

ARCHIVES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC AND CULTURE

liner notes

NO. 19 / 2014-2015



**Petrella
Pollefeyt:**
First Lady of
Country Soul

From the Desk of the Director

aaamc mission

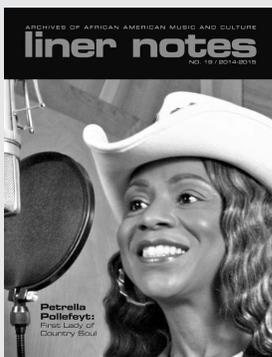
The AAAMC is devoted to the collection, preservation, and dissemination of materials for the purpose of research and study of African American music and culture.

www.indiana.edu/~aaamc

Table of Contents

From the Desk of the Director	2
In the Vault: Recent Donations	3
One on One: Interview with Petrella Pollefeyt	4
Featured Collection: Petrella Pollefeyt: First Lady of Country Soul.....	10
AAAMC and Robert Marovich Team Up to Preserve Gospel Music History	11
A Tribute to Al Hobbs.....	14
Themester 2014: Hot Buttered Soul.....	18
New Research Associate: Alisha Lola Jones	22
William Vanden Dries Joins AAAMC Staff.....	26
New Books by AAAMC Staff and Research Associates	27

On the Cover:



Petrella Pollefeyt in the studio, 2007.

In drafting this column for the first time as Director of the AAAMC, I feel compelled to acknowledge the legacy of Portia Maulsby, whose vision in 1991 led to its founding. Initially supported by a Ford Foundation grant, the Archives represented Dr. Maulsby's desire to identify and gather the many print, audio and visual resources which document the richness of African American music in shaping and defining the American musical landscape. It is a history most worthy of preservation, and following the path forged by Dr. Maulsby is both an honor and a challenge. We welcome her continued involvement in identifying potential contributors and securing collections.

With the unwavering support of Provost Lauren Robel, the AAAMC continues to pursue its overarching vision, in our welcome of William Vanden Dries, who joins our staff as digital archivist in June 2015. William brings a wealth of knowledge, skill, energy and fresh ideas to our unit. The fact that he and his family eagerly anticipate the snow of an Indiana winter, as they bid farewell to the sweltering heat of Austin, Texas offers us a promising glimpse of the positive impact that he will have on our work environment. To Ronda Sewald, whose expertise and diligence contributed in so many significant ways during her six-year tenure as a member of the Archives' staff, we extend our most sincere thanks and gratitude.

The Archives mourns the loss of our friend and advocate, Al "The Bishop" Hobbs, whose homegoing services were held at Christ Church Apostolic in Indianapolis in August 2014. Hundreds gathered from far and near to celebrate the life and career of the man with the golden voice, who, for decades, commanded the WTLC airways and worked tirelessly to develop, promote, and advance gospel music locally, nationally, and globally. The mass choir, comprised of members of the Gospel Music Workshop of America (GMWA) under the direction of Sherri Garrison, distinguished Minister of Music at Eastern Star Church in Indianapolis,

sang with the aesthetic beauty and spiritual grace fitting for such an iconic figure. From Grammy-award winning Dr. Bobby Jones of Sunday morning *BET Gospel* fame to GospoCentric founder, Vicki Mack Lataillade, the tributes extolled Hobbs' commanding leadership in the world of gospel music.

The public face of the Archives this year was most strongly evident in our Themester event, *Hot Buttered Soul: The Role of Foodways and Music Making in Building and Sustaining African American Communities*, which attracted an extremely responsive audience of almost 150 students, faculty, staff, and community members. As a collaborative effort which engaged our student and full-time staff, as well as an invited scholar and our research associates, this exchange reinforced the subtleties and complexities inherent in the interpretation of African American musical and cultural practice. The Archives is pleased with the prospect of our findings being presented at future scholarly meetings, and also being translated into publication.

As always, AAAMC welcomes your input. Please let us hear from you regarding *Liner Notes*, or about individuals, organizations, or resources which you feel could contribute to our efforts. It is our sincere hope that you continue to visit our website, and take advantage of the many offerings designed to support and affirm African American music in all its guises.



In the Vault: Recent Donations

Jacquie Gales Webb Collection:

Materials documenting her career as an award-winning producer, including interviews and production materials used in the public radio series *Remembering Slavery* and *Jazz Singers*, the television documentary *Melodies from Heaven*, and her “Sunday Afternoon Gospel Music Program” on 96.3 WHUR in Washington, DC.

Ronald C. Lewis Collection:

Personal papers, sounds recordings, and videos documenting Mr. Wonderful Productions, Inc. in Louisville, Kentucky.

Erica Blount Danois Collection:

Personal papers documenting her journalism career, including over 100 audiocassette recordings of interviews conducted for her book, *Love, Peace, and Soul: Behind the Scenes of America's Favorite Dance Show Soul Train: Classic Moments* (2013).

African American Arts Institute Collections:

Interviews and production files for the book project, *The Black Composer Speaks* (1977); production files for a Black composer encyclopedia project (1970s); and video of recent interviews conducted for an IU Soul Revue oral history project.

CD/DVD/Book/Image/Music Donors:

22 Ventures / Below Systems	Ed Hines & Associates	Legacy Recordings	Reel People Music
Alive Records	EMI Recods	Light In The Attic	Rhymesayers Entertainment
Arhoolie	Entertainment One	Mack Avenue Records	Rick Scott
AristoMedia	Eothen Alapatt	Mark Mclean	Rock Paper Scissors
Audio Preservation Fund	Films Media Group	Mark Pucci Media	Rounder Records
Ballin' Entertainment	First World	Michael Woods	Shanachie Entertainment
Bear Family	Forced Exposure	Living Legends	Shore Fire Media
Bellamy Group	FTG International	MCG Records	Shout Factory
Betsy Blue Music	Full Circle Entertainment	Merlis for Hire	SLG
Bowling Green State University	Fully Altered Media	MoFunk Records	SmallsLive
Bjazz Promo Services	Funky Town Grooves	Monocentric Music	Smithsonian Folkways
Black Berry	Ged Soul	Motown Gospel	Sony Music Masterworks
Blind Raccoon	Girlie Action	Muse Media	Southgate Entertainment
Blues Images	Gold City Records	Musebox	Spencer Robinson
BMF Media	Golden Fetus Records	MVD	Stickfigure Distribution
Brian Coleman	Great Scott Production	Myles Sanko	Sub Pop!
Byrd Communications	Harmonia Mundi	Naxos of America	Sugar Shack
Capital Entertainment	Honorable South Music	Now-Again Records	Summersoul Entertainment
Cherry Red Records	Hot Casa Records	Oakhill Music	Terri Hinte
City Hall Records	Hot Milk Records	Passion Music	Tiny Human
Cleopatra Records	Imagine This	Pendulum Records	Tish Febach
Concord Music Group	Indigo Soul	Per Notini	Tompkins Square
Conqueroo	Jasmine Records	Perry	Tyscot Records
Croshal Entertainment Group	Jazz Promo Services	Plug Research Music	Universal Music
Cumbancha	Jeffrey James	Press Junkie	VP Records
Daptone Records	JS Music	Reach Records	Wolf Records
Delmark Records	K7 Records	Real Gone Music	World Music Network
Distorted Soul	Kayos Productions	Red Distribution	
DL Media	KG Music	Red Hot Records	
Dust-to-Digital	LCD Factory	Red River Entertainment	

The AAAMC contributed to the following projects published in 2014-15:

Print:

Sykes, Charles E. “The Black Forum Label: Motown Joins the Revolution.” *ARSC Journal*, Vol. 46, No.1 (Spring 2015). (images)

Associated Press. “Mercury Records Co-Founder Irwin Steinberg Dies at 94.” *Billboard Magazine*, January 4, 2015. (image)

Smith, Walker. *Mello Yello: The Incredible Life Story of Jack the Rapper as told to Walker Smith*. Sonata Books, 2015. (images)

Exhibits:

Birthplace of Country Music Museum, “New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music” (images)

African American Museum of Iowa, “Behind the Beat” (images)

Radio:

Mighty Writers documentary, *Going Black: The Legacy of Philly Soul Radio* (audio)

Film and Television:

TV One *Unsung* series episode on Chuck Brown (images)

What Happened, Miss Simone?, a Netflix documentary about Nina Simone (audio)

one-on-one



An Interview with Petrella Pollefeyt

Country soul singer and songwriter Petrella Pollefeyt, a native of Hot Springs, Arkansas, was interviewed by AAAMC graduate assistant Christina Harrison in the fall of 2014. In these excerpts she discusses her entry into the music business, her work in Nashville, and her reasons for donating her collection to the AAAMC.

CH: So when did music become or start to become a part of your life? Were you involved in the church? Were you singing at an early age? When did it all begin for you?

PP: Well, on my father's side, he had five siblings. His younger sister, her name was Velma, and my grandmother had put a lot of time in teaching her how to sing and also giving her a lot of lessons. So she was taking a lot of piano lessons, a lot of voice lessons. She was also taking modeling courses and my grandmother had been sending a lot of her kids to St. Louis to learn how to do hair. So this was all a part of my grandmother's culture. So she, my aunt—I was the only niece she had—took up a lot of time with me. She would teach me how to walk and she'd teach me how to sing. And then she'd take me to church and I would sit up with the rest of the choir, but I was quite young. I can remember my grandmother would have a solo and she would let me do two or three lines, you know. I remember we did "Wash All Your Burdens Away," and she would be teaching me how to speak and make sure I was saying all the correct [words]—I was only three or four. Then when I went into grade school

I had a music teacher by the name of John Puckett, and I was in probably the second grade when I first started to do stage work. He thought that I should imitate Pearl Bailey, because she was a really big icon at that time, so I did Pearl Bailey and my brother was doing Elvis Presley. And talent shows were very much a part of the school system at that time. I always considered John Puckett as my mentor in music, because he also gave me piano lessons. When I finally got to junior high school, he was also my music teacher and he started me doing [Della Reese] songs. So, music has always been a big part of my life.

CH: So after you got your business degree, what happened then? Where did you go? What jobs did you have after you got your business degree?

PP: Well, I didn't get my teaching certificate because I was pregnant with my first child. I went to work for a factory in accounting and I worked for the Governor of Arkansas, Dale Bumpers. I worked for him for almost two years and he offered me [an opportunity] to go to Washington, but I just didn't think I was very political. I didn't think I would fit in very well, so I ended up going to the aluminum plant, Alcoa, and from there I followed my first husband to Detroit, Michigan. I worked for Chrysler Defense and that's where I met my second husband.

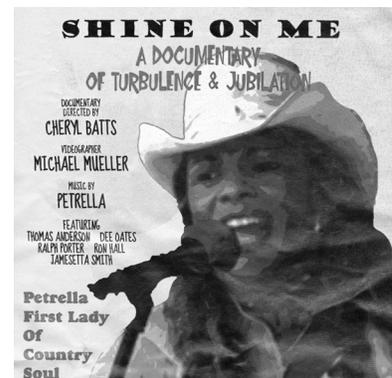
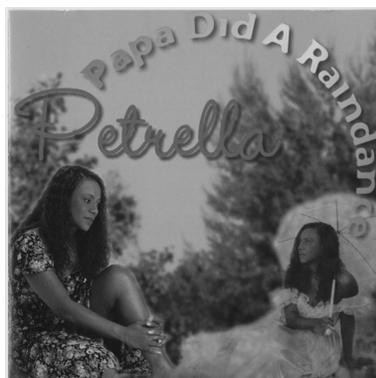
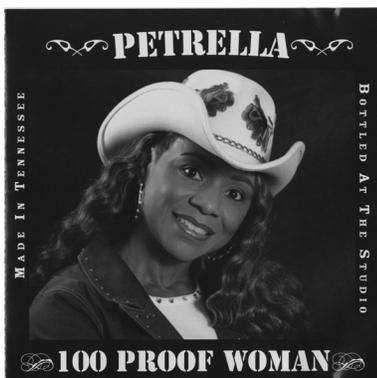
CH: So in the process of all of these life events did you still have your eye on the prize in terms of where music was concerned? Did that ever take a back seat at all, or was that always at the

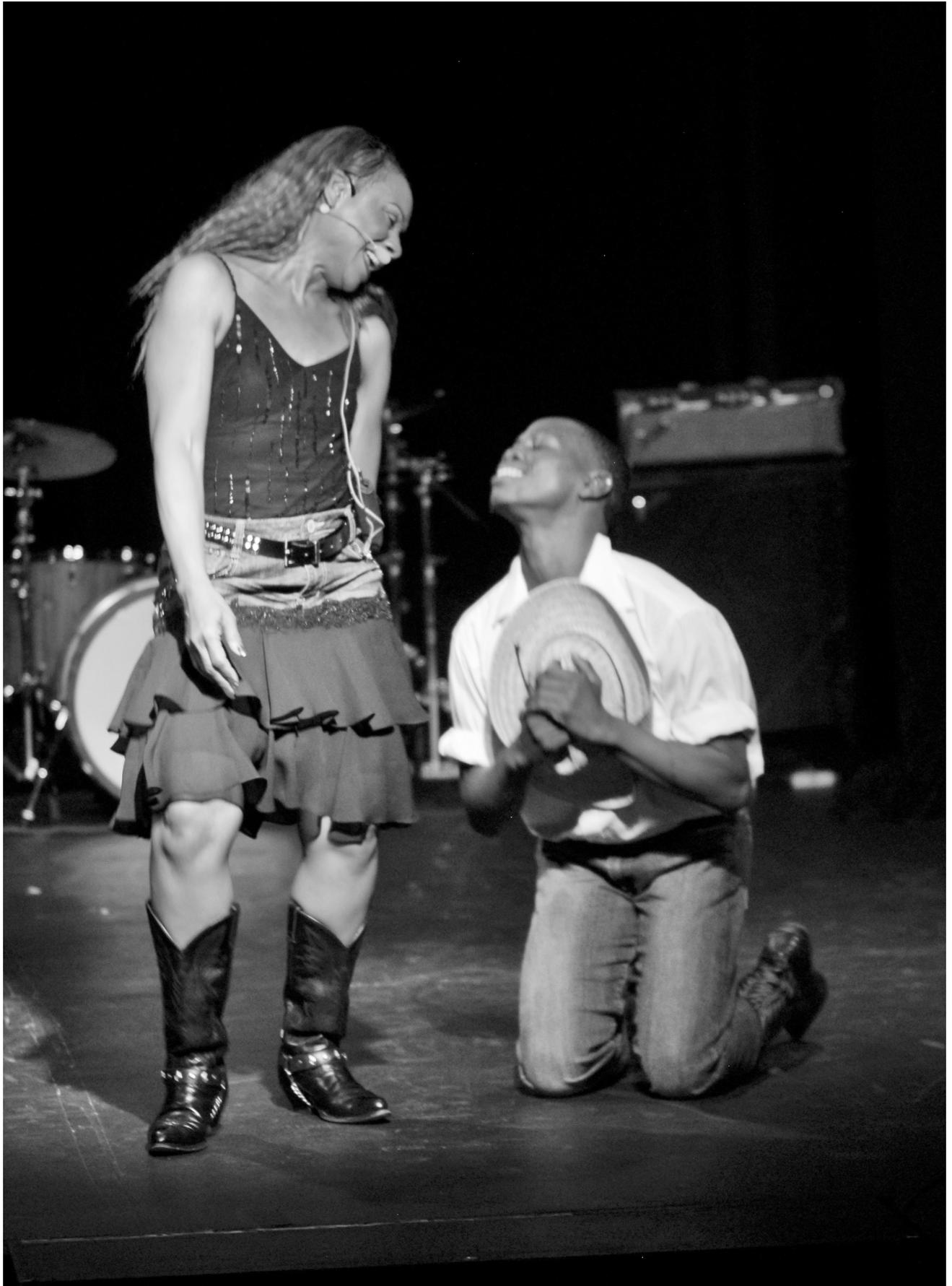
forefront in terms of your life?

PP: I understood that I needed to protect my girls. I had no intentions of taking them on the road. But there was the spark that was always in the back of my head concerning it. I was writing poems and writing something that was indicative of me wanting to go into the music business, mainly from the songwriting side. I had just always held that close to my heart without making it public until my girls got older. Now, I always sung in my church choirs. My girlfriend and I—she was a teacher at one of the elementary schools. We used to go around to different elementary schools and high schools and try and teach a songwriting class. She was a wonderful pianist. Oftentimes I would sing with her husband. They had a jazz combo and I would sit in as a soloist. So I was quite mindful of my music capability, but I also knew that with two girls—that for me to make a commitment to this industry, in any kind of capacity, would just be overwhelming. It would be important that I would get them raised first.

CH: It seems as though you were still writing and still involved in that way. Was that your entrée into the music industry? Did you start from the writing standpoint? Or did you start as an artist?

PP: Everywhere I worked everybody remembered that I had this incredible love for music. I can remember I would always end up doing the Christmas parties with the band. I was always on stage, you know, so everybody knew





Petrella performing *18 Reasons to Live, Laugh, and Love* at the Carrie Hamilton Theatre in Pasadena, 2012.

that I had this desire. Once my oldest daughter entered college [and] my youngest daughter was a freshman, then I decided to become professional in the songwriting aspect. I thought it would be a better side for me as opposed to artist. I knew nothing about that side of the business. But the songwriting, you know, I was basing it more on my skills. So, [my husband] said, "OK, let's pitch it. Let's see what we can do." So, we started to do a demo, and it was hilarious. At first we thought we could just do it at home, you know, homemade demos. We had this little Casio and we would put the rug over my head and we would try to get the tracks together and we would record it. We really didn't realize how bad it was until we decided we would go to the Los Angeles Songwriter's Association convention. They would allow new writers to come and pitch to the industry. We had people there like Ike Turner, Michael Jackson had representatives, and it was just wonderful. I didn't realize how bad my demos were. We went the first year and I was a little bit embarrassed, but the next time I was much more prepared and I had started seeking others to help me do better demos.

CH: When did you get your break where songwriting is concerned?

PP: Well, it was a few years later. I had worked with bands and we had gone into studios and did demos. We had been pitching to the industry via any kind of way that we could. Because once we joined the Los Angeles Songwriting Association, it became very clear with all of the classes we were taking—they were very in tune with making sure that the songwriter understood about the copyright, how you go about pitching to artists and making sure that it was written for those people that you were trying to get to sing your songs. We did a lot of classes probably for two years. I guess I might have been songwriting professionally for about four or five years when I pitched a song to Nashville, simply because Los Angeles had been saying that most of the music I was pitching to them had a country undertone. They thought it would fit a lot better if I started pitching to more of a country producer and see what they thought about what I was writing. So I did and we would get a green sheet that would come to us via the songwriter's association once a month. Jack Gale

was there and he was getting ready to cut Kitty Wells. I wrote this song called "Living on a Shoestring" and pitched it to him. I was in Arizona when I received a phone call. This guy had a huge voice, "Hello." "Who is this?" "This is Petrella." "Well listen, I've got this demo and I need to know who's singing on this demo." I said, "Which one was it?" He said, "Something about living on love." Anyway, he says "I want to talk to you." I say, "About the song?" He says, "No, about you." And so that was the beginning of the conversation concerning me becoming a recording artist.

CH: So he calls and now he wants you not as just a songwriter, but as an artist. What was your reaction to that? What happened after that phone call?

PP: Well, it was flattering. I mean, he was just like, "I can make you a star," you know, "la di da di dah." And I'm thinking all the time that he's a country music producer. He has Playback Records, which was one of the largest independents at that time in Nashville, and I'm amazed at all of this.

PETRELLA

P2-002

LET'S STOP PRETENDING

P-2 PRODUCTIONS

27066 COLUMBIA COURT

HAYWARD, CA 94542

1987

P.C.

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Side A
LET'S STOP PRETENDING
 Side B
Instrumental Version

LET'S STOP PRETENDING

Written and Produced by
 Petrella Pollefeyt

Arranged by
 Jeannine O'Neal

Executive Producers:
 George Pollefeyt
 Harry Bonner

Editor:
 Barbara Kyger

Coordinator:
 Carrie Johnson

Special Thanks:

...to my many friends and relatives across the USA especially those in VA, AR, FL, MO, MI, TX, and CA.

...to my husband and daughters who put up with my long hours in the studio...I love you.

Recorded and mixed at
 Tiki Sound Studios, San Jose, CA.

"Please Turn Over"
 for Words to Music

Cassette insert from Petrella's first songwriter demo, 1987.



Petrella with Arsenio Hall (Lorre Entertainment)

CH: I guess this question could apply to your move to Nashville or even prior, as an African American woman. What were your experiences being a country artist? Were there others like you walking around? Were there any concerns or issues about marketing you and all of those kinds of things? Did those issues come up at all as an African American woman trying to be a country singer?

PP: Absolutely. Everything. All of the above and unbeknownst to us. I had never seen it as a factor, because I'm from a tourist town. So the difference in

color had never been an issue. When Hot Springs went into desegregation it was done so soon because nobody wanted to interrupt tourists, you know to be honest about it. So, even though Little Rock had all of the news about the [Little Rock] Nine and everything, Hot Springs just didn't have that. But when I did get to Nashville, I went to the Country Music Hall of Fame and I met a gentleman by the name of John Rumble, who is a historian. And I asked him, "Do you have any African American women who have been in country music, who have been writers, recording artists or

anything that I can read about?" And he brought out an envelope [and] says, "This is all we have on African American women." He said, "Of course we have Charley Pride," and he was a part of their exhibit. I had read a lot about Charley Pride, but he was more of a recording artist, rather than a singer-songwriter. That's what I was looking for. So I listened to Ruby Falls, and she was a gorgeous African American woman who was a writer and she had also toured with Ernest Tubb and the Troubadours. Ernest Tubb had one of the largest independent record stores in Nashville, and he also had Midnight Jamboree and everything, so I felt like Ruby Falls was a very legitimate source. She had unfortunately died before her career really got going. She had one album and I don't know if it ever got distributed, but she wrote very well and the vocals were just outstanding. So I kind of carried her in my pocketbook as my good luck charm and I took off running.

Now, I had heard of an African American woman in Nashville. It was someone that they talked about [known as] the "Brown Cow." They also talked about Linda Martell. I heard about Rosetta Tharpe, Big Mama Thornton. But to actually see them in their environment, [that's what] I'm looking for, so I know that environment. I was just trying to figure out how to go about this as professional as I could. So I chose people like Bonnie Raitt. I knew she wasn't pure country, she was a little bit on the edge. So that's pretty much what I did and I made a commitment to Ruby and to John Rumble when I was at the Country Music Hall of Fame, that I would do better than Ruby. I would try to really lift her up by making sure that I would leave a legacy—not [just one] envelope—but plenty for them to display about an African American woman who had actually succeeded in the country music business.

CH: So, other than Ruby Falls and Bonnie Raitt, were there other influences whether inside country music or outside that heavily influenced you as a musician?

PP: When I got ready to work on my

vocals I borrowed from Shirley Caesar on the gospel side. I borrowed from Diana Ross so far as how I wanted to [project an] image, Tina Turner, Wynonna Judd, Patsy Cline who is one of my favorite country artists. I borrowed how I would like to write my songs which would be more storytelling. I got that from Dolly Parton. So I was using all these women. I love Reba McEntire in concert. I was pulling from everywhere because I had to make and mold myself from zero.

CH: So when did you actually go about getting your own label and how did that happen?

PP: Well this was in 2000. I had cut three songs in Nashville [and] I had another group of lawyers who wanted to try and seek another record deal. Everybody's seeking majors, right? So they had me cut "Papa Did a Rain Dance," "I Miss You," and I can't think of the other one. But anyway, a gentleman by the name of Anthony Smith, who is an African American producer and he had also produced Donna Summer—they thought he would be a good producer we could pitch to the majors, as opposed to trying to go through an entertainment company. That we might get the majors to put up all the money, right? So we went in and I cut the three songs [but] they passed on them. At that point [we had] probably [spent] ten or twenty thousand dollars. So, I said, "Petrella, Petrella, Petrella, maybe it just isn't meant for you to be a major artist." I had toured all over small towns . . . I had founded a non-profit. I had so much that I was doing and I was very satisfied, to be honest. So when I came to California in 2000, I had a really good friend, John Smith, [who] was a black attorney here in Pasadena and he was from Little Rock, Arkansas. He invited us over and we were talking about finishing up this album. We had done these songs in Nashville and I had acquired another producer here in California, David Sheffler. David and I had done a lot of demos together in the Los Angeles Songwriter's Association. So he said, "Petrella, you're a big girl. You've done a lot of this business and you and your husband are pretty astute." He says,



Autographed photo of Petrella.

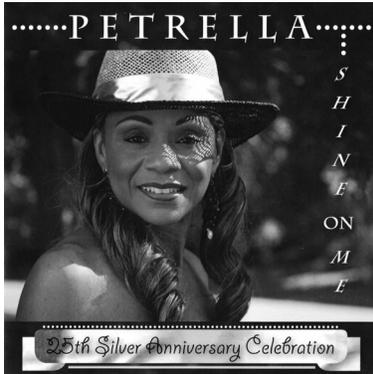
"Why don't you just let me do your own label." He said, "Why don't you just try and see how that works for you." And I have to say, it's been a blessing.

CH: I wanted to talk a little bit about the term "country-soul" and what that term means to you and how you think it relates to the music that you've been producing. Or was it some sort of marketing term that people decided to use for you?

PP: Well, you're absolutely right. When

I was pitching songs which got me the record deal there was no such thing as "country-soul." It was just country. This was the first single, "Blues Stay Away From Me." But when they got ready to put the album together I think that they were talking to George Albert of *Cashbox* magazine, [which like] *Billboard* had all their categories and everything. They ended up making a division. Absolutely. I thought it was very nice to make a division for just me!

— Transcribed by Christina Harrison



Featured Collection

Petrella Pollefeyt: First Lady of Country Soul

Vocalist and songwriter Petrella Pollefeyt (performing simply as “Petrella”) has worked almost 30 years in a genre where few African Americans have received major recognition in the form of album sales or industry awards—country music. Growing up in Hot Springs, Arkansas, Petrella listened to and performed music from multiple genres including blues, country, gospel, and soul. This eclectic musical environment encouraged her to forge her own brand of musical expression that she now calls “country soul.” In the early 1990s she gained national attention with her single, “I Found Somebody,” which reached No. 1 for the week of April 17, 1993, and spent 14 weeks on the Top 100 Country Singles chart in the industry publication, *Cashbox* magazine. She has toured and performed in venues all over the country and has been nominated for several awards including New Female Vocalist of the Year by the Nashville Tracker Magazine. In 2003, she received the Golden Microphone Award at the Airplay International King Eagle Awards.

Petrella, now referred to as the “First Lady of Country-Soul,” has generously donated numerous materials to the AAAMC which document her career. The sound recordings in the collections include 45 rpm discs, audiocassettes,

and CDs of her demos and commercial releases, many of which were issued on her own label, Garden Mound Records. The collection begins in the late 1980s with her earliest recordings—a songwriting demo “Let’s Stop Pretending” (1987) on audiocassette and a cover of “Blues Stay Away from Me” (1988) on a 45 rpm single. The launch of her solo career is also documented in the release of her first album, initially under the title *Petrella* (1988) on Playback Records, and later reissued on her own label under the title *Coun-try-ver-sial* (1992). After a break in recording during the 1990s, Petrella returned to the studio and released several albums including *Papa Did a Rain Dance* (2000), *Walk Around Heaven* (2006), *100 Proof Woman* (2007), and *Shine on Me* (2013). Beyond Petrella’s full-length projects, the audiovisual materials in her collection also document her many philanthropic efforts. In 2001, she released the CD *Find a Cure* to support the Lupus Foundation of America. She has continued to work with her organization, Dreams of the Heartland, even recording an album by that title in 2005 to raise money to support other nonprofit organizations and initiatives. Her dedication to “giving back” to the community is also highlighted through a DVD of her performance in a public school to help raise money for local food banks.

Print materials, including flyers and posters, also document Petrella’s performances and CD releases. These promotional items showcase her multiple performance contexts—concerts, benefits, and original one-woman shows such as *18 Reasons to Live, Laugh, and Love*. Clippings from newspapers and

magazines document her engagements across the U.S. as well as her work with community organizations like the Arkansas Arts Council. Petrella’s personal papers also offer a glimpse into her career as a songwriter through sheet music, lead sheets, and a songwriting notebook indicating the inner-workings of her creative processes, while contracts provide detail on the financial mechanisms that are crucial to a professional career in music.

One of the most unique features of this collection is the costumes that Petrella donned during her shows. Cowboy hats, colorful cowboy (or perhaps cowgirl) boots, and custom made skirts indicate the elements of style and adornment that this artist prioritized in her live performances. The inclusion of these items may help researchers construct a more holistic image of Petrella as a creative artist.

As an African American performing a genre largely dominated by white American vocalists, Petrella has been sensitive to the difficulties African Americans have faced in “breaking into” the business of country music. Recognizing the uniqueness of her position, she has also collected a few materials that explore African American involvement in the creation and production of country music. By donating her collection to the AAAMC, Petrella has fueled opportunities for research, particularly from a woman’s perspective. We look forward to continuing to increase our collections in this subject area.

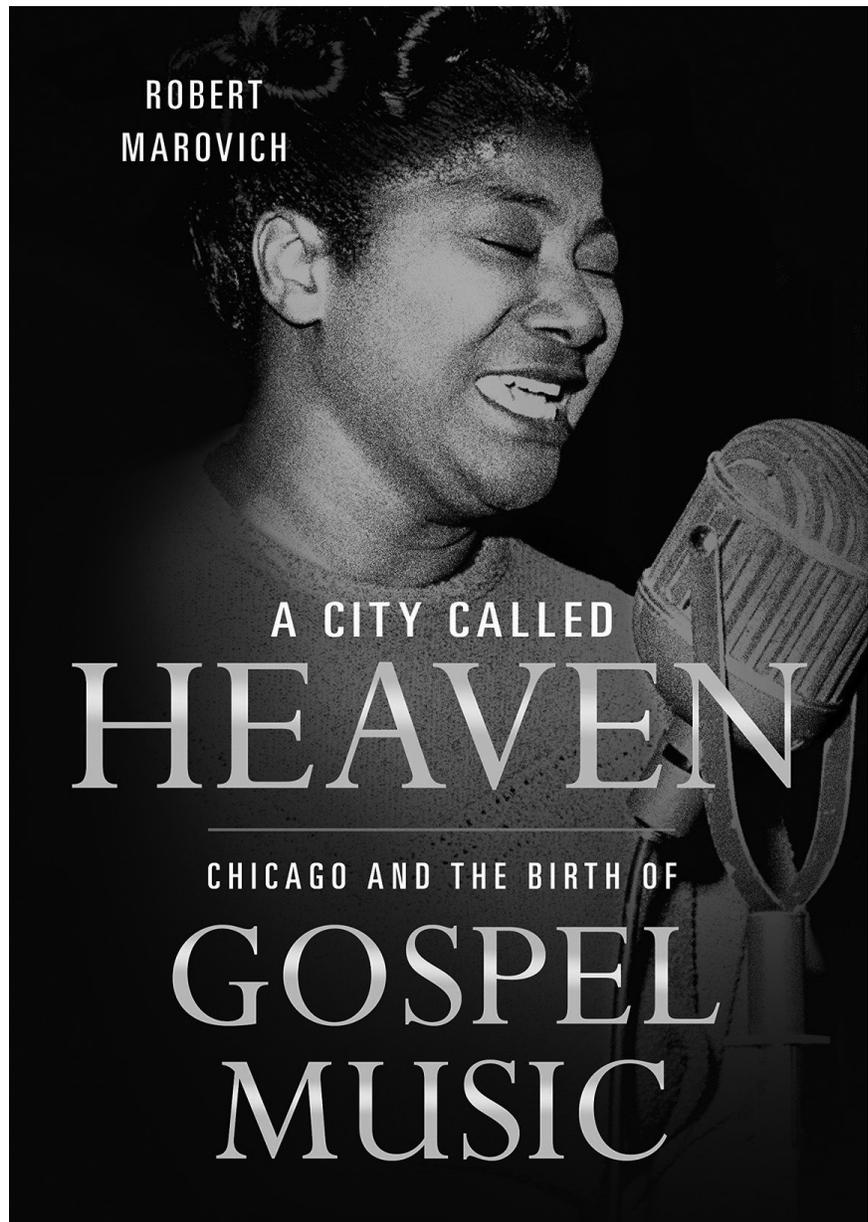
— Raynetta Wiggins

AAAMC and Robert Marovich Team Up to Preserve Gospel Music History

On April 28, 2015, AAAMC graduate assistant Raynetta Wiggins conducted a lengthy interview with Robert Marovich regarding his work in the gospel music industry, his research culminating in a new book on the history of gospel music in Chicago, and the preservation partnership with the AAAMC. Portions of the interview were used in the following article.

When young Notre Dame graduate Robert Marovich migrated to Chicago, Illinois, from northern Indiana in 1985, he had little idea what awaited him in the “windy city.” While he was a music lover from a young age, his experience with gospel music was tangential at best. Even after his first encounter with gospel music in college via Chicago’s Cosmopolitan Church of Prayer’s radio broadcast, his focus remained on popular music. As Marovich clarifies, “I was still collecting doowop and jazz and soul and blues and all that. And the only gospel I had, I think [was] one Mahalia Jackson 78 and that cassette of the Cosmopolitan Church Broadcast.” While pursuing a career as a professional grant writer in the mid-1990s, he decided to further explore gospel music—listening to, collecting, and reading about this dynamic music genre.

By the end of the 1990s, gospel music had become more than a hobby for Marovich—it was his passion. Having amassed a sizeable collection of traditional gospel recordings comprised of artists ranging from Mahalia Jackson to the Davis Sisters and lesser known artists, Marovich was moved to share this music with the public. In 2001, he began hosting a local radio show called “Gospel Memories” at Loyola University’s WLWU-FM that celebrates the traditional gospel of the twentieth century. While it began as a once a month stint, his show eventually moved to a more prominent airtime with a one hour timeslot at 10:00 a.m. every Saturday morning. His work with radio led to greater exposure to the gospel music industry. Marovich became an active member of the Gospel Music Workshop of America and an officer in his local Gospel Announcer’s Guild chapter. Other opportunities soon followed. He explained, “Notoriety of



the [radio] show in the gospel music community inspired the creation of the gospel music review website *Black Gospel Music Blog* in 2004 . . . I would have artists come up to me and say, ‘Can I send you my CD to play on your show?’ and I thought, ‘I don’t play contemporary gospel.’ I felt bad because [I would] be serviced with these CDs . . . [and I would] feel so bad taking them from people and I can’t do anything with them . . . And I started [the blog] just because I wanted to be honest. If I’m going

to take your CD, I’m going to write about it [even] if I can’t play it on the radio.” On its 10th anniversary he renamed the site *The Journal of Gospel Music*, as he was ready to take his work with the publication in new directions.

While pursuing his love of gospel music, Marovich has also maintained a career as a full-time grant writer. However, in 2006 after a new job appointment did not meet his expectations, he made the decision to leave his job and pursue writing a book

“I always say this was like my love letter to Chicago gospel... I want to show the full spread of it...”

about gospel music. He first discussed his ideas with Anthony Heilbut, author of *The Gospel Sound* (1971). “I had been thinking of doing a book on the Roberta Martin Singers. [Heilbut] said, ‘I think you would be hard pressed to fill a volume about the Roberta Martin Singers. Why don’t you just write about Chicago gospel? It’s never been done.’” Building on his knowledge and experiences in gospel music, Marovich actively began researching the development of gospel music in Chicago with a rather clear agenda: “I wanted to settle this question once and for all, [about] where gospel music was born. [Many cities] claim it, but I knew it was here [in Chicago] . . . And I didn’t see anybody [else] writing it. And I thought well maybe this is what I should be doing. Maybe this is my legacy. . . You know, that I’ve done something significant to recognize the people who labored for decades in gospel and didn’t get their just desserts. Or just even the ones that were perhaps more famous that really haven’t had much written about them.”

Recognizing the scarcity of detailed scholarship on the subject, he would come to rely on two primary sources for the book—interviews with gospel practitioners of previous generations and documentation of gospel music in the local African American newspaper, *Chicago Defender*. He prioritized crafting a holistic account of African American social life and the development of this music. With passion he states, “I always say this was like my love letter to Chicago gospel. . . I want to show the full spread of it. Not just the quartet. The quartet, that’s an important piece, but it’s just a piece. It’s the singers, the groups, the quartets, the choirs, the publishers, the songwriters, the record company owners, the pastors, the churches. And I really wanted it to be a social history of Bronzeville.” Thus his eight year journey of research and writing included conducting almost 60 interviews with prominent pastors, vocalists, and relatives of gospel legends who have passed. While he was unable to interview gospel greats such as original Soul Stirrer Rev. Leroy Taylor or Albertina Walker before their passing, the interviews provided Marovich with the



Sallie Martin Singers, Kenneth Woods Jr. at piano (early 1960s). (Courtesy of Robert Marovich)

opportunity to learn more about lesser known artists as well as to confirm or undermine information he had gathered from written resources. The end result was a 488 page volume that records a 50 year history of gospel music in Chicago.

A City Called Heaven: Chicago and the Birth of Gospel Music (University of Illinois Press, 2015) is divided into two sections: “Roots” which spans from the 1920s to the late 1930s, and “Branches” which examines gospel’s evolution from the 1940s to 1970. In a candid, yet straightforward tone, Marovich crafts a narrative about this Christian community of musicians who would transform their ordinary

circumstances into an extraordinary expression of faith. The substance of the text rests on five main arguments: 1) Gospel music was a means for African American migrants to establish their place within Chicago’s African American church and social communities because it allowed them to combine their southern worship styles with urban musics and sensibilities; 2) Gospel music transcended denominational boundaries while also being influenced by unique denominational styles; 3) The gospel music industry was birthed from the entrepreneurial ingenuity of often fiscally oppressed African American migrants; 4) Gospel music would be periodically altered

by younger artists; and 5) There were six historic “tipping points” or events that helped establish gospel music, including Thomas A. Dorsey’s founding of the first modern gospel chorus at Ebenezer Baptist

and valuable resource for gospel music scholarship as they offer first person accounts from individuals who witnessed and/or participated in the first generations of gospel music in Chicago. The interviews



Gay Sisters, Geraldine at piano (1950s) (Courtesy of Robert Marovich)

church and the founding of (Sallie) Martin and (Kenneth) Morris Music Studio, the largest African American owned gospel publishing enterprise.

Upon the completion and publication of the text, Marovich partnered with the Archives of African American Music and Culture to preserve all of the interviews that he conducted over the course of his research. The Bob Marovich Collection features 65 audiocassette tapes of recorded interviews that will be digitized as part of Indiana University’s Media Digitization and Preservation Initiative. Corresponding transcripts are also included in the collection. The interviews are a unique

are largely oral histories that focus on specific details (such as dates and locations) as well as social experiences of gospel music among African Americans Christians living in Chicago.

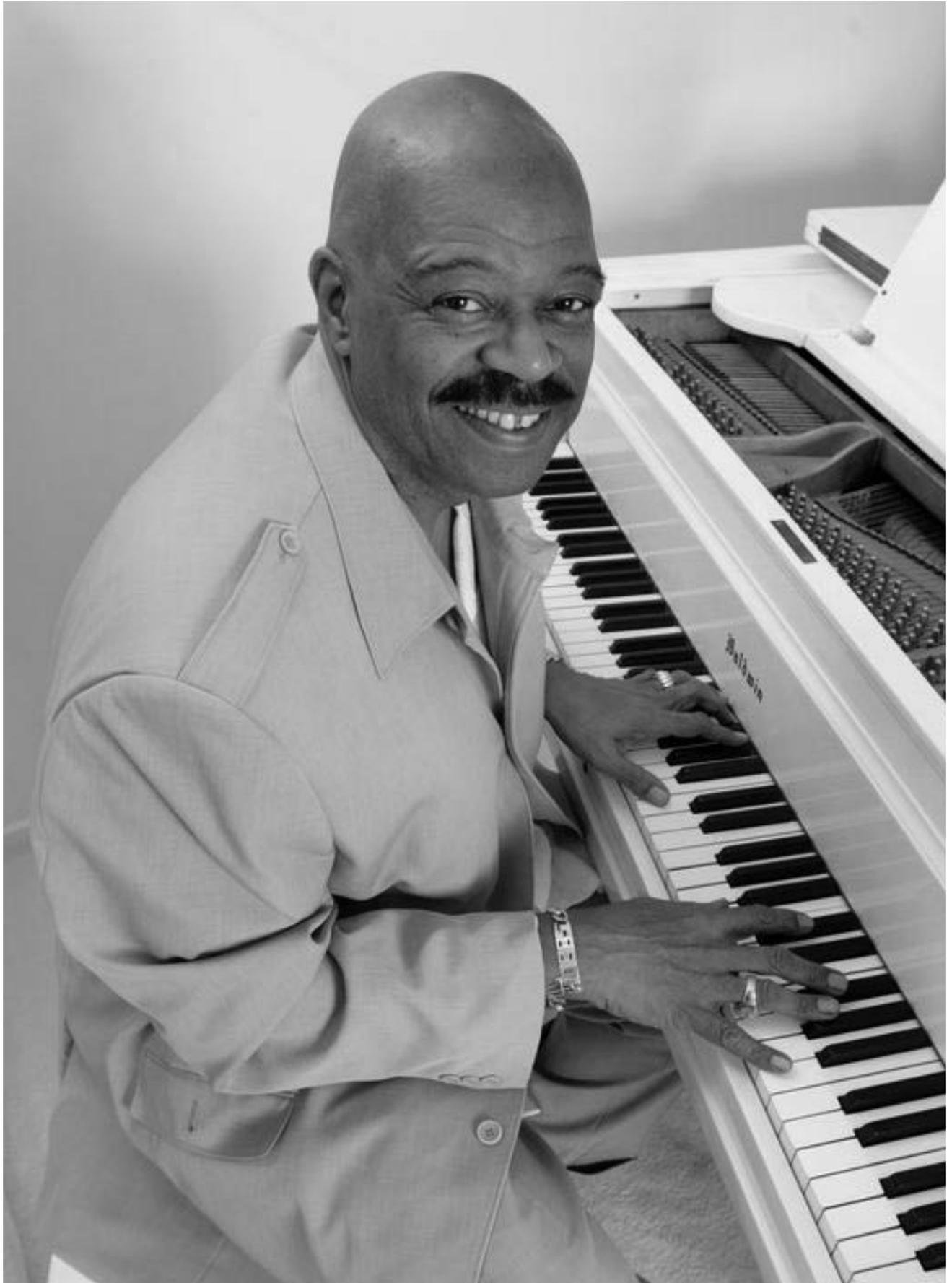
Featured interviewees include DeLois Barrett Campbell, a member of the Roberta Martin Singers, as well as her family trio The Barrett Sisters. In conversation with Marovich she discusses her experiences performing around Chicago and internationally. The interview of Geraldine Gay Hambric with her brothers Gregory and Donald Gay—who also performed as part of the family group Preacher Gay (Donald) and the Gay Sisters (Evelyn,

Mildred, and Geraldine)—includes detailed discussions about crafting their signature sound and the gospel music industry, as well as the process of recording some of their most well-known songs like “God Will Take Care of You” (1951). Marovich was particularly impressed with the interview of Rev. Clay Evans, founder of Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church (1950). “He was the one I was the most in awe [of] because I knew his history. I knew what he had done. I knew how important he was. . . . He was able to give me a sense of what it felt like to be in the community of gospel singers at that time. He confirmed a lot of things that I’d read before about Fellowship. But just to hear his stories about how the church was founded gave me a kind of reference point for how other churches were founded.” Equally significant were the interviews of Indianapolis native Kenneth Woods, Jr., former accompanist of Sallie Martin and Joe May, and Eugene Smith, one of the original Roberta Martin Singers. These individuals provided some of the most valuable information specifically regarding gospel music surrounding the World War II era.

Since Marovich began working on *A City Called Heaven* at least a dozen of the personalities interviewed have passed away, making this preservation effort of paramount importance. He is excited about partnering with the AAAMC as he explains, “I see this as an opportunity to have a repository of the voices of people who were part of the first three generations of gospel music. Singers and musicians whose voices, many of them [would be] lost already [if it were not] for these tapes. We can let others know. I think it’s important to share that [information] rather than just have it here in my closet. Because who knows, what somebody said in an interview may inspire somebody else to do further research. It may be just the information they need. And to know that that exists and it exists in a way that pays respect to those individuals and their contributions, I mean that’s a great legacy as well to have.”

The AAAMC has completed preliminary indexes for the interviews and we are working to make them available to the broader community of scholars and gospel music enthusiasts. Additional materials may be added to the collection as Marovich continues to research and write on gospel music in Chicago.

— Raynetta Wiggins



Tribute to Al “The Bishop” Hobbs (1943-2014)

Dr. Mellonee Burnim interviewed Al “The Bishop” Hobbs at his Indianapolis home on July 14, 2011, prior to his participation in the conference “Why We Sing: Indianapolis Gospel Music in Church, Community, and Industry” [see Liner Notes No. 16/2011-2012]. After migrating to Indianapolis from Louisville, Kentucky as a teenager, armed with a profound love of gospel music, Hobbs later became a member of the Gospel Music Workshop of America (GMWA), the 30,000 member organization founded by pioneering gospel composer and recording artist, Rev. James Cleveland. In 1971, Hobbs was one of the founders of the Gospel Announcers Guild within the GMWA. Upon Cleveland’s death in 1991, Hobbs became Chairman of the Board of Directors of GMWA, leading it to new heights. At the time of his own homegoing in 2014, Al Hobbs was Vice-Chairman of the GMWA under the leadership of Bishop Albert Jamison.

In the following abbreviated interview excerpts, Hobbs discusses his early drive to pursue gospel music as a profession, his meteoric rise through the ranks to the helm of WTLC radio, largely through his advancement of gospel music, and finally, his multiple leadership roles in the GMWA from 1971 to the time of his death in 2014.

The Call of Gospel Music (1950s)

AH: When my love for gospel really first evidenced in me, and I recognized that I had a desire to somehow professionally be connected with gospel music, I lived in Louisville, and I came from a good but economically challenged family. I was sitting on the steps of my house just having left a Caravans concert, and I never will forget it. I thought what a magnificent thing gospel music is. What a magnificent entity God is. I just want to do this. So firstly I thought I wanted to be a singer. I wanted to be in the Cadillac and go from city to city, singing on the chitlin’ circuit and that kind of thing. Then I moved [to Indianapolis] and I asked the Lord if he would allow me, as I grew to be professionally involved in gospel music. I didn’t want to be a fireman, I didn’t want to be a policeman, I didn’t want to be none of that. I just wanted to be into music.

WTLC Radio Career (1970-)

AH: I was singing, and then I had gone out to the radio station [WTLC] to do a concert because I had started to emerge as a young promoter, as well. So I went out to do a Shirley Caesar concert, and I asked those guys if I could cut my own spot. The spot ran on the air to promote her concert, and I went back out there to pay for the concert and the guy who was the manager called me and says, “How’d you like to work for us and do the gospel show?” And then I said, “Oh boy, that would be fun.”

And he then heard some way or another that I had quit [my job at 7-Eleven]. So he calls me and says, “Now, do I not only want you to be the gospel man, how would you like to sell broadcasting? How would you like to be an account executive?” Well, I knew I was going to need money. So I said, “I’ll come out and talk to you about it.” I came out and he sold me the bill of goods of life. “You’re going to work from eight to five. We’re going to have a clothing allowance for you down at Marty’s Menswear. You’re going to get these parts, and you’re going to get to go to the movies, and bang, bang, bang, bang.” I bought in, hook, line, and sinker. I worked that way one week, and from then on it was 24/7.

I was already gregarious. I didn’t have knowledge of the radio product under me at that time but I was a very quick learner and I was learning quickly. You know, how to position radio and position what we had. As I replaced the absence of knowledge with product knowledge, I was able to be even more successful. I didn’t just come in and smile and be handsome and talk with my strong voice. I actually had knowledge of how I could help you do a greater, more profitable business, or earn greater profits from the African American community, because ’TLC specifically targeted that community. So, I became very quickly the number one sales guy there, and quite honestly, because I had the voice, a lot of people trusted in my production as well.

So I became very self-taught in creating production and spots and other kinds of things. At one time, I actually sold and voiced about seventy percent of the fare that was on ’TLC of the advertising revenues that came through.

After I was there three weeks I did take on the gospel show. I was dubbed by Tom Mathis as “The Bishop of the Airwaves.” That’s where Al “The Bishop” Hobbs came from. I was born in a time when there were radio handles, as they called it. There was Spiderman, and this guy or that guy. And mine became Al “The Bishop” Hobbs. I went on the air from six to eight o’ clock. [Later] I asked for more time, so I went on at four.

MB: You mean starting at four a.m.?

AH: Yes. This showed you what my love of gospel was, and what my love for radio was. I asked for more time for gospel music because I didn’t think we had enough. My whole bit at that time was not to necessarily popularize it, because I was really frightened of the attention I got almost immediately. Like I said, I was young, I was an African American male, I was handsome, and I had a voice. I wasn’t great-looking, but I knew then if I was wanting to be successful in life, I had to work to put a package together that was impactful.

MB: How did you know you were popular? What were the signs of your popularity as a radio personality?

AH: When people called the radio station for a salesman, they asked for me. I actually did all of that sales work for the commission off the gospel sales in particular. For the first three or four years I never went to bed on Saturday night, because I had the kind of voice that didn’t have very many highs in it, and if I’d go to bed I was like a frog when I would wake up. So on Saturday nights, a few of us would always get together—and Delores [“Sugar”] Poindexter, my coworker—we were friends at the time and gospel comrades. So we would do our

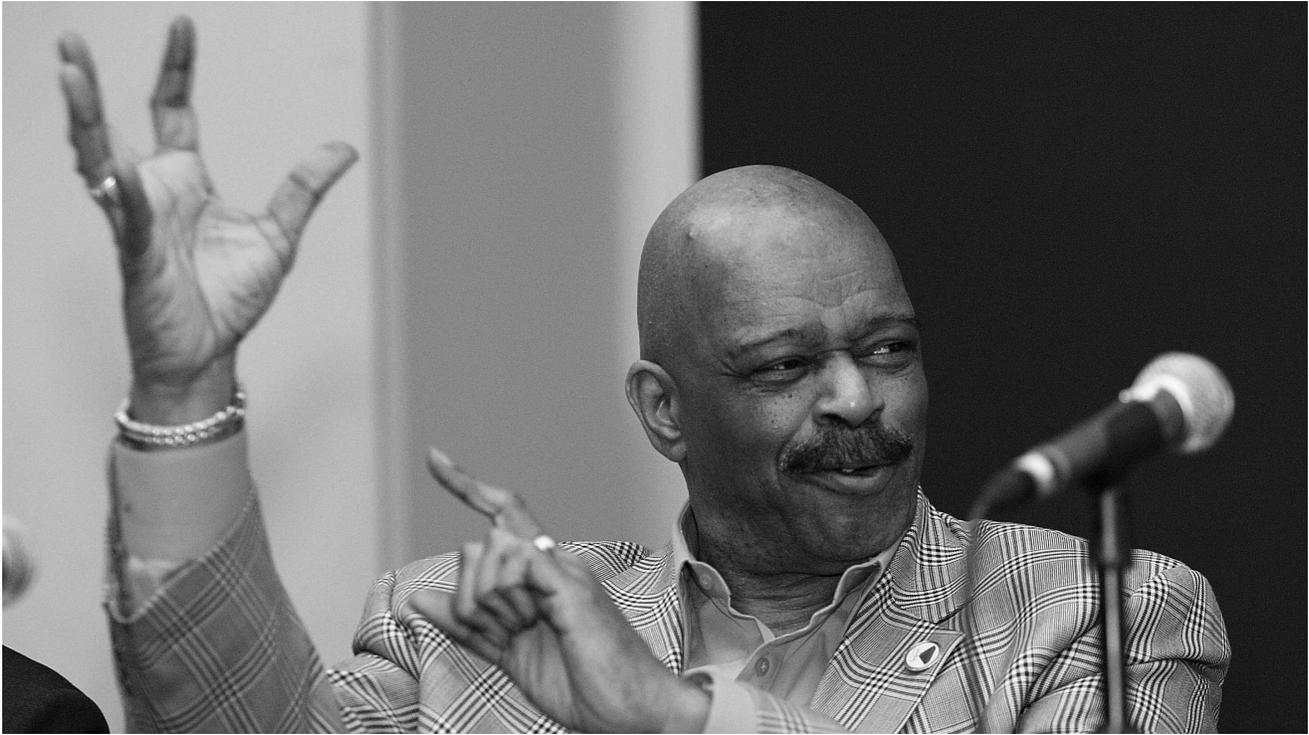


Photo by Milton Hinnant

fellowship, and she would stay up with me, for the most part, and I would be fresh at four o'clock in the morning. And then I would get out of there and do all the assorted things I had to work on until ten. And then I set up a program that I did live, because I did the *Gospel Spotlight* program live.

In '73, I became sales manager, which is another sign of impact and success in the industry. The general sales manager left after a few months, and they gave me a shot at the job. So I became the general sales manager, and then when we moved to Meridian Street, which would have been '74 or somewhere along in there. In '76, I became general manager. In '81, I became vice president and general manager. And I remained there until '92, until I was out by the longer lines of development on so many fronts. The civic development, the development in gospel music, the impact of bringing Sugar on and turning the morning show over to her. I moved on to develop *The Love Express*, which was the broader-based show. The morning show targeted the church community, with announcements with the kind of outreach that would endear, even a radio station. If I'm announcing and having your program be successful, and I'm not charging you any money, guess what? I'm your friend, right?

So I had already become a friend to the gospel community, and Sugar had as well, because I basically had started with her, and she was doing my announcements. And then I opened up the lines for dedications, because I knew interacting was the way to go early on. If you could hear your name on Sunday morning and me calling it, you would listen to me. We started that kind of program, and like I said, when I became sales manager and I became general manager, I said, "Well, why would I keep her development down just because I want to do all the gospel? That's not it." So I'll go on into developing *The Love Express*, which is the afternoon show. And she had the morning show. So she took the morning show, and she became "Queen of the Morning," Delores Poindexter did, and *Love Express* was the afternoon show. That was the show where you might have been looking at television, but you had me on, too. It was that kind of thing. I was fortunate enough to get that kind of welcome into the hearts and homes of so many people in Indianapolis, and I did that show for twenty-two years straight. I did miss a Sunday or two because of illness, but for the most part I never missed the real days: all the holidays; as a matter of fact I had twenty-two Christmases in a row on the air that I gave up. And I didn't have to, because I was the general manager

and the vice president. What a rewarding thing to be a part of your Christmas! I don't even know you, but the Lord gave me the opportunity to somehow or another be a part of your day. To share whatever joys you were experiencing, whatever you went through, and be a part of your life on an ongoing basis. Weekly. It was just a tremendous thrill to me.

Vision & Community Impact

"TLC enjoyed a unique place. And I think—I submit humbly—that I probably had a role to play with that. I really wanted the property to mean more to the African American community than just some place where they could find some "booty shakin," you know, "love making" kind of music. I wanted us to be positioned as a property that had the quality of life first in mind. Before our commercial success, before wealth and gains, and I was fortunate in that my owner, Frank Lloyd, felt the same way. He wanted that radio property to say, "If I can't make it, and I'm probably the most uniquely positioned African American in town as it relates to the establishment right now, what other Black has a chance?" So that was kind of his posture, and he gave me the carte blanche to go forth. I'd go forth and do what I needed to do in order to bring that

kind of honor and that kind of positioning to the radio property. That positioning, which made "TLC at that time... if you didn't hear it on "TLC then it wasn't happening. That was a part of the thrust. The other thrust was if, in essence, we said it was worthy, it happened. Or if we said it wasn't worthy, it also didn't happen. So that was a very unique little power place. So I recognized that early on and I tried to use that for the positive, and I challenged the establishment. I did editorials, challenged the police department, challenged downtown. Whenever there were atrocities and mismanagement of issues that became very negative, as far as impact on African Americans, I was always there with a voice.

Gospel Music Workshop of America (GMWA)

AH: 1967. '67—the dream; '68—the first Convention. '70 was the third Convention, and that's where I entered. I had had the invitation from Reverend [James] Cleveland, whom I had known for a long time before that, to come and be a part of that.

I told James, "No, thank you." And the third year I showed up and I went through the Convention and I knew then and there that was the place for me. Everything I loved about the music industry and gospel music was right there in that convention.

MB: What were those things?

AH: Well one, it was a place that opened up platforms where gospel could be heard. That was the first thing. Then it had an educational division, which was our academic division; and it had the performance division. And James was the pied piper of attraction for performance, and then those of us who were there got a chance to...the aspiring got a chance to be with the accomplished. That was the real unique thing about it. I loved that the motto is "The place where everybody is somebody." I loved that. Then I loved the whole creative energy of those who labored to bring gospel music and the delivery of that music. I loved the songwriters, because I was an aspiring songwriter and arranger. I loved the unique nuances of language, where gospel folk could rag you out and you wouldn't even know it. It was just those

special nuances that were indigenous to gospel folk. I loved the fact that I was able to participate in the rehearsals and all the this and that, and that's where I learned to eat after everything. Every meeting, every rehearsal gospel people would go eat. That's just the way it is. So all of the nuances I liked, plus I liked the whole mass choir.

MB: So initially you told Cleveland no, but then, three years later you join Cleveland, and then you moved all the way to the top. So tell us...

AH: I was the first chair after him. I was the first chairman of the convention; he was the founding president. I was a part of the committee that redrafted the constitution. You want me to tell you about that?

MB: Yes! We need all of this! Yes, I want you to tell us.

AH: I labored in GMWA after being there the first year, which was St. Louis; I went to Dallas, Texas for [my] year number two, which was 1971. In that time, there were eleven academic workshop classes, of which one was Radio Religious Announcers class. Of the few religious announcers that were there—there might have been twelve or thirteen—I, along with Ed Smith and a few others, sat in the room and we talked about the plight of the Black Radio announcer and the plight of gospel music in the system of radio.

So we were concerned about our lot; and the fact that we recognized that we were basically the stepchildren of radio. We were the ones that got the dog hours, the milk runs and the cat walks and the mail runs overnight. We were the ones that got those; there at six o'clock in the morning laboring over you and trying to get you up and get you ready for church and not get anything that looked like a decent salary. So we banded together; we said we need some kind of organization that can begin to address these things. And Ed Smith encouraged us because he knew if we could put that together inside the workshop it could certainly strengthen and be a blessing to the workshop. So, he became one of the organizers, as well as I, of the Gospel Announcers Guild.

MB: And so the radio announcers...

AH: So the Radio Announcers Guild was born. I wasn't a president; I was just what I said I was: I was a host of the first one. I think I did wind up... I was Treasurer. So I did become an officer of the first group.

MB: So when he [Cleveland] died, you were elected to become...

AH: When he died, I said, "Okay. The man is dead. He did not leave any clear leadership here." What they decided to do was to go into a moratorium on the election of officers; the board would jointly govern, Ed Smith would continue in his role as executive secretary, and we would then put the constitutional committee together to rework the constitution.

So we were able to get that done, and interestingly enough the election was the last thing on the plate, and Ed ran. They drafted me to run with it, which was just to my surprise big time, and Kenneth Ulmer—Bishop Ulmer. We were the three. And when they announced me, it was just unbelievable. I mean, I managed it well in the room and I humbled myself, I submerged myself in great humility, but inside I was about to bust because I could not imagine a little boy sitting on the back steps in the alley of Louisville, who wanted to be connected professionally with gospel music, was about to become the chairman of the largest gospel organization in the world. It brought out everything that I had always heard and learned and knew already for myself: that God was able to do anything. But it gave me a testimony that I will never be able to live up to probably, in that, here is what God can do.

MB: So your actual title then was...?

AH: Chairman of the Board. The first actual Chairman of the Board of Directors. And what I drove was five words: the will of the Board. That was the driving force that caused us to remain in existence: the will of the Board.

MB: So how long were you Chairman of the Board?

AH: I served for four years—two two-year terms.

— Mellonee V. Burnim

Hot Buttered Soul:

The Role of Foodways and Music Making in Building and Sustaining African American Communities

On October 27, 2014, the AAAMC explored the complex relationship between African American music and food through a panel and exhibit titled *Hot Buttered Soul: The Role of Foodways and Music Making in Building and Sustaining African American Communities*. Moderated by AAAMC director, Dr. Mellonee Burnim, the panel featured guest speaker Dr. Psyche Williams-Forson, Associate Professor in the Department of American Studies at the University of Maryland College Park, author of the book *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, & Power* (2006) and editor of *Taking Food Public: Redefining Foodways in a Changing World* (2012) with Carole Counihan. Presentations were also offered by Dr. Alisha Lola Jones, a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology (Assistant Professor beginning 2015-16), and Dr. Tyron Cooper, Assistant Professor in the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies and Director of the IU Soul Revue.

The event was organized in conjunction with the Indiana University College of Arts and Sciences 2014 Themester topic *Eat, Drink, Think: Food from Art to Science*. Through the panel and exhibit, the AAAMC initiated a conversation about the intersections of foodways and musical traditions that have served as cultural markers of identity for diverse African American communities across the United States. The goal of the panel was to interrogate and discover the complex of meanings that can be derived from the collective experience of sharing music and foodways that affirm, empower, and embrace African American humanity and creativity.

The Panel

Dr. Mellonee Burnim opened the panel discussion by recounting her experiences with African American foodways and music growing up in rural Texas, where she attended church homecomings that were defined by soul food feasts (prepared by the best cooks), spirited music from



Dr. Mellonee Burnim (Photo by Floyd Hobson III)

celebrated singers, and powerful preaching from a noted guest speaker. Her dialogue set the stage for Williams-Forson, whose presentation offered historical context on the intersections of these cultural expressions. She began by discussing the antebellum relationship between music and food exemplified by African American street vendors. She explained that in the midst of this unjust system of commerce, wherein African Americans were often regarded in a manner similar to the very commodities that they sold, musical street cries provided an outlet for African Americans to elevate themselves from lives of drudgery to lives of dignity.



Dr. Psyche Williams-Forson (Photo by Floyd Hobson III)

Williams-Forson went on to unpack the ways in which contemporary perspectives of African American foodways are, in fact, much more nuanced and complex than the dominant narrative would suggest. She clarified that the notion of “soul food” arose in the 1960s as part of a political objective

to identify and celebrate elements of black culture. During this period, “soul” became a moniker of all things black, inspiring writers like Amiri Baraka to celebrate “soul” food, music, dance, and art through their work (e.g. Baraka, *Home: Social Essays*, 1966). Williams-Forson concluded that African American foodways are such important and evocative elements of black culture because of their connection to “home” and to emotional wellbeing and comfort. Moreover, food, like music (sacred and secular), makes a powerful and diffuse locus of memory as it allows black men and women to engage with and create life affirming art.



Dr. Alisha Lola Jones (Photo by Floyd Hobson III)

Dr. Alisha Jones focused her presentation on food and music in African American Christian communities. In particular, she explored the notion of “fasting” or abstaining from food as a means of achieving spiritual transformation and subsequently indicating unity with other believers. Jones analyzed the gospel song “Peanut Butter and Jelly” (1983) by the family group The Truthettes, that recounts a young boy who attends a church service in which the preacher’s sermon moves him to become a Christian. When he returns home, he metaphorically reveals his change of heart by telling his mother that he is “so hungry.” After his mother offers a sandwich, he declines stating, “I don’t want no peanut butter and jelly, I want my soul to be saved.” Jones argued that the son’s rejection of the food offering signifies his spiritual transformation. Furthermore, this song

The Archives of African American Music and Culture Presents:

HOT BUTTERED SOUL

**The Role of Foodways & Musicmaking in Building
and Sustaining African American Communities**

Dr. Psyche Williams-Forson

(Dept. American Studies, University of Maryland College Park)

With Dr. Tyron Cooper

(Dept. African American and African Diaspora Studies)

& Dr. Alisha Jones

(Dept. Folklore and Ethnomusicology)

**October 27
4:30PM**

**Neal Marshall
BCC Grand Hall**

**Followed by
Soul Food Tasting
& Exhibit Opening
in Bridgwaters
Lounge**



thēm·es·ter
Eat, Drink, Think: Food from Art to Science
Fall 2014
IU College of Arts and Sciences

(Poster designed by Lisa Haviat)



(Exhibit photos by Raynetta Wiggins)



celebrates African American Christians' communal practice of fasting, or abstaining from food, in order to attain a higher level of spirituality.

Finally, Dr. Tyron Cooper discussed the integration of soul music and soul food as 1) historical facilitators of diverse social interaction, 2) signifiers of black identity, and 3) vehicles of improvisation used to negotiate black life. He referenced songs from three different time periods in the 20th century to illustrate each of his main points, beginning with Louis Jordan's "Saturday Night Fish Fry" (1949) that describes a weekly gathering in which both food and music are prevalent and elemental to the event. Cooper highlighted the ways that the multi-layered musical elements mirror the multifaceted personalities and characters introduced within the narrative of the song. He then turned his discussion to Rufus Thomas' "Soul Food" (1970) as a prime example of the black cultural awareness that defined the late 1960s and 1970s. Written as a 12-bar blues that celebrates such food choices as spare ribs and catfish, "Soul Food" becomes a metaphor for black identity in both style and lyrics. Concluding with an examination of the hip hop song "Soul Food" (1995) by Goodie Mob, Cooper suggested that the lyrics chronicle the history and function of soul food and music in shaping black consciousness. In particular, he argued that these expressions have provided a foundation upon which African Americans build and improvise to satisfy their contemporary needs.



Dr. Tyron Cooper (Photo by Floyd Hobson III)

The Exhibit

Following the panel discussion, the AAAMC hosted a soul food tasting reception that accompanied the opening of the *Hot Buttered Soul* exhibit. The exhibit was curated by Raynetta Wiggins and



Left to right: Dr. Psyche Williams-Forsen, Raynetta Wiggins, Dr. Alisha Jones (Photo by Floyd Hobson III)

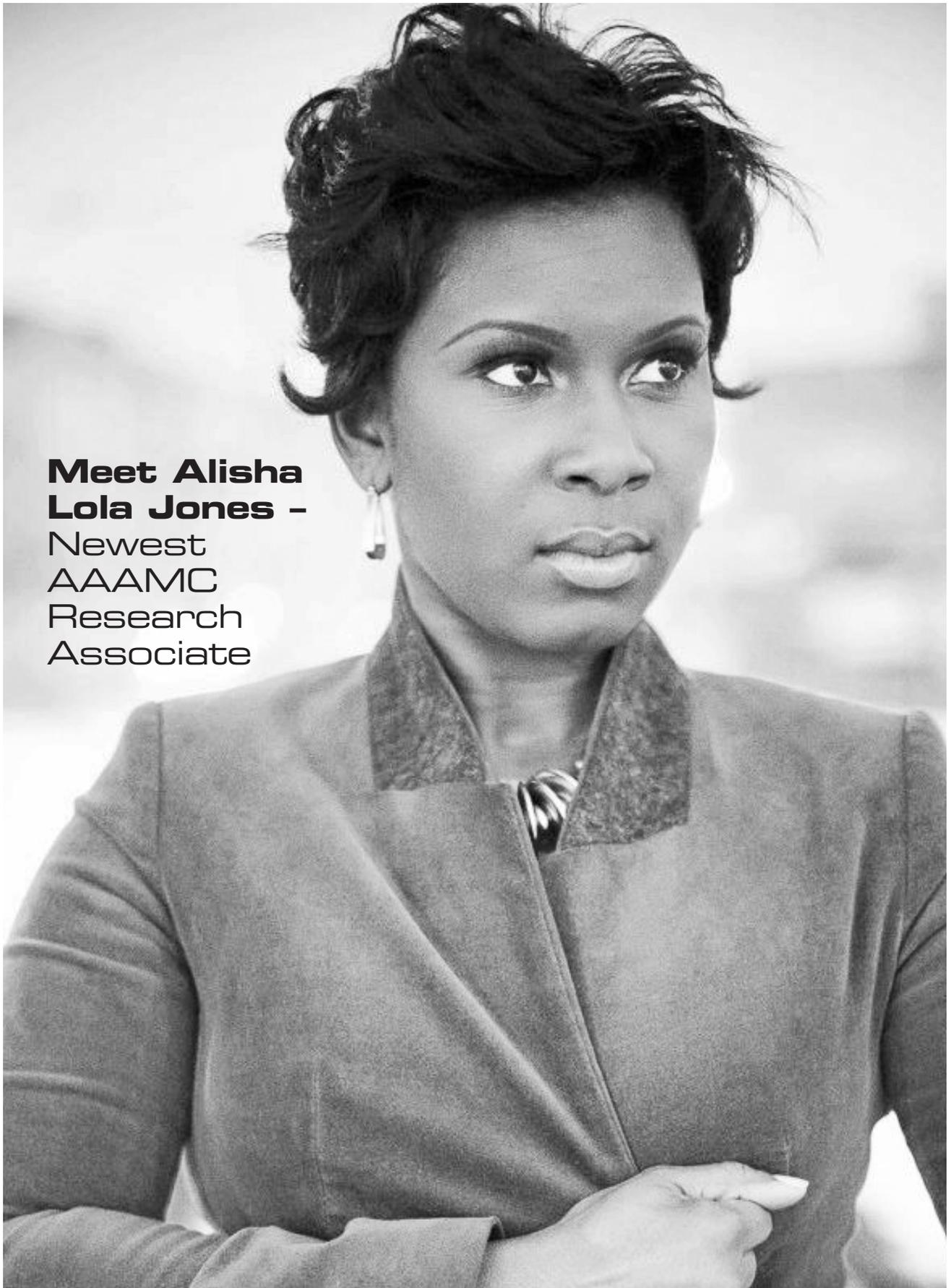
Brenda Nelson-Strauss with assistance from graduate assistant Christina Harrison. Using photographs, album covers, cookbooks, and recordings from the AAAMC collections, the exhibit highlighted four themes concerning the intersections of food and music. The first section, "The Chitlin' Circuit: Food and Music on the Move," surveyed the complex comingling of food and music within African American segregated life in the South (specifically Memphis, TN and New Orleans, LA) and the Midwest (Chicago, IL and Indianapolis, IN). Key performers, performance venues, restaurants, and "roadside joints" along the circuit were also featured. The second section, "Get Down!: Food and Music in African American Social Life," looked more intimately at the social spaces that African Americans have frequented, including fish frys, rent parties, and even family reunions. Food and music have been equally situated as definitive to the cultural experiences of fun, friendship, kinship, and celebration within these arenas.

The third section of the exhibit, "The Welcome Table: Spiritual Engagement and Social Commentary," addressed the ways that African American foodways have often been used as sociopolitical devices to establish group identity and assert African American humanity. In particular, the section explored ways in which African American communities of faith (i.e. Christians and Muslims) as well as

popular African American musicians create and prepare food as a means of celebrating their cultural and spiritual vitality. The fourth and final component, "Food for Thought: African American Food Culture as Metaphor" presented prevalent food metaphors in song lyrics and music making. While examples of this phenomenon abound across genres, the exhibit focused on the blues and double entendre, "brown sugar" and "chocolate" as metaphors for black love, the "fatback beat" in funk music, and African American food and jazz connections.

The exhibit was installed in the Bridgwaters Lounge of the Neal Marshall Black Culture Center on October 22, 2014 and remained on display through June of 2015. The accompanying "Hot Buttered Soul" Spotify playlist is available at <https://open.spotify.com/user/aaamc>. The panel discussion, exhibit, and reception were generously sponsored by several IU units including the College of Arts and Sciences' Themester Program, the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies, the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs, the Department of Anthropology, the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center, and the Asian Studies Program. The panel discussion was videotaped and is available for research and classroom use.

— Raynetta Wiggins



**Meet Alisha
Lola Jones -**
Newest
AAAMC
Research
Associate

Dr. Alisha Lola Jones recently joined the faculty of the IU Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology as an Assistant Professor. Given her specialization in African American religious music as well as music and religion in the African diaspora, we're thrilled to welcome her as the AAAMC's newest research associate. Dr. Jones is a woman of many souls—she is a life coach, arts consultant, producer, ethnomusicologist, singer, theologian, and an ordained preacher. Academically, her research interests span from musical masculinities, through music and theology, business and the music industry, music and mysticism, western art music, and international vocal pedagogies. Following are excerpts from her recent interview with AAAMC graduate assistant, Jude Orakwe, that highlight her great ingenuity and areas of expertise, as well as her thoughts on future contributions to the AAAMC.

Family background

I am from Washington, DC. Born and raised...by two clergy people: Rev. Drs. Alvin Augustus Jones and Martha Butler Jones. I am actually a third generation preacher on both sides of my family, and both of my parents are pioneering theologians in multi-media. My dad got his undergraduate and graduate degree in journalism at American University. My mother is a visual artist and vocalist. And in many ways those creative backgrounds informed their ministry and their interest in engaging the public through multi-media. My sister is also a theologian, recording artist, educator, and humanitarian.

Early music education

My music education experiences have been quite diverse. I enjoy sharing with people about my unconventional path to encourage them to follow their heart. I went to Duke Ellington School for the Arts (DESA). It is the only public school for the arts in the Georgetown area of Washington, DC. It's kind of like the school in the 1980s movie *Fame*. And we actually had folks on staff like Debbie Allen who starred in and produced *Fame*. It was founded by Peggy Cooper Cafritz and Mike Malone, who remained a presence during my time at Duke Ellington. While at Ellington, we were exposed to rigorous professional training. We went to school from 7 a.m. to maybe even 10 p.m. on any given day, several days in a row. We had the conventional

academic education dispersed throughout the day. And we had music theory, voice, piano, dance, acting, jazz band with Davey Yarborough, and show choir, which was the premier touring choir under the direction of Samuel L. E. Bonds. Members from that time who have gone to do amazing things included Yahzarah St. James, Edwina Findley, Summayya Ali, Marquita Railey, and Monique Holmes. As members of show choir, we performed with celebrities in venues such as the Kennedy Center, in embassies, at the White House, and during presidential and mayoral inaugurations. We performed with musicians such as Mariah Carey, Boyz II Men, and Stevie Wonder. We were hired by Bill Gates and travelled the world hosted by the governments of Germany, Jamaica, Cayman Islands, Barbados, and Antigua. The best part for me was that not only was I able to pursue the multi-cultural interests sparked at my parents' church... but being able to rub shoulders with these amazing people I got a glimpse of the potential impact I could have as cultural ambassador. And I am really thankful for my Duke Ellington School for the Arts experience.

Influences on choice of music career

The Washington Performing Arts Society was the first entity for which I auditioned and was able to really get a sense of what it looks like to perform and teach music to young people. They had four choirs that comprised this thing called Children of the Gospel, COTG for short. There was the mass choir of about 500 students and then that choir was divided into elementary, middle school, and high school, I believe. Through COTG, we worked closely with composers and musicians such as Evelyn Simpson-Currenton, Rev. Richard Smallwood, Rev. Nolan Williams, Joyce Garrett, Rickey Payton, Sr., Dr. Walt Whitman, and Ned Lewis. They taught us musical discipline with excellence and I wanted to be like them. I decided to ask them questions about where they went to school. I remember Nolan Williams told me he went to Oberlin and Howard Divinity School. I loved his compositions. He featured some of my family members who are also music ministers such as Jimeka Jones. And I thought, well since he and the others seem to have done some sort of formal music education and formal religious studies,

well then I have to do that in order to have impact. So, when I was accepted into Oberlin I realized that it was a great opportunity to follow in the preacher-musician tradition.

Higher education pursuits

I enrolled in Oberlin College and eventually in the Conservatory as a music major, pursuing voice. During my study, I concertized with the Washington National Opera's Education Department, Kennedy Center Honors, at the Centro Studi Italiani in Urbana, Italy and the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. Oberlin Conservatory Black Musicians' Guild (OCBMG) provided me with opportunities to collaborate on new music with composers such as Jeffrey Mumford, Courtney Bryan, and Herman Whitfield. I also was a member of the gospel choir Voices for Christ (VFC) under the direction of Michael Preacely and then assisted his successor Janice Reddick Gaines who is now a Motown recording artist. We had other incredible musicians [such as] Courtney-Savali Andrews and David Hughey working with VFC. Janice Gaines, Sharon T. Thomas, and I also hosted a campus gospel radio show on Sundays. The three of us, along with Josiah Woodson and Steffon Thomas, also founded the Oberlin gospel conference. I was afforded the opportunity to work with the late Professor Richard Miller. If you know anything about vocal pedagogy and those who have written in the 20th century about vocal pedagogy, Richard Miller is an icon. I have heard people say that his books, such as *The Structure of Singing*, are worth their weight in gold. I worked with him and Professor Lorraine Manz at the Otto B. Schoepfle Vocal Arts Center (OBSVAC) where I learned about acoustics, physics, and how bio-acoustic feedback could be used to teach people how to hear their voice. I was so fortunate to get that training with such a formidable vocal pedagogue. Oberlin equipped me to be, hopefully, a well-rounded performer as well as a teacher of voice.

A turning point in my time at Oberlin was when I took Introduction to African American Music History with the late composer Dr. Wendell Logan, where I was introduced to the research of Dr. Eileen Southern and Amiri Baraka, to name a few. After taking his course, I wrestled with the cultural assumptions in Western art music performance training and thought there



“...there’s an old adage [that] you can tell the vitality of a community by their art.”



(Above) Alisha presenting at a Center for Black Music Research conference, Columbia College, Chicago.



(Above) Outreach with Genius for Men.
(Left) Preaching for ShePreaches.

needed to be more research about African American contributions, especially as I sought resources for my recitals. There was so much beautiful Black art song and concert repertoire that was not formally taught in our repertoire courses. In addition, I worked for Dr. Logan and was greatly impacted by his wisdom.

From there, I went to Yale Divinity School and enrolled in the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, where I met my now colleague Dr. Mellonee Burnim in my first semester. She was a visiting professor there while on sabbatical from Indiana University. That was the first ethnomusicology course that I ever had

and it was with Dr. Burnim that I had my first opportunity to have an African American woman professor teach me about African American music. That interaction in many ways gave me a glimpse of the music research that I could contribute to religious studies. In addition, I started to do arts-based advocacy work for Cece Jones and her organization Sing for Change that brought HIV/AIDs awareness and prevention to churches in the New Haven and Hartford, CT area. And by the end of my time at Yale Institute of Sacred Music, I presented research about the social network connections between Dvořák,

Will Marion Cook, and Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington. While working on my final project, I met Dr. Philip Bohlman who invited me to study at the University of Chicago.

Upon completion of graduate work at Yale, I matriculated to University of Chicago’s ethnomusicology [program] in the music department where I studied with Dr. Melvin L. Butler. We were equipped as scholars who could comfortably engage across disciplines such as musicology, theory, and anthropology. That rigorous research translated into a lot of blood, sweat, and tears.

Work in the music industry

Well, as I mentioned, I grew up in the household of a journalist. My parents engaged in radio and TV and with entities like CBS and ABC. They founded their own radio and TV network. I was able to watch from the floor up what it means to take a risk—found something; what it means to invest—develop something; and persist in pursuing a dream. And so, my parents started one of the first broadcasting networks on cable TV called the Dream Network. It was the first faith-based network that predates The Word Network. My parents allowed me to see how they negotiated. We talked through concepts and strategies, of how to format multi-media. My dad Alvin Augustus Jones consulted radio stations, developing the Paradise and Heaven formats that we have today. I saw their production of concerts, taping of music videos with national recording artists, and collaborations with the various international music festivals such as the Barbados Music Festival.

I wanted to be able to do something similar but in low-income high-minority settings, places where they need to see the arts, they need to have creative engagement. I believe that . . . there's an old adage [that] you can tell the vitality of a community by their art. I wanted to be able to be a catalyst for the vitality in places that are overlooked. And my sister Angela Jones and I produce an arts-based men's empowerment conference called Genius for Men, an event that is a combination of training and then an actual honors show, where we showcase the stories of men by having emerging artists tribute them with their original music. And I also produce a retreat called Move and Shake Women's Life-Work Balance, encouraging women to tap into their creative resources so that they can be brilliant, balanced, and sisterly. We have received acclaim and support for our work from entities such as an Innovation Grant from the University of Chicago and a feature in *Restoring Hope: 50 Years of Reflecting the Past, Reframing the Future* by Rev. Dr. Keith Magee with the MacArthur Foundation. I have consulted and served on the board of various arts organizations such as Center for Black Music Research (CBMR) with Monica Hairston O'Connell and The

Black Gents of Hollywood, co-founded by Lamman Rucker.

Initial impressions of IU

You know, I am truly humbled to be here. The work that has come out of Indiana University has been crucial to me in my formation as an ethnomusicologist. As I mentioned, my first ethnomusicology professor was Dr. Mellonee Burnim. To be a part of this faculty means so much. Everyone has been so hospitable and even our very own, recently retired Dr. Portia Maultsby has offered her wisdom on how to thrive at IU. The students have definitely tapped into me as a resource. I have met with students and talked with them about the ways in which ethnomusicology may be combined with public sector work. It is nice to hear folks on the ground trying to think with emerging scholars about rigorous scholarship that makes impact in the ivory tower and community, with both head and heart. We have students trying to have the courage, the investment and the dreams. I also remind them that my role here is to make sure that when they present their ethnomusicological research, they do so with authority. So I'm excited to continue these conversations and this rich legacy that is music research at IU.

Desired goals as a faculty member

I want to continue the excellence that is associated with this department. My work focuses on African American music, specifically religious music and issues related to music regarding gender and sexuality. The sorts of performances that exist and that are being developed within African American gospel music, for example, are so interesting. I look forward to really showing the variety of performances out there and the new research that is emerging from my colleagues. There are several of us who are pursuing gospel music research at this time. So I think it is a great time to have that sort of focus. I'm also excited about really delving deeper into public sector work and engaged ethnomusicology—the strategies. There are so many resources that are now available for folks who are equipped as researchers and who would like to program for various

communities. So I am excited to think with folks about relevant and impactful programming and then also I'm eager to learn from this community. The joy of teaching, for me, the joy of research and writing is the conversation that follows. So I hope to be a good conversation partner and I hope to be available for any partnerships with other artistic entities that would like to tap into the resources that are at the AAAMC. So I want to be a resource.

Vision for the AAAMC

You know, because I understand what it means to sustain organizations like an archive or various artistic centers, I'm interested, number one, in helping to make sure that folks know that they can financially support the AAAMC. We cannot be bashful about that. But then also, I think it is important to connect with the people who have the papers, recordings, and the paraphernalia from various artists and events, getting them to understand they need to consider depositing their materials at the AAAMC. I'm also interested in any way that I can help craft programming that engages emerging issues in music and culture. For example, what are the resources that address, support, or dismiss issues around music and violence in African American culture? That topic can reach into the culture of domestic violence and police brutality. It can reach into urban music and how it relates to youth victimization. I would love to see something along those lines and I think folks would engage that topic.

Projected contributions to the AAAMC

In addition to what I just mentioned, being able to use the resources at the AAAMC in my courses, helping artists to understand how they can come to Indiana and enliven what we are doing, whether it is through collaboration on events or it is using the AAAMC resources for projects, or getting patrons to deposit their resources. I am really trying my best to point folks to the possibilities of the AAAMC as a resource for everyone.

— Transcribed and edited by Jude Orakwe

William Vanden Dries Joins AAAMC Staff



The AAAMC welcomes William Vanden Dries, who is joining our staff as Digital Collections Archivist/Project Manager. William is a graduate of the School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin, where he recently earned his Master's degree in Information Studies with a focus in archival studies and preservation.

Though William earned his undergraduate degree in aerospace engineering, his love for music has been a constant throughout his life. He grew up in Austin, the "Live Music Capital of the World," and comes from a long line of musicians and performers. His father, Paul, once worked as an assistant to The Magnificent Men, the first white

act to headline at the Apollo Theater. His paternal grandparents met while performing together in a jazz band and his paternal great grandparents were traveling vaudevillians in the 1920s and 1930s. An avid record collector, William received his first LPs from his maternal grandfather, a country music fan, who at 93 "is still pickin' and blowin'" on the guitar and harmonica.

William continued his passion for music while a student at the University of Texas, serving as vice-president of the Music and Entertainment Committee which hosted acts such as The Roots and Little Richard. He was also a deejay at the university radio station, KVRX, specializing in early rock and roll, soul, and blues. During his spare time, he began performing with various groups, including guest appearances with the psychedelic rock band The Black Angels. William also gained recording experience in front of and behind the mixing boards, serving as an audio engineer intern at Ray Benson's Bismieux Studios, where he worked on digital and analog projects with many musicians and producers including Willie Nelson, the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, and Asleep at the Wheel. Another notable side project was a live music film, *Carousel Saturday Nights*, for which he produced a series of music videos for Austin bands, filmed on Super 8 film stock and recorded to analog audio tape.

After taking a year off to travel across the United States, Asia Minor,

and Eastern Europe, William founded the Audio Preservation Fund (www.audiopreservationfund.org) in 2009 with a mission to "pass on the past and current musical heritage and recorded sound history of the world to future generations by expanding sound collections of public libraries, archives, universities, and museums." His new passion for preserving audio led to his return to graduate school and inspired the topic of his master's thesis, "Collaborative Practices Employed by Collectors, Creators, Scholars and Collecting Institutions for the Benefit of Recorded Sound Collections." Over the past two years, the AAAMC has been the recipient of several collections from the APF and looks forward to continuing this relationship.

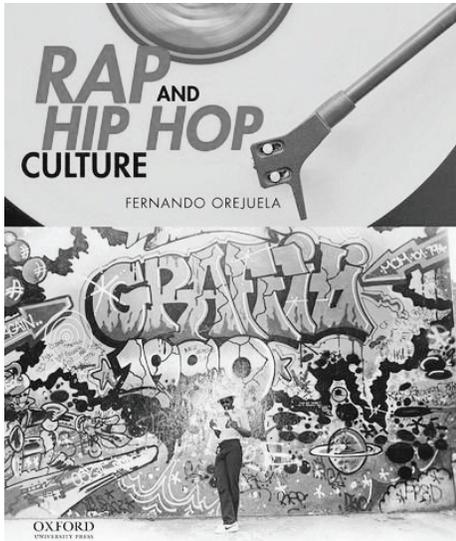
In addition to these many accomplishments, William brings to the AAAMC a wealth of archival experience. He has served as a volunteer and been employed by many Austin institutions including the Texas Music Museum, South by Southwest, and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center. At the University of Texas, William has held multiple positions: assistant to the digital archivist at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the audio resources manager at the Applied Research Laboratories and assistant processing archivist at the Alexander Architectural Archives. We look forward to working with him in achieving such AAAMC goals as redesigning our website, expanding online access to collections, and participating in IU's Media Digitization and Preservation Initiative (MDPI).

AAAMC Student Assistants, 2014-15



Left to right: Anna Polovick (undergraduate), with Christina Harrison, Raynetta Wiggins, and Jude Orakwe (graduate assistants). (Photo by Raynetta Wiggins)

New Books by AAAMC Staff and Research Associates



Rap and Hip Hop Culture by Fernando Orejuela

(New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Dr. Fernando Orejuela—a senior lecturer in the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Indiana University, and one of the AAAMC’s faculty research associates—is an expert in rap and hip hop. His new textbook, *Rap and Hip Hop Culture*, stands as a condensed articulation of many years of teaching and research experience, ranging from popular music and body art to youth cultures and subculture studies.

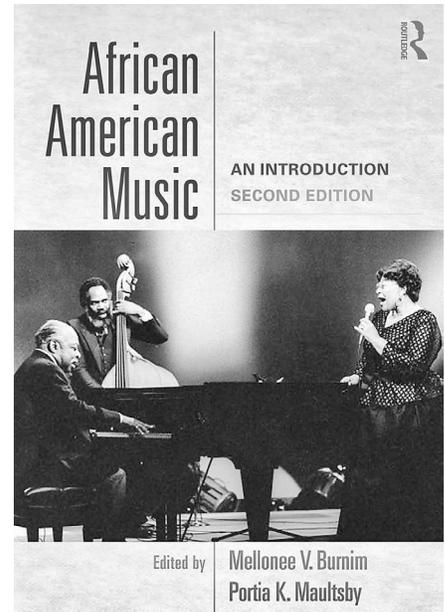
Orejuela’s text “traces the ideological, social, historical, and cultural influences on a musical genre that first came to prominence in the mid-1970s in one of New York’s toughest neighborhoods, the South Bronx.” *Rap and Hip Hop Culture* is therefore not just another book about contemporary youth musical art, but one that throws light on “key performers, producers, and voices in the rap and hip hop movements, using their stories to illuminate the underlying

issues of racism, poverty, prejudice, and artistic freedom that are part of rap and hip hop’s ongoing legacy.” While there is often a tendency to dismiss rap and hip hop music because of its overt affirmation of or reference to violence, sexism, and racial stereotyping, Orejuela’s text is based on rigorous field research and delivers the important message that hip hop culture cannot just merely be ignored, but demands systematic and sustained investigation as a key to profound understanding of the attitudes and proclivities of modern youth. A companion website available via Oxford University Press offers additional resources for both students and instructors, including playlists and videos.

African American Music: An Introduction (2nd edition), ed. by **Mellonee V. Burnim and Portia K. Maultsby**

(New York, NY; Abingdon, Oxon : Routledge, 2015)

The second edition of *African American Music: An Introduction*, edited by the AAAMC’s current and former directors, Mellonee V. Burnim and Portia K. Maultsby, was recently published in hardcover, paperback, and ebook formats. The collection of seventeen essays presents a survey of major African American musical genres, both sacred and secular, from slavery to the present, and is divided into four sections: Antebellum Formations and Manifestations (1600s-); Post Bellum: Music in Transition (late 1800s-); Music in Migration: Urban Voices (1900s-); Post Civil Rights and Beyond (1960s-). The text has been substantially revised and updated from the original 2006 edition,



and includes new essays on African and African American musical continuities, African-derived instrument construction and performance practice, techno, and vocal quartet traditions. Contributions are by leading scholars in the field who bring together various analyses of African American music based in large part on ethnographic fieldwork, which privileges the voices of the music-makers themselves, woven into a richly textured mosaic of history and culture. At the same time, the book incorporates musical treatments that bring clarity to the structural, melodic, and rhythmic characteristics that both distinguish and unify African American music. Musical transcriptions, photographs, illustrations, a discography and videography, and a new accompanying 40 track audio CD brings the music to life.

Burnim and Maultsby are currently at work on Volume 2, of the second edition, *Issues in African American Music*, which is slated for publication in 2016.

— Jude Orakwe

Archives of African American Music & Culture

Smith Research Center, Suite 180-181
2805 East Tenth Street
Bloomington, IN 47408-2662

Phone: (812) 855-8547
Web: www.indiana.edu/~aaamc
E-mail: aaamc@indiana.edu

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Black Grooves
ARCHIVES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC AND CULTURE

Black Grooves (www.blackgrooves.org), the music review site hosted by the AAAMC, promotes black music by providing readers and subscribers with monthly updates on interesting new releases and quality reissues in all genres—including gospel, blues, jazz, funk, rock, soul, and hip hop, as well as classical music composed or performed by black artists. To submit material, subscribe, or join our group of volunteer reviewers contact aaamc@indiana.edu.

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- William Vanden Dries, Digital Collections Archivist/Project Manager
- Christina Harrison, Graduate Assistant
- Raynetta Wiggins, Graduate Assistant
- Jude Orakwe, Graduate Assistant
- Anna Polovick, Undergraduate Assistant

Newsletter design & layout by Dennis Laffoon

Faculty Research Associates

- Portia K. Maultsby
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