so" and "oh". This will also help for the higher pitches on "oh."
Mm. 91-100	"Take my life, Lord!"	Maintain the [ɑ] vowel and mix in head voice as necessary.
Mm. 101-112	"If today is my last…"	Keep the text clear for this phrase. Be mindful of the inversion at the end of the phrase, placing the 4-3 suspension (G-F#) in the soprano.
Mm. 113-end	"Take my life, Lord!"	Suspensions return to the tenor for each phrase

The Lord's Prayer – Cates

The Lord's Prayer was also released on Cates's first album, and serves as a unique choral setting of an established text which stands out among many others. The piece is set in a 6/8 meter with driving rhythms, starting with an extended instrumental introduction which repeats a descending four-chord sequence as the piano, drums, and bass guitar enter. The tenors, followed by the altos, sopranos and basses, enter on a repeated sixteenth-note ostinato on the opening phrase, "Our father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come / Our father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy will be done." This phrase maintains the opening chord progression as it repeats, and includes *marcato* accents on the words "Our", "art", "be", and "Thy", most of which are not on

strong beats. This passage is best introduced by rote: having singers speak the ostinato in repetition, adding the *marcato* accents, teaching notes by starting with the tenors (as their notes outline the harmonic progression), and then continuing to add each voice part.

The next two phrases, "Give us this day our daily bread", followed by "and forgive us our debtors" are also marked by additive choral entrances, requiring strong articulation and initial consonants with each entrance. Cates creates a few climactic phrases using traditional Western chords with gospel vocal technique. For example, on the word "debtors", he creates a moment of tension by setting the choir on an A#dim7 chord which inverts upwards three times, before resolving on a V7 chord (see Figure 3.5). The ascending chords, increased dynamics, and driving eighth-note pulse during this phrase creates a strong dramatic build. In performances, Cates would also have his singers in Ordained place a small separation in between each note of "debtors" before inverting, with a slight scoop into the following pitch. The re-articulation of this can be rehearsed with a choir by having them add a slight 'Y' or 'yeh' with each pitch, or a slight voiced 'H', creating the onset of vocal fry. For the phrase "For thine is the kingdom", the choir outlines a V chord with voices entering low in their register on the word "for"; and sing a glissando up an octave to the word "Thine" on a high resolved tonic chord (see Figure 3.6). This requires a change of pitch, vowel, vowel placement, and vocal register within half a measure. Singers can use a rounded [o] vowel to focus the initial placement of the word "for", as they would in Western vocal music. During the glissando, they would simultaneously widen and open the vowel from [o] to [ɑ]. This will also be used for the sequential "Amen" section, with three four-measure phrases that are written with inversions, 4-3 suspensions, and dynamic increases.

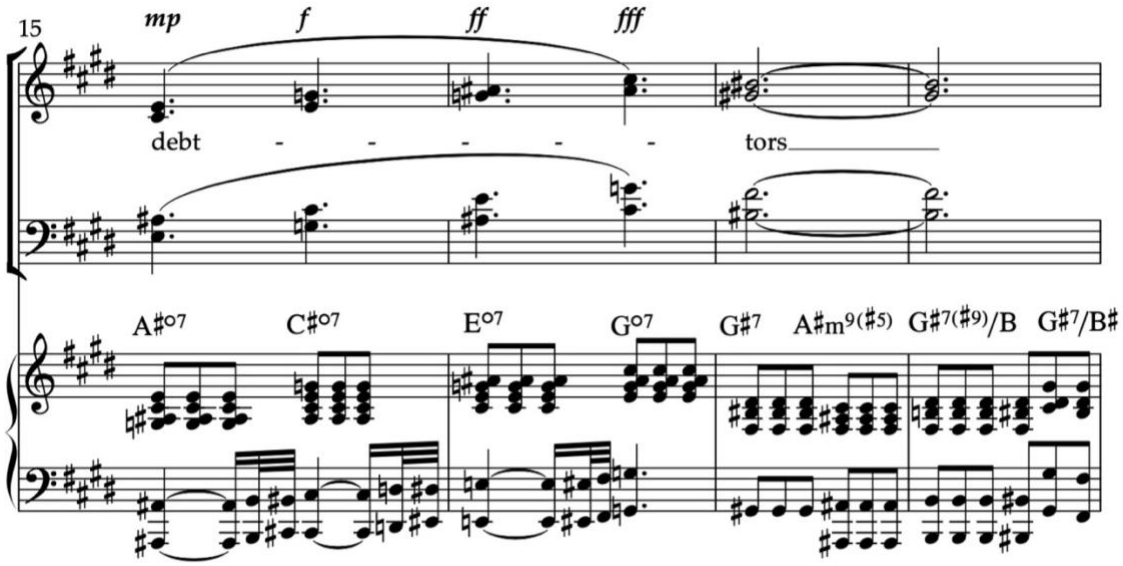


Figure 3.5: Isaac Cates, The Lord's Prayer, mm. 15-18.

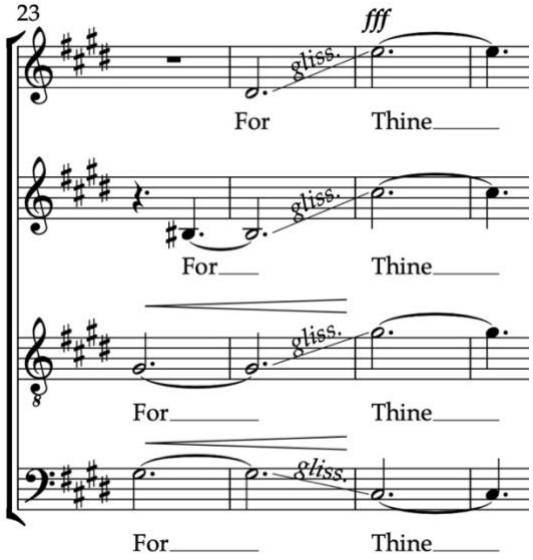


Figure 3.6: Isaac Cates, The Lord's Prayer, mm. 23-26.

In general, Cates recommends that closed, vertical or rounded vowels should be placed more open and forward during this piece. This placement will remain consistent throughout the piece, and could even be used in a vocal warm-up of singing on that forward [a] vowel to prepare singers for the transition. This can be especially useful for singers who

may not have the upper register pitches in their chest voice. I believe this piece can be a great opportunity for choral singers to explore differences between Western and gospel vocal techniques, and learn how to sing both styles healthily with their own voice. In comparison to his gospel singers in Ordained, Cates shares:

> …my singers typically belt from the chest but my advice is to use a good mix. Sing the climactic portions in a register that is vocally healthy for you. We are using quite a few vocal affectations to produce the sound, i.e. swells, bends, vowel modifications, etc. should have a relaxed sound initially; not too over concerned with anything other than forward resonance in the mask. No lofty/hooty lifted soft palate. Not a very traditional choral sound.[66]

Table 3.2: *The Lord's Prayer* Conductor's Analysis Chart by Phrase

Measures	**Text**	**Recommended Rehearsal Pedagogy**
Mm. 5-8	"Our father which art in Heaven…"	Have singers first speak the ostinato and rhythms in repetition several times, and then add the accents on "Our", "art", "be" and "Thy" in order to engrain the stylistic text pronunciation.
Mm. 9-13	"Give us this day our daily bread"	Similar process, while adding dramatic crescendo swells and strong initial consonants for "give" and "day."
Mm. 13-18	"And forgive us our debts…"	Use a slight separation in between each note of "debtors", with a slight scoop into the pitch. Add a slight 'Y' or 'H' with each re-articulation.
Mm. 19-22	"And lead us not into temptation…"	One of the few homophonic phrases with no additive entrances; have singers speak this by rote for rhythms and word stress.
Mm. 23-32	"For thine is the kingdom…"	Use a focus, rounded [o] vowel to focus the initial placement of "for." During the glissando, singers will simultaneously widen and open the vowel from [o] to [ɑ]. Practice this by gradually speaking [o] → [ɑ] to prepare the vowel change and placement before applying to pitch and vocal register.
Mm. 33-end	"Amen"	Maintain the forward, open [ɑ] for each "Amen" onset. Prioritize balancing voices with the tonic and third in the final chord.

[66] Isaac Cates, email message to author, October 31, 2023.

Strong and Mighty – Cates

Strong and Mighty was released as a single in 2020, recorded live by Ordained and an orchestra. The piece is a massive undertaking due to the performing forces, contrapuntal writing and choral divisi, but it serves as an excellent example of seventeenth century influence in Cates' writing. The anthem is based on the scriptural verse Psalm 24:7, and was written to feel like a large procession. There are four significant choral sections: a contrapuntal introduction heard three times as the voices part layers in with each repeat; a bridge with individual voices decorating the prolonged dominant; a repeated polyphonic vamp with multiple modulations and two inserted descant trios; and an ending "Amen" with extended vocal ranges. Cates refers to this piece when discussing his inclusion of Baroque elements in his writing:

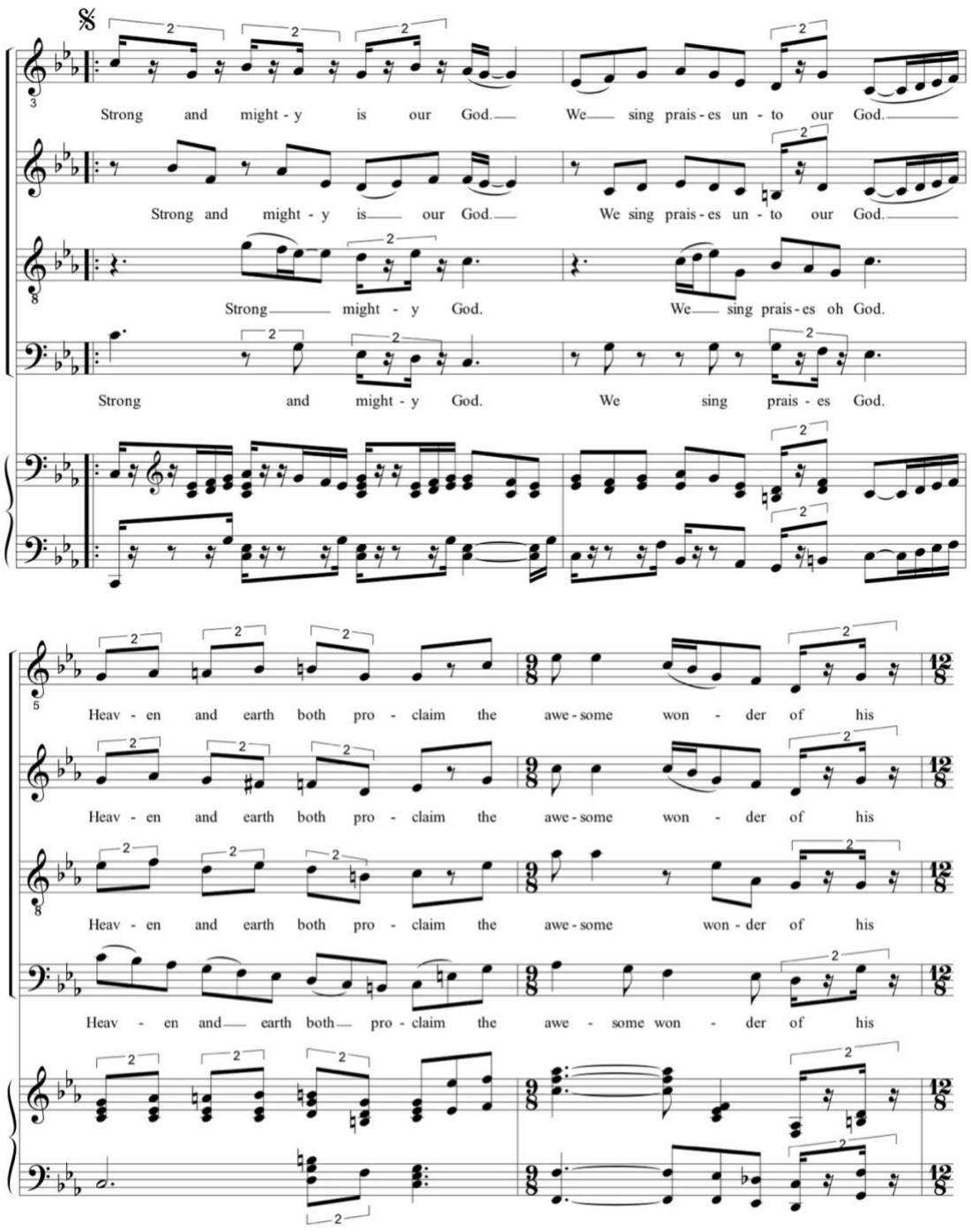
> I do use certain musical motifs, scales and modes to make things happen, but in that one, there's a lot of counterpoint going on…everybody has their own part, but it's sort of like tumblers in a lock. So it kind of harkens to counterpoint. So yeah, there are definitely some Baroque elements that I use when I'm arranging my music. It's definitely true, because I love to. I love polyphony and love harmony. I love tension and release. I love the response that happens in counterpoint. I love this musical conversation happening in addition to these lyrics.[67]

Similar to *The Lord's Prayer,* the anthem begins with a triumphant and building introduction from the orchestra and rhythm section. Each voice enters with a repeated six-measure phrase on the text "Strong and mighty is our God / We sing praises unto our God/ Heaven and earth both proclaim / The awesome wonder of his name", starting with sopranos, then adding the altos, and finally the tenors and basses. While the piece is set in 12/8, the soprano melody features several eighth note-duple sets in their text, creating a two versus three rhythmic sensation. The altos have some harmonized thirds with the

[67] Cates, interview.

sopranos, but their first measure of rhythms maintain offbeat echoes of the sopranos with no duple eighth notes, creating a similar rhythmic interplay heard in the vamp of *Take My Life (Lacrimosa)*. The polyrhythms in this section intensify as the texture increases. The basses are also given a functional accompanimental part, frequently in stepwise motion. (See Figure 3.7.)

Cates' use of two versus three polyrhythms also create the Baroque-era sensation of hemiola. This continues throughout the vamp, which begins with an accented soprano motive on the text "Lift up your heads O ye gates, be lifted up ye everlasting doors", echoed by the lower voices on strong beats to continue creating the processional feel that Cates intended. He continues a syncopated feel with "Lift up your" on accented, detached eighth notes, and then uses connected quarter notes for "be lifted up." The vamp repeats and modulates from Cm to C#m, Dm, and E♭m. In the first repeat, Cates layers in a homophonic descant in three-part harmony. While this descant is mostly written in parallel triadic motion on strong beats, the second three-part descant which appears in the modulation to D minor is highly syncopated. Both descants drastically increase the choral texture, and both are sung on different texts simultaneously. The ending "Amen" section also challenges extreme vocal ranges, with the final E♭ major cadence including basses in the raised third with a G4 and tenors on a B♭4 after all voices have ascended in their register throughout the concluding phrase.


Strong and might - y is our God. We sing prais - es un - to our God.
Strong and might - y is our God. We sing prais - es un - to our God.
Strong might - y God. We sing prais - es oh God.
Strong and might - y God. We sing prais - es God.
Heav - en and earth both pro - claim the awe - some won - der of his
Heav - en and earth both pro - claim the awe - some won - der of his
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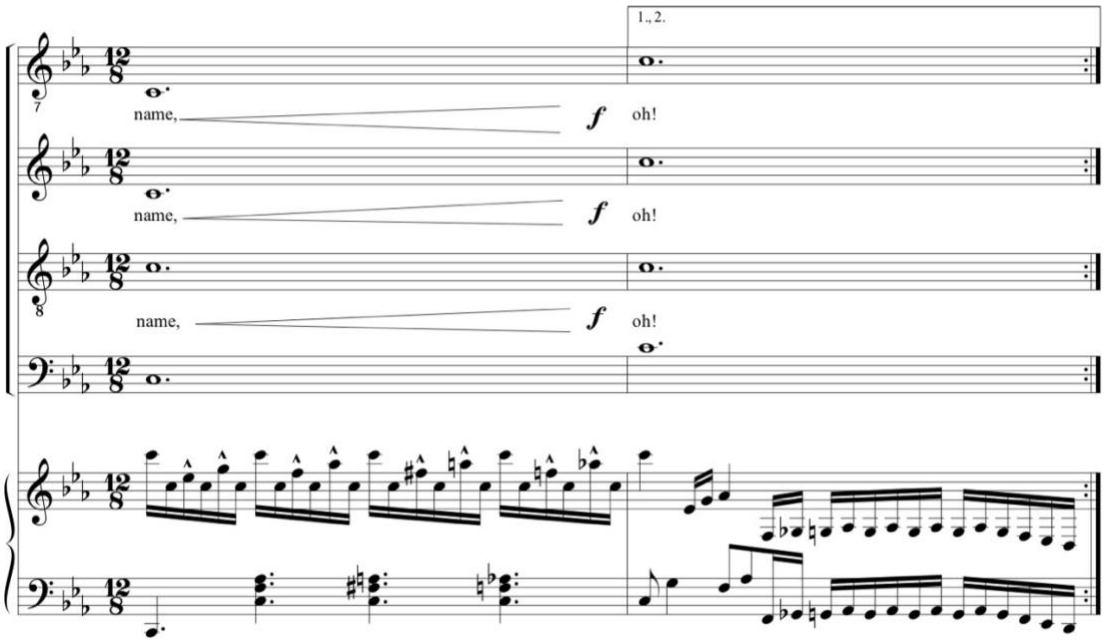


Figure 3.7: Isaac Cates, Strong and Mighty, mm. 3-8.[68]

This piece would need significant choral and instrumental forces for a strong, balanced performance. Cates has performed it with his 20 singers in Ordained with amplification from individual singer microphones in performances, while symphonic choirs such as the Argentina Gospel Choir have performed it with 60-80 singers and a rhythm section.[69] The intersection between styles can be found in the contrapuntal construction of the motives, which may be executed with both a Baroque-style articulation of the text, and the approach to gospel singing style as the textures continue to develop and layer with phrase repetitions. The use of extreme vocal ranges and polyrhythms also demonstrate evidence of Cates' influence from seventeenth and eighteenth century choral music, which are developed further by the modulations in the latter half of the piece. While

[68] Isaac Cates, *Strong and Mighty* (Isaac Cates Music, 2016), 1-2, mm. 3-8.
[69] Isaac Cates, "Argentina Gospel Choir 'Strong and Mighty' (by Isaac Cates)." YouTube video, 4:17. September 6, 2019. https://youtu.be/dq6HyvpGmeM?si=jspKunYgW6Luagbt.

this piece is a challenge to perform and requires great attention to rhythmic detail and divisi, it is a fascinating composition that demonstrates a creative merging of gospel with baroque choral influences.

Additional related choral works by Cates continue to demonstrate the strong influences of seventeenth through nineteenth century European repertoire found in his gospel writing. The intersections between these styles can often be found in the vamp sections of his pieces, aided by Cates' use of structure and choral texture. His setting of *Carol of the Bells* quotes Peter Wilhousky's arrangement before breaking into polyrhythmic gospel motives. He inserts an eight-measure repeated vamp with an expanded choral texture into nine-part divisi, plus a trio descant chorus. The polyrhythmic 'ding-dong's in the increased texture create the layered effect of multiple bells ringing, while gospel vocal tone is applied to sustained pitches with dramatic crescendos. The vamp of *It's Working*, mentioned in Chapter 2, is taken from his 2006 setting of the hymn *It Is Well*, with this composition adding inversions to reinforce the hopeful message of the text.[70] A choral tone based on rounded, focused vowels is an ideal foundation for the lyricism that Cates has written in this piece, which will also produce a clear tone for singing the higher inversions.

Conductors will be able to program these selected gospel works by Cates, as well as others, for collegiate choirs of various levels. His study of European vocal styles, harmonic writing and compositional traits provide opportunities for singers to explore these aspects with applicable gospel techniques. Cates advocates for healthy vocal singing regardless of the style, using his catalogue to provide examples for this with recognizable

[70] "It Is Well" was also released on his 2006 album, *Take My Life*.

features. Choral singers and audiences will also enjoy the palpable energy and encouragement heard in Cates' music.

Be Thou Exalted – White-Clayton

Many of the Baroque-era compositional elements that Dr. White-Clayton enjoys using in her writing are featured in her anthem *Be Thou Exalted*, written in 1992 and revised in 2008. It premiered during the concert for a gospel workshop at Westmont College in Santa Barbara that Dr. White-Clayton hosted annually for 10 years. It was recorded for her 2005 album, *Dr. Dee Live in DC: My Heart Says 'Yes'*, including a fuller instrumentation with strings. It is available for both mixed and treble voices. Her love of nineteenth century virtuosity is also seen throughout the opening moments, beginning with the elaborate piano introduction. For this, she had originally quoted Edvard Grieg's *Piano Concerto in A minor* and transcribed it into F minor, stopping just after the ascending arpeggios before the orchestral entrance. She later replaced it with an original introduction, feeling that her quoting of Grieg's concerto was not creative enough for this particular anthem.[71] The choral opening continues to demonstrate Dr. White-Clayton's nineteenth century influence, as the parallel choral phrases include frequent passing tones from the altos, expressive dynamic contrast, emphasized dissonances, and prolonged harmonic resolutions. The gospel influence can be heard in the triadic vocal writing, and particularly in the consistent caesura pauses which add to the dramatic pleading in the text. The caesuras and articulations increase as this phrase continues, and the dynamic contrast continues to increasingly emphasize the word stress, especially upon arrival of "God shall send forth

[71] Diane L. White-Clayton, email message to author, August 16, 2023.

His mercy and His truth." In the program notes of her choral score, Dr. White-Clayton makes mention of further gospel influence found in the choir's unisons, particularly with the use of wide, low ranges where this phrase ends with unison F3s. She states that these low notes are "not uncommon for African-American sopranos."[72]

The phrase "My heart is fixed, O God; I will sing and give praise!" continues the triadic writing and range extensions, as the upper voices ascend with the two outcry statements of "O God" and the sopranos ascending an octave-and-a half within four measures. The basses double the descending bass line in the accompaniment of F–E♭–D♭–C–B. Dr. White-Clayton had originally written this as a continually descending for the basses, but they were typically buried in the texture of the rhythm section and the upper voices singing in the strongest parts of their tessituras. Her friend Pastor Jeremiah Murphy performed the anthem with his 200-voiced Largo High School Choir and had his basses sing this passage up the octave, inspiring her to change this in her revised composition later.[73] This phrase also acts as a bridge to connect the vamp, which ushers in a driving, march-like pattern in a 12/8 meter. Each voice part enters with their own individual line in a layering fashion, beginning with the altos, followed by the sopranos, tenors and basses.

The vamp is accompanied by a sequential circle-of-fifths progression in C. The bass line of the piano outlines the ascension of each chord, with the chords providing a suspension and resolution. The chord progression Dr. White-Clayton uses here is F min–B♭–E♭–A♭–D dim–G–C. While perhaps not intentional, this is nearly the same progression used in the "Alleluia" section of Dietrich Buxtehude's seventeenth century cantata *Der Herr ist mit mir*. Both pieces may allow a similar use of expression through quick rhythmic

[72] Diane L. White, *Be Thou Exalted* (Washington, DC: BYTHAX, 1992, rev. 2008).
[73] White-Clayton, email message.

motion, light articulation, form, texture, and changes of meter and rhythmic motion between sections (see Figures 3.8 and 3.9). This rhythmic expression and articulation could often be found in imitative "Alleluia" sections to conclude baroque works.

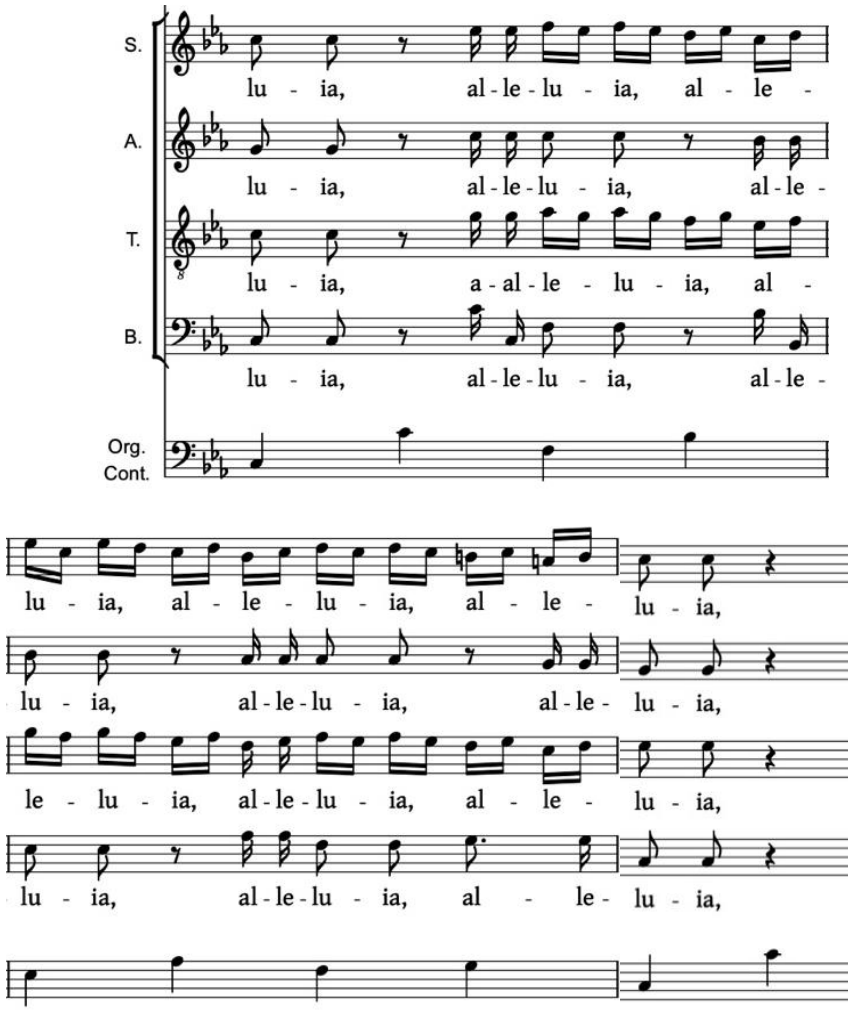


Figure 3.8: Dietrich Buxtehude, Der Herr ist mit mir, mm. 164-166.[74]

[74] Dietrich Buxtehude, *Der Herr ist mit mir*, BuxWV 15, ed. Rémy Claverie, accessed November 16, 2023, https://imslp.org/wiki/Der_Herr_ist_mit_mir%2C_BuxWV_15_(Buxtehude%2C_Dietrich) , 17, mm. 164-166.

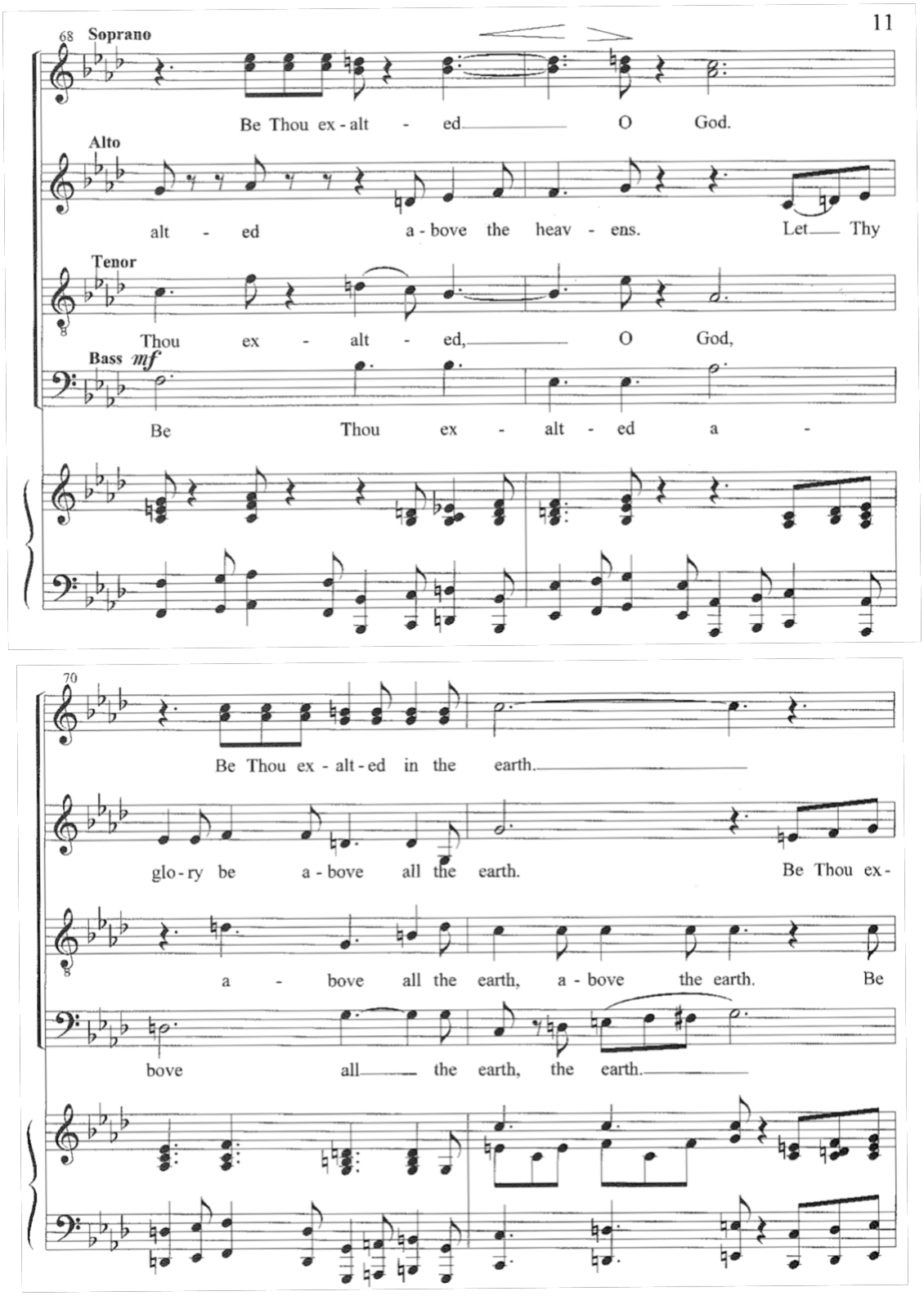


Figure 3.9: Diane L. White-Clayton, Be Thou Exalted, mm. 68-71.[75]

[75] Diane L. White-Clayton, *Be Thou Exalted* (BYTHAX, rev. 2008), 11, mm. 68-71.

Dr. White-Clayton encourages pianists and conductors to improvise during the repeats of the anthem, with embellishments in the piano accompaniment, the conductor using additional repeats of the vamp once each voice has entered, isolating individual voice parts, or using contrasting dynamics. The anthem concludes with a triumphant "Amen" section, with three sequential call and response phrases between the first sopranos and the rest of the choir, leading to the concluding F minor chord.

I would certainly recommend this anthem for a chorus of singers who are familiar with baroque vocal technique, and conductors may even consider pairing this with other baroque repertoire on a concert program. Choral students who have performed any motets or cantatas by Buxtehude (e.g. *Der Herr ist mit mir*) or J. S. Bach (e.g. *Jesu meine Freude, Lobet den Herrn*) will be able to utilize similar applications of articulation and vocal technique in Dr. White-Clayton's gospel anthem. They will also be able to navigate the gospel style through the extended ranges, intonation through high chords, and the rhythmic vitality. The opening choral section is best rehearsed by employing strong initial consonants, a lifted soft palate to produce vertical vowels, and focused intonation for the unison pitches which end the phrases. Conductors can certainly encourage singers to apply Baroque-era buoyancy and precision for the polyphonic vamp, and even use a similar rehearsal process for note learning as they would for the imitative passage of a Lutheran cantata by J. S. Bach. For example, conductors may rehearse singers on individual vocal lines on a neutral syllable such as 'bum' for pitch and rhythmic accuracy, have them speak the text with a light buoyant quality, maintain the character through ornamental passing tones, and sing with intentional clarity for entrances and releases.

Table 3.3: *Be Thou Exalted* Conductor's Analysis Chart by Phrase

Measures	**Text**	**Recommended Rehearsal Pedagogy**
Mm. 15-18	"I will cry unto God, unto God most high"	Onset for "I" entrance should be on the breath, not glottal. Encourage vertical, rounded vowels executed with a lifted soft palate. Soft with strong initial consonants. Draw out the alto's passing tones.
Mm. 19-23	"Unto God that performeth all things unto me"	Use continuous motion and strong word stress through long notes, and a focused intonation for the unison low C4 and F3 at the end of this phrase (without treble voices pushing to produce the sound).
Mm. 25-33	"He shall send from heaven…"	Similar steps for the first two phrases; give plenty of urgency on the ***forte*** accents for "God shall send" and urgency for each post-caesura entrance
Mm. 34-42	"My heart is fixed, O God..."	Strong releases of "God" on rests for the upper voices. Work on intonation for ***fortissimo*** chords – the choir should unify vowels and balance, and avoiding over-singing.
Mm. 43-51	"Be thou exalted among the heavens" (Alto entrance)	Have the full choir speak the alto rhythm, practicing Baroque-era buoyancy and precision. Light articulation of text and rhythms.
Mm. 52-59	"Be thou exalted…" (Soprano entrance)	Rehearse an equal balance between 1st and 2nd sopranos. Both parts should arc the notes across the bar line on "exal-ted O God", and give clear releases.
Mm. 60-67	"Be thou exalted..." (Tenor entrance)	Be sure to separate the [aʊ] vowel in "thou" and [ɛ] in "exalted", as they ascend from C4 to F4. Maintain the buoyancy at the rhythmic passage in mm. 63 "earth, above the earth."
Mm. 68-75	"Be thou exalted..." (Bass entrance)	Have basses sing this on 'bum', as if emulating the light articulation of playing handbells. Use this to make sure the chromatic motive in mm. 71 on "earth, the earth" is accurate. Bring the sound forward and keep initial consonants present. Rehearse this section a cappella.

Mm. 76-82	"My heart is fixed, O God..."	As this repeats, continue to prioritize intonation and clear releases.
Mm. 82-end	"Amen"	Keep the [ɔ] and [ɛ] vowels rounded but relaxed with minimal shift in the vocal embouchure to best facilitate the quick rhythmic repetition, and the extended final chord.

O Sing Unto the Lord – White-Clayton

O Sing Unto the Lord was Dr. White-Clayton's first anthem, composed in 1985 at the age of 19 during her sophomore year at Washington University in St. Louis. The anthem was written for conductor Joseph Price and the Joseph Price Singers.[76] It has continued to be performed by several church and community choirs, including the Mass Choir of the Gospel Music Workshop of America in Detroit, Michigan, and the Antigone in Ferguson Brooklyn Choir in 2019.[77] The polyphonic vamp in this anthem notably quotes the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah*, specifically borrowing "Forever and ever; hallelujah, hallelujah!"

The anthem transitions from a European choral-influenced sound to that of the gospel tradition throughout the piece, similar to Cates' *Take My Life (Lacrimosa)*, although the quotation of the known European choral masterwork happens towards the end of this work, rather than the beginning. The use of rhythmic declarative choral statements throughout the opening phrases of the anthem feel similar to how this device was used to set a new vocal aesthetic in Baroque music. Composers of early Baroque music wrote solo and choral voices with rhythms that imitated a natural declamation of text, accompanied

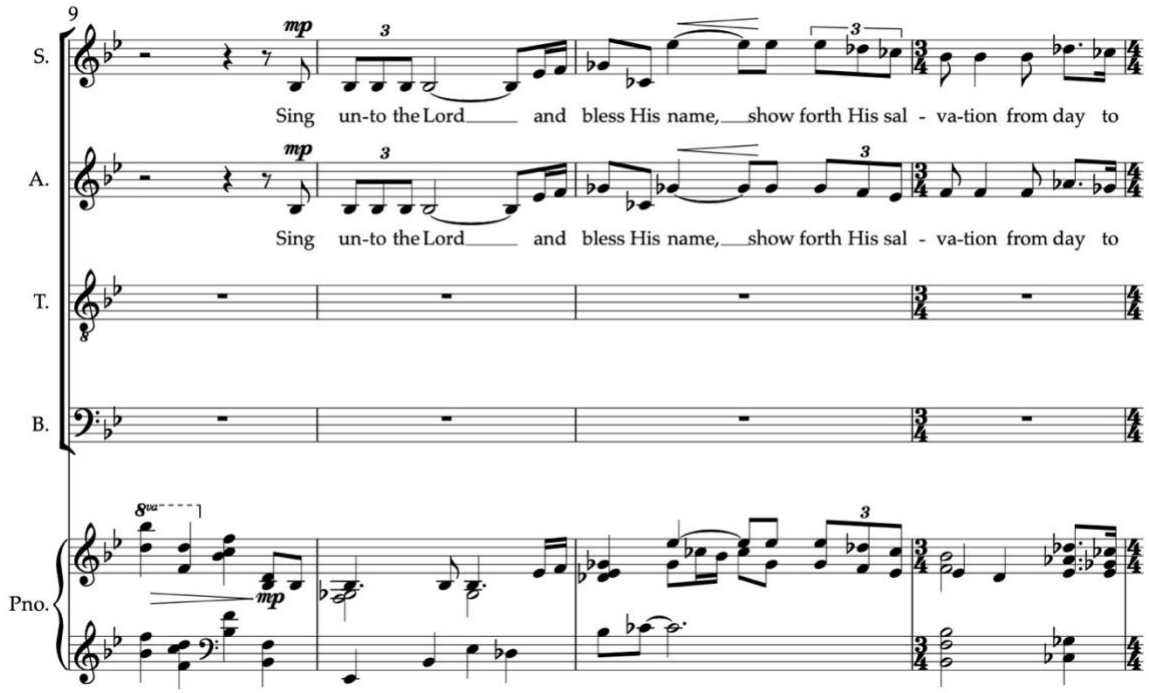
[76] "O Sing Unto the Lord." BYTHAX Store. Accessed November 7, 2023. https://www.bythax.org/product-page/o-sing-unto-the-lord-digital.
[77] Phil Woodmore, "Oh Sing Unto the Lord-Music by Diane White." YouTube Video, 3:03. May 10, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crMxYtuH3N0.

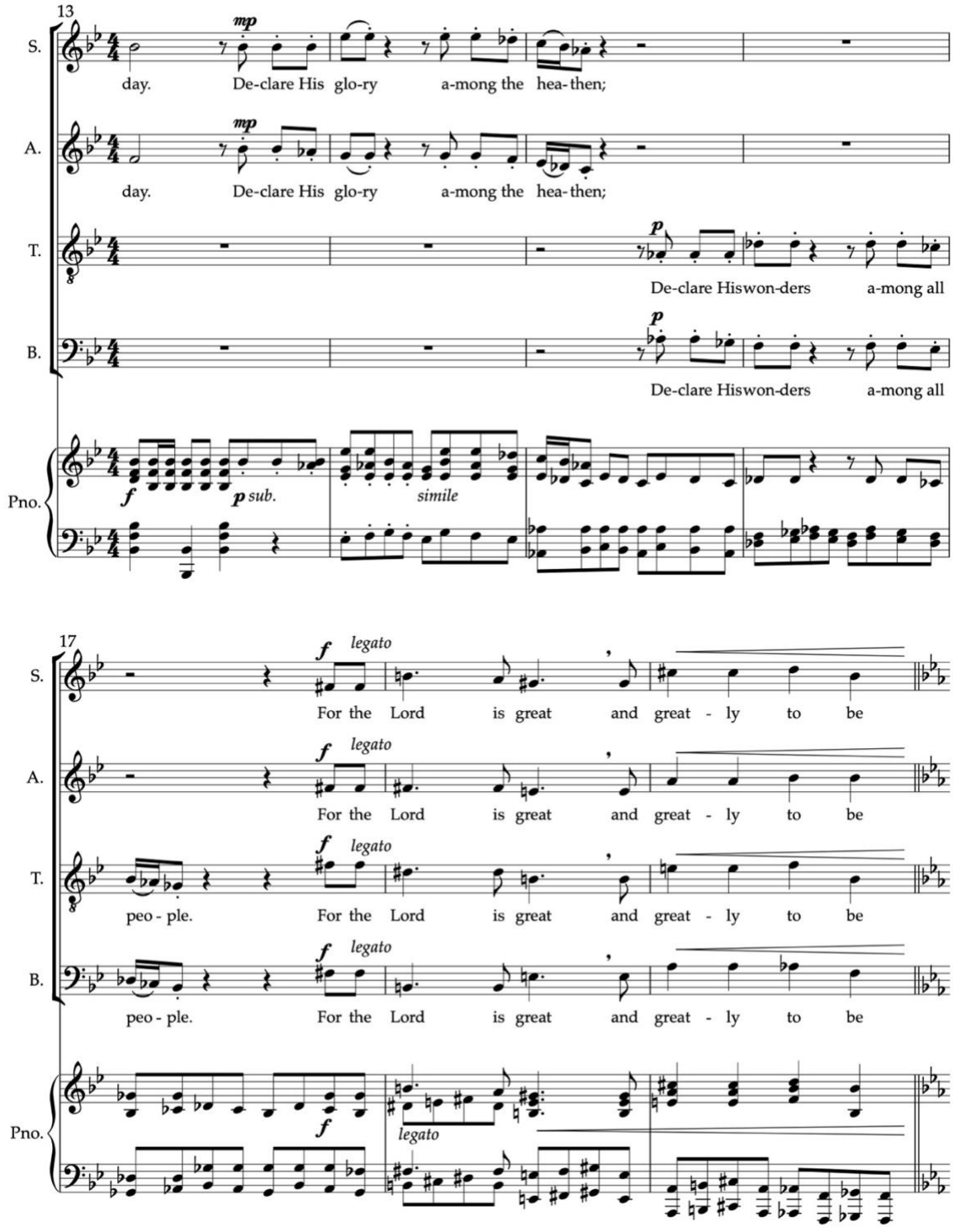
with simple harmonies on keyboard instruments.[78] This can first be seen with the forte, *maestoso* choral entrance on "O sing unto the Lord a new song. Sing unto the Lord all the earth." The opening piano accompaniment supports this with a fanfare-like orchestral sound, using several tonic-dominant declarations on strong beats in the left hand (emulating timpani), with the inclusion of eighth note-triplets and ♭VI–♭VII–I chord progressions in the right hand (emulating brass). The following pair of soprano/alto and tenor/bass duets continue this, with brief, soft *staccato* phrases to articulate the text. The articulations and eighth-note triplets with the text setting help to emphasize possessive words for God, such as "salvation", "glory" and "wonders." Both pairs begin with unison pickup notes that then divide into harmonies at the interval of a sixth (see Figure 3.10). The harmonic development is notable here as well, with a circle-of-fifths progression that ushers in the return of the tutti voices, accompanied by a brief march-like pattern in the rhythm section. While the harmonic development is expanded by the amount of tonal areas available for modulation in the first half of this anthem (similar to eighteenth and nineteenth century choral music), the sequential harmonic progressions and use of text driving the rhythmic settings are reminiscent of Baroque era writing. These compositional traits were established by composers such as Schütz, Handel, Purcell, using text to set declamatory phrases and to inform the texture, rhythm, form, and modes in their choral works.

Dr. White-Clayton introduces two repeated vamp sections which may be extended at the conductor's discretion. The first vamp features additive entrances of each voice part on their own text, all ending together with a *staccato* "greatly to be praised." The soprano and bass settings of "King of kings and Lord of lords" on declarative quarter note rhythms

[78] Shrock, Dennis. 2013. *Performance Practices in the Baroque Era* (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc.), 4.

foreshadow the *Hallelujah Chorus* quotation to follow in the second vamp, with a call-and-response between the sopranos and the lower voices. The repeats in this vamp are differentiated in the score by a dynamic change from piano to forte, and an inversion in the upper voices. This culminates with a harmonized quote of Handel's "And He shall reign forever and ever", ending with another V–♭VI–♭VII–I progression. The tenors' repeat "Amen" on 4-3 suspensions, with repeated tonic-dominant pitches in the accompaniment.




13
S.
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day. De-clare His glo-ry a-mong the hea-then;
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17
f legato
For the Lord is great and great - ly to be
peo - ple.

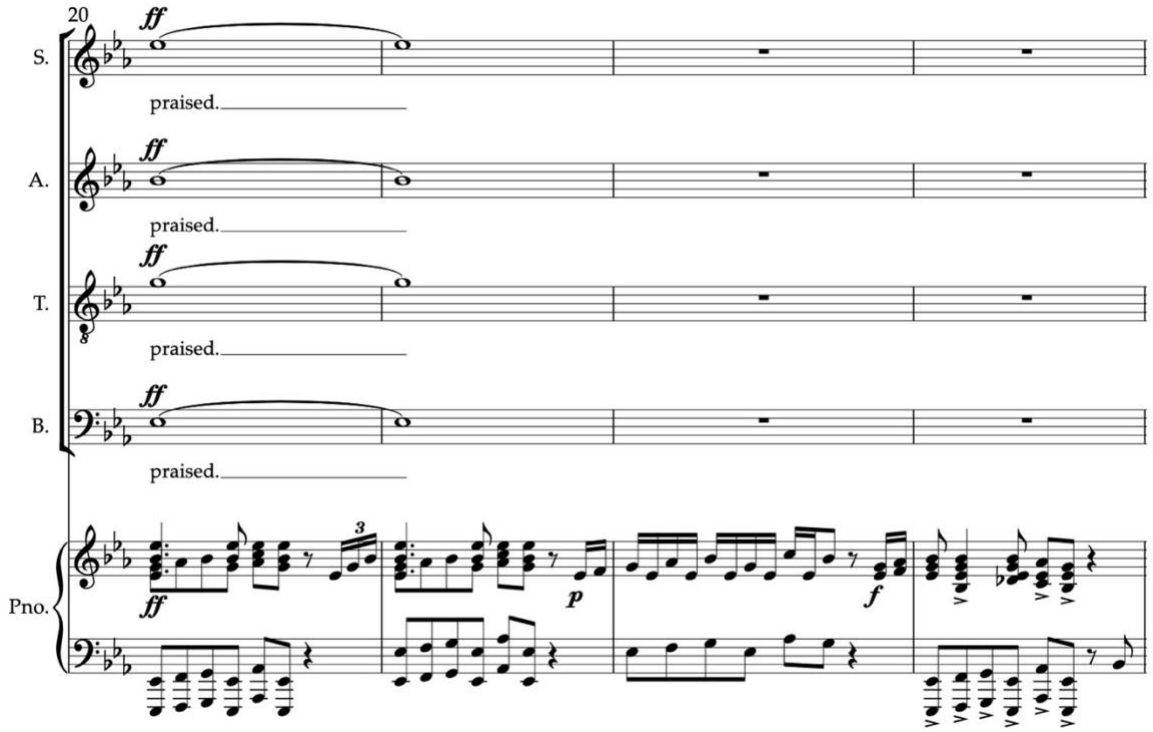


Figure 3.10: Diane L. White-Clayton, O Sing Unto the Lord, mm. 9-23.[79]

This would also be an excellent work for choristers familiar with baroque technique, for both advanced collegiate choral ensembles and those involving volunteer community singers. Conductors of many community choirs have performed the piece successfully, demonstrating a balance of gospel and European choral technique. Most choral singers will be familiar enough with the *Hallelujah Chorus* to employ the baroque text precision where it applies. The opening phrase can certainly be rehearsed and performed with rounded, closed [o] and [a] vowels to set the foundation of a focused European choral tone. After this, the vamp sections can be sung with the vocal freedom of the gospel style. Conductors can also use the accompaniment to heighten the inclusion of the gospel sound with improvisation during the vamps, such as how Phil Woodmore

[79] Diane L. White-Clayton, *O Sing Unto the Lord* (BYTHAX, 1984), 2-3, mm. 9-23.

included Black Pentecostal church "shout" music in the vamp during his performance with the Antigone in Ferguson Brooklyn Choir.[80]

Table 3.4: *O Sing Unto the Lord* Conductor's Analysis Chart by Phrase

Measures	**Text**	**Recommended Rehearsal Pedagogy**
Mm. 3-8	"O sing unto the Lord a new song…"	Use rounded, closed [o] and [a] vowels for tone foundation. Rehearse once on vowels only to focus the vowel foundation. Speak text on rhythms to encourage articulation.
Mm. 9-22	"Sing unto the Lord and bless His name"	Rehearse articulations on text before learning pitches to inform intentional text declaration.
Mm. 24-28	"King of Kings…" (S/B) "For the Lord is great…" (A/T)	Additive polyphonic entrances: Alto, Tenor, Soprano, Bass Have Sopranos and Basses speak their declarative entrances with strong consonants and connective motion through longer note values. Have Altos and Tenors speak the text with light articulation.
Mm. 29-36	"Forever and ever, Hallelujah, Hallelujah"	Quotation from the *Hallelujah Chorus* with rhythmic counterpoint Repeats – *ad lib* by conductor Call and response led by sopranos, with an inversion and dynamic change from ***p*** to ***f*** Opportunity to include a Black Pentecostal "shout" progression during the inverted ***f*** vamp (see 2019 performance by Phil Woodmore).
Mm. 37-end	"And He shall reign forever and ever more"	Use an open, forward placement of vowels that is supported by intentional breath control for the concluding "Amen."

Additional gospel anthems by Dr. White-Clayton continue to demonstrate the marriage of these seventeenth through nineteenth century European repertoire influences.

[80] Woodmore, "Oh Sing Unto the Lord-Music by Diane White," 2:18.

In addition to the compositional traits discussed in the aforementioned pieces, she often prioritizes the vertical approach of gospel melodic lines as a singer. This is seen through her melodic treatment of hymns in the polyphonic vamp for her anthem *Sweet Meditation*, during which each voice part layers in quoting three hymns which use the word "sweet": *'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*, *Every Day with Jesus is Sweeter than the Day Before*, and *Jesus, O How Sweet the Name*. The vocal style transitions from that of European choral to a gospel tone during this vamp, allowing the hymns to be prominent within the texture and the driving, march-like rhythms. Dr. White-Clayton's quotation of hymns also serve as a demonstration of how hymnody has influenced gospel, spirituals and camp meeting songs since the nineteenth century formation of African American churches.[81] These elements can be found in her celebratory anthem *Rejoice in the Lord* as well, with declamatory call-and-response statements as a punctuation of the unison phrases. The piano quotes Bach's *Prelude in C major* transposed up a half step for the introduction, as well as his *C minor Prelude* as an interlude before the brief polyphonic vamp. The short melismas, declamatory dotted rhythms, and articulations of the text serve as further demonstration of Dr. White-Clayton's Baroque era influence, while the tonal language of the nineteenth century can be heard in the piano embellishments and frequent harmonic development built on chromaticism and flat sixth and seventh chords (see Figure 3.11).

[81] African American church hymn collections included white protestant hymn collections published Dr. Isaac Watts, John and Charles Wesley, and George Whitefield. (Southern, Eileen. 1997. *The Music of Black Americans: A History*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.)

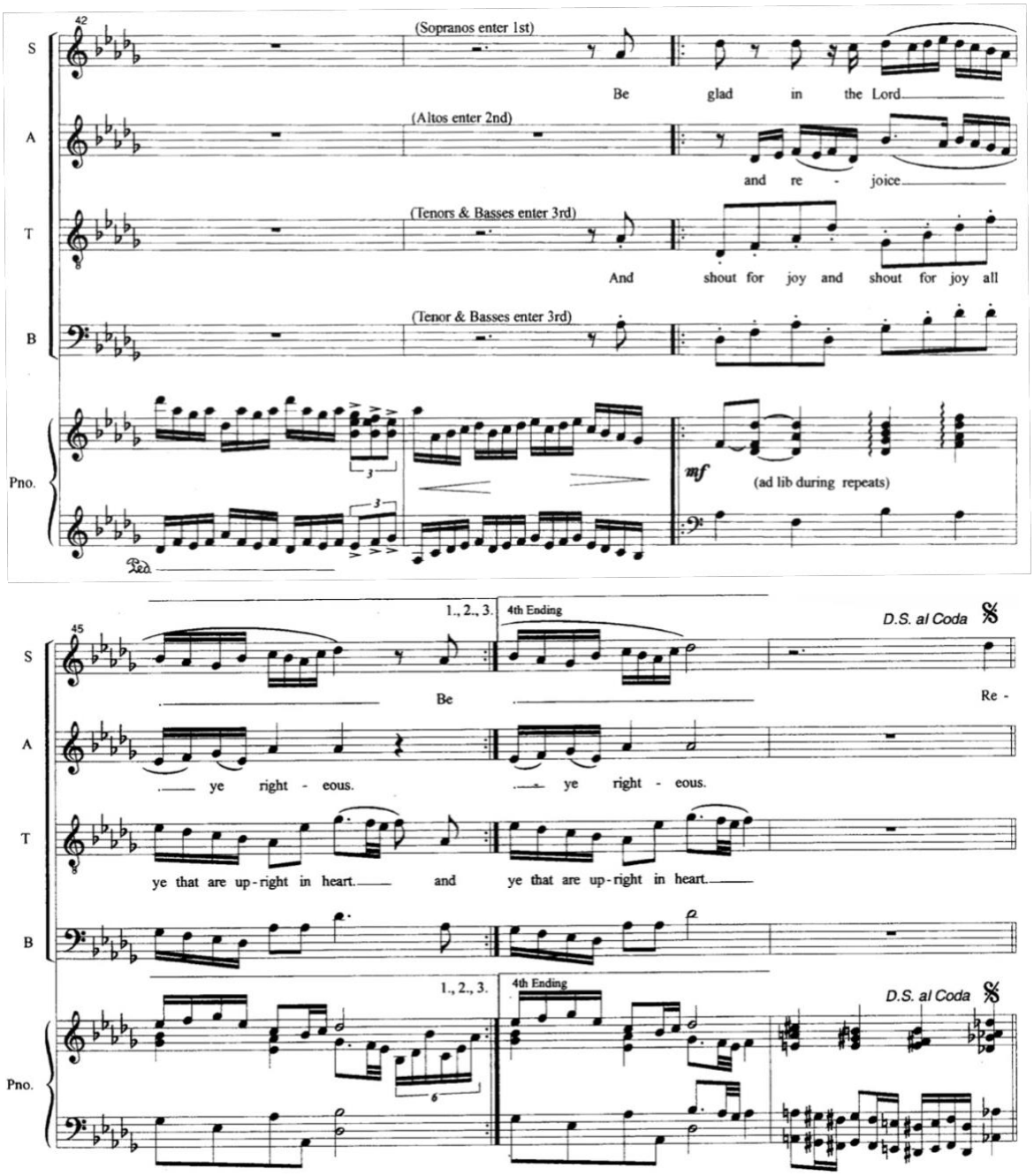


Figure 3.11: Diane L. White-Clayton, Rejoice in the Lord, mm. 42-47.[82]

Dr. White-Clayton encourages choral conductors and educators to explore gospel music with great intentionality, hoping that her repertoire may facilitate an informed study

[82] Diane L. White-Clayton, *Rejoice in the Lord* (BYTHAX, rev. 2005), 5-6, mm. 42-47.

and preparation of the style. Throughout her lifetime, she has witnessed the reception of gospel music in academic settings transition from not being taken seriously, to it becoming more and more desired with the rises of its' cultural popularity and conductors' desire for musical inclusivity. Her choral and vocal catalogue demonstrate a fascination for European repertoire that is shared with many choral artists, along with her strong passion for gospel music. This joyful enthusiasm can certainly be felt through the score as choral singers explore and perform her compositions.

Glory and Honor – Wise

Glory and Honor was originally written as a trio for Dr. Wise and two of his Raise Productions singers in 1985, and was revised later as an SATB choral piece. It has since been published in his Gospel Music Series through Raise Publishing. He once performed the piece at a gospel festival where the Raise Choir was opening for the headlining praise and worship singers. Their performance of *Glory and Honor* was able to change the tone of the room, bringing together both the gospel audience and the classical audience.[83] He has since performed the piece around the world, often opening concerts with it, and on occasion changing the language of the text to the country where they performed. The piece notably features a vamp with several rising inversions in the upper voices as the choir repeats "Glory, honor, glory, honor", with the sopranos, altos and tenors on A5, E5 and C5 respectively by the apex of the phrase at measures 54-55. This repeated vamp with these rising inversions is heard twice during the anthem, as Dr. Wise wanted to use word painting to create the effect of ascending higher into the heavens. Typically, higher singing in gospel

[83] Wise, interview.

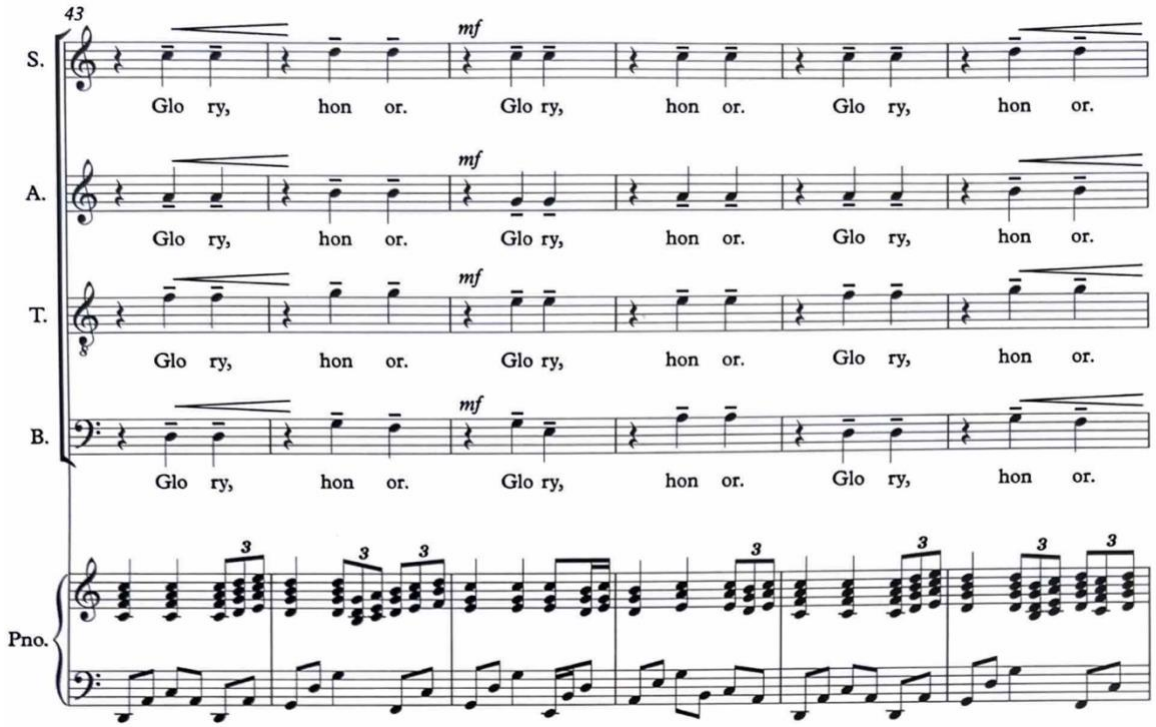
music is associated with the chest voice and belting; however, Dr. Wise, a countertenor, encouraged the use of head voice for singers as they continue ascending, which allows for a differentiation in the vocal tone. This is similar to the expansion of vocal ranges with repetitions found in late-Classical era repertoire, such as those found in choral works by Beethoven. While the dynamics will naturally increase with the vocal ascensions, conductors should encourage singers to maintain an open vocal space based on an [a] vowel, approaching each re-entrance with a sigh-like quality to alleviate any potential for vocal strain. These repeats may also include vocal falls at the end of each measure to incorporate gospel vocal style, so long as they maintain the pitch integrity of each re-entrance.

The anthem also begins with a piano introduction which outlines the melody. The use of several arpeggiations, rhythmic decorations and embellishments, harmonic shifts, and ascending and descending lines in the introduction have heavy influence of late-Classical music. Dr. Wise often uses Classical-style introductions to bring out an almost "instantaneous draw" to engage the listener, but in a different way than traditional upbeat gospel would.[84] The choral entrance features a mostly unison phrase sung on 'ooh', with constant dynamic arcs to create a synonymous blend of the voices together, creating the feeling of an opening prayer. The main verse of the piece is hymn-like, set in a homophonic phrase with several specific articulations which demonstrate the exact character of the text. This encourages specific treatment of each note value, word stress and phrasing. These detailed nuances are not only part of the musical execution of this piece, but they also played a significant role in de-emphasizing the stereotypes about loud, unhealthy and

[84] Wise, interview.

unrefined singing in gospel music that Dr. Wise fought in academic settings. Dr. Wise emphasizes the importance of polished singing and vocal health in gospel music, drawing upon this as a critical intersection between choral traditions to enhance the sound of gospel singing and for this piece in particular.

> That was also the other big issue about gospel: "You're screaming your voice." So [that] you don't have to scream and kill your voice, how can we sing in a way that's healthy and beautiful? So the other piece was, in terms of timbre and tone and technique, doing a lot of the things that are used in traditional Western music, in terms of keeping everything healthy, but also the other level that generally a lot of gospel singers don't move to is phrasing and articulation. They just sing notes…but the idea of now phrasing, adding articulation, adding glissandos to new crescendos, and purposely doing those things to bring another level of refinement to the music – those things are very, very powerful.[85]



[85] Wise, interview.

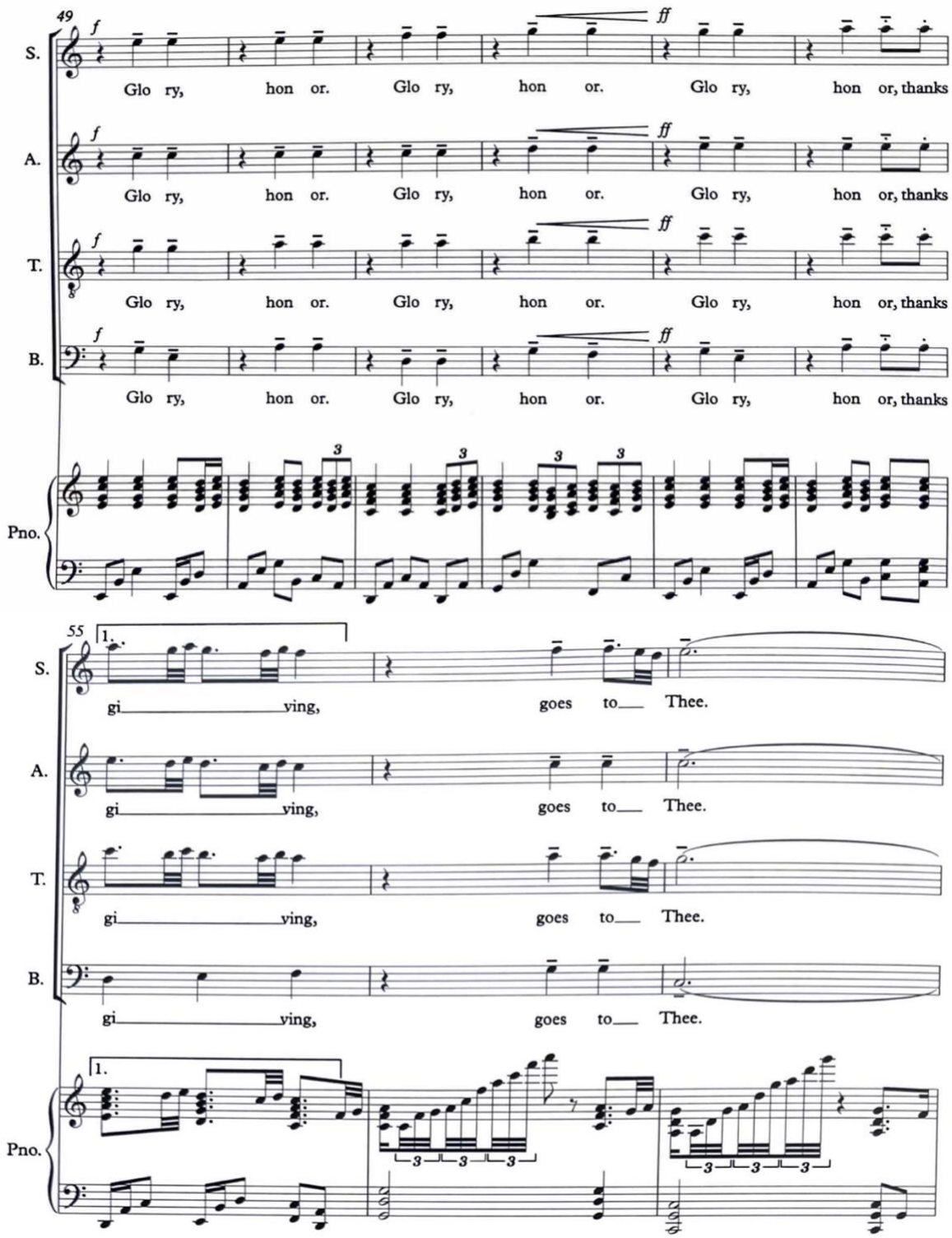


Figure 3.12: Raymond Wise, Glory and Honor, mm. 43-57.[86]

[86] Raymond Wise, *Glory and Honor* (Raise Publishing, 1985), 5-6, mm. 43-57.

Conductors should rehearse the piece by having their singers speak the text with these articulations and the dynamic contrast in order to establish these nuances even before learning pitches. This approach will also help the ease of the ornamental thirty-second notes that follow the dotted eighth notes, which should be sung with a very small decay for rhythmic vitality. While the piece is virtuosic due to the higher ranges, the notes and phrases themselves are much less challenging to learn, allowing conductors time to focus more on the specific articulation nuances in the score and the song structure with the frequent repeats. Conductors and singers should also familiarize themselves with Dr. Wise's guided repeats in the score. Each section of his published score is labeled with rehearsal letters, giving singers a quicker reference for each phrase.

Table 3.5: *Glory and Honor* Conductor's Analysis Chart by Phrase

Measures	**Text**	**Recommended Rehearsal Pedagogy**
B. Mm. 17-24	"Ooh"	Sing with very focused, pure [u] vowels. Employ constant dynamic swells throughout this section.
C. Mm. 25-34	"Glory, honor, and praise we give to Thee…"	Speak the text for rhythmic accuracy and precision with the given articulation markings. Make clear decisions on phrasing based on text. Encourage motion through the dynamic contrast, especially the accented long note values.
C. Mm. 35-39	"Glory, honor, thanksgiving goes to thee"	Singers may use vocal falls at the end of "Glory", provided they maintain pitch at the following entrance of "honor." Use a little bit of decay in between the dotted quarter note and the thirty-second notes for rhythmic vitality.
D. Mm. 41-end	"Glory, honor…"	Have the SAT voices begin to mix in head voice as the notes continue to rise, keeping an onset with a rounded [a] vowel. Maintain the full note value, and consider using vocal falls at the end of each measure with clear pitch re-entrance.

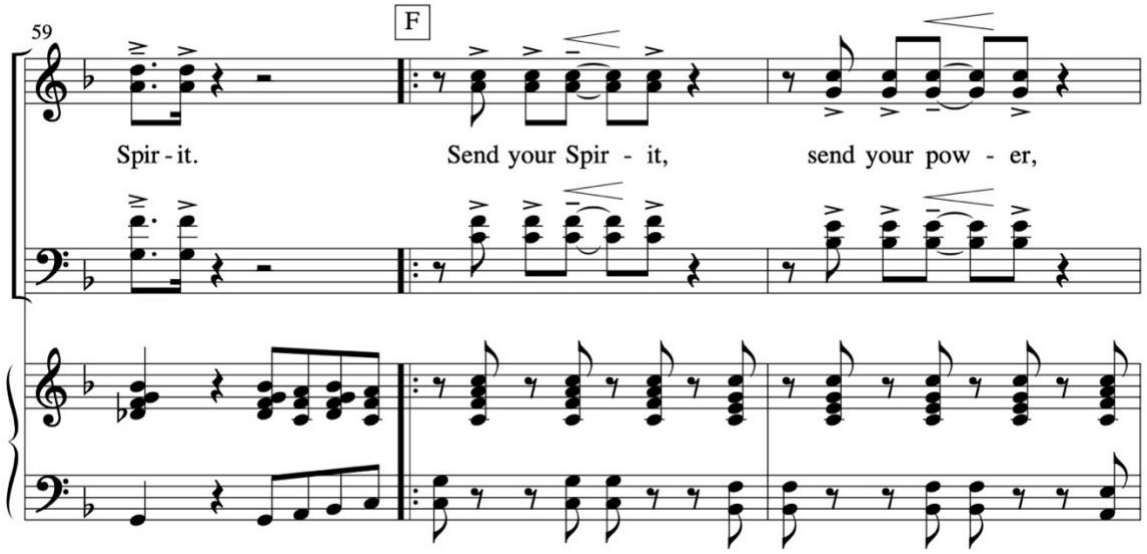
		Allow the marked crescendo to happen naturally with the ascension – avoid over-singing to produce volume! Work to maintain intonation in the phrase ending "goes to Thee" with a focused [I] vowel to center the pitch.

Lord, Send Your Spirit – Wise

Lord, Send Your Spirit was originally written for Dr. Wise's church youth choir as an anthem response to a Sunday sermon given by his brother based on Acts 1:8. It has since been published in GIA's African American Church Music Series. This is an excellent piece to teach classically-trained singers gospel pedagogy through the use of rote teaching. Dr. Wise highly recommends that much of the piece can be taught via modeling more than reading the physical score, teaching them to use their ears more than their eyes. Similar to *Glory and Honor*, the score for *Lord, Send Your Spirit* has several articulation markings for annunciating the text, which conductors should demonstrate via call-and-response. For example, in the opening text, "Lord, send your Spirit", the first three words are marked with accents and *staccatos*, with a *marcato* and a crescendo on the word "Spirit." This articulation repeats for each subsequent phrase: "Lord, send your power" and "Lord, send your glory." The outcries in the following phrases in D minor, "use me, Lord" are also heavily accented, with short responses from the sopranos and altos that include blue note pitches on the fifth scale degree.

Two of the sections lend themselves well to conductor improvisations. The first comes at the end of the first verse, and again later in the penultimate phrase, as the choir sings together: "Send your Spirit, send your power, send your glory", ending with the

sopranos and altos singing with “Fall on us” on a descending line. The first syllables of “Spirit”, “power”, and “glory” are all *marcato* with a crescendo for emphasis (see Figure 3.13). “Fall on us” should be sung by the treble voices with the same open, forward [ɑ] vowel referred to in some previous works discussed in this chapter, isolating the phrase in rehearsal to acquire a looser vocal freedom in the tone. The second section begins in the middle of the piece with each voice layering in with repeats, from sopranos to basses, singing “Lord, send your spirit”. Both sections may be repeated *ad lib*, with the conductor using the repeats to experiment with different dynamics, using neutral syllables in place of text (e.g. “doo” or “dah”), or isolating individual voice parts.[87] In doing so, the conductor must give clear gestures when they desire to move on from this repeated vamp. Dr. Wise concludes the piece with the opening phrase.



[87] A great example of this can be seen in Dr. Derrick Fox’s conducted performance with the JVLMA choir in Sweden. JVLMA, “Raymond Wise – Lord Send Your Spirit” YouTube video, 4:26. March 28, 2018. https://youtu.be/3Zsm0z27eFk?si=PINFF1-sW-ZbCbRw.

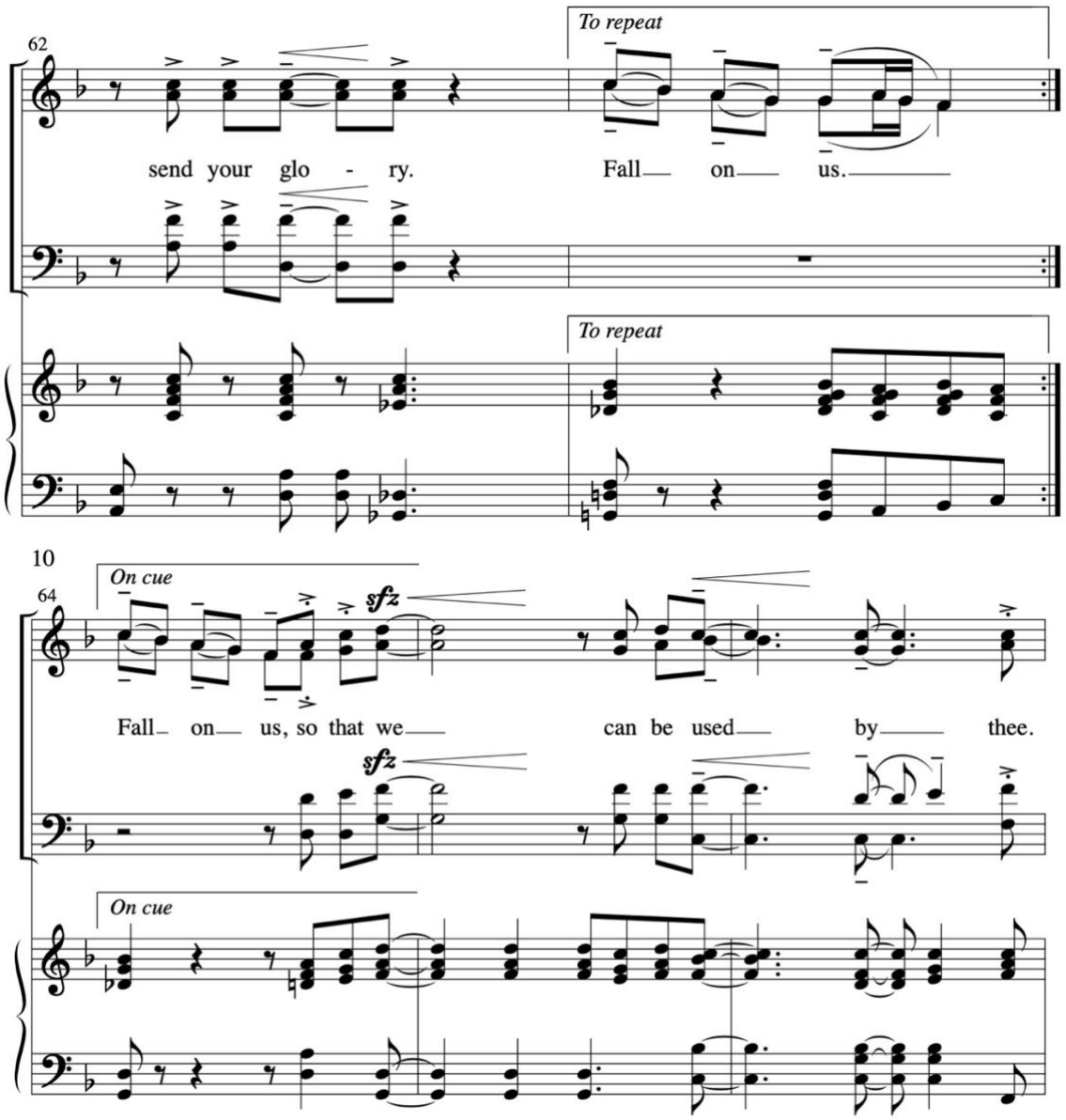


Figure 3.13: Raymond Wise, Lord, Send Your Spirit, mm. 59-66.[88]

Dr. Wise encourages classically-trained singers to perform this piece memorized, allowing themselves to be fully immersed in the flexible, improvised structure of the piece. They are also able to perform with more freedom of sound, bringing much of their tone

[88] Raymond Wise, *Lord, Send Your Spirit* (GIA Publications, 2018), 9-10, mm. 59-66.

forward. Conductors should rehearse this piece with informed modeling, based on familiarizing themselves with the written articulations and an appropriate forward tone. They should also focus on conducting the melodic rhythms, rather than relying solely on the traditional pattern, as the pulse will be maintained by the rhythm section. Many of Dr. Wise's pedagogical literature on gospel may also assist conductors looking for how to employ this style, such as his book *Singing the Gospel Style.* Dr. Wise enthusiastically encourages singers and conductors as they learn this piece, saying, "you have permission to enjoy this piece. Be free, enjoy yourself, and that's what will make the difference."[89]

Table 3.6: *Lord, Send Your Spirit* Conductor's Analysis Chart by Phrase

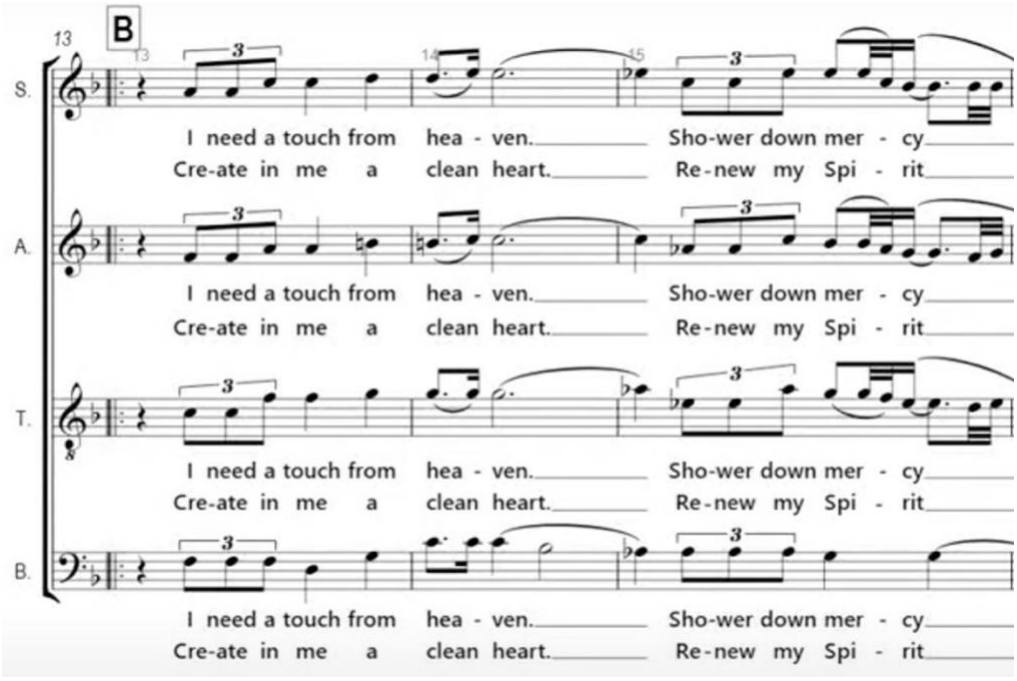
Measures	**Text**	**Recommended Rehearsal Pedagogy**
A. Mm. 9-20	"Lord, send your spirit, Lord send your glory…"	Teach the opening phrase by speaking the text via call-and-response rote modeling, emphasizing the given long vs. short articulations for word stress. Teach sopranos and basses their pitches (single pitch on F), then have them continue and add tenors and altos. Have the S/A voices de-emphasize the [ə] vowel in "power."
A. Mm. 21-28	"Use me, Lord…"	Have the choir speak the text on rhythms. Open the sustained "Lord" vowel to [ɑ] rather than a closed, rounded [o]. Conduct the melodic rhythm, not the pulse. Encourage the S/A voices to lean into the *tenuto* markings on "hands do too" and "feet do too." Vibrato is encouraged per the composer.
A. Mm. 29-41	"Send your spirit, send your power…"	Teach the rhythm by rote with repetition, then add the voice parts (suggested order: S, A, T, B). Singers should continue modeling an open sound, and de-emphasizing ending syllables in "spirit", "power", "glory." S/A on "Fall on us" – sing this measure on 'da' using an open, forward [ɑ] vowel a few times, then on text.

[89] Wise, interview.

		1st ending – keep the release of "used by thee" short. 2nd ending – conductor should give a clear gesture for this, and emphasize the sustained ***sfz*** to come.
B-E. Mm. 42-59	"Lord, send your spirit"	Additive entrances – S, A, T, B Continue using the open, forward [ɑ] placement for "Lord". Each entrance should have a clear release of the 'L' consonant, and growth sung through the sustained pitch. Repeat *ad lib* – signal to the basses when moving into the next vamp, as their pitch changes in the 2nd ending with the chord progression.
F. Mm. 60-66	"Send your spirit, send your power…"	Repeat *ad lib* Conductor may experiment with different dynamics, using neutral syllables in place of text (e.g. "doo" or "dah"), or isolating individual voice parts.
G. Mm. 67-end	"Lord, send your spirit, Lord send your glory…"	As the beginning

Additional choral works by Dr. Wise offer applicable repertoire in which he merges these musical traditions. As with *Glory and Honor, Fix Me* has a similar hymn-like structure that supports a unique harmonic development based on the melody. The vocal ranges are often high, calling for the use of head voice for both a clearer approach in the higher register, and to create a purer tone. Each verse decorates the homophonic phrases with sixteenth and thirty-second notes, intensified with eighth-note triplets throughout the middle verses to draw more focus to the pleas in the text, such as "Create in me a clean heart / Renew my Spirit, restore my joy" (see Figure 3.14). Upper voices especially would need to apply a similar purity of tone and blend to this piece as they would a late sixteenth- or seventeenth-century choral motet, in the interest of having a unified treble sound for both sustained and short rhythmic passages. *It Happened on Calvary* also provides a unique

harmonic development of a simple melody after its' introduction with a sequence of chord progressions and interplay within the choral texture. Gospel anthems he composed in the 1970s and 1980s such as *Jesus Will Make a Way* and *I Just Want to Praise the Lord* include brief fugal sections inserted during the vamps, transitioning into a different style much more abruptly.



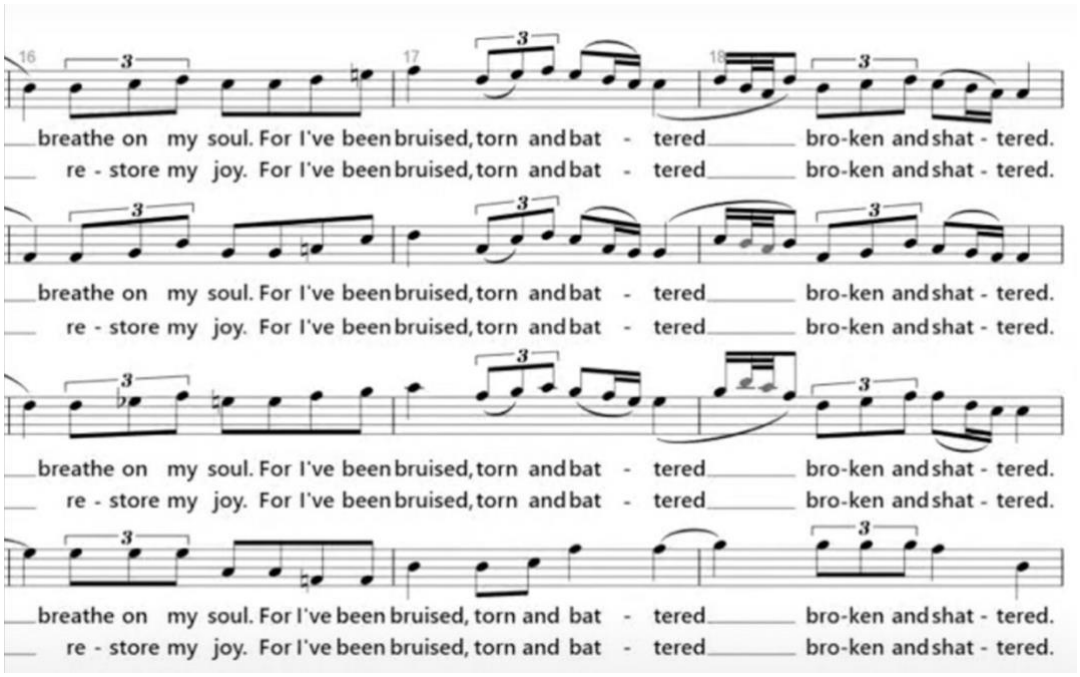


Figure 3.11: Raymond Wise, Fix Me, mm. 13-18.[90]

Conductors will be able to program many of Dr. Wise's gospel works for collegiate choirs of various levels, as they truly represent a variety of the gospel and European choral traditions and techniques available for exploration. He has also been very intentional about writing accessible gospel works for academic choirs, which have been enjoyed by a number of ensembles for decades. His attention to detail, desire to unify people through different musical cultures, and passion for this music has the potential to grow collegiate students in their choral musicianship, and create a memorable experience.

[90] Raymond Wise, "Fix Me" from *Classic Raise: The Best of Raise Choir* (Raise Publishing, 1992), mm. 109-111.

CHAPTER 4

AVENUES FOR FUTURE STUDY AND CONCLUSION

The works of these three composers are only a sampling of repertoire with intersections between the gospel and European choral traditions. In the initial stages of my research, I explored several gospel works by composers, dating as early as the 1950s. I would highly recommend exploring these fascinating works by gospel composers and arrangers such as Dr. Mattie Moss Clark, Thomas Whitfield, Donald Lawrence, and Richard Smallwood.

Since gospel has traditionally been a genre of music learned by rote for worship services, several pieces in gospel choir repertoire which would qualify for this study have not been transcribed into functional sheet music for chorus and piano. Other existing transcriptions contain inaccuracies in the choral writing, or do not include a written piano accompaniment. This chapter will provide avenues for future study: examples of transcribed gospel repertoire related to this topic, repertoire without published transcriptions, and the performance issues that may occur with inaccurate transcriptions. Many of the published scores discussed are available through self-publishing directly from the composers, while others are available through national music publishers such as GIA, Hal Leonard, J. W. Pepper and others (see Appendix A for a suggested listing of these works). The overview of gospel works without published choral scores will include

recommendations of gospel repertoire that should be transcribed for mixed chorus and piano for future study of this repertoire, creating greater accessibility for collegiate choral ensembles, and increasing the visibility of these works among choral conductors and audiences (see Appendix B for a suggested listing of these works).

Selected Gospel Works with Published Choral Scores

Renowned gospel artist Richard Smallwood is known for including influences of Classical and Romantic era writing in his repertoire. He and his colleagues developed their musicianship in these styles while studying at Howard University in the late 1960s to the early 1970s, at a time when gospel music was not allowed to be practiced or performed in HBCUs. Smallwood continued to do so, however, and was one of the founding members of Howard's first gospel choir. His compositions such as *Total Praise*, *Anthem of Praise*, and *Trust Me* have not only become world renowned, but also demonstrate clear influences of harmonic progressions, vocal technique and other traditions found in classical and romantic music. Dr. Wise refers to Smallwood and his contemporaries Henry Davis, Wesley Boyd and Robert Fryson as examples of composers who incorporated classical elements and performance practices within African American gospel music in various ways, categorizing them in the "Classical Style" during the development of gospel music.[91] "Total Praise" was released in 1996 on Smallwood's album *Adoration*, performed by one of his established choirs, Vision, and an orchestra. The song has since been performed by countless ensembles worldwide in worship, concert and academic settings, becoming recognized as one of his seminal compositions. "Anthem of Praise" was released on

[91] Wise, Raymond. "Defining African American Gospel Music by Tracing Its Historical and Musical Development from 1900 to 2000." Doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 2002, 261-263.

Smallwood's 2001 album with Vision, *Persuaded*. The text sets excerpts of Psalm 134, Psalm 150, and the hymn *Lift Him Up*. Dr. Braxton Shelley notes in his analysis of the piece that much of the drama is formed by Smallwood's use of formal musical units, textural transformation, harmonic rhythm, and tonal modulation.[92]

Before Smallwood and his contemporaries, the mid-twentieth century developments of gospel included several pianists who applied their education of European repertoire and traditions to their performances and writing. This included gospel artists such as Arizona Dranes, Thomas Dorsey, Clara Ward, Roberta Martin, Robert Wooten Sr., and Thomas Whitfield. Dranes and Dorsey in particular were two of the earliest pianists to form what would become the gospel piano style, which involved influence of European music traditions and jazz.[93] Whitfield in particular became known for his blending of Black Pentecostal and classical influences in his choral music and piano accompaniments throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Much of his music was performed by his choral group, the Thomas Whitfield Company (also known as "The Company") in Detroit, Michigan. While the embellishments in his piano accompaniments followed in Dorsey's traditions of infusing jazz and blues, his use of precise articulation, vocal inflection, and operatic vocal technique with soloists allowed his choral music to stand apart from his contemporaries. One of his most well-known works, *I Shall Wear a Crown* (also known by its alternative title, *Soon as I Get Home*), features many of these elements, along with circular progressions, frequent secondary dominants, and frustrations of the progression back to the

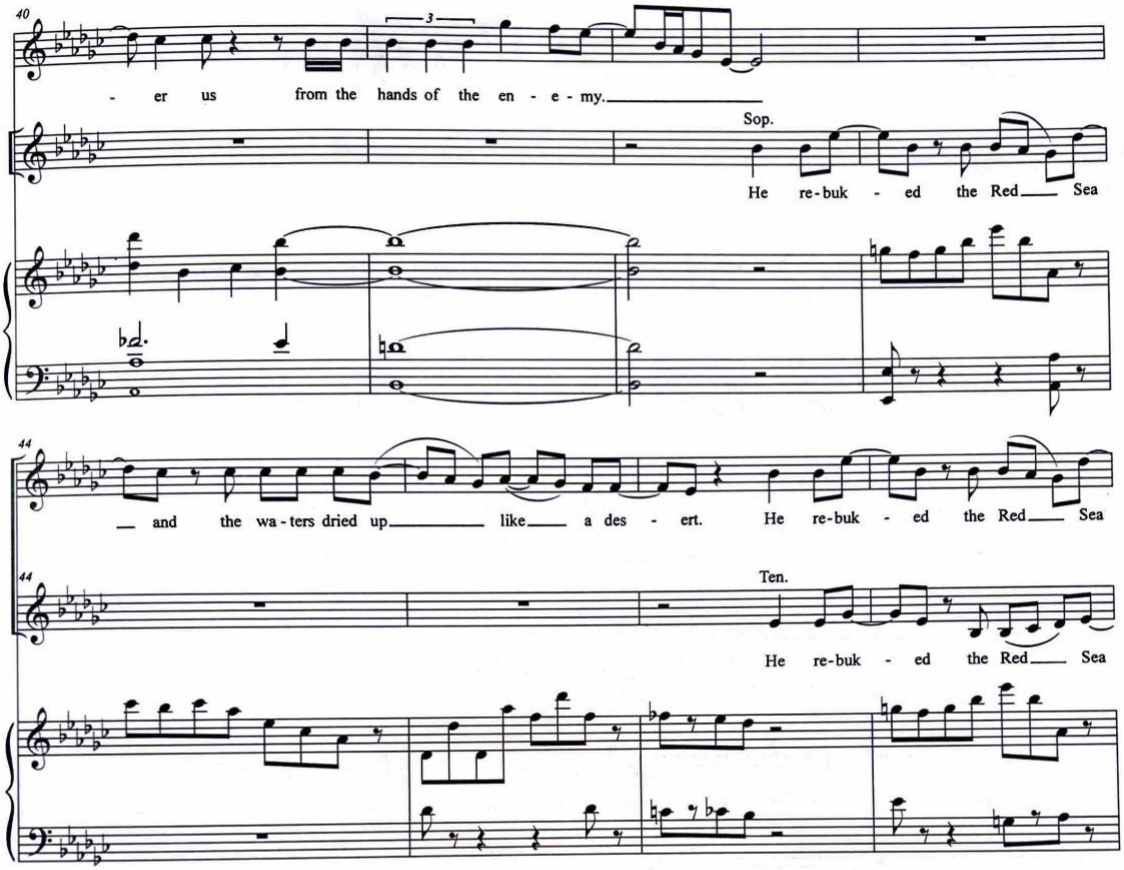
[92] Shelley, Braxton D. 2017. "Sermons in Song: Richard Smallwood, the Vamp, and the Gospel Imagination." Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 21.
[93] Johnson, Idella L. "Development of African American Gospel Piano Style (1926-1960): A Socio-Musical Analysis of Arizona Dranes and Thomas A. Dorsey." Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2009, iv.

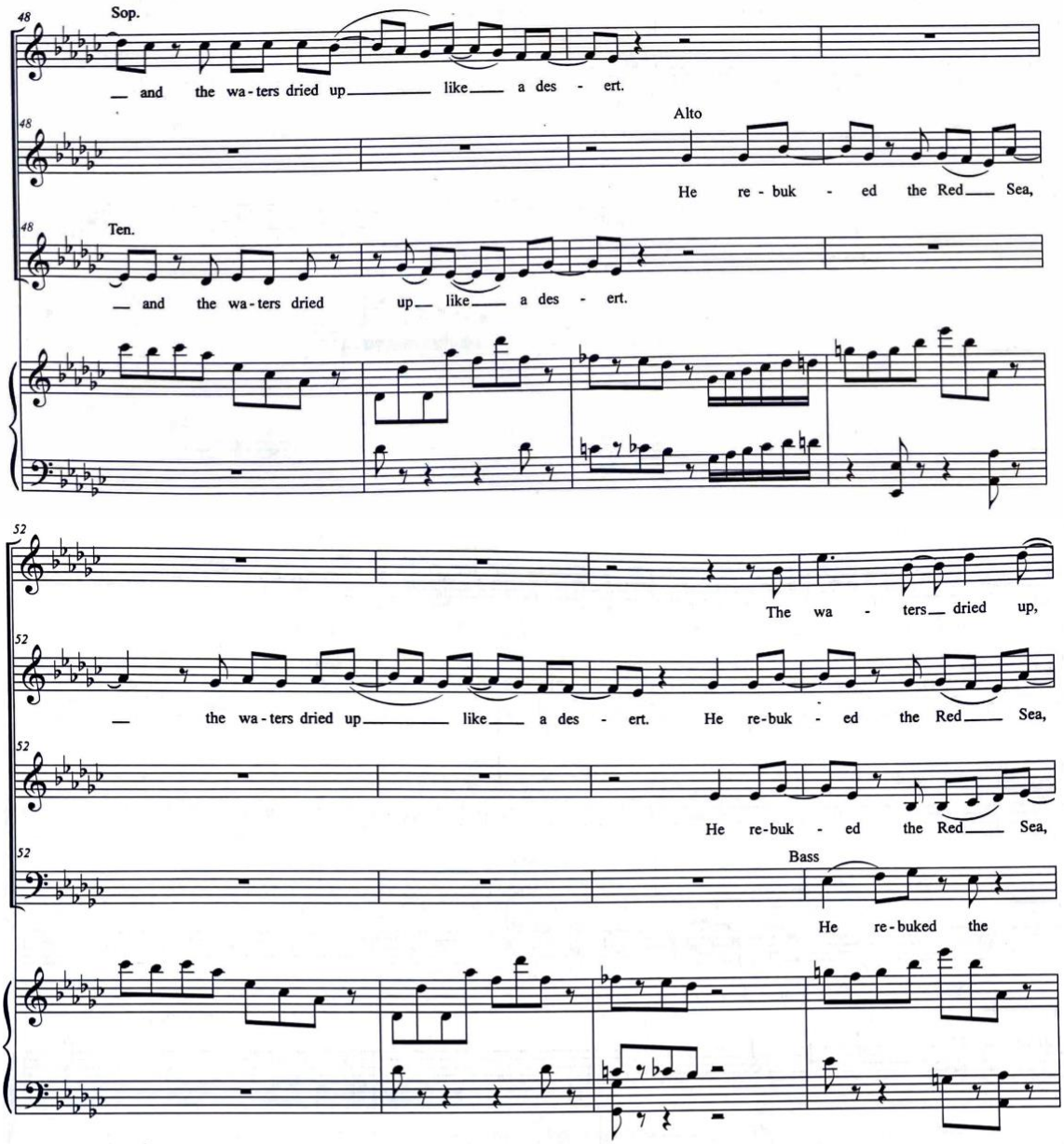
tonic. Dr. Brandon Waddles has transcribed this piece along with other choral works by Whitfield for mixed chorus and piano, in addition to producing scholarly writing about Whitfield and his choral output.

Donald Lawrence has been an active gospel artist for over 30 years. He received his music education from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, where he studied musical theatre and fell in love with choral music. He has since produced several award-winning gospel albums with his choir, the Tri-City Singers, and various artists such as The Clark Sisters.[94] One of his most recent albums, *Goshen*, released in 2019, includes a variety of styles including gospel, symphonic music and rap. The song entitled "He Rebuked the Red Sea" from this album incorporates a repeated fugue in the upper three voices for the majority of the composition. The melody ("He rebuked the red sea, the waters dried up like a desert") and countermelody ("the waters dried up") appear in each voice in soli and duet form throughout the piece, appearing at different pitch intervals in polyphony, as well as in harmonized homophony. Lawrence illustrated the text with brief melismas either moving in an ascending motion on "the waters dried up" and "they dried up", or in alternating directions to create the sea's movement. The piece is formed by a structure of two fugal choruses, which end in homophony before the soprano soloist introduces two verses on new text. The third fugal chorus is written with each voice entering in imitation every four measures, with the polyphonic texture building into an a cappella breakout for the tutti choir (as the basses have been used sparingly by this point). The final section transitions into a syncopated, homophonic declaration of "You can cross over, God has

[94] Datcher, Mary. "One-On-One With Gospel Hitmaker: Donald Lawrence." https://Bronzevillelife.Com/. July 15, 2019. https://bronzevillelife.com/uncategorized/one-on-one-with-gospel-hitmaker-donald-lawrence/.

made plain the way", now set in the parallel major instead of minor. This transition also segues into the execution of a unified proclamation of a hopeful message. The accompaniment until the final section of the piece is somewhat reserved, supported mostly by a consistent rhythm from the drums during the fugal choruses. "Jehovah Sabaoth (God of Angel Armies)" for mixed chorus, soloist and piano is also a strong choral selection from this album which uses full vocal ranges, emphasized suspension, and short melismas in the choral writing.




48
Sop.
— and the wa-ters dried up like a des - ert.
48
Alto
He re - buk - ed the Red Sea,
48
Ten.
— and the wa-ters dried up like a des - ert.
52
The wa - ters dried up,
52
— the wa-ters dried up like a des - ert. He re-buk - ed the Red Sea,
52
He re-buk - ed the Red Sea,
52
Bass
He re-buked the

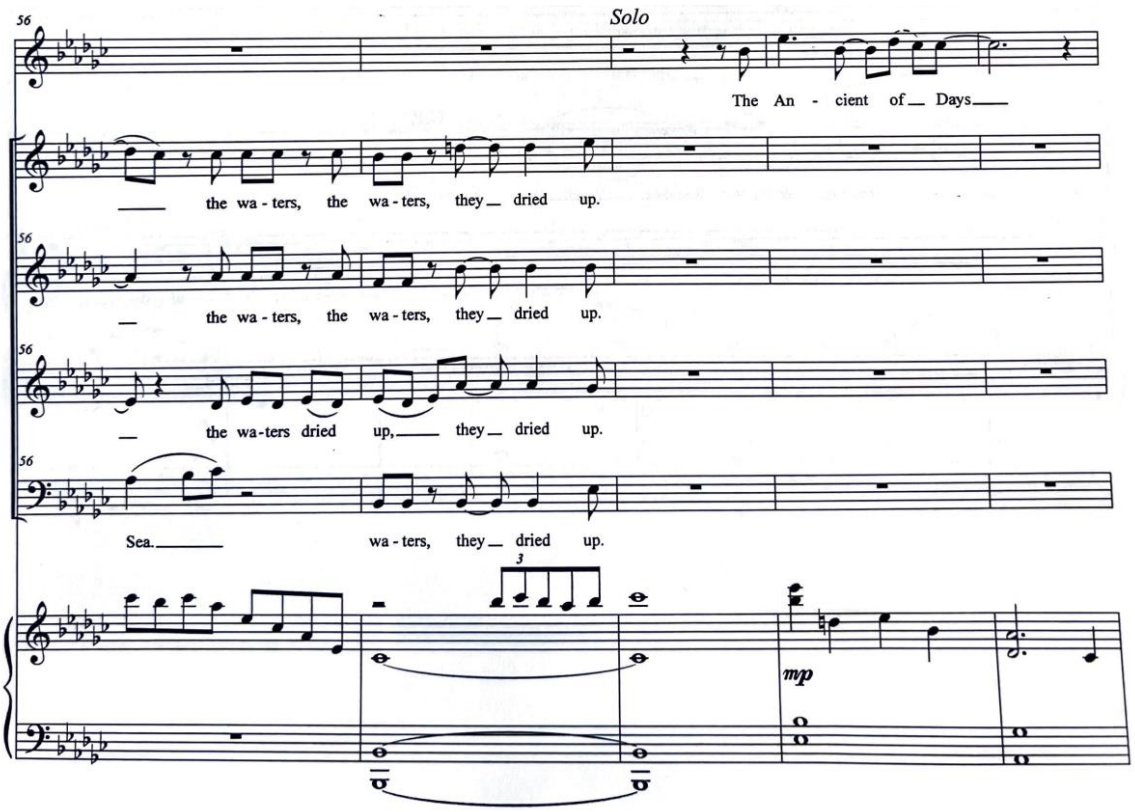


Figure 4.1: Donald Lawrence and William James Stokes, He Rebuked the Red Sea, mm. 40-60.[95]

Choral singers familiar with Handel's *Messiah* will enjoy exploring selections from the collaborative album *Handel's Messiah: A Soulful Celebration*. The album was released in 1992 on the Warner Alliance label, and features interpolations and arrangements of 16 selected movements from Handel's seminal work. The arrangements were written in multiple African American genres of popular music, including gospel, ragtime, spirituals, R&B, jazz, and hip-hop. Several prominent and award-wining artists and vocal groups were featured on the album, among them Vanessa Bell Armstrong, Daryl Coley, Tramaine Hawkins, Take 6, Stevie Wonder, The Boys Choir of Harlem, The Richard Smallwood

[95] Donald Lawrence and Williams James Stokes. "He Rebuked the Red Sea" from *Musical Selections from Donald Lawrence Presents the Tri-City Singers: Goshen*. 2018. Norwood Music Publishing, 73-74, mm. 40-60.

Singers, Commissioned, and The Clark Sisters. Mervyn Warren, Grammy-award winning artist and film composer, served as one of the executive producers and arranged several of the reimagined pieces.[96] Warren, along with Michael O. Jackson and his former Take 6 collaborator Mark Kibble, arranged "Hallelujah" as the concluding piece on the album, with many of the album's featured artists and other established African American artists singing in the choir.[97] Several church and community choirs have enjoyed performing this over the years, and it is currently the only selection from this album with a published score (see Appendix A). While this score re-voices many of the SAT parts into a three-part treble divisi, it does preserve the arrangers' setting of each phrase from Handel's original composition. Conductors can determine if this voicing benefits the voices in their choir, or if they prefer to re-voice certain phrases to align with the original 1992 recording.

Handel's uses of textural changes between imitative polyphony and declarative homophony, articulation to prioritize text, and dynamic increase through ascending passages are all demonstrated during this syncopated adaptation of "Hallelujah." Similar to Cates' *Take My Life (Lacrimosa)*, the arrangement pays homage to significant compositional traits of the original work in a recognizable way, while still incorporating them in a unique and accessible gospel setting. Conductors would need to prioritize rhythmic rote learning, as well as the treatment of focused vowels and diphthongs for a freer gospel timbre, while using Baroque-era precision towards the articulation of the text.[98]

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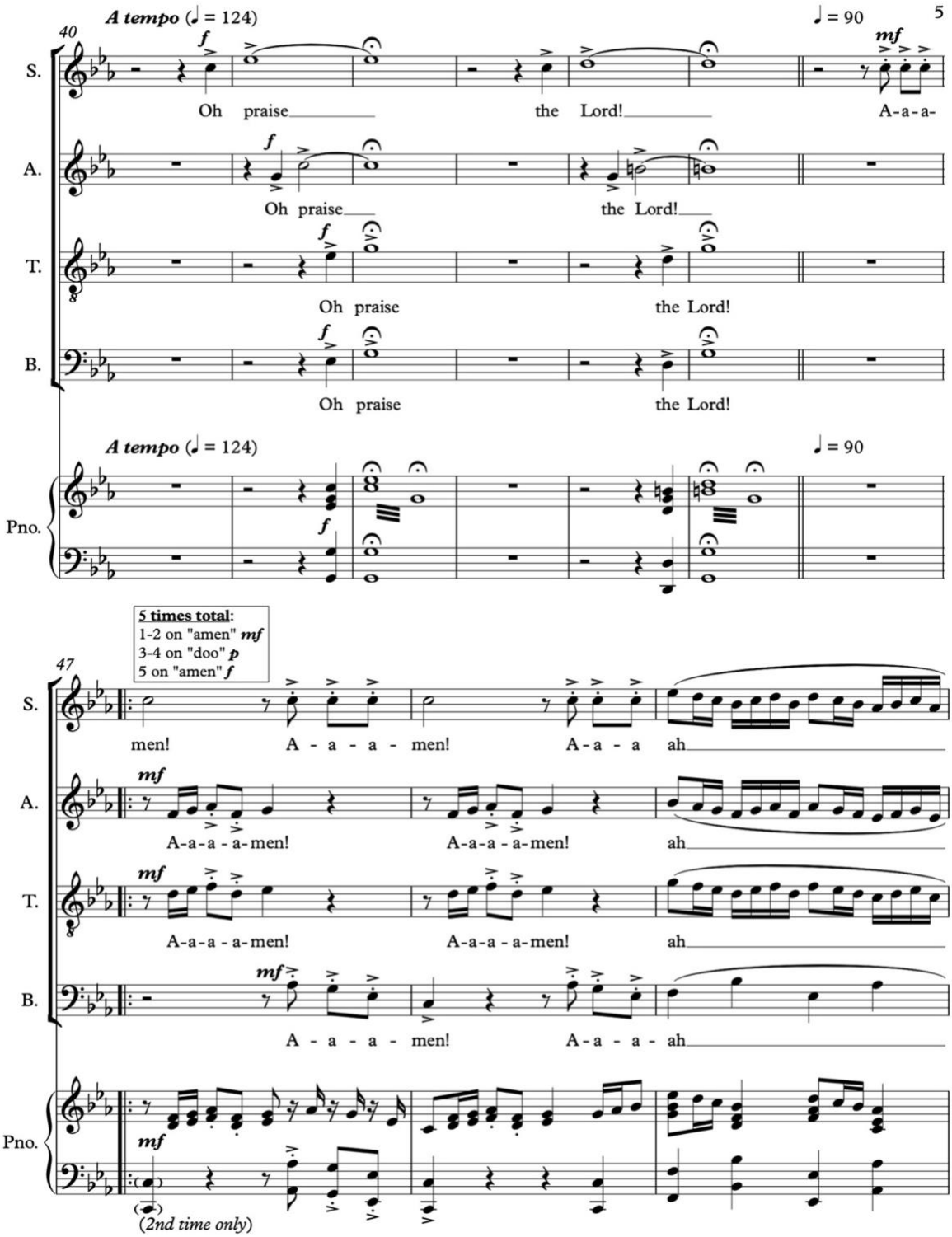
[96] Warren, Mervyn. "Mervyn Warren: Biography." Mervynwarren.com. 2023. https://mervynwarren.com/biography.
[97] soundsgoodtomeYT, "Hallelujah!" YouTube video, 5:56. October 26, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoBwzLH2Aig.
[98] A good vocal analysis for rehearsal preparation: Jaron M. LeGrair Studio, "HALLELUJAH from HÄNDEL'S MESSIAH: A SOULFUL CELEBRATION / Voice Teacher Analyzes." YouTube video, 15:57. December 23, 2022. https://youtu.be/XyKtcTq9Src?si=EjKF8r7Bc3f7MJpO.

Selected Gospel Works without Published Choral Scores

Singer, songwriter, arranger, and music minister Dr. Mattie Moss-Clark was a major figure of the gospel mass choir movement in the mid-twentieth century. Dr. Clark was the longest-serving International Minister of Music for the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). Her arrangement of George Pass II's *Let Everything That Hath Breath (Psalm 150)* has become one of the most famous standards of gospel repertoire in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Her daughter Elbernita "Twinkie" Clark-Terrell, gospel organist and composer, produced a performance of the arrangement on her 1996 live recording, *Twinkie Clark-Terrell Presents: The Florida A&M University Gospel Choir*. Prior to this recording, Dr. Clark famously conducted performances of this piece in several COGIC worship services and convocations. This uplifting anthem expertly blends together both the musical aesthetics of traditional gospel, and the influences of Baroque-era melismatic passages and harmonic progression. It contains great differentiation in dynamics, precision, and phrasing for the choir. The use of articulations in this piece is critical to its performance, as they increase the amount of creativity conductors may have with word stress in performance.

Twinkie Clark-Terrell's 1996 live album recording involved a collaboration with FAMU music students. Carolyn Tribune Brewer, one of the sophomore music students involved at the time, crafted many of the Baroque-era elements heard in the song, including the four-measure piano interlude that leads into the polyphonic phrase, "We give Thee honor." She ultimately incorporated elements of the seventeenth through eighteenth century music she had been studying throughout the piece, and performed as the pianist for the live recording. Brewer later studied music at the University of Michigan, and is currently an active performer, educator, composer, and church musician in Baltimore. She

recalled this album as one of the most remarkable experiences during her undergraduate studies (refer to Appendix F for a recount of the development of this piece).



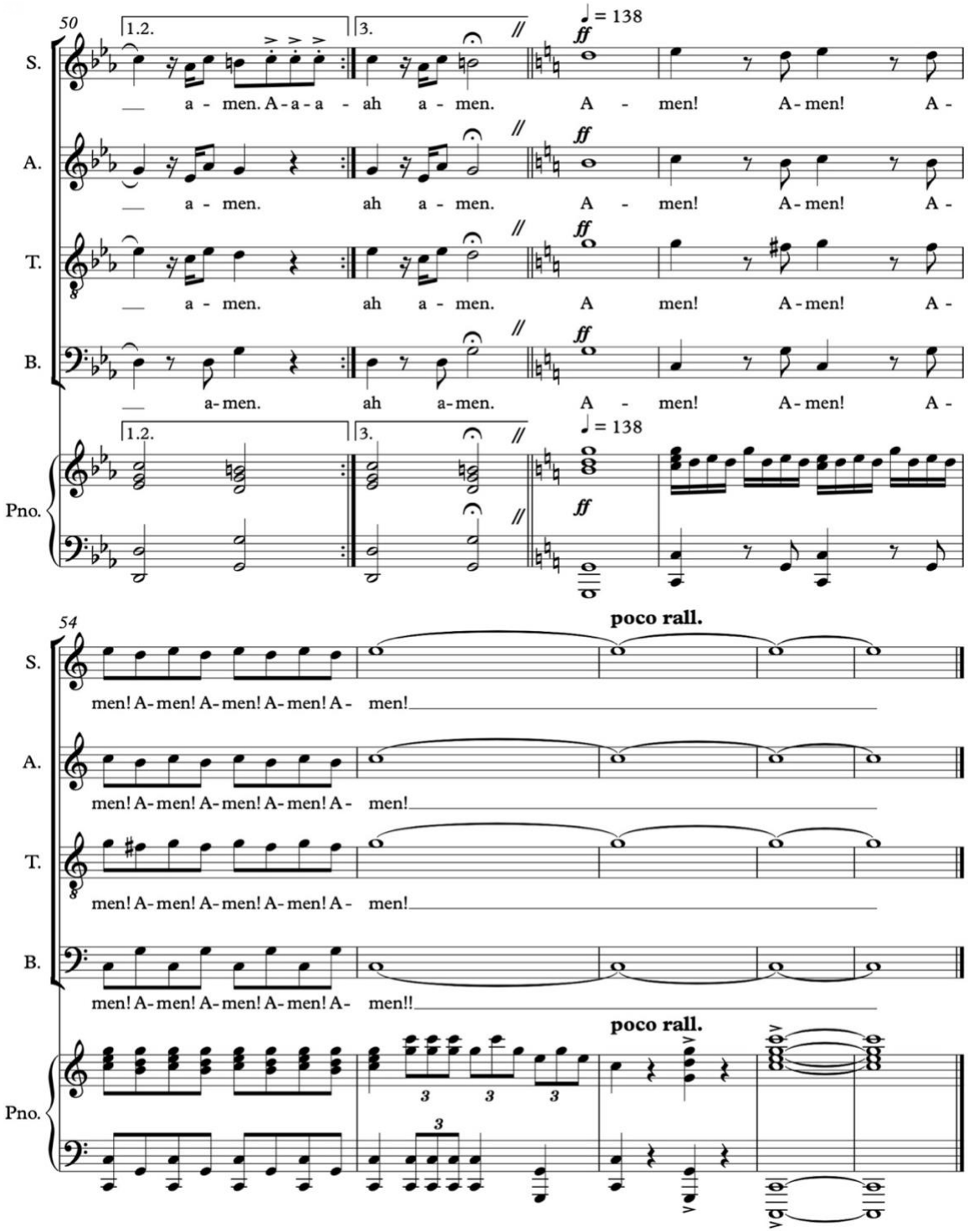


Figure 4.2: George Pass II, arr. Mattie Moss Clark & Carolyn Tribune Brewer, Let Everything That Hath Breath (Psalm 150), mm. 40-58.[99]

[99] George Pass II, arranged by Mattie Moss Clark and Carolyn Tribune Brewer, transcribed by Bryon Black II, *Let Everything That Hath Breath (Psalm 150)*, mm. 40-58.

Several of Richard Smallwood's gospel works that contain significant European intersections do not currently published have choral sheet music, dating back to his earliest albums with the Richard Smallwood Singers, his first group which was formed in 1977. "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" is a setting of "Jesus bleibet meine Freude", from J. S. Bach's cantata *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben, BWV 147*. Smallwood placed Bach's orchestral accompaniment in the piano, supporting the original choral and solo writing. He also contributed a choral arrangement of "Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion" for the *Handel's Messiah: A Soulful Celebration* album with the Richard Smallwood Singers, placing a number of the original melismatic phrases in either homophonic phrases for the tutti choir, or in the soprano part with supportive motives from the lower voices.[100] Other works such as "Calvary", "I Love the Lord", and "Trust Me" contain more uses of *bel canto* and gospel vocal techniques, prominent treatment of secondary dominants in his chord progressions, and accessible vocal lines for singers of varying abilities. "Hebrews 11" from Smallwood's 2015 album *Anthology* uses a combination of intense chromatic progressions and syncopated choral statements, standing out as one of his more challenging original works. The work has not been widely performed by other ensembles, but may work well for advanced choral musicians. The piece may also provide opportunity for spoken narration during the vamp, as Smallwood narrated from the scriptural text during the live album recording and included his own personal testimonies.[101]

[100] Smallwood won his first Grammy Award along with a Dove Award for his involvement on this project. "Richard Smallwood." The Kennedy Center. Accessed December 15, 2023. https://www.kennedy-center.org/artists/s/sa-sn/richard-smallwood/.

[101] "Hebrews 11", Track 10 on Richard Smallwood with Vision, *Anthology Live*, RCA Inspiration 88875-01660-2, 2015, streaming media. https://open.spotify.com/album/5WLNmhnWJMg400zCerfW5f?si=haP5Wmm6T66fdjRrsw-W_g.

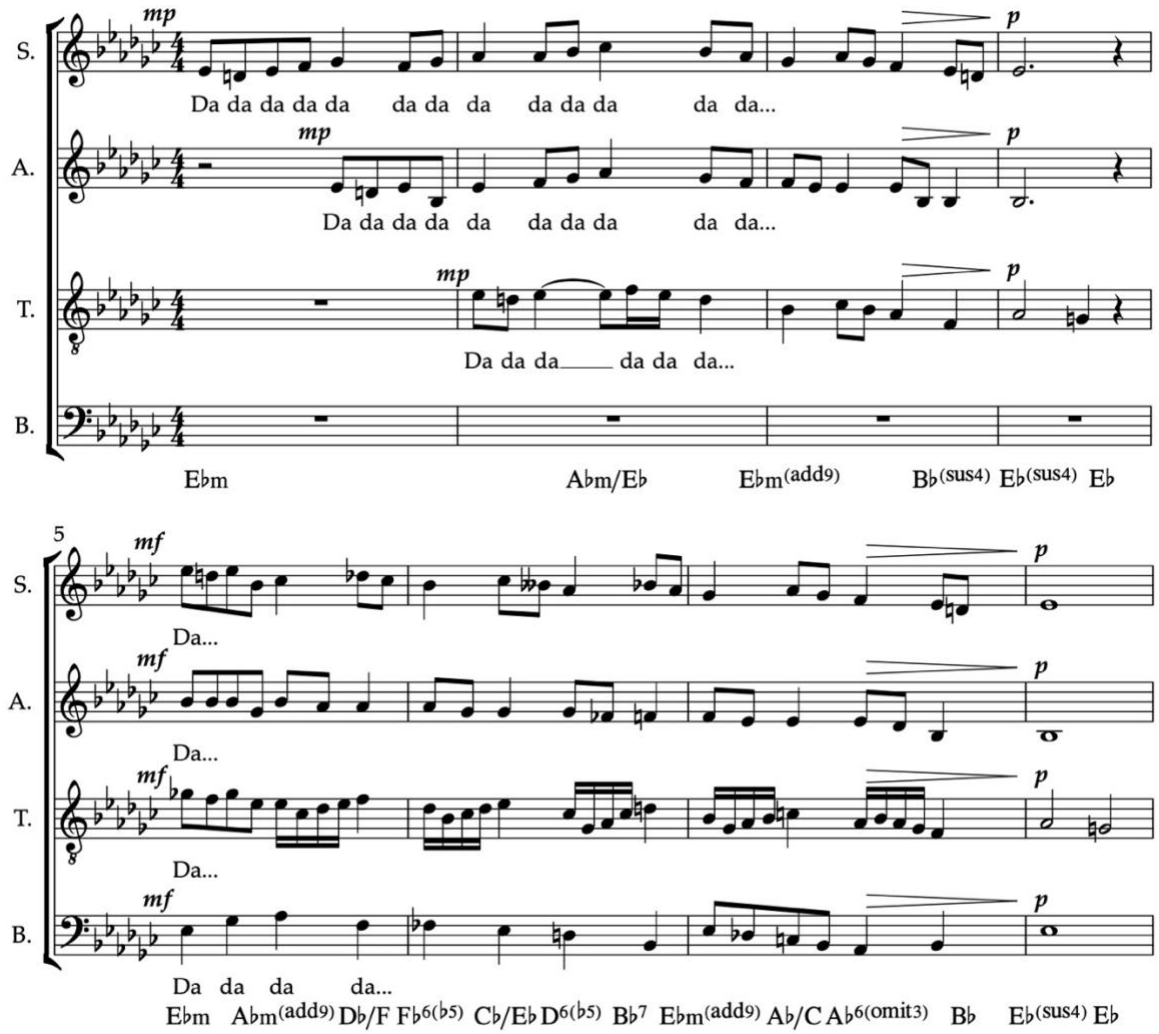


Figure 4.3: Richard Smallwood, Hebrews 11, mm. 1-8.[102]

While accessible choral scores of Donald Lawrence's works from *Goshen* are available for mixed chorus, soloists and piano, this is not the case for many of his related works, with many gospel choir directors teaching his music by rote. His 1995 narrative album *Bible Stories* contained choral selections in which singers blended gospel and European vocal technique, such as "Cast Your Cares", "When Sunday Comes", and "Great Things." In "I Am God", the chorus demonstrated a pure choral tone to blend during the

[102] Richard Smallwood, transcribed by Bryon Black II, *Hebrews 11*, mm. 1-8.

opening verses, and gradually transitioned into a traditional gospel vocal production during the vamp as the soloist improvised.

Additional choral works worth exploring include are those by the late Dr. Robert Wooten Sr., founder and conductor of the Wooten Choral Ensemble. Wooten composed several gospel anthems, many of which contained fugues, strict imitation, interpolations of hymns, and other similar elements of European choral music. He founded the choir in Chicago in 1949, and it has continued as the oldest community choir in the country.[103] GIA Publications published his setting of *I Heard the Voice* in 2008, but many of his other works, such as *Lord We Give Thanks, O Sing Praises,* and a stirring choral arrangement of Roberta Martin's *He Knows How Much We Can Bear* are also worthy of publication for choral conductors to explore with their singers (see Appendix B for reference of these pieces).[104]

Performance Challenges

The problems that arise in choral performance from inaccurate gospel scores would be a valuable area for future study. Existing transcriptions which have either been published or have been released by independent musicians may provide choral singers with a written reference, but they frequently create more challenges in performance that misrepresent both the piece and the composer. As gospel is a more recently developed

[103] "About WCE." The Wooten Choral Ensemble. Accessed August 15, 2023. https://wce1949.com/.
[104] Many of these recordings are available to hear through streaming media. The first two pieces mentioned are both included in the WCE recording: The Wooten Choral Ensemble, *Because He Lives*, Rewind Records, WCE-217, 1978, streaming media.
https://open.spotify.com/album/37yyvZM5tccEZVICoivwyS?si=pmnEeHvsRS6DfHEIBssPpA.

genre of American music, many gospel composers, artists, and pedagogues are currently active and able to advise on the intentions of these works.

Smallwood's *Total Praise* has been subject to many chord inaccuracies over the years as choirs and pianists have learned it by rote. Smallwood has spoken many times in lectures, workshops and even social media posts about ensembles performing his music as intended, often clarifying the purposes of specific chords, suspensions, and voice leading.[105] While many choral scores are available of *Total Praise*, not all maintain the accuracy of Smallwood's intended writing. For example, in some scores, choral arrangers and editors have adapted the choral part-writing for the ending "Amen" vamp. During this section, one voice sustains as the other two ascend in stepwise motion with decorative chromaticism, and the section inverts three times. Some score editions change which voices sing the stepwise passages and add additional pitches. Some choral scores also adjust the voice leading for the climactic phrase "You are the source of my strength", often re-voicing the high D♭ chord as a three-part SSA divisi instead of SAT, giving tenors and basses lower pitches that double the other voices. While these voicing changes may assist choirs with limited voices or vocal ranges among their tenors and basses, collegiate choral conductors should consider pursuing scores which clearly reflect and communicate the composer's intentions to the ensemble. Smallwood intended to use the tessituras of each voice part's range at key moments in the song based on the text, which singers can achieve through the use of good vocal technique. Conductors would also need to give careful attention to intonation when rehearsing, particularly to chromatic passages and suspensions. Singers should also be aware of when their pitch does not change with the other voices. One

[105] C1 Media, "Richard Smallwood teaching the proper way to sing Total Praise & more – Conversations w/TQ." YouTube video, 19:56. June 11, 2017. https://youtu.be/Z9fPg3hxuO4?si=CYRqgCbh9lAPYq9M.

example of this that Smallwood often corrects appears in the opening phrase "Lord, I will lift mine eyes to the hills," when the tenors sustain "hills" while the sopranos and altos have a shared suspension in thirds. One of the most accurate vocal/piano scores of *Total Praise* can be found on Musicnotes.com.

When programming gospel works, conductors should aim to be selective of the scores they use. The primary source should always be the composer. Many gospel composers are living as of this writing, providing the opportunity for them to be the authoritative voice on the accuracy of their music. Inaccurate transcriptions not only work against the composer's intentions, but may also lead to significant performance challenges. One example may include re-voicing choral parts, such as what occurred with *Total Praise* and *Hallelujah*. Even as arrangers and publishing editors seek to assist choirs with vocal limitations, they should still prioritize the written parts of the composer.[106] Another example is adding or changing notes beyond the composer's intended writing. Some pieces which were initially written for SAT voices may add a bass part. While this inclusion benefits an SATB choir, the bass parts occasionally do not fit with the harmonic structure. Piano accompaniments in some scores may also range from near-accurate transcriptions to very simplistic ones that reduce the rhythmic complexities and syncopations which are inherent to the gospel style. Most successful scores will incorporate a functional piano accompaniment which supports the piece while still including the stylistic embellishments. A related example is scores which change the rhythms in both the choral and piano parts. This may arise from a desire to reduce the level of complexity for performers, but doing so may diminish the ideal character and style of the music. Some scores may lack the

[106] Preparing adaptations of these works for younger voices which are both accurate and still appropriate for their abilities may also be explored as an area of study.

articulations necessary to accentuate the text, or even provide appropriate word painting. Finally, some scores change the structure of a piece, which can affect the creativity of repeated vamps or its narrative communication.

As mentioned briefly in Chapter 1, some HBCU choral conductors may be interested in programming gospel repertoire with elements of traditional European music. For HBCU or multi-cultural choirs that have a background in performing gospel music or other African American performance traditions, the desire to approach European choral practices in gospel repertoire could exist for a few types of ensembles: choirs with singers who have some exposure to classically-influenced gospel, but they do not possess the proper performance practice or technique; singers who possess a range of musical abilities, but were never able to formally study European music/choral traditions; or singers in a setting where gospel itself has been stigmatized by administrators or department heads. Conductors of these ensembles may turn to gospel music organizations which have offered instruction for the vocal pedagogy of gospel singing for many decades. The Gospel Music Workshop of America (GMWA) was formed in 1967 by Rev. James Cleveland and his colleagues to produce a venue for gospel music presentations and academically prepare people in gospel music traditions. In addition to their annual conference for both lay church singers and professional gospel musicians, GMWA offers a certification program through their Academic Division with continuing education credit. One of the purposes of the Academic Division includes to "perpetuate, promote and advance the Christian ideal through the medium of music in the African American religious experience, Euro-American sacred music experience, Caribbean music experiences and other forms of

music."[107] Similarly, the annual meetings of the Dorsey Convention, also known as the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses (NCGCC) was founded in 1932 by Thomas Dorsey, engaging legendary gospel artists such as Rev. Cleveland, Della Reese, Aretha Franklin and others. Their mission includes fostering an appreciation for gospel music through performances and training, as well as expanding the horizons of gospel music into other culturally diverse environments.[108] The course offerings and resources provided by these organizations may certainly align with cross-cultural approaches in the education of gospel music.

These areas should be given great consideration and research when seeking or preparing a gospel choir score. Additionally, choral arrangers and publishers should fully immerse themselves in the accuracy and intentions of any gospel composition they wish to transcribe. In the event that the composer is inaccessible or deceased, arrangers should refer to available recordings of performances led by the gospel composer. These will typically provide an accurate depiction of the composer's intentions, stylistic choices, and any creative opportunities for improvisation. While some variables may change depending on the performer (such as piano embellishments or improvisations), this can largely provide well-informed decisions, leading to a reliable score.

Summary

This study has explored choral repertoire with intersections between gospel music and European choral traditions. The gospel composers and artists presented in this study

[107] Review of *Academic Division of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, Inc.* Gospel Music Workshop of America, Inc. Accessed February 6, 2024. https://www.gmwanational.net/Academic.htm.
[108] National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses. Accessed February 9, 2024. https://www.ncgcc.org/.

employed a variety of these intersections in their music, whether by specific musical intention or as a byproduct of their musical influences and surroundings. These intersections may assist conductors interested in programming and rehearsing these works, with the benefit of using European choral traditions familiar to their students as they navigate the nuances of gospel music.

One relevant intersection is the use of form and structure. Just as baroque and classical cantatas, oratorios and sonatas have an expected structure or an inevitable form, gospel pieces use text to create a dependable structure of verses, choruses, and vamps. In performance, a dependable structure for gospel choir ensembles may involve the use of call-and-response, repeated vamps, and the inclusion of movement or dance. The use of the vamp in particular goes beyond a tactic to repeat a section in rehearsal for perfection, or occupy time in performance; rather, it is an opportunity to escalate the uplifting, scriptural messages for the listener as a hallmark of "troping cycles" and other rituals present in sacred music of the African Diaspora.[109] This is evident Wise's vamp for *Lord, Send Your Spirit*.

Additional intersections include the language of performance practice and stylistic expectations. Baroque music performance is generally characterized by a single melodic idea combined with an alternation of textures and a rhythmic drive in the accompanying instruments.[110] Composers included the use of trills, mordents, turns, appoggiaturas, grace notes, passing tones, and vibrato as an ornament, especially when improvising on cadences. Classical music performance is characterized by light textures, frequent cadences, heavily

[109] Rucker-Hillsman, Joan. 2014. *Gospel Music: An African American Art Form*. Victoria, BC, Canada: FriesenPress, 42.
[110] Burroughs, Jacy. "A Brief Guide to Baroque Performance Practice." Take Note. Sheet Music Plus, May 1, 2014. https://blog.sheetmusicplus.com/2014/05/01/a-brief-guide-to-baroque-performance-practice/.

ornamented melodies and simpler harmonies.[111] Romantic music performance is characterized by a freedom of form and design, with composers who created music that was much more personal and emotional. The literature was more song-like or lyrical with the use of chromatic harmonies, recurring themes and programmatic music to tell a story. Each style represents a different way to execute rhythm, texture, dynamics, articulation, ornamentation, and tuning. Gospel music relies heavily on improvisation, articulation, and ornamentation as the Baroque era did, as seen in White-Clayton's *Be Thou Exalted*. Wise' *Glory and Honor* uses simple harmonies with ornamented melodies and embellished accompaniments, similar to Classical era performance practice. Smallwood's *Total Praise* and *Hebrews 11* are also examples of Romantic era chromatic harmonies, freedom of form and reliance on an emotional communication in gospel music.

Developing different approaches in conducting technique is a significant consideration for conductors exploring this repertoire. In general, conducting gestures in both gospel and European choral styles aim to model the vocal tone, indicate dynamics with gesture size, and demonstrate the depth of the sound (such as using lower or rounded gestures to indicate that the choir sings with low body support for a fuller sound). Gospel music requires that the conductor forsake traditional conducting patterns and instead give preference to gestures which indicate the melodic rhythm and the shape of the lines. This was discussed with Wise's *Lord, Send Your Spirit*, and it can also be highly beneficial in Cates' *The Lord's Prayer* as well as Warren, Jackson, and Kibble's adaptation of *Hallelujah*. There are also many opportunities for conductor improvisation during repeated

[111] Burroughs, Jacy. "Musical Characteristics and Performance Practice of the Classical Period." Take Note. Sheet Music Plus, May 29, 2014. https://blog.sheetmusicplus.com/2014/05/29/musical-characteristics-and-performance-practice-of-the-classical-period/.

sections, allowing the conductor to isolate or change which voice parts are singing, add modulations, lengthen repeated sections to include solo improvisations (for vocal or instrumental soloists), or create harmonic variation with members of the rhythm section.

Another significant consideration is the approach of vocal production. The common generalized expectation of most gospel music is belting. However, as Cates, White-Clayton and Wise expressed with the execution of their music (see their interviews in the appendices), the fundamental goal for vocal production with gospel singing is *healthy* singing. The foundation of good singing is the breath, which should be given consistent priority in the rehearsal and performance process regardless of style. Conductors can use the combination of European choral and gospel styles to their advantage when creating a healthy sound for the repertoire presented in this study. Singers should produce a focused sound with a light mechanism (or head voice), bringing that into the lower register, and carrying it through the *passaggio* areas of their voice into the upper register. This will be particularly beneficial for any gospel 'squalls', 'shakes', and 'wails.' Even when rehearsing gospel music, conductors should include vocal warm-ups that stress the *bel canto* style. In this style, the light mechanism is the foundation for almost all of the vocal production, whereas in gospel, there is typically more of a reliance of the chest voice. Exercises that engage the head voice will create a focused sound which can be brought into the chest voice. In her article *Getting Gospel Going*, Dr. Patrice Turner encourages conductors to use vocal sirens to blend the registers, as well as warming up on a unison song that incorporates head voice production in the lower register. These practices in the warm-up process can help singers to focus on tall vowels, a raised soft palate, an energized breath, expansion of abdominal muscles, and other light mechanism techniques without

concentrating on harmony, body movement, or any vocal manipulation until later in the process. She cites gospel choirs who use this technique effectively, such as Richard Smallwood's major groups, Vison and the Richard Smallwood Singers, as well as Donald Lawrence and the Tri-City Singers.[112]

Closing

Gospel is a dynamic, engaging genre of music that has captivated musicians throughout the many decades of its development. In addition to instilling impactful messages of hope, perseverance and faith, exploring the repertoire can provide unique opportunities for musicians which may increase their overall musicianship.

Dr. Patrice Turner states in her article, "Gospel music offers music teachers and their students the opportunity to experience an exceptional genre that has deep historical roots in many African American Christian communities in the United States."[113]

Dr. Jason Max Ferdinand has programmed gospel and repertoire from other genres of African American sacred music for the Jason Max Ferdinand Singers, as well as his collegiate choirs at Oakwood University and the University of Maryland. In his teaching, he often draws comparisons in the rhythmic backbeats in jazz to baroque rhythmic features. He has also discussed the importance of healthy vocal singing with the *bel canto* style when approaching gospel music.[114]

Karen Burke, Chair of the Department of Music at York University in Toronto, conducts the Toronto Mass Choir and founded the York University Gospel Choir. Her

[112] Turner, Patrice E. 2008. "Getting Gospel Going." *Music Educators Journal 95*, no. 2 (December): 64-65, 67.
[113] Turner, *Getting Gospel Going,* 62.
[114] Jason Max Ferdinand, interview by Bryon Black II, September 1, 2023.

inclusion of gospel has helped many of her choral students to sharpen their ears, memorization and engagement that can be applied to their singing of all styles. She feels that "learning gospel music has made me a better conductor of all music."[115]

It is my sincere desire that this study of intersections may help to demonstrate accessible elements of gospel music for collegiate choral ensembles, and that it may also help to demystify aspects of the gospel tradition for conductors who are less familiar with the style. Connections that can be drawn between the performance practices and pedagogies of gospel and European choral music can benefit conductors seeking to be more inclusive in their repertoire programming.

[115] Karen Burke, interview by Bryon Black II, August 21, 2023.

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APPENDIX A

SUGGESTED REPERTOIRE LIST OF PUBLISHED GOSPEL CHOIR WORKS WITH EUROPEAN CHORAL INTERSECTIONS

All works listed are for mixed chorus and piano accompaniment.

A rhythm section including bass guitar, drums and organ may be added if desired.

Table A.1: Published Gospel Choir Works

Gospel Song	**Composer/ Arranger**	**Voicing**	**Score Location**	**Style Notes**
Order My Steps	Glenn Burleigh; Arr. Jack Shrader	SATB	J.W. Pepper: www.jwpepper.com/Order-My-Steps/8020331.item	Implements chromatic blues lines with European vocal tone for hymn-like harmonization
Carol of the Bells	Isaac Cates	SATB, trio descant	J.W. Pepper: www.jwpepper.com/Carol-of-the-Bells/10661464.item	Quotes Peter Wilhousky's setting before breaking into polyrhythmic gospel motives; inserts a vamp with an expanded choral texture of nine voices
It's Working	Isaac Cates	SATB	Self-published: isaaccatesmusic.com	Lyricism of the piece calls for a clear choral tone based on focused vowels at the foundation
Strong and Mighty	Isaac Cates	SATB, two descant trios	Self-published: isaaccatesmusic.com	Rhythmic contrapuntal thematic material, polyphonic vamp with multiple modulations, extended vocal ranges and polyrhythms

Strong Tower	Isaac Cates	SAT	Self-published: isaaccatesmusic.com	Begins with a nineteenth century-style extended piano solo; choral writing calls for purity of tone and vowel formation
Take My Life (Lacrimosa)	Isaac Cates	SATB with solo	Self-published: isaaccatesmusic.com	Setting of *Lacrimosa* from Mozart's *Requiem in D minor, K 626*; intersects European and gospel singing technique throughout the piece
The Lord's Prayer	Isaac Cates	SATB	Self-published: isaaccatesmusic.com	Uses a combination of traditional European chords and vocal technique with gospel vocal technique, rhythms and ostinato phrases; opportunity for rote teaching
God Wants a Yes	James Hall Arr. by James D. Thompson	SATB	GIA, African American Church Music Series: www.giamusic.com/store/resource/god-wants-a-yes-print-g9850	Use of both chest and head voice, short stepwise melismas, specific articulations for declarative statements, chromatic harmonic development; modulations with extended vamp
He Rebuked the Red Sea	Donald Lawrence, William Jakes Stokes	SATB	Printed in the *Donald Lawrence Presents The Tri-City Singers – Goshen* Piano/Vocal Songbook: ntimemusic.com/donald-lawrence-presents-the-tri-city-singers-goshen-piano-vocal-guitar.html	Repeated fugue and countermelody in imitation; text painting with melismas

Jehovah Sabaoth (God of Angel Armies)	Donald Lawrence	SATB	Printed in the *Donald Lawrence Presents The Tri-City Singers – Goshen* Piano/Vocal Songbook: ntimemusic.com/donald-lawrence-presents-the-tri-city-singers-goshen-piano-vocal-guitar.html	Written for soloist, mixed chorus and piano; uses full vocal ranges, emphasized suspensions, short melismas, and a pure tone to blend the choral verses
Even Me	Arr. Michael H. Reid	SATB	GIA, African American Church Music Series: www.giamusic.com/store/resource/even-me-print-g7347	Sequential harmonic development in chorus with circle-of-fifths progression and frequent passing tones; opportunity for conductor improvisations in the chorus
Psalm 91	Bernadette Salley	SATB	Self-published: Composer can be contacted at bbsalley@gmail.com	Layered melismatic fugue for "Amen" vamp, declarative statements
Anthem of Praise	Richard Smallwood Arr. Keith Hampton	SATB	J.W. Pepper www.jwpepper.com/Anthem-of-Praise/10364305.item	Fugal passages, melismas, escalation through polyphonic and homophonic textures
Total Praise	Richard Smallwood	SAT	Musicnotes: www.musicnotes.com/sheetmusic/mtd.asp?ppn=MN0049021 (Most accurate scoring of the composer's intentions)	Chromatic harmonic development, homophonic foundation, use of secondary dominants and suspensions

Hallelujah	Mervyn Warren, Mark Kibble, Michael O. Jackson; Arr. Teena Chinn	SSATB	J.W. Pepper: www.jwpepper.com/Hallelujah%21/1858901.item	Gospel setting of "Hallelujah Chorus"; use of contrapuntal and imitative phrases; syncopated, declarative rhythms
Be Thou Exalted	Diane L. White-Clayton	SSATB	Self-Published: www.bythax.org	Application of baroque vocal technique, articulation, precision, harmonic progressions, and buoyancy; gospel style can be navigated through ornamental passing tones, extended ranges, and rhythmic vitality
Oh Sing Unto the Lord	Diane L. White-Clayton	SATB	Self-Published: www.bythax.org	Intersects baroque and gospel choral technique; quotation of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus"; gospel improvisation in the piano accompaniment can heighten the inclusion of the gospel sound during the vamps
Rejoice in the Lord	Diane L. White-Clayton	SATB	Self-Published: www.bythax.org	Piano quotations of two Preludes by J. S. Bach; Baroque era influences found in the short melismas, declamatory dotted rhythms, articulations of text; nineteenth century influences found in the piano embellishments and chromatic language

Sweet Meditation	Diane L. White-Clayton	SATB div.	Self-Published: www.bythax.org	Polyphonic vamp which quotes three hymns; during this vamp, the vocal style transitions from that of European choral to a gospel tone
I Shall Wear a Crown	Thomas Whitfield, Roscoe Corner; Transcribed by Brandon Waddles	SATB	GIA, African American Church Music Series: www.giamusic.com/store/resource/i-shall-wear-a-crown-print-g9350	Infusions of jazz and blues, precise vocal inflection, circular progressions, frequent secondary dominants, rapid descending motives similar to tonal exploration in nineteenth century European piano or orchestral literature
Fix Me	Raymond Wise	SATB	Self-Published: raiseonline.com/sheet-music	Use of head voice and purity of tone to unify the sustained and rhythmic passages in the SAT voices
Glory and Honor	Raymond Wise	SATB	Self-Published: raiseonline.com/sheet-music	Vamp with ascending inversions in SAT voices, requiring the use of focused head voice for differentiation in the vocal tone; open vocal space; specific articulations and phrase markings; piano introduction with several arpeggiations, rhythmic embellishments and harmonic shifts
I Just Want to Praise the Lord	Raymond Wise	SATB	Self-Published: raiseonline.com/sheet-music	Inclusion of a brief fugue

It Happened on Calvary	Raymond Wise	SATB	Self-Published: raiseonline.com/sheet-music	Unique harmonic development of a simple melody
It's Gonna Be Alright	Raymond Wise	SATB	Self-Published: raiseonline.com/sheet-music	Freedom of sound with a forward tone; syncopated; specific articulations to accentuate the text; call-and-response; opportunity for rote teaching
Jesus Will Make a Way	Raymond Wise	SATB	Self-Published: raiseonline.com/sheet-music	Use of different styles (motet, fugue, etc.) as well as a gospel vamp
Lord, Send Your Spirit	Raymond Wise	SATB	GIA, African American Church Music Series: www.giamusic.com/store/resource/lord-send-your-spirit-print-g6924	Freedom of sound with a forward tone; specific articulations to accentuate the text; opportunity for rote teaching and memorization
I Heard the Voice	Robert Wooten, Sr.	SATB	GIA, African American Church Music Series: www.giamusic.com/store/resource/i-heard-the-voice-print-g7396	Use of harmonized ornamental chromatic notes and relaxed vocal production with vowels

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTED REPERTOIRE LIST OF UNPUBLISHED GOSPEL CHOIR WORKS

WITH EUROPEAN CHORAL INTERSECTIONS

*Unless otherwise noted, all works listed are for mixed chorus and piano accompaniment.

A rhythm section including bass guitar, drums and organ may be added if desired.

Table B.1: Unpublished Gospel Choir Works (*as of the time of this writing*)

Gospel Song	**Composer/ Arranger**	**Voicing**	**Album Recording**	**Style Notes and Transcription Notes**
My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord*	O'Landa Draper	SAT	*Live…A Celebration of Praise*, O'Landa Draper and the Associates (1994, Word, Inc.)	*A cappella; driven by melodic rhythmic phrasing rather than pulse Transcription by Bryon Black II – seeking publishing as of this writing
Blessed Be the Name	James Hall	SAT	*King of Glory – Live in Montreal*, James Hall and Worship & Praise (1995, Intersound)	Intersects European and gospel vocal technique, such as switching between chest and head registers for range and highlighting the text

I Am God	Donald Lawrence	SAT	*Bible Stories*, Donald Lawrence and the Tri-City Singers (1995, Crystal Rose Productions, Inc.)	Soloist utilizes gospel vocal technique (bending of relaxed vowels, increased vibrato, glissandi); chorus utilizes choral tone to blend in the verses and adapts towards traditional gospel vocal production during the vamp
He Knows How Much We Can Bear	Roberta Martin; Arr. Robert Wooten, Sr.	SATB	*Beams of Heaven*, The Wooten Choral Ensemble (2016, Rewind Records)	Influences of eighteenth and nineteenth century motet writing in choral harmonizations and piano accompaniment, with some brief imitation
Let Everything That Hath Breath (Psalm 150)	George Pass II; Arr. Mattie Moss Clark, Caroline Brewer	SATB	*Twinkie Clark-Terrell Presents The Florida A&M University Gospel Choir*, Florida A&M University Gospel Choir, Twinkie Clark-Terrell (1996, Crystal Rose Inc.)	Baroque-era melismas for the chorus, and counterpoint developed for piano accompaniment by Caroline Brewer for the 1996 recording with Florida A&M University Gospel Choir
Jesus, Lover of My Soul (Jesu Joy of Man's Desire)	Richard Smallwood	SAT	*Testimony*, Richard Smallwood and The Richard Smallwood Singers (1992, Sparrow Records)	Setting of "Jesus bleibet meine Freude", from J. S. Bach's *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben, BWV 147*; Bach's orchestral accompaniment is placed in the piano

Center of My Joy	Richard Smallwood	SAT	*Textures*, Richard Smallwood and The Richard Smallwood Singers (1987, Word Entertainment LLC)	Contains uses of *bel canto* and gospel techniques, prominent treatment of secondary dominants, and accessible vocal lines
Hebrews 11	Richard Smallwood	SAT	*Anthology Live*, Richard Smallwood and Vision (2015, RCA Records)	Influence of Classical/Romantic era chromaticism; melismatic opening, declarative phrases, syncopated choral statements SATB transcription by Bryon Black II – seeking publishing as of this writing
I Love the Lord	Richard Smallwood	SAT	*The Richard Smallwood Singers*, The Richard Smallwood Singers (1982, Onyx International Records)	Prominent treatment of secondary dominants and augmented sixth chords; accessible, vocal lines
Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion	Richard Smallwood	SAT	*Handel's Messiah: A Soulful Celebration*, Various Artists (1992, Reprise Records)	Gospel setting of "Rejoice Greatly" from Handel's *Messiah*; original melismatic phrases placed in the soprano part or homophonic phrases for the tutti choir throughout the piece

Trust Me	Richard Smallwood	SAT	*Promises*, Richard Smallwood and Vision (2011, Verity Gospel Music Group)	Contains uses of *bel canto* and gospel techniques, prominent treatment of secondary dominants, and accessible vocal lines
And He Shall Purify	Mervyn Warren and Michael O. Jackson	SAT	*Handel's Messiah: A Soulful Celebration*, Various Artists (1992, Reprise Records)	Gospel setting of "And He Shall Purify" from Handel's *Messiah*; original melismatic phrases placed in the chorus and solo part
Lord We Give Thanks	Robert Wooten, Sr.	SATB	*Because He Lives*, The Wooten Choral Ensemble (1978; re-released in 2016 with Rewind Records)	Several fugal choral statements of the theme in various keys, with declarative homophonic statements
O Sing Praises	Robert Wooten, Sr.	SATB	*Because He Lives*, The Wooten Choral Ensemble (1978; re-released in 2016 with Rewind Records)	Setting of Joachim Neander's German-language hymn *Lobe den Herren*, appearing with choral texture changes, choral a cappella voicing, and modal shifts with a rhythmic gospel accompaniment

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW WITH ISAAC CATES (EXCERPT)

JUNE 7, 2023

BLACK: How did your music education that included the Western/European traditions of music inform your compositional writing?

CATES: My mother started me on piano at the age of four, and I did not like it. I loved music, but I think the training that you get by the regimen of classical piano was valuable for me. I started off with sonatinas, and then moved into sonatas and all those sort of things, and learned from the technical aspects that you get from playing those. Then I went on and studied voice about the time I was in high school, and I sang arias and started to study language and diction. I think for me, it was natural, whereas most people separate and do a hard delineation because you have to learn the different approaches, the performance practices, the historical significance, the technique. You got to learn all those things with regards to the genre separately. You really do. You got to learn them in their true form.

I grew up in the Baptist church, like "high Baptist", if you will. So we had anthems and spirituals. You had to read music, because we would sing a Kirk Franklin song, or back in the day we would sing [music by] James Cleveland, or the Hawkins family that was more contemporary or gospel; but then we would turn around and sing *Let Mount Zion*

Rejoice, or one of the [John] Peterson cantatas. You had to be versed pianistically to read that stuff, so it was introduced to me at a very young age. It was kind of the lay of the land.

I'm originally from Kansas City, and because of the influences of jazz and classical music on the musical culture here, it's just sort of underneath, or rather, an undertow that's there. Although I was a little bit of an anomaly in that a lot of musicians when I was growing up weren't studying music, especially Black ones, and they weren't studying classical music. If they were, there was a mindset of, "I'm going to be a classical musician; I'm not going to still do stuff with church." So for me, I just didn't see a separation in it. I saw a kinship in the music…So for me, it was just a natural inclination to have some of those elements in my music. I think it's one of those things where everything that you are influenced [by] sort of inspires and informs your style.

BLACK: You hear so often about musicians broadening their exposure so they can have something new to add in their creation, whether it's a specific genre, a certain sound, or even music from different cultures. I think one thing you said that was so accurate was how everything that you're influenced by just inspires you and it adds more to your creation, rather than it being, "you have to fit in this box", so to speak.

CATES: No, I just have never subscribed to that.

By the time I got into UMKC, I was joining the choruses – the men's choir, some of the concert choirs and a couple of the auditioned choirs. Choral music really inspired me there because I was already writing gospel music. When I actually got a chance to perform larger masterworks, like Verdi's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Bach's

St. Matthew Passion, or really any of his choral work – I saw the beauty of it…I see God in it, in the technique of it, in the splendor and the beauty, in the math of it.

Yes, it started to really inspire me as I delved further into the larger literary works of choral literature, if you will. The functionality of the music was interesting to me as well. So for instance, liturgical elements of a mass, if you will; it's a service, so it just happened to be beautifully gorgeous music that was set for this service. But that's no different than what we do in the Black Church. We have choral anthems, we have responses, we have appeals, we have all of these things to give it structure. It just so happens that little excerpts of them are very beautifully composed. In classical music, it's repeatable. In gospel music, it's subject to change with whatever the Holy Spirit is doing. So I started to see a kinship.

And then of course, I became aware of amazing music by Thomas Whitfield, Eddie James (he had a group called Color Blind, and he does contemporary Christian music now), and my dear friend Richard Smallwood. When I heard his music, I think I may [have been] 15 or 16, and I thought to myself, "this man is doing everything that I've already thought to do." Before I knew about his music, I was like, "I think this would go well with that." I kind of delved off into some other pianists that were using elements of their classical training and infusing it into a different genre. So for instance, Anthony Burger – he was the pianist for Bill Gaither and the Gaither family. He was a monster. He was incredible. I would listen to the Carpenters – Karen and her brother, Richard Carpenter, classically trained pianists. Dino Kartsonakis, he was like the Christian Liberace for a while. These are people who influenced other genres all together differently, but they had classical training. Marvin Hamlisch, classically trained pianist, influenced so much of what musical

theater is. Alan Menken, whose music is being revitalized through the Disney franchise – classically trained pianist. So long story short: these are things and people and musicians I was listening to who inspired me that it could be done.

BLACK: What's so fascinating by hearing you speak about all these people is that while absorbing all of their music and what they were able to do, you were able to take all of that in and craft what ultimately has become your signature style. I know there are countless stories like that with many others, but it's still all the more fascinating to me how you can still take that and craft your own as opposed to just regurgitating.

CATES: Absolutely. You have to make it true…you got to be you. It's no different from the classical regimen that we learn. You learn different approaches as a pianist and as a conductor, based on their performance practices and cultural significance of the time. You don't perform baroque pieces the same way you would approach Mahler or something like that. It's just different. But it also makes you a better musician, makes you a better artist.

BLACK: Are there any specific elements of classical or baroque style writing that you like to use in your gospel writing?

CATES: Yes. In my songwriting, no; I'm a songwriter and composer, but as a songwriter, I write the song first. It has to be a motif, a melody and words; I start an idea, a theme. When I am composing and arranging, yes. I wrote a piece called *It's Working*. I wrote the song first, but I finished it for the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and it's got this opening

that's extremely big. It is Mahler-esque and huge, the way the choir is singing; then it breaks down to somewhat of a chorale part that is very contrapuntal. I mean, it's not for long, but it's more of a precursor or an introduction to set the mood for the rest of the piece. So I use it in elements like that.

I wrote an anthem called *Strong and Mighty*, based on the [Biblical verse], "Lift up your heads O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in."[116] I wanted that to feel like this huge procession. I do use certain musical motifs, scales and modes to make things happen, but in that one, there's a lot of counterpoint going on…everybody has their own part, but it's sort of like tumblers in a lock. I'd never do it with other choirs unless they've already worked on it or got the score…It just wouldn't work unless you have a really good bunch of singers and people who've already put some time in. It's a workhorse.

So yeah, there are definitely some Baroque elements that I use when I'm arranging my music. I love polyphony and love harmony. I love tension and release. I love the response that happens in counterpoint. I love this musical conversation happening in addition to these lyrics. I think about those sorts of things when I'm going to arrange.

BLACK: In your opinion, why do you think collegiate programs should include gospel music in their curriculum? What do you think the value of that is?

CATES: First of all, choral music, in my opinion: it's group singing in its nature…I really feel as though gospel music specifically – because it's such a direct derivative of its

[116] Psalm 24:7, KJV.

ancestor, the spiritual, and because of the reason that Black music in general has its lineage – it is American music. Gospel music is American music. You have no other popular styles of music in America without gospel music…without the broader influence of Black music, from work spirituals to concert spirituals to field hollers and all of those. The passion of it really hasn't changed down through the years. It's absolutely powerful and impactful, no matter the situation that you put it in.

I think also because there's such a long history of it. It's one of the few choral traditions that is historically for the lay people, so everyone can sing it. You don't have to have an extensive amount of pedigree to do it. I think the music itself speaks this amazing, powerful message of hope. I am a Christian, I'm a believer, I'm a "Jesus roller." I understand I'm in areas where that's not the lay of the land, and I have dear friends who believe differently…I believe that I can introduce Jesus to them in my posture, in my life, in my interactions with them. Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I'll draw all men unto me."[117] So I lift Jesus in my living, my music, my interactions – He can do the rest. (That's a sidebar – I'm just throwing that in there because that's a big thing to me.)

The significance of gospel choir…covers so many genres: there's classical influence, there's jazz influence, there's even musical theater influenced gospel. You think about the Broadway Inspirational Voices. I mean, there's musical merit to it. It's beautiful, and most of all, it's uplifting. I mean, it carries the goodness of Jesus Christ. It emulsifies, it brings people together. It breaks down the wall of audience and performer; it brings the idea of participation. It carries the Black tradition of call and response. I tell people all the time – I work at Church of the Resurrection office now. It's the largest United Methodist

[117] John 12:32, KJV.

Church in the United States, but it's white. So I introduced a gospel choir here, and we're gradually integrating that in just to influence, because I'm never going to abandon the Black side of my worship. I mean, that's the expressiveness that's wrought out of pain, that's wrought out of a story, that's wrought out of oppression and marginalization, all these other not-so-good things. But [also], it's just wrought out of our amazingness, our sense of humor, our sense of style, our sense of culture. Anyway, I'm very proud to be Black, and I think gospel music is inherently black. It's for everyone though, and I think it's so important.

There are so many things that you can get from the choral technique: working on things like the blend of your choir, the tone, dynamics and phrasing, word painting. There's so many amazing things that can come out of singing gospel. And then on top of the fact that it's fun! It's got victory in it. It's affirming. Then there are times that it just gets you through. My father just got out of the ICU, and I went to the piano and sang some of my own music, *Strong Tower*. I'm preparing to teach that next week, and it just blessed my heart.

Another thing is that it's directly connected, the lineage. So Thomas Dorsey, Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses, everyone knows him – they think of him as the "Father of Gospel Music." Before him, you really only had Arizona Dranes and a few other people who were significant, but he started his own convention. James Cleveland went to that convention, and started his own convention. Kirk Franklin went to that convention. Edwin Hawkins at some point came too; he would be at GMWA, and he had his own seminar. He gave us Lashun Pace and John P. Kee. John P. Kee had his arts seminar; he gave us Dwayne Woods, Isaac Caree, and so on and so forth. So there is a

direct lineage of people and many of them are still alive, and they are one generation away. I think not only should it be taught – it has to be taught. I mean, there are videos of this music. You don't have to guess at the performance practice. We don't really know what Palestrina or Bach intended, even with the details that we have. I've been in Leipzig before and seen his manuscript. He was just a machine. We know he had improvisatory chops too. Imagine being able to improvise counterpoint. We're just guessing at it though, based upon the information – we're making an educated guess based upon research. You ain't got to do that with gospel music. You can go hear what Albertina Walker sounds like on YouTube. You can go hear Tri-City sing. So I think there's great merit in it because it's not as nebulous and gray, because it's a living, breathing thing, and it's still influencing musical movements.

BLACK: There's so much truth to all these points, but all of them speak to the value of gospel music as a living, breathing genre and experience. This speaks to the ministry of it, the value that it has for passing it down, and how having it involved in teaching curricula for collegiate students, even secondary down to middle school, high school, etc. is an added musical experience.

CATES: We can go further to say: one of the other reasons is that it bears a bunch of wives tales and rumors that are based upon conjecture…this mindset that singing gospel music destroys the voice. It's just wrong. That's just not true. There's no science to promote that…I do not like saying these huge end-all superlative things like "gospel music destroys the voice." Singing improperly destroys the voice. Singing in a way that's not supported,

singing in a way that's not resonant, that's not natural for your body, that's not prepared, or that's not taught [well] destroys the voice, not singing one genre at all.

BLACK: *Take My Life (Lacrimosa)* – I feel that this piece is just one of many great examples of the intersection between genres here. This is, of course, based on Mozart's "Lacrimosa" from his *Requiem*. There are other pieces where you're taking classical/baroque elements into a piece; in this one, you took the composition, used that as an influence and worked through it. So what led you to pick this piece to make an adaptation?

CATES: So this is one of the few that I really like to talk about, because people ask you about your songs and you don't have a deep story at all. But this one, I do!

I was at UMKC, and we had already sung the entire [Mozart's] *Requiem*, and I had to do a study of it. I love it, it's one of my favorites – this one and Verdi's are like my top two. But just from the opening "Kyrie", it just got me. I already had a huge love for Mozart in general, because I always say Mozart was definitely the pop artist of his time. His music cadence is so…it just feels right, even when it's more sophisticated. I had done excerpts even in high school of it, but never did the whole thing. So I was like, "this is amazing, this is beautiful." This is an example of collaboration. This is an idea of interpolation…because, keeping in mind, he passed before he finished it. He started it in a direction, and Süssmayr and other students came in and said, "So this is where we think he's going with that." That's one of the earliest examples of collaboration, which no one ever talks about, but it's true. Specifically the "Lacrimosa."

The Latin Lacrimosa:

Lacrimosa dies illa, Qua resurget ex favilla

Judicandus homo reus.

Huic ergo parce, Deus: Pie Jesu Domine,

Dona eis requiem.

"Mourn for the day the dust will arise, and the guilty man is to be judged, therefore spare them God; grant them eternal rest."

I love the idea of the *Requiem*, and I love the setting. I love the use of it, and the Latin in the Catholic Mass. That just spoke to me specifically, because with "Lacrimosa", we get the derivative of the English word 'lacrimate', which means to cry. I think it made sense to me, because it was this petition for the last rites for the soul. This person has died, and this is like you're giving them up. The analogy for that impacted me. I was in college and we were singing the music and I said, "man, this is deep that this would be the last thing that he would work on."

But more so than that, [for] me as a believer: what would it be like if I wrote my own Requiem for myself? Not necessarily about death, but metaphorically: as a Christian, as you get baptized, the whole idea is death of the old man, new creature. So much in the Bible talks about new life: "behold, all things have become made new."[118] So what would be like for me to write my own requiem in a song and illustrate it – because that's the use of it, right? It's the song for the dead. And so, what if this is my death song, not my life, but for my will – my will over my life. So that's why I wrote my English parts: "Come

[118] 2nd Corinthians 5:17, KJV.

Holy Spirit and stay with me always. Within you, I'll remain, for in you, I'm sustained: master, ruler, redeemer, my savior." But then it says "Where you lead me, I will follow. Where you lead me. I will follow." It's like, "I'm cool with dying."

So it went way over church folks' heads. I would recite the Latin as I just did, and they thought I was speaking in tongues. "[*speaks in tongues*] Hallelujah!" I said, "no guys, it's not tongues, this is Latin." So it was just really funny. I remember saying, "No one will ever hear this, and no one is ever going to sing this." And I didn't care; I literally did it because that was in my heart to do creatively, and because it was the music I was already being exposed to. Then years later, fast forward: there's an artist here [in Kansas City], probably the number one underground artist, his name is Tech9. He's a hip-hop artist and he recorded it. His mother passed away from lupus, and so did my mother. I got a chance to teach him what a requiem was, and so they made an interpolation based on my arrangement, which is so fascinating. We did this on his album in 2016, called *Special Effects*. Fascinatingly enough, we used the requiem how it was meant to be used as a memorial piece for his mom and for my mom.

It made some people angry too because they didn't like how I did it. I totally revoiced things from Mozart's original. He only wrote the first eight measures, but the soprano line just jumps to that A, right in the beginning. I certainly applied gospel technique to it…the harmony became tertiary and it moved parallel, which is your good old way to make gospel. I scrunched the parts, as opposed to the mid-choral style, spread apart. But you can still hear it. I didn't change the accompaniment because I thought that was so beautiful. There's something macabre about it being in this sort of waltzy…I mean,

I kept all that. I didn't change that at all because I was like, "why would I, that's beautiful." So anyway, that was my inspiration behind that song.

Then we went on to record it, we put it in the first album, *Take My Life*, and we would sing it around, and that is what made us stick to some people. They were like, "oh my god, he took what Richard Smallwood does and has gone even further," because I made my singers sing it in Latin, and some of them are not classically trained. So I spent a lot of time hammering in the meaning of it. Once I got that in them, they understood, because that's the whole tenor of the entire *Requiem* in general. It's not upbeat, it's not *Jubilate Deo*, it's different. Crazy enough, by me doing that in the gospel music, I was able to teach them about some classical music. So people who may never go listen to Mozart may go listen to that now. It's just cool that it's gotten more life in ensembles and choral music departments. And then, of course, we did it at the American Choral Directors Association Conference in 2019.

BLACK: Yes, that video from the ACDA 2019 conference was my exposure to it. It's so inspiring to hear that something that you thought would have such a short shelf life has gone on to do exceeding abundantly, above anything that you could have imagined at the time, even continuing from Mozart's original intentions with it. You can see the elements that you honored from his original composition, such as the fugal writing in the bridge, some of the ascending and the ascending/descending motives in the piano part that you kept from the violin section, and the harmonic parallels that's still continuing throughout it. There's just so much here within this six-minute composition that's so unique, but still recognizable one way or another.

CATES: I thank the Lord for it. We brought in live strings, and I did those, I arranged and conducted those too. I always thought big, I always thought with quality. I was so particular about the mix, so particular about the mastering of it, so particular about how we sung it, so particular about how it's played, because I wanted it to be clear. I didn't want to look back in 20 years and be ashamed of it. We all have music that we write [and say], "it's okay." But I'm usually pretty proud of the things that [we make] because we work so hard, and I sort of annoy my whole team until we get it. So yeah, it was just interesting, because we hadn't sung it in a long time, and it got brought back for ACDA. My mother had passed away, and I stopped moving off into a lot of the intricate arrangements of reimagining things, and I was writing more worship music, more choir stuff, and gospel stuff, and I said, "well, I have some new singers, and I need to teach this to you guys." So I taught them, we put up a little clip of us rehearsing, and everybody kept talking about it. Then we did it at ACDA, and then that went even further. They sing it in Japan, and places in Europe.

You never throw away your music. Just because it doesn't catch or stick or it doesn't 'pop', if you will, in one era does not mean that it will not, the next. Look at Jeffery LaValley, who wrote *Revelation 19:1*…Then Stephen Hurd recovered it and kind of brought it back to us, then Kanye [West] and then Maverick City. There's no way Richard [Smallwood] would have known that *Total Praise* – even though *Total Praise* was a hit from the moment it came out – he couldn't have known that it would be translated to pretty much every written language…Beyoncé sings your music, the Pope knows *Total Praise*, and the presidents could sing it like a tenor part. Quincy Jones studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris; Aaron Copland was friends with him. How could he have known that *Thriller* would have done what it did? He knew he had a hit, I'm sure, because he's pretty

brilliant; but you couldn't have known the details, that this many years later, it still smashed stuff in its periphery within a 30-year radius. But you don't throw your music away, you don't throw your ideas away, you don't discount what God is giving you. It'll get light when it needs to.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW WITH DR. DIANE L. WHITE-CLAYTON (EXCERPT)

AUGUST 29, 2023

BLACK: I would love to start by asking what got you into composing.

WHITE-CLAYTON: That's an excellent question, and I don't know that anybody has actually ever asked me that. I just did it. I started my first piece [at age] 11, and I was directing a little choir at the time. But, nobody said "write a piece." I come from a musical family, so they were doing music. I'm next to the youngest of six. The two sisters that were next older to me, I started in music singing with them, so we had a trio. But even before that, they said I was singing in our church's children's choir starting at [age] four – I don't remember that. But six years old was the first time that I sang in public with my two older sisters; and that I remember, because I was terrified.

So I took the hymn, *Take My Life and Let It Be*. I've always been really serious about God. I was very serious and I just wrote new music to it. And the choir that I had, we were really serious and major in our day. It started with just five. We lived in the inner city in DC, and a couple of kids just came over to the church. Their family was not in church, but they wanted to sing, and so they came, and I forgot how they found me. I was playing for Sunday School at the time. I started playing for Sunday School at nine years

old. So anyway, I wrote that first song and that was my thing. I loved it. I have always loved composing. It's always been composing and arranging, taking songs and redoing them.

So having that group from the initial five, which only lasted for like a couple weeks, ended up being 12. It wasn't until I was an adult that I realized how phenomenal those kids were and what we were doing, because I was doing these very complex arrangements with sometimes more than three-part harmony. They were my age, but I had an old soul, so I was like the taskmaster. I wrote a couple of musicals in high school, Christmas musicals. I wrote out the script and did the choreography, directed it, wrote the music for it. And because we were P.K.s (my dad's a pastor), the church was very supportive. We had a little make-up room, I mean, we were just doing it. You couldn't tell us nothing! But it just seemed normal to me. It didn't seem like it was something phenomenal, but all that to say, I started composing in the context of my church.

Both junior and high school had really, really outstanding music programs, even though DC public schools were one of the lowest in the country at the time. The music programs of those two schools were very good. So my high school music teacher, who is just this phenomenal legacy woman – I don't know if she just heard me one day doing something, or if she knew I composed or something – she said, "Why don't you arrange something for the choir?" But anyway, we did this song, *Out in Beauty*. I don't know if we ever really even sang it, or if she just let me teach it to them. So anyway, I had a lot of support. I had a lot of support. So that's how I got into composing.

BLACK: Wow. You hear sometimes about people who write from utility or the necessity of needing to put something together for their group, or for a specific situation. But I love the growth of falling into that as a very young person, and in finding inspiration from all these different places that really just end up being some kind of an outpouring of what's been poured into you. You start finding that this is what you've been hearing, what you've been surrounded by.

WHITE-CLAYTON: Yeah, I think that is a lot for every composer. You know, everything that's in you comes out in some redone way. But actually not thinking about it. Really, the "necessity," if you will, of me having a group and writing – I don't know if I would have written that first song if I did not have a choir. Really, the majority of my output by far has been because I had a choir. I needed a song where I was working and they needed this particular thing, or this event was coming up. You know, commissions [came] later on in life, but even that's a very small amount in terms of all the breadth of it.

Now, add to that composition lessons in school. That's a whole different thing because you got to get the A. I think because I started so very young…I wasn't like another young person I was talking to recently, who [said], "I just made up some songs. You want to hear them?" I'm like, "sure." So she just wanted to write. I didn't approach it like that, like, "oh, I think I want to try to write something." It wasn't like that at all. I just started playing that song, and I taught it to them. We sang it at church.

BLACK: How would you say your formal music education of 16th-19th century music informed your compositional writing?

WHITE-CLAYTON: Well, I'll first answer that by saying before the formal education came, it was in my environment. So my church – a Baptist church in the city of DC, not unlike a lot of African American Baptist churches, and some other A.M.E. churches as well – we did everything. So it was nothing on a Sunday morning for us to do an anthem, whether it was standard European classical music, or a piece by an African American composer; and we'll do the hymn straight with the pipe organ and three choirs situated in different places that they sang [from], and then we'd shift into some gospel music as the service progressed. That was my norm, and I thought everybody's church was like that. We did spirituals, down-home spirituals because we had a lot of people from the Carolinas, you know, with the parallel fourth harmonies. We also did classically-arranged spirituals. My sisters and I were taking classical piano, we learned Fauré…. So that was normal; it wasn't a stretch. It wasn't, "oh, they're doing that uppity music." That's what our church did. I was born into that. So when I started learning about it a little bit in high school, but more formally and more extensively in college, it wasn't an introduction to the music. And so that genre, that language was always "home" for me as much as gospel music was home for me.

I have a sister who has her doctorate in music theory. She was getting her doctorate where I was doing my undergrad in St. Louis, Washington University. She told me one day, "I want you to come to a concert." I said, "Okay"; so I went, and it was a contemporary art concert. It was the four composers we had in our music department, and it was the first time I ever heard any atonal music, on a conscious level. I left out of the concert going, "this is awesome!", and my sister was just laughing, because she just knew I was going to love it. That was my 'aha' moment to move into that world in terms of my composing. But

that's how it informed me – it was already in there. Like my *O Sing Unto the Lord*, the anthem that has been done most by Black churches in the USA. I wrote that my sophomore year in undergrad, and it was just something that was already in me.

BLACK: I feel like it goes to prove how these intersections between styles and genres, and even the training that goes with them, complement each other in making you a much more well-rounded and informed artist and musician. I think it even speaks towards the strengths of these musical traditions on their own, how much all of these things can really coalesce and prove the sophistication of these genres, and how it is not just a one-note deal.

WHITE-CLAYTON: Right, very important. As a people, we've had to be multilingual throughout our lives. So it's that, and it is also the incredible gifting that God has given us for the domain of music. But yes, the great history that we have of African Americans in classical music and doing this mélange, you know, that's just this longstanding history. I stand on the shoulders of all the greats who've done that. It's a wonderful thing that we get to do to match these worlds.

BLACK: What are some specific elements of Western music that you enjoy using in your gospel writing? I know the use of polyphonic vamps has been a continuous trait that I've observed across different pieces.

WHITE-CLAYTON: Yes, and not intentionally. It was some years after I wrote *O Sing Unto the Lord* that one of my friends even told me that. We were talking about one of the

anthems of mine that he was doing, and he said, "and you got your signature vamps." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "all of your anthems have a polyphonic vamp at the end." So I thought, "don't fight it. It works. That's you." Do I think of the polyphonic vamps as being something borrowed from European tradition…it may be, but you know, we've got so many gospel pieces to do that, right? Certainly, we have much polyphony in our West African roots. They're so married in me; they're so intertwined in me.

I will say, some of it is just the approach of composing. So now, I think a lot of development when I think of my writing. Whereas when I was in undergrad, when I first started studying composition and I was still writing gospel stuff, I would do something and then just go to another idea. I had this song called *Thank You* for this really incredible ensemble that I inherited when I started undergrad. It started, it was pretty, I liked it. But I was so bored so quickly. So development was one of the most valuable tools I learned in studying composition. "Like, wait, you got all this good material. Let's take from this and let's develop it." You know, from that two-note wonderful phrase, to create a symphony behind it. "Let's think about what you already have." So just that notion and the maturity of my composing, being able to do that.

Some of it is just the lines. Traditionally, gospel music can be more vertical in terms of how we approach the melodic line as singers, whereas I just think more of a line – and that could have more to do with me as a conductor and as a singer versus as a composer. I think the only other thing I would say is the harmonic language in some ways and the approach. So *Sweet Meditation*, that's classical sounding; that's not going to be anybody's gospel song starting off that way. So that pomp and circumstance, if you will, that majestic approach that you find in some of my anthems, I do love that. The *Hallelujah Chorus* is

what I used for my *O Sing Unto the Lord* – the vamp that's in E♭. Baroque is such an easy marriage with gospel music (Hello, *Soulful Messiah*) because of its improvisation that is inherent to that style, even though the two are not same in terms of type of improvisation. But yes, that's another thing I've taken, when I think of baroque polyphony and how it has influenced me. And sometimes just practically taking stuff, like how I [originally] started *Be Thou Exalted* using the Grieg *Piano Concerto in A minor*.

There's another anthem I recall, *Rejoice in the Lord*. I literally started off with a Bach prelude, but just a half-step off. Then in the middle, I do an interlude where I used the C minor prelude, but a half-step up and I do it in major. So that one has the most baroque sound of all my anthems. So those elements, I would say, when it comes to what I take – the approach, the harmonic language, the pianistic feel oftentimes, chords, progressions – all of that from the classical tradition.

BLACK: So it's a myriad of different elements. But primarily, it sounds like you especially gravitate towards things like development, song structure, and some harmonic language. So the areas where you were especially captivated by how those things operate with a song's structure, and finding ways to use those that supports the text; such as if an anthem needed to be elevated by changing the texture to break out of a norm, or leaning into the repetitive nature of a section to let the core of the text really resonate in some way, shape or form.

WHITE-CLAYTON: Yes, absolutely.

BLACK: When you're teaching or conducting, do you find yourself using elements from both your gospel and Western training in the classroom setting – such as vocal technique to guide your singers, or other pedagogical things?

WHITE-CLAYTON: I always think of technique…I'm a vocal coach amongst a whole bunch of things I do. And when I say that, I mean I'm always thinking of the voice doing well, being healthy. So whether it is a strong belt in a high part of the chest voice, or wherever we're trying a gospel piece and you want that kind of feel, versus whether we're doing a classical piece – I am thinking about technique. That technique is not always a classical technique. It's just healthy singing. I think healthy singing is healthy singing. You know, whatever you're singing with: if you're singing hard rock, if you're singing country western, if you're singing a Gregorian chant, if you are a preacher and you're singing at the end of your sermon, it needs to be healthy so the voice can last. There are certain things that are common to singing healthy, period, in terms of support and what your muscles are doing: vocal fatigue, knowing your voice, knowing the style, and knowing how to make your voice work well within that genre. And yes, partially, my classical vocal training has helped to form that, definitely. But so has just years and years and years of being a choir director, being a singer, and understanding intuitively a lot of things that I haven't formally been trained to know. God just shows me things when I'm working with singers.

Some of that, though, also depends also on who I'm teaching. So one area might inform the other, but I'm going to communicate it differently based on who I'm talking to, because they're coming at it with different knowledge and with different presuppositions. I might go into a classically-trained group that has never sung gospel. Chorus Austin

commissioned me in 2018 to write a song. They wanted it gospel-ish. They had never done any kind of gospel music. They just perform standard classical music. Many of the members were 60 or up and they did have some younger. So when I wrote the piece, I wasn't trying to write, you know, straight up "*gospel*-gospel". (I mean, none of my stuff is like hard, "killing it" gospel.) But I wrote it, and they wanted some gospel elements. So I had to inform what I spoke to them about, using my classical training to help them to get to where I needed them to be in the gospel sound.

Let's say it's a choir similar to the age range of the choir I just mentioned, where it's older singers. This is a perfect example: I did something with First A.M.E., the oldest African American church here in L.A. – and this was post-COVID, so they were kind of scraping off the cobwebs. They had a lot of older voices that had not been singing throughout. I had done an arrangement of *Nothing Between My Soul and My Savior*, Reverend Charles Albert Tinley's piece that I love. It was a classical arrangement, and it was really hard to get where we needed to go. That's a piece we would have had to do over several months because the voice has to be in a different place…I wanted what some people will call a "white sound." I never called it that because it's not a "white sound." It's just a sound that needs to be sung in this particular piece.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW WITH DR. RAYMOND WISE (EXCERPT)

SEPTEMBER 28, 2023

BLACK: Can you talk to me about your background, and what got you into composing?

WISE: Well first, I'm a fourth-generation musician. My great-grandmother was a musician, her husband was a pastor. Her brother was also a music professor; he studied at Peabody, Julliard. He played with John Philip Sousa. They had six daughters, three of whom were musicians. My grandmother and all of them were in that area. Then my mother was also a musician. My family had a family gospel singing group called The Wise Singers. There were six children, three old and three younger. My three older brothers and sisters were singing as a group before we were born; and as soon as we were born, we were put right into the family group and we were starting to sing. So music was literally in the womb – I've got a picture of my mom expecting me as a baby, sitting there. I started playing around with the piano around [age] four, and I would always create little things. So by the time I was nine, I was actually writing songs and things like that. I used to have to bribe my brothers to sing my songs when I was 12, 11. But they did and I've got a couple recordings of them!

I was in a very, very unique environment in that we sang gospel music; but the Baltimore, Washington, DC, Virginia areas had several HBCUs and such a heavy focus on classical music as well. At that point in the 1960s – well, even earlier – gospel music was not accepted in the academy. So, a lot of the students who went to school to study music formally were prohibited from playing gospel music in schools, but yet they played it on Sunday. So they played on Sunday morning, but they couldn't do it during the week. So, as a compromise, they began combining this music where they were either taking the techniques and the choral things they learned and teaching the music directly as a piece from the European/Western tradition; or taking ellipses of those traditions and putting them in their music to be able to come up with a musical style that their professors would approve of. At any rate, that was the environment in which I was raised.

So you had Richard Smallwood and Henry Davis, and then you had Robert Friesen from Virginia Union – all those guys were all classically-trained musicians. My family grew up singing on programs with all of these singers, so that classical gospel piece was before me. My goal as a child was, I wanted to be like them. I wanted to grow up and be a conductor that could do gospel and then classical. These choirs, all of them could do some great anthem or choral piece, and then on the other side was just some "knock-down, drag-out" gospel. That was my goal. By [age] 15, I had a choral ensemble that was doing that. Then I sang with the high school choir, and we did all kinds of choral music. We sang with the orchestras, we traveled overseas, we traveled up and down the East Coast. My director was not familiar with gospel, so he allowed me to teach gospel to the choir, and I was also assistant director. When I went to college, I majored in piano and voice. I eventually went and studied in Vienna, Austria, where I studied opera and art, in German. I also did gospel

while I was in Vienna, bringing that as well as singing with other choral groups there. So, it was always this place where I was in the middle, bringing these two worlds together because they were both the music [traditions] that I was exposed to.

What started coming out of me was this music. I just wrote some classical excerpts, and I put something in. I remember my friends saying, even then, "We like your music, but we don't know what to do. Are we supposed to clap, are we supposed to listen?", because it would be such a mixture of the styles. I didn't realize the uniqueness of the style then; I just knew it was different.

Fast-forward many years later: a gentleman by the name of Dr. Robert Mitchell Simmons, who was the Dean of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, he moved to Columbus, Ohio where I was living at the time and started pastoring a church there and teaching at the seminaries. So I would connect with him and I would accompany; my choir would demonstrate. One day, he was talking about cross-cultural music, and he talked about how back in the day, two cultures (A: a dominant culture; and B: Black culture) came together. It was just A-B, B-A, two things in the same room, but how the cultures were so mixed that now when they come together, it was something new, and he called that C. The Lord spoke [to me] and said, "That's your problem. You're C." My background is gospel. My training is European classical. What was coming out of me was neither one nor the other, but a combination of both. So I go to the B folks, who will say "Oh, that's nice, but it's too *that*. I go to the A folks, they go "that's nice, but it's too *that.*" I was like, "Come on, God, what's up?" He says, "I'm preparing you for a 'C-world', a place where people will speak both languages; and when you speak both languages, you become a bridge to

bring people together." So that concept of 'C' is something that comes from Dr. Simmons' book, *Good Religion*. He quotes me in this book as being an example of a 'C musician.'

That was a coming together that perhaps was ahead of my time in terms of people accepting it. But it was a common thing when musicians were trained in both worlds, and they found a way to bring those worlds together. It wasn't until I was 30-something that I realized that it was okay, because I never felt like I fit, and I wasn't supposed to because I was this unique brand. So I have this conversation with many of my friends and young mentees who are in these worlds and are trying to negotiate [being in] both of them…You're designed and equipped to be that bridge that helps to bring people together and bring this music both ways.

So I take gospel to choral people and academic people, and then I take choral music to gospel folks. In terms of training, I studied classical choral music. My degrees are in piano and voice for undergraduate, and music education for my masters and my doctorate. Because of the experiences I had as an undergraduate trying to be a gospel musician and classical musician…it burned into me a vision that people need to learn how to do this music in academic settings. So for all of these years, I've been proposing to develop pedagogy and methodology and ways to teach people how to do gospel music in academic settings, especially [for] those who do not come from this setting, this community.

I ran a center for the gospel arts for 23 years, where we develop courses in all the gospel arts. But we develop pedagogy doing gospel voice, doing gospel piano, teaching people how to play by ear. We've got a technique to show people literally how to do that. That was birthed out of my studies in Vienna – I was there for a while and I had these cassette recordings, about five or six in the Walkman days. Of course, you couldn't go

down the street and get a new gospel record in Vienna. So I kept listening to the same ones over and over and over and over, and I started hearing form, I started hearing patterns, I started seeing theory, and that became the basis of piano technique. So I taught that technique; it really works. Just straight theory, looking at analyzing what people do with gospel music, and making it a step-by-step technique. In fact now, University of Nebraska's piano department uses it for all their students every year as a must for all their classical students to show them how to play by ear or how to get away from the scores. I developed a vocal training for the gospel singer. All these manuals at the school go with the courses that we taught. Some of my other mentees have used my work: Trineice Robinson-Martin, who's now at Princeton; she wrote the book on *So You Want to Sing Gospel*. Her dissertation is on developing a gospel pedagogy for the classical studio. Patrice Turner was also one of my students. So over the years, I've been trying to work and help other folks build literature or build resources and do research in this area to broaden it; to help validate its worthiness, if you will, to be in academic settings.

My whole life has been gospel music. Growing up, my great-aunt was a pioneering radio announcer in the 1940s and 50s. Her name was Pauline Wells Lewis, and she was on the radio doing a gospel show, but also she was a promoter. Of course, there was segregation during that point, so all the gospel artists couldn't perform anywhere. So they had to have a network of places where they could perform and sing and eat and sleep. All over the East Coast, she did the careers of people like Rosetta Tharp and Clara Ward and James Cleveland, Shirley Caesar and Albertina Walker. She did concerts, sponsored all of these folks, and we sang on them. So I grew up singing on all these concerts of all these gospel greats. I didn't know then they were the gospel greats, we were just singing. But

now in hindsight, it's like, "wait a minute. This was a major piece of the 'Golden Age of Gospel.'" I also noticed they always stayed at her house. When the artists came through town, they stayed at her house. I didn't realize that because of the racism and segregation, they had to stay there, because they couldn't stay in hotels. So I grew up literally exposed to the "Golden Age of Gospel", singing with these artists. My aunt would call when somebody was coming to town; she called my mom to say, "hey, James Cleveland's gonna be in town next week, I need the kids to sing. I need y'all in Philadelphia, I need y'all in Virginia; we're doing a concert", and we just traveled like a gospel Jackson 5 during the 50, 60s, 70s, and it was the height of the "Golden Age of Gospel."

So when I got to college and they told me that it was waste, that it was trash, and that it was no good, I couldn't receive that. Many of my friends turned their backs on gospel and went completely classical, and almost had an attitude of "I'm not doing it, it's beneath me", and I was like, "no, this is my music, this is my culture, this is my heritage, I am not getting rid of this." So, how do I negotiate both? And that's where the coming together of these two worlds really solidified, because I was just unwilling to say no and turn my back on what was in my heart. In fact, I wanted to go to school to study music because I wanted to combine classical with gospel. Richard Smallwood, Henry Davis, Mark Payne – three phenomenal musicians who were gospel musicians but classically trained, and all throughout their piano playing, you heard the wonderful classical components, cadenzas and all kinds of things, and they were just effortlessly being played…I would literally sit at the piano, watching Richard and Henry with my tape recorder. I would sit there and watch, and I would go home and learn every note and try to play it.

Many of the Black churches during the 60s and 70s did all kinds of music, because those musicians were being trained at the traditional colleges and universities. They brought that music back to the churches, and you found that as a norm in that Baltimore/Washington/Virginia area. So that's what I thought everybody did, until I left Baltimore. So it was a very, very unique awakening to know that that was a regional thing in that area, in the East Coast along the Mid-Atlantic states. So that has really been the story and the trajectory. I started there, but went through all these other pieces, added more to it; but I'm still here, I'm in the academy doing what I started doing, having filtered it through all of the other European/Western training and so forth and now presenting it in a way that makes it accessible.

BLACK: There is so much parallel in your story with others I've spoken with. We're living in an era now where in the academic setting, more people are wanting to approach and use gospel, versus in prior decades of having to prove its value. That foundation has now already thankfully been set, but I know that it was a journey getting to that point.

WISE: Absolutely…I know the journey. I mean, there's still that attitude there that exists in many places that we don't belong. But it's different today, especially with people looking for diversity. The other primary thing is that so many music schools are in decline in terms of enrollment because so many of the K-12 arts programs are being taken away. So they're not getting the natural pipeline of students who are coming in before, and many of the students who are there don't necessarily want traditional music. They want some different things. So they're now looking at all these other musical things we can do to

recruit in their tracks to get people in the seats. And of course, our musical forms are the ones that attract the people. As a result, they're getting people in; that's still a point of challenge for some traditional musicians who still believe that [gospel] music is unfit, and then to see this music coming in and people being so excited about it, the students embracing it – that sometimes is a challenge for many, but nonetheless, the doors are opening. So that's what my goal has been for the last 20 years. So how do we now develop a faculty, develop and train people and get them their degrees and credentials so they can go into these different academic settings, and be the ones who can now teach because they have both world experiences.

BLACK: One of the greatest things about so much of your output is its accessibility. Along with your educational training, were there any specific elements of Western music that you've used to enhance your music?

WISE: Absolutely. In my dissertation, I talked about what I call the "Total School" and the "Classical School," and of course, the whole notion of just doing the complete work. In the "Total School," they would just take the whole *Messiah* and do the whole thing. The Classical School takes some notes from *Messiah*, or takes a couple of notes and throws it in. I've done both of those…I could use some of those things, but more importantly, the form and structure, the compositional tools; not always taking directly what I hear, but going, "okay, this is how you write a fugue for this phrase," or "this is a canon." So looking at the same compositional tools and applying them in the gospel style.

The other thing is, as a choral person, all the vocal health things. That was also the other big issue about gospel: "You're screaming your voice." So [that] you don't have to scream and kill your voice, how can we sing in a way that's healthy and beautiful? The other piece was, in terms of timbre and tone and technique, doing a lot of the things that are used in traditional Western music, in terms of keeping everything healthy, but also the other level that generally a lot of gospel singers don't move to is phrasing and articulation. They just sing notes. You know, I talk about three levels: music, polished music, anointed polished music. The idea of now phrasing, adding articulation, adding glissandos to new crescendos, and purposely doing those things to bring another level of refinement to the music – those things are very, very powerful.

As a pianist, even [in] the introductions of a lot of my songs, I would do these classical-type piano solo introductions that are evident that there's been some kind of classical training. That brings an almost instantaneous draw. [When] writing, you do anything, you've got to grab their attention. Well, if you're gospel people, you start out hollering and screaming your guts on the floor, and it's like, I don't want to hear that. But just even the introduction of a, "ooh, listen to that! That sounds like some kind of classical piece." All of a sudden, you've drawn somebody in who doesn't even want to hear gospel because they like Classical music. So you use that as a way to move them in, and then you engage them further in the piece. I do that often, even in terms of a harmonic vocabulary. Generally, most gospel, primarily the traditional [harmonic progression] was I–IV–V–V–vii. That was it. Once you get into the "Contemporary Era", you may add iii, vi, ii; you won't bring those progressions in. But expanding the harmonic vocabulary and moving outside of the normal patterns…and you'll find that in a lot of classical music where when

you start analyzing a lot of it. They're not just doing the primary chords; they're doing all these other things. So expanding the harmonic vocabulary there was also an interesting piece.

The truth is, most of my writing is very accessible because I wrote for the people with whom I worked. The challenge was often, especially when working in church for many years, I wanted a lot of my singers to do traditional choral literature. But because they were "whosoever will come", you know, people not formally trained; and sometimes even monotones joined the choir, they couldn't sing the regular literature. Unfortunately, sometimes many conductors will still teach their choirs this traditional literature when they can't sing it, and it's above their musical ability at that moment. So I'm like, "you know what, I'm not going to do that. Let me write things that will work for the people that are in my room. If the basses can only sing one note, then I'm going to give them one note in the song. If they can sing a low D, then I'm going to put a low D in the song. If the sopranos can hit a high A, I'm going to put a high A…" You write the music for the people that are in the room. More than likely, the issues that you had with your choir, somebody else has those issues with that choir. So those are tools that I've always used toward in terms of writing. Knowing that I can go to the high end for all those folks who can do it, and then realize the real world, the practical world: who's gonna sing this, who's the average choir that's going to be working with your music? What can you do for that group?

The other thing that was helpful in my composition is my brother. He's been a pastor for 40-some years. He has often and always done a preaching series, and wrote all the Sunday school literature, and he always wanted music to go with the sermons. There would be many times when I couldn't find anything that went with it. So I just write a song,

I write something to go with whatever it is. So a lot of my output was for writing for accessibility, and then writing to go specifically with sermons or events for which I could not find the appropriate song. But as I grew up, and my commitment in faith grew, my writing kind of shifted a little bit more toward ministry in terms of having a purposeful intent, that it's not just a song that attracts people and [something] they can get excited about, but there's a message in the song that really feeds or inspires or encourages. So then pulling all those things together. So you've got the music and the notes, you've got the technique and the time, but also the message and the ministry, and then trying to then bring all those three worlds together.

Then of course, when you move outside of the church and you move that same music into the academy, how do you now put gospel in the academy – a sacred music in a secular setting? So, you just focus on the artistic value of it, but you teach the singers to find their story in the story. So you're not proselytizing and getting anybody to be saved, but you talk about the meaning of the song. Now, what does this mean for you in this setting? How can you bring that alive? But that's it. You know, always, it's wanting to bring all of me to the piece, unless I'm doing a specific thing for specific effects. And all of me is classical to gospel and anything in between.

BLACK: "Bringing all of me to the piece" may be the hallmark quote for me, because, while a lot of this is centered around the styles that you came up with, like we stated before: there was writing for functionality of who you have in the room; there was a writing for accessibility to be able to take it beyond those who are in front of you for others as well, that they could use in different contexts. Then there is writing from a pedagogical

standpoint, and then adding the ministry portion into that. All of this speaks to things that create, I feel, a longevity in the writing that can really be used in probably any setting.

I feel that much of what you have described can be found in *Glory and Honor*. While I was analyzing this, I noticed that the piano introduction does feel similar to some of the expansions and composition that keyboard instruments were going through – probably more closely to the mid- to-late-19th century, when more of the harmonic language was really starting to open up a bit more. Even the height of the vocal ranges: once they're doing the "glory and honor" repeated vamps and continuing to ascend and invert higher and higher and higher. When you wrote that, what was the intent behind the singers ascending up into the high C's, E's and A's? Was that to highlight the text?

WISE: Well, initially, that song was written when I started my company Raise Productions. I had an open house, a program festival with different singers. Myself and my best friends, Franklin and Cheryl Southern, they were president and vice president, and we wanted to sing something. So I wrote it for us to sing, just a trio; and then eventually I taught it to my Raise Choir. We did our first concert, I taught it to them. They were singers who could sing anything. But that's primarily the thing: I'm a countertenor, and I sing very high, so I tend to write very high. And because I could sing it, it's like, "I can sing it, so let's write it, let's go on up." But in terms of technique, generally, you have to go into your head voice. Singing those notes in those areas, you're going to go right into your head voice, which then allows a different kind of tone in gospel music that would be different; like, "wow, they're singing high, but listen to those tones."

So again, there was always this sense of, in the back of my mind, what are the classical things singers think of what we're doing? Are they going to say, "this is hollering and screaming", or are they going to take note and go, "this is something interesting here"? So that was it. And then let alone, you talk about the word painting of when you're ascending into the heavens, the heights of going higher. So there are all those different layers of why that's happening. But the main thing is, we could sing it. If that wasn't the group in the room, they probably wouldn't have gone up to hit the high A's…But they could sing it. So, I wrote for them. And that's what happened pretty much, the choir was because of who was in that room.

Now, I did not write that same style for my church choir at the time. I was writing differently – in fact, *Lord, Send You Spirit* was when I wrote for my church choir. That's a different level of accessibility than *Glory and Honor*. I needed a song, something about spirit and Holy Spirit, that's it. That was one of my 10-minute songs. I had rehearsal on Saturday, needed something new, wrote this song for the choir; we sang it at church the next day. But again, that's really that thing – who's in the room, that whole piece of who am I writing for. But *Glory and Honor*, I wanted to write something to say, "thank you God." Coming to that point in my life, I had gone through several other things – coming out of, not a tragedy, but a challenge in my life, and I had made a new commitment to God at that point. It was just like, "God, I am new because of you." All that we were doing, it was very important for me. I had choirs and groups before, but they were not for ministry, they were to show what I could do. At this point, it was different.

We would often start concerts with *Glory and Honor*. We would do a lot of concerts in academic settings, and European American churches. Sometimes, you would see the

folks like, “okay, what’s this Gospel choir going to do? Prove it to me.” So, for example: we went to a concert, one of the Ohio State branches in Marion, Ohio, and it was a gospel festival. My choir was the headliner. So as we were meeting, they said, “hey, we’ve got a local gospel choir from this church, wouldn’t it be great if they would open up?” It was a traditional, Pentecostal church. But they were doing Praise and Worship type songs, and they were talking to the audience and badgering them because they were not participating. This is African American singers of a Pentecostal church, speaking to a predominantly white audience, in a classical college setting. Not that that wouldn’t be appropriate in certain places, but understand who’s in the room. So after all of that, when we came on, I started with *Glory and Honor*. All of a sudden, it changed the whole tone of the room, because now I know where I am. So the whole notion of bringing those two worlds together, it literally becomes a bridge. And then I teach throughout the concert to give history, give tools; and then once you get the tools, then you can go there, because they now have a place from which to understand. *Glory and Honor* has been one of the secret tools, or secret weapons that I’ve used for many, many years. Raise Choir, we’ve sung it in different places all over the world, and we translate the different languages. We do the ascending part in the language of the place. We did it in Romania, we did it in Germany, we did it in Portugal, different places where we just add the language of the country we’re in. So it’s been one of the signature pieces that we’ve done for many years.

BLACK*:* Plus, the markings in your scores are so specific as far as articulations and such are concerned. Almost everything you need to do is already immediately on the page.

WISE: That's another part with the piece that's been very important. Again, that was the other complaint, the scores. First of all, there are no scores. Then the second one, "the scores, they don't sound like what the people are singing in the recordings and we don't know how to do this. We don't know the nuances." So it was important then to score what we actually sing, to score what I actually play, and then put the articulation on it, putting the *tenutos* in. It's a lot, but the point is, if it's there, then there's no excuse to not say "we cannot perform it in this setting." And sometimes, you feel it's like too much articulation. But I feel it's better to go overboard and put in every little nuance, rather than saying it's open and free and people say they can't perform it because they don't know how to approach the style. But that was the point, trying to make sure it sounds like what we're singing, and that it's really close to what we're doing. Here are the notes, here's the phrasing, now it's on you to bring your story to the story.

BLACK: When you work with singers who have less gospel exposure, what are techniques that they usually overthink that you try to break them out of? For example, *Lord, Send Your Spirit* is a very straightforward gospel piece. There's plenty that you can do with the repetitions to mix things up; also, with the articulations, all the instructions are there. What are some things that you have to keep singers from over-thinking when they have not done as much gospel?

WISE: Using their ear versus their eye. Even though the articulations are in the score, sometimes they're like, "okay, but this is a dot" – no, don't look at that. Listen to what I'm doing. [*demonstrating*] "Lord, send your SPI-rit" – It's written there, it's got a *staccato*, a

tenuto, but what does that mean? No, listen, use your ears instead of your eyes. I do a lot of modeling to get them to do that. The other thing is, in terms of the sound, getting them to have a little bit more freedom in terms of developing the darker sound and using the vibrato, all those things that we tell you not to do in the traditional choral…"hold back, don't use the vibrato," No, all those things can come forward.

The greatest thing I think I have often is the improvisational repetition. They're like, "Well, Dr. Wise, how many times are we going to repeat this time? Are we going to repeat this two times?" So giving them the freedom and permission to relax and enjoy. That's probably the greatest challenge, because again, when they can read, they can read the notes like *that*; that's done. Normally in non-traditional settings, when people don't read, you got to spend 20 minutes, 30 minutes to teach them the notes; but [musicians who read music] get the notes like that because they can read them. Okay, now you got the notes – move the score out of the way, memorize it. To get them to sing from the heart, they've got to move those scores out of the way. So even if you insist, "okay, this song, I know we're going to use music, but this one, I want you to memorize because we want to go somewhere differently" and then giving them the kinds of directing cues that will be traditional gospel cues, like repeat, or " from the top", some of those cues where they're not just straight podium conducting things – giving them specific gospel cues, so you now have the room to improvise. Getting them free of the tradition of, "whatever's on the page, it's the only way it's going to be and this is perfect." No, perfect is not repeating the same thing, exactly the same. Perfection is the spirit that you do it, which may change from place to place.

That's what my other book is on, *Singing the Gospel Style* – dealing with all that tone and technique. But the main thing working with choral folks is giving them the freedom and permission, first of all, to do it – to do gospel music and not the appropriation stuff that's going on now; but giving them that freedom, and then giving them the tools to get the sound, to get the style. I talk about the five S's: sound, style, sorrow, spirit, spontaneity of gospel music, and showing them how to do that, so they can then be free to really enjoy the piece.

BLACK: This piece is one that you can easily do enough times to memorize it by the fourth or fifth time. It's less involved in that way from some of the other pieces that are more like an anthem.

WISE: Absolutely. I think Derrick Fox has one where he's doing it with the group in Sweden.[119]

BLACK: That's what I found. That's a good one!

WISE: There are all kinds of choirs that are singing it, and they're enjoying themselves, they're having some fun. So that's the main thing: enjoy yourself. You have permission to enjoy this piece. Be free, enjoy yourself, and that's what will make the difference.

[119] JVLMA, "Raymond Wise – Lord Send Your Spirit" YouTube video, 4:26. March 28, 2018. https://youtu.be/3Zsm0z27eFk?si=PINFF1-sW-ZbCbRw.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW WITH CAROLYN TRIBUNE BREWER (EXCERPT)

SEPTEMBER 15, 2023

BLACK: Would you mind telling me a little bit about your music background, your training and your education especially?

BREWER: Sure, sure. My name is Carolyn Tribune Brewer. I'm a native of Tampa, Florida, grew up in Tampa. I grew up in the church. But pre-college, I studied [at] a school of music that wasn't too far from my elementary school. I studied just the basic method books, things like that. I was always very gifted at music, and they saw, "okay, yeah, she's got something here." I started taking classical lessons when I was about 10, and all we did for two years were just scales and fingering. I didn't learn any new pieces. I think the technique was being built at the time. So pre-college, I just studied a lot of classical repertoire after those two years and went on to Florida A&M University. At first, I was a computer science major, but then I changed my major to music. I was a piano major. While I was there, I did a bunch of everything. I started out in the concert choir, I was an accompanist, I did all those kinds of things. So some of the anthems and the Western lit that you're probably referencing, I probably played a few of those with some of the choir tours.

At some point, I started playing for a family gospel choir. That was a little later in my freshman year. And then I had my own group. I always sang too, and I would compose. So I operate in all of those types of spaces. After FAMU, I went to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. My master's is in improvisation. Perfect for me because my background is very non-traditional. It's not just classical, it's not just gospel, it's not just jazz. It's like a hybrid of a lot of things. So it had been a challenge for me to fit in one space neatly, to be just one thing on one path. Sometimes that fits people. Sometimes you just lean toward, "hey, I'm a classical pianist," or "hey, I'm a gospel pianist that plays in the church," or "I'm a choral conductor," or "I'm a vocal music teacher." But that was my lane. Speaking of vocal music, I taught vocal music for about 15 years in Detroit Public Schools, as well as Baltimore County Public Schools here in Baltimore where I am now. I've always been on the staff of some church. So I've been at my [current] church for about 14, 15 years now, and I do just about everything. I play organ primarily now. I do freelance stuff. I play for a professional group that tours the U.S.; it's called Pieces of a Dream, and it's a smooth jazz group. So I do a lot of different things. I think being a good musician, you have to be versatile and not just wear one hat, because you never know what you're gonna have to do to keep your career going, put food on the table, elevate your own gift, all those types of things. So that's what I do.

BLACK: *Let Everything That Hath Breath (Psalm 150)* – I've got to ask you about this piece. I grew up with it, and I've been incredibly fascinated by it. I grew up in a COGIC church, so we had the familiarity with the Clark Sisters. How did you come into your involvement with the performance of this piece and crafting the piano part?

BREWER: Well, I have a short answer. This came from the fourth floor of the FAMU practice rooms. So there is a recording that I've learned of in recent years that had organ, but we never heard that. I was a freshman at the time that the choir was trying to record. We learned some material, like the things that came from the writers within the choir, things like that. But my sophomore year is when we actually recorded. Some of those songs, we didn't learn until the week of recording. Literally, the [Clark] Sisters came down, and we were in rehearsal from 7:00 to midnight. That type of thing is a very, very tight schedule: recording on Saturday, and rehearsing Tuesday, and all that kind of stuff. With that song specifically, what I remember was we had the skeleton of it. It was just the vocals and the song, because back then in the 90s, there was no email that we had access to. (It might have been like 1996 or 97 before we had corporate access via student emails and things like that.) So we didn't have that. All we had was word of mouth. I think we finally got somebody to send the recording or something, and it just may have had a very basic organ [part]. But I put that together in the fourth floor FAMU practice rooms. I knew what I wanted it to sound like. I knew the implications of the chord progressions, and I knew that I wanted to put my touch on it because I'm a classically trained musician. So I wanted to put as many embellishments as I could in spaces. And it was just all very organic. I didn't collaborate with Twinkie at all. It was already done by the time we got with her in the rehearsals; it was kind of like a through-composed type of situation. It was already finished and everything. And everybody loved it. And I was nervous, sweating bullets.

BLACK: Wow, that's just incredible. So it sounds like it wasn't necessarily something in the basic organ part that exists already that you were like, "okay, I hear some real

counterpoint. Let me build on that." It was more so, that was already organic in you, and you wanted to apply that in the piece.

BREWER: Right. There was no counterpoint. Whatever I heard was... It may have hinted at *We give thee honor.* But it implied that. It was just one line... not quite monophonic, but just standard harmony. There was no counterpoint. So that was just something that came to me during my practice, and I had to stick with it because it's not something that you're doing in one sitting. You get a little bit here, you work for that, and then you come back and it evolves. When you finally get it, it's like, "okay, does that sound authentic?" I'm a big authentic type of person. I want things to sound as authentic as possible. Not so terribly perfectionistic, but just authentic.

BLACK: Wow, to have that kind of experience as a sophomore in college for something that is now so renowned, to where other people gravitate towards the version that you were involved with creating, is just astounding. Do you get recognition or writing credit when it comes up?

BREWER: I mean, you could say my name in some circles and some people recognize me. So it's been that type of thing, but certainly nothing financial. It never evolved to that. Being so young, we didn't have the business sense back then. We were really passionate. I can't take full credit. I mean, I take full credit for that arrangement, the piano part…But we were all planted in some soil back then and everybody was sprouting up in their own ways….I'm not the only one that had that level of passion and dedication to my

contributions. I think everybody had their own niche as to what they were bringing to that recording. It really was something special to be involved with that. It was legendary because Twinkie had gone solo, and The Clark Sisters had not been together. So this family recording was not just them getting back together, which the whole world was waiting on, but it's also like, what we're doing today is introducing them to a whole new generation. Some of us knew them, but if you weren't in COGIC circles, you weren't as familiar.

BLACK: I appreciate how elements of this song can easily associate some Baroque era writing, with the piano interludes, the compositional structure, the ascending and descending melismatic; and then with the "Amens", the melismas sung by the choirs are structured in a circle-of-fifths progression. It all sounds very much like what I would hear in a chorale by Bach, Buxtehude or their contemporaries.

BREWER: Yeah, they are the original progenitors of all this, absolutely. And I think some of the [sections], like the "Amens", for example – some of the chord progressions just naturally lent themselves to those lines. I was studying classical more strictly [at the time]. I was a piano major. I think I was probably getting ready to take counterpoint, or maybe I had taken counterpoint. So sometimes when those things are fresh, they're gonna come out, they're gonna seep out of your pores. So it's very likely that I was doing that. I've always had a jazz kind of approach: big left hand chords (not to interfere with the bass player), chord clusters, extensions, colors…and that's something Twinkie did herself. I love her colors. I've always been a color person.

I think one thing that gospel kind of struggles with, in a weird way, is legitimacy. I've been in spaces where the gospel that I played was not legitimate until I played something classical, or I played something that showed some type of classical influence. It's like it's not appreciated for the African American art form that it is; it's more like it's only legitimized within a context of some type of European standard. I'm 19 or something at this point, so I'm just thinking about what's authentic. I'm not thinking, "okay, by adding this, can this now become part of the canon of acceptable African-American [music], because it has some type of European element?" It's like, you have to know what key to use for what door. Everything does not have to be your contemporary gospel, but everything doesn't have to be so totally classical either. It's interesting to see how gospel music is more or less legitimized by the inclusion of these types of moments and inflections within the music. Do we sing it more, is it more acceptable for Sunday morning because it's arrived?

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW WITH KAREN BURKE (EXCERPT)

AUGUST 21, 2023

BLACK: From a conductor's standpoint, why do you feel that collegiate choirs should include gospel music in their repertoire, outside of a dedicated gospel choir ensemble?

BURKE: I think that if the conductor is trying to provide an experience for their choristers where they are, A) going to learn something that's outside of the norm to be able to balance what other types of things that they're doing; and, B) give them an opportunity to delve into something which many ostensibly might say is unfamiliar, but to be able to show them that it actually is familiar to them, and show them how these things overlap into other things that they already are listening to. Most of our choristers, particularly if they're not professionals, they're not listening to classical music 24/7. So their ears are already accustomed to many of the things that are already inherent within gospel music – the types of chord progressions and scales that they're using, call and response and all those things. So I think it's good because it helps them to break down the barriers that would seem to be there, that would make this music considered "other."

Also that the type of way that gospel music is taught, remembered, and performed – I think it makes all choirs better. I call it an amoeba, where they move together and it's

not like only the best reader gets the prize. It's everybody working together, and they have to do that in order to be successful. They have to be attuned to the director. That's another thing, which is a plus for the conductor. You have an opportunity to work with a choir who is totally fixated on you, which is something that most conductors never get a chance to experience. There is always that barrier, the printed music. So when they don't have it from the get-go, they're relying on you for shape, for nuances, for phrasing, for duration of phrases, for repeats, everything. I love the relationship that's developed, and I think that once it's developed, it doesn't really just go away. It's going to bleed over into other ways that you're doing music with your choirs. That's been my experience because I've been conducting both types of choirs. I would do both types of music with a choir and see the benefits from what I've done with them in gospel music, and then been able to build on that with the other music that they're doing.

BLACK: When you've taught gospel repertoire with ensembles, were there traditional elements of Western/European choral music that you applied while teaching?

BURKE: Yes, absolutely. I will tell them if it's something that is the antithesis of what they're learning with their traditional choir conductor. It obviously depends on the piece, right? But if it was a straight-ahead, "happy, clappy" gospel song, I wouldn't be talking to them about a unified vowel, that kind of an approach, because what I've come to understand is that some of that iconic sound of gospel music has to do with that celebration of the personality of the voice. This is one of the things that I learned when I was studying gospel quartets and the ones with more traditional repertoire. It was all about trying to get

everything sounding exactly the same…and that when you move away from that goal, you start to experience more of what gospel music is supposed to sound like. Aesthetically, it's not supposed to be pin-perfect. There is a welcoming of the character of the voice. We're not asking people to dry out your voice, [with] no vibrato and all of those kinds of things.

I also work so hard with rhythm. I call it rhythmic enunciation. I'm talking to them about the fact that the vowels are where the music lives. So you have to have attention to vowels so that the music can keep going. If you cut it off too soon, the music is gone, right? So you have to open as far as you can and then extend to the end of the phrase. Those things are still the same. I describe using consonants like ice cream scoops, that they are the ones that dig out the sound from the line. So if you do it rhythmically, you get the benefit of that pulse that keeps your group together.

When I'm working with singers new to the genre, I always tell them that rhythm is everything. So often, a choral conductor will spend a lot of time fixing one or two notes, and they forget about the fact that if the rhythmic pulse is not together as an ensemble, whatever it is you're trying to fix isn't going to matter because they're not going to sing together. So using that feeling of ensemble togetherness, using rhythmic enunciation to make sure that the pulse is intact, and that they're feeling the song as a unit. When you do those things, it can be applied across the way. It's not just something you would use in gospel music, but I would definitely say learning gospel music and teaching gospel music has made me a better conductor for all music.

BLACK: How did your education of Western music inform your work with gospel music? Do you think that has worked in reverse for you as well?

BURKE: Yes, absolutely. I would say the biggest has to be the way in which I can teach this to other people. It gave me a language that teaches people who don't know anything about gospel music. For example, if I'm teaching them about the form of the song and then we get to the vamp, I would say to them, "you know, like a coda in a symphony: it takes the material inside the symphony and then it plays with it a different way. So that's kind of what you're doing in a vamp." When I can make those parallels; or I can talk to them about when you break the parts out, it's like counterpoint. So the fact that those things are a bit analogous, that it helps me to be able to have a language to teach this music to people who have never done it, but they might know about music because they've taken it before, or they've been in university taking courses in music. I can make those examples.

My students have told me that when they've played gospel music or been singing gospel music, that their ears become bionic. It's like they can't believe how much they've learned. And those who couldn't sing harmony before all of a sudden are hearing things in new ways. Some of the best moments have been where I've decided, "Okay, I can't decide between these two singers, so we're going to make a duet out of it." So they come to my office and we figure it out, and they're not too sure; but then all of a sudden, they're singing in harmony and they're just jumping out of their skin, just so happy that they can do this thing. So to see students who would never try something like that, actually succeed and do well. Guitar players would be playing for me; they're saying, "I'm so glad I took this class because my ears, I can play anything; that's so much better for me when I go out to play. I'm so much more marketable & useful as a musician." So I love that part too.

It's such an easy sell when I talk to teachers about using this music in their class, because they're experiencing it in the moment. And then I'm saying, "just think about how

much this is going to help your students," and they can actually feel it themselves. They'll say, "I've just learned a whole song. I didn't use a piece of paper; my ears, I could remember it." "Of course you could remember it!" So yeah, those are really cool benefits of learning the music.

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW WITH DR. JASON MAX FERDINAND (EXCERPT)

SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

BLACK: In your formal music education, how did your study of sixteenth through nineteenth century music inform your work with gospel music?

FERDINAND: Well, it informed me because I'm always looking to see what are the similarities between any two things, or any three things, or however many things are on the table. So it became very apparent to me that in baroque music, for example, in my mind, is so close to jazz, because you always want to make it dance, right? Teachers always say, "make sure this dances." Well, the way it dances is you have to feel the backbeat. In baroque music, you have to kind of cheat all the dots and all the tied notes that the music has space in between to keep moving forward. Because if it was all connected, it just becomes this big blur. So little things like that. I always look to see what's similar and what's not. That's the basic principle I use when doing any style of music. I'm doing this one style here, but I'm looking for different things along the way.

My good friend Bruce Rogers [does this] when he trains his choirs. Bruce is great at Western canon music, but Bruce also conducts his vocal jazz group at his institution…and if I listen carefully, I always hear cross-fertilization of different genres.

He's always going in between, but it's done so skillfully that it doesn't pop out at you. "Oh, that's jazz inflection in this renaissance piece." It's not like that, but it's all blended in so very skillfully that everything is very subtle, very well blended. So at the foundational level, that's what I'm always looking for: similarities.

BLACK: That's a constant fascination of music for us – how the informance of one thing to another just continues to live a life through that crossing over. Especially in these more modern genres, twentieth century and on, nearly everything is some kind of blend of previous styles.

So in thinking about technique and teaching: Are there elements of European or Western choral music that you utilize when teaching gospel pieces, such as vocal technique, vowel formation or modification and such?

FERDINAND: Yes. Admittedly, I don't call myself a gospel music expert. I was born in Trinidad and Tobago. So in the 1990s, in Trinidad and Tobago, hardcore gospel was like Brooklyn Tabernacle. It was only when I came to the States, went to Oakwood [College] and started hearing more of the other things. But maybe because of that, my approach to it is exactly down the lane of what you're asking me. As my teacher, Nathan Carter used to say: his belief was if someone is trained classically (especially vocally), that allows them then all the tools necessary to sing anything, because all styles should benefit from great technique.

So how does it inform it? When you start talking about things like head voice – in gospel music, in most choirs, we use a lot of vibrato, which is the natural way to approach

it. But I have learned that to add some additional nuances in that sort of music, sometimes you might want to go without vibrato to line up a very dense harmonic chord. You want the chords to sound, so you want to take some of the vibrato off so people hear the sonority. And you're doing all of this in a way that is not blatantly obvious, and that's the beauty of it.

You mentioned the Richard Smallwood piece that the Aeolians did [*I Will Sing Praises,* on a London tour in 2017].[120] Let me give you a perfect example. So you know that song keeps modulating. I remember one trick we used in that song is once – because now you start talking about the tessituras of the rest of the singers, right? So there comes a point when it starts getting really high, where we have altos jumping up to tenor, and then we have tenors flipping on to two altos singing in their head voice or something like that, or some of my basses that would really have very, very high head voices, some of them are singing soprano or alto. But the audience has no clue that all this is happening. I think in that video, maybe you've seen me give another signal…that meant, "this is about the time you only start switching up these parts." So that's a good example of knowing the voice, knowing your tessituras, knowing the difference between head and chest, which all classically trained people would know; and when to use it, so that it becomes easier in your voicing, not straining. Now you want to sing the style and we're going to use these tools over here to just help us get through.

Another thing up there with that specific example: once the sopranos start singing F-sharp's and G's above the staff…physics proves that even a machine can produce a pure vowel up that high. So the sopranos at some point, they're not even saying words at that

[120] Tegemea Champanda, "I WILL SING PRAISES – by The Aeolians." YouTube Video, 9:16. June 21, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjGzQDJfQNg

point. That's basically what they're doing while everybody else is singing text. But again, you don't really hear that, and the audience has no clue what's going on. So that's another example of using technique within this gospel song to make the delivery.

BLACK: I spoke with Karen Burke at York University, who kind of summarized that entire statement you just said. She said, "gospel made me a better musician of all music, and then a lot of those styles are going to bring that to gospel." There's this great synergy and connection between the two.

FERDINAND: That's well said, exactly. Because the reverse of that is, gospel music tends to give conductors a greater sense of rhythm. My choirs hear me use the word "groove" all the time. If you came from the other side of the tracks, you wouldn't necessarily use the word "groove" as a classical musician. But if I'm doing Bach, in my head, I feel a straight groove. So if I have a bar in front of me that understands that word and what comes with it, it automatically just starts locking in a different way. So Karen is exactly right. The whole conversation goes both ways.

BLACK: Yeah, it does. It gives you a better sense of rhythm, and I've seen several cases where it also helps you to instill better harmonic training and thinking about the other textures, because they're used to being independent on reading their part.

In your personal opinion, do you think collegiate choirs should include gospel in their choral repertoire?

FERDINAND: Sure, definitely. I think choral ensembles should take on the responsibility of reflecting the world in our choir spaces and our concerts. People always ask me, "is my choir allowed to do the Negro spiritual?" Of course, why not? That's like telling me I can't do Brahms or Bach. And I get it; like I said earlier, I don't do a whole ton of gospel. But when I do it, I want to do it well, and I want to make sure it's impactful to those who will hear it. You have some fabulous settings now that are very conducive to a traditional choral group…like the ones André Thomas does, and Rollo Dilworth and Brandon Boyd; Brandon Waddles is bringing a whole different spin to the old Thomas Whitfield charts that we know from church; Joseph Joubert; I mean, you could go on and on and on.

BLACK: It's also a great way to share what is a microcosm of American music in so many areas. I think one thing that's captivating about the work that you've done in a lot of African American sacred music is similar to so many others that we aspire to be like: that there's still an intentional and excellent approach of that music, no matter what it is. Whether it's something that was existing from generations ago, or something that you may have just written yesterday, there is still an intentionality in the approach of it to make sure that it's presented well.

FERDINAND: That's a good point. What really used to get on my nerves [as a student] is what you just said: we would spend a considerable amount of time on Bach or Brahms, but when we would get to the gospel stuff, we would just kind of throw it together. My students at Oakwood knew if I was doing gospel, I was going to take my time and shape it and do all inflections and nuances. I was so inspired back in 2019, we invited Donald Lawrence

down to Oakwood for a few days. In most settings like that, when we have a gospel artist come in, and if local singers are on the ground, we're going to sing with them, they'll come in, the full band will be there and we'll start rehearsing. Everybody's playing, the drummer is going, the band is loud and the choir just sings, and you probably run it a few times and then say, "all right, that's good, we'll see you tomorrow," right? Even prior to this coming in, messaging back and forth is when I learned that Donald grew up singing some choral music, and then he went to CCM to study theater and he's always been a lover of choral music. When we started talking about techniques, I realized, "wow, a lot of what he does is the stuff we do on the classical side." So I saw that's exactly why I brought him to Oakwood that time, because I wanted to see this fusion and he wanted to work with the Aeolians. But there's something he did when he walked into that rehearsal. He walked in and he said, "all right, band: all I need from the drums, I just need hi-hat, and let's just go with the piano." And he spent so much time with the choir making sure the vowels were right, making sure the nuances were exactly [right] – and he ran that thing as if we were doing a Bach rehearsal. I mean, the intentionality, the details, I was just blown away. Then towards the end of the verses, he added the band and everything back, but by this time he had fixed everything he wanted. It was something to see, and he could literally write a book on his pedagogical approaches. I was just really inspired to see that he and his gospel music, he was approaching it just like I would approach Handel's *Messiah* – the detail and just wanting to do it right. I think that inspired me to do gospel well and inspired me to really dive into everything else with so much focus, because he really exemplifies that.

BLACK: He came up quite frequently in a lot of my preliminary study of just seeking out gospel composers who have those intersections. M. Roger Holland II transcribed his *He Rebuked the Red Sea,* and I was like, "oh, it's a fugue. It's quite literally fugue."

FERDINAND: That's one of the songs we did with him when he came to Oakwood. He describes his technique so well and the Aeolians just latched on, and I was like, "oh, okay, this is like Western techniques, a different way." But yeah, *He Rebuked the Red Sea* is a straight-up fugue.

BLACK: Would you say that there is value in including Western influences in gospel music?

FERDINAND: I think so. The ones that come to my head most readily: if you employ a very good vocal technique (which you should always employ), it'll save a lot of [hoarseness]. In gospel choirs (in my surroundings), people getting hoarse and losing their voice was probably because of just bad vocal techniques. So that's one thing that it could benefit from too. The gospel choirs that approach some sort of vocal technique, you always hear the difference in the sound. They sound fuller because they employ in space and depth and heighten the sound. Vibrato, non-vibrato will affect colors and different stylistic things. If it's loud, loud, loud all the time, it's getting a little annoying quickly, right? I think that's what makes people like Donald Lawrence, for example, and Anthony Brown, listen to their singers. So all these influences of simple things like dynamics, which we stress in the Western canon, how we approach cadences could be beneficial in the gospel side. Tuning

– how many times have you heard the word tuning in a gospel rehearsal? In my time, very few. But on the Western side, we talk about tuning chords [in a way] that could benefit any genre. The way we shape text – Donald does that very well too. He wants certain words pronounced a certain way, and he'll actually give you the IPA if he wants. This might seem like a simple one, but how many times have we heard a chorus on one chord, and the keyboard is just playing something slightly different. I'm like, "oh my gosh, that clashes." And sometimes somebody might want that intentionally, but sometimes it's just that they missed it, and then realized we're playing two different things. Richard Smallwood is good for that. He'll tell you, "that's not what I wrote, that's the wrong chord." And one part might be singing a half step off of what it's supposed to be. So simple things like that make things much cleaner.

I just did the World Choir games back in July as a judge, and one of the categories was Gospel Chorus. I must say, I was absolutely blown away, floored in awe at the choirs in Asia. Now, these are choirs from all over the world, but the choirs in the Gospel category that were Asian…I dare say, some of their choirs are singing gospel music better than we are, because they've studied it in a way like we would study Western music, because it's not natural for them, so they study it. Everything was written out, so they have scores. It was clean, it was nuanced, it was balanced, I could understand all the words…and they were doing arrangements of the gospel songs. For example, one choir did *Now Behold the Lamb*, but it wasn't just like the Kirk Franklin track. They had to make it shorter, for one, and they would change some things here and there. Another group from Indonesia did his *Hosanna*. Oh, man, it was so good.