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Pioneering African American Teachers of Singing

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

PIONEERING AFRICAN AMERICAN TEACHERS OF SINGING

By

Carl Franklin Du Pont, Jr.

A DOCTORAL ESSAY

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

PIONEERING AFRICAN AMERICAN TEACHERS OF SINGING

Carl Franklin Du Pont, Jr.

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The purpose of this essay is to identify the first African American teachers to join the faculties of prestigious predominately white institutions in the 1960s and 1970s. In order to accomplish this, sources on African American musicians were examined, university archivists were consulted, and interviews were conducted. While many singing teachers helped pave the way, Sylvia Olden Lee, Willis Patterson, and Camilla Williams were found to be the first African American voice teachers to establish themselves as instructors in the highest-ranked vocal programs of the United States; as such, the focus of this essay is on those three pedagogues. The strong correlation between the timing of their appointments and the Civil Rights Movement throughout the United States and on college campuses suggests that politics played an influential role in encouraging music departments to include African American voice teachers on their faculties. By critically considering the implications of this occurrence and the contributions of the first African American teachers of singing, the significance of their presence is understood to have expanded the role of African American participation within the academic music establishment in the music college and conservatory system.
We, ourselves, must pilgrims be.
- J. R. Lowell
Acknowledgments

It is important to me to mention that the challenge of researching, writing, and presenting this project was no match for the unwavering optimism of my immediate family. My parents and sister have alternated as road-trip warriors, research assistants, proofreaders, audience members, and supportive shoulders over this past year. They have been incredible cheerleaders.

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The Miami chapter of Links, Inc. along with Leatrice Damus provided a generous grant for me to go to Austria and study with and interview Grace Bumbry for this project. For that I will be forever grateful. I corresponded with countless librarians and archivists over the course of this project, the vast majority of whom I never met. I was routinely impressed with how ready they were to help me and the thoroughness of their responses.

I also have to thank the musicians at the core of this study. I derived an incredible amount from inspiration from the pages that I read and the interviews that I conducted over the past year. The resolve of the people, both black and white, who put their
livelihoods and lives on the line to integrate music has encouraged me to continue the work that they started.

And to the Creator that began a good work in me and has been faithful to complete it, who taught me the power of words and also their weakness, who gave me a vision and the courage to not look away: let me sing to you this serenade.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AAASA</td>
<td>Afro Afro-American Student Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASU</td>
<td>Afro-American Student Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAM</td>
<td>Black Action Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BU</td>
<td>Boston University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCM</td>
<td>Cincinnati Conservatory of Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT</td>
<td>Critical Race Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBCU</td>
<td>Historically Black Colleges and Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMA</td>
<td>Institute of Musical Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JGS</td>
<td>Juilliard Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASM</td>
<td>National Association of Schools of Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OU</td>
<td>University of Oklahoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWI</td>
<td>Predominantly White Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UM</td>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBA</td>
<td>United Black Action</td>
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Yet do I marvel at this curious thing:
To make a poet black, and bid him sing!

—Countee Cullen, Yet do I Marvel

The purpose of this doctoral essay was to identify the first African American teachers of singing that integrated the voice faculties of America’s premiere conservatories and universities. Acknowledging that the current scholarly literature has scant focus on how higher music education has historically represented a racialized space requiring attention, this document is intended to help bring awareness to that issue. There has been substantial interest in the accomplishments of African American singers of the concert and operatic stage—pioneers in a profession previously off-limits to them—yet this interest has not encompassed the eventual professors of voice who broke similar barriers in the related field of vocal pedagogy. This paper is intended as an intervention to this oversight, and will recognize the teachers, administrators, and institutions that changed the face of vocal pedagogy; it specifically focuses on the 1960s and 1970s in America, when being hired to teach voice was also a matter of civil rights.

Many independent and co-related factors intersected and produced an environment that allowed for a representative increase of African American voice pedagogues. The introduction to this study briefly describes how African American singers became diplomats who shifted the focus on their capability as members of a historically maligned race to their ability as artists in the field of art music. Following that, the second chapter describes the methodology and criteria used to collect and analyze
data about the appointments of African American voice faculty during the 1960s and 1970s. The third chapter consists of a literature review that will reference materials written about the accomplishments of black singers in the twentieth century, as well as a review of sociological sources concerning marginalized communities in academia. Chapter four focuses on the teaching careers of African American voice pedagogues, and where possible, expounds on the political and social environments they entered as a result. Elizabeth Taylor-Greenfield, Emma Azalia Hackley, Roland Hayes and Carol Brice at Black Mountain College, along with Thelma Waide Brown and Edna C. Williams are introduced in this chapter. The hiring of Sylvia Olden Lee in 1967 at Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Willis Patterson in 1968 at University of Michigan, and Camilla Williams in 1977 as the first black voice teacher at Indiana University, receive the most attention in this study, due to their prominence in the field. Thomas Carey’s arrival on the faculty of University of Oklahoma is also briefly discussed. The fifth chapter makes a case for the significance of the findings by borrowing an analytical approach from Critical Race Theory, and the sixth chapter suggests areas for further research and offers concluding remarks. Attached to this study is a lengthy appendix including the first and only known list of prominent African American voice teachers at predominately white institutions, edited transcripts of relevant interviews, and facsimiles of pertinent artifacts collected for this research and not readily available to scholars. The reader is encouraged to reference these primary sources while reading the text in order to better understand the era and the accomplishments described therein.
Diplomacy in Music

A stimulating starting point for the discussion of diplomacy in music is Marian Anderson’s momentous operatic debut at the Metropolitan Opera House on January 7, 1955. When she sang the role of Ulrica that night in Verdi’s *Un Ballo in Maschera*, she became the first African American vocalist to perform on that stage. However, as Leontyne Price eloquently said at a seventy-fifth birthday tribute to Anderson at Carnegie Hall, “Whatever role she did that night, it wouldn’t have mattered. Even if she had just walked on stage that night, the singular thing that she did was to make the door open. She did that, and I will be eternally indebted to her.” The symbolism of the event had more importance than the notes Anderson sang, and that fact didn’t escape the notice of anyone in the house. While the significance of that event has been well documented, an element of what happened behind the scenes is particularly relevant to demonstrate how importantly music institutions and their leaders treated integration during that time. In an article written for *The Journal of Negro History* entitled “African American Women Singers at the Metropolitan Before Leontyne Price,” Wallace McClain Cheatham explained that this event also served as a vehicle for the Metropolitan Opera’s general manager, Sir Rudolf Bing and the impresario Solomon Hurok. The Civil Rights Movement in the United States had garnered a worldwide audience. Though Bing’s

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2 Story, 36.
3 Ibid., 55.
4 Ibid., 54.
6 Ibid., 173.
decision to integrate the roster of singers was a courageous one, he did so without first informing the board.\(^7\) That decision was also made in response to the social and political environment surrounding the opera house.\(^8\) In other words, Anderson’s debut was as important for the Metropolitan Opera House itself and its administration, which had conveniently turned away black talent until then, as it was for the generation of singers who would be inspired by it, like Leontyne Price.

As Price indicated in the quote, African American opera singers discovered that simply opening their mouths to sing was a political statement, regardless of the notes or the role.\(^9\) Racialized concepts of their body, and in turn their instruments, made their performance different in a way that drew attention to their skin as well as their sound.\(^10\) Rosalyn Story, in her compendium of black female concert and opera singers, *And So I Sing*, described the implications of this infiltration by a black presence in a presumably white artistic space by saying, “The black diva, in contributing to the awakening of a new social awareness in America has been quietly, musically aggressive.”\(^11\) Another well-known example of this was Grace Bumbry’s experience when she made her 1961 debut singing Venus in *Tannhäuser* in the Bayreuth Festival.\(^12\) More than two-hundred letters of protest were registered by angry patrons once newspapers began sensationalizing the debut of “Die schwarze Venus” (the Black Venus) with the opera festival long before

\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) Ibid.

\(^9\) Story, 149.


\(^11\) Story, xv.

\(^12\) Ibid.
audiences had even heard her.\textsuperscript{13} Bumbry’s simple reply was, “You know, I have a job to do.”\textsuperscript{14} The historical importance of Marian Anderson’s debut and those of black singers immediately following in her footsteps have clearly been archived for future generations and those singers have been recognized as trailblazers.

For African American teachers of singing who matured artistically in this same atmosphere, teaching outside of the segregated Historically Black Colleges and Universities would have presented a similarly charged space. Their arrival on music faculties previously closed to African Americans was a correlative struggle for recognition and acceptance for which singers like Anderson and Bumbry strove on the stage, though this one was outside of the spotlights. Even without having to address race issues in academia head-on, the social awareness of the day implied that they were making a statement simply by being a black presence in a previously white space. In order to explore how African American singers developed this place as diplomats through music it is appropriate to start with the music often closely associated with African American singers, the Negro spiritual.

**The Spiritual as the Origin of Black Politics in Music**

Political activism through black music by black musicians started with the popularization of the Negro spiritual long before the struggle for civil rights took center stage in the mid-twentieth century. Eyewitness accounts from visitors to the New World prior to 1800 had already made mention of the strangely compelling music that emanated from its bonded inhabitants; they wrote about their experiences to sympathetic European

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 149.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 150.
readers eager to discover more. In describing the moving qualities of these spirituals, W.E.B. DuBois wrote “The music of Negro religion is that plaintive rhythmic melody, with its touching minor cadences, which, despite caricature and defilement, still remains the most original and beautiful expression of human life and longing yet born on American soil.”

By the late nineteenth century, these musical expressions would quickly find eager audiences across the United States of America. That journey began on October 6, 1871, with a Cincinnati, Ohio-bound train leaving from Nashville, Tennessee, carrying nine black singers, eight of whom were ex-slaves; they would present the Negro spiritual in a concertized format and give voice to the black struggle for recognition at home and abroad. They called themselves The Fisk Jubilee Singers, and they had embarked on what became a highly successful political campaign to establish their humanity through music, and an equally important financial campaign to raise money for their own educations and the well-being of their institution, Fisk University.

Many audience members had never seen black singers perform music other than minstrelsy, so initially audiences reacted to the group with surprise and curiosity, but eventually the skepticism gave way to critical praise on account of the singers’ perseverance and musicality. Though denied affirmation of their humanity by the

17 Lovell, 402.
18 Lovell. 402.
government, these first proponents of the concertized spiritual tradition proved their personhood through song. This theme reappeared when the pioneering African American teachers of singing at the center of this project chose to elevate the music of their cultural heritage in predominately white institutions.

If The Fisk Jubilee Singers had souls, suffering, and the ability to sing about their sorrow in a way that communicated to both white and black audiences, it follows that other black singers were capable of musical interpretations irrespective of skin color. This marks the first barrier being broken by African American singers as ambassadors through talent and tenacity. The logical gap, then, that they would also be capable of performing and teaching music from the European tradition narrowed as a result, but didn’t disappear. They had transformed the conceptual barrier of blacks in art music from a formidably substantive one of ability into one of preference. In effect, The Fisk Jubilee Singers were the artistic progenitors of the singers who would later make their stage debuts around the world in the twentieth century presenting spirituals alongside European arias and art song. The Negro spiritual had been skillfully crafted into a tool that could be passed down from generation to generation for the purpose of carving out recognition for its interpreters.

**Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

America’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) further laid the groundwork for black singers to eventually become singing teachers. Founded prior to 1964, these institutions were created for the express goal of educating black students.²⁰

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Some critics argued that because some of these institutions were founded by whites who harbored preconceived notions about the intellectual ability of black students, HBCUs were in fact a hindrance to black education.\textsuperscript{21} However, because institutionalized segregation both inside and outside of the South made it otherwise impossible for many African Americans to earn an education, HBCUs had a major influence on the development of the academic and musical identity within the black community.\textsuperscript{22}

While the debate between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois raged over the mission of HBCUs as strictly vocational or more openly educational according to a liberal arts tradition, the music-making scene on these campuses soared to life and united those sparring ideals.\textsuperscript{23} As an example, William F. Rogers describes in great detail how life in the Hampton Institute Choir under the direction of celebrated arranger Dr. Nathaniel Dett prepared soprano Dorothy Maynor for what would become an illustrious concert career.\textsuperscript{24} The choir’s tour dates included performances in Amsterdam’s Konzertgebouw and Hamburg’s Musikhalle among other venues.\textsuperscript{25} Dett, a Canadian by birth, was actually a graduate of Oberlin class of 1908 and Eastman School of Music in 1932.\textsuperscript{26} Such was his renown that he was offered the honorary doctorate from Howard

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{21 Encyclopaedia Britannica Online (Online2013), s.v. "Historically Black Colleges and Universities."}

\footnote{22 Ibid.}

\footnote{23 Du Bois, 24.}

\footnote{24 William F Rogers Jr., Dorothy Maynor and the Harlem School of the Arts : The Diva and the Dream (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993).}

\footnote{25 Ibid., 37.}

\end{footnotes}
University in 1924 and received a second honorary doctorate from his alma mater, Oberlin College-Conservatory of Music, two years later in 1926.27

Like The Fiske Jubilee Singers that came before him, Dett had clear and intentional political goals for equality that he attempted to accomplish through his music, and he sought to help other musicians achieve the same through the HBCUs with which he was affiliated.28 While at the Hampton Institute, he wrote to the school’s president, “I am a musician whose ambition in life is the advancement of my people, and who believes absolutely in equality of opportunity for all peoples, regardless of race, creed, or color, or previous condition of servitude.”29 Dett’s scholastic career, however, took place during a time when black teachers could only teach at black schools, and even a talented, celebrated, and decorated like musician himself would not be sought out to teach at a white school.

A short list of HBCU attendees who went on to major careers includes Roland Hayes, the aforementioned Dorothy Maynor, Felicia Weathers, Betty Allen who attended Wilberforce with classmate Leontyne Price, and Mattiwilda Dobbs who desegregated the San Francisco Opera and later taught on the faculty of Indiana University.30 The African American teachers of singing at these institutions, like Dett, facilitated the careers of many successful artists, but whereas black singers were achieving acclaim, the pedagogues remained confined to the HBCU sphere. Significantly, Willis Patterson and Sylvia Olden Lee changed that. At the time of their appointments at prestigious schools

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27 Ibid., 51.
28 Ibid., 40.
29 Ibid., Preface.
of music, their compelling *curriculum vitae* included education at important conservatories, established performing careers in European centers, recognizable national profiles, and successful teaching careers at HBCUs. The teaching experience gained at the HBCUs qualified the pedagogical talents of these candidates, creating a path to professorship that might have otherwise remained closed.
Chapter 2

Methodology

Identifying Subjects

The emphasis in this study is on full-time faculty appointees at the collegiate level of top-ranked music schools during the 1960s and 1970s. Significant appointments as “masterclass faculty” have been recognized in Appendix A, and referenced in the text where appropriate. No qualitative assessment has been made by the author in regards to rank within the professoriate, such as assistant professor, associate professor, full professor, instructor, or visiting professor. Since the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) has no official ranking of their affiliate institutions, the 1997 *U.S. News and World Reports* list of the top thirty graduate schools of music (Appendix B) and the top five programs in opera/voice (Appendix C) have been used as guidelines.31 These rankings were compiled by the magazine using questionnaires sent to school deans, top administrators, and senior faculty in their respective disciplines.32

The institutions ranked as the top five programs in opera/voice (Indiana University-Bloomington, Juilliard School of Music, University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Eastman School of Music, and the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor respectively) have received the most attention in this paper as a result of their stature.33 Archivists at these institutions were contacted through email to confirm the accuracy of the names and dates of tenure collected for the study, as well as to make any suggestions for the inclusion of other teachers who might qualify based on the guidelines

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
specified above. The Willis C. Patterson Papers in the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan were examined personally by the author, as were the university archives at Indiana University and University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Primary resources that mentioned the hiring of one of the subjects were considered, as were school newspaper articles that spoke to the racial climate in the university.

Information was collected about notable African American teachers whose schools did not appear on either list as well. Such was the case with Thelma Waide Brown, Edna C. Williams, and Thomas Carey. They merited inclusion based on the political climate of the institution entered or the impact they made on the musical community. The digital archives at Roosevelt University provided information on Thelma Waide Brown, and the digital finding aid of the Thomas Carey collection, housed in the Western History Collections at the University of Oklahoma, was used to locate and consult documents pertaining to Carey’s tenure. Facsimiles or digital files of relevant documents were requested by and sent to the author for consideration of this project.

The term conservatory will be used as a collective noun to indicate all independent music conservatories and schools of music housed within larger universities. Because these disparate institutions often express similar goals and have similar practices, the conservatory can be compared to the term academia and its usage in literature about higher education.

All African American voice teachers who are mentioned in this document are referenced alphabetically in Appendix A along with all the information collected about their places of work. Teachers interviewed or found to meet one or all of the criteria
mentioned above are also included. Appendix A is not exhaustive. Most teaching institutions did not collect data on the race of their employees, so it is impossible to be completely confident that no African American singing teacher was overlooked. However, Appendix A is the most comprehensive collection of data on this topic available to date. Copies of documents referenced yet unavailable to the reader are provided in subsequent appendices, as are interviews that are quoted or referenced in the body of the essay.

**Race**

At the core of this project is the notion of identity as it pertains to race. For the purpose of this document, the terms *African American* and *black* are used interchangeably to identify persons who self-identified as such, and who participated in society as members of this group. This group identity was constructed after World War I, when the social and mental isolation that pervaded in Southern rural areas was replaced with a race-conscious sense of self that proliferated with the move to urban areas.\(^{34}\) Ethnically, these terms can be ambiguous, but sociologically, the shared history and destiny of members identifying themselves in this group in America allows constituents to be discussed together without risking misunderstanding.\(^{35}\) The terms Negro, African American (hyphenated), African American (unhyphenated), Colored, Black (capitalized), and black (lower-case) appear alternately within the literature as identifiers. In accordance with the Kate Turabian *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, These, and Dissertations*, the terms African American (unhyphenated) and black (uncapitalized)

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\(^{35}\) Ibid.
have been designated to name people, while alternately Afro- or African-American (hyphenated) has been employed to describe the culture.\(^\text{36}\)

*White* (uncapitalized) and *Caucasian* are terms used to indicate Americans of European ancestry. The expressions *dominant culture* and *majority society* are used to position the influence and power that white Americans and assimilated white Europeans have historically wielded in the United States of America. This is contrasted with the words *minority* and *marginalized*, which indicate the outsider status created for and inhabited by people of color and women in American society. Schools with mostly white student and teacher populations are referred to as *Predominantly White Institutions* (PWIs) when clarity is needed. Schools mainly attended by black students are termed *Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (HBCUs).

**Oral History**

As noted in the previous chapter, the teaching careers of performers are often mentioned briefly as a coda to the biographical and performing information collected about these artists. This has been a valuable starting point, but the exigencies of this project have demanded a more thorough investigation into the academic portion of their careers. Oral history has been collected, when possible, to complement the existing record available in published literature. In accordance with *The Oral History Manual* by Barbara Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan, interviews have been conducted in order to collect first-hand narratives by participants or observers about the past.\(^\text{37}\) Participants


have been defined as African American teachers of singing, their students, or their former colleagues. It is presumed that these persons have valuable information about the subject worthy of preservation and of possible interest to future researchers.\(^{38}\) Questions were submitted to the Internal Review Board of the University of Miami and this project was deemed \textit{not human research}. In-person interviews and phone interviews were conducted by the author, transcribed, and presented to the interviewee for consent and signed copyright approval.

\textbf{Critical Race Theory}

The framework for analyzing this information has been borrowed in large part from the Critical Race Theory (CRT) movement. Developed by a collection of scholars and activists concerned with the stalling of civil-rights era progress, this approach takes into account broader concepts within the experience of racialized culture like context, history, conscious, and unconscious feelings.\(^{39}\) In legal contexts, it questions neutrality principles of constitutional law because these laws tend to favor specific groups within American society.\(^{40}\) For the purposes of this research, that same line or questioning will be directed toward the neutrality principles in hiring and retention practices of voice faculties in the conservatory for a similar reason. As a result, the discussion will center on how academia and the institutions examined marginalized blackness and the efforts made by the pioneering African American teachers of singing to intercede in response.

\(^{38}\) Sommer and Quinlan, 1.


\(^{40}\) Ibid.
CRT also bolsters the oral history approach by assuming that the voices of people of color can represent a unique perception to an identical experience of a white observer due to divergent histories with oppression. Oral history, then, becomes an ideal vehicle to discovering what the majority of readers are unlikely to know. Bias in a conservatory’s practice of hiring and retaining faculty rarely receives vigorous scrutiny. No doubt, this is because staffing a faculty of performing artists is a particularly intricate process that relies heavily on subjectively evaluated qualifications like reputation, talent, and collegiality. Though doing nothing constructively against racism actively contributes to its survival, it is difficult, if not impossible, to lobby accusations of racism in such cases. CRT, then, becomes all the more essential because it enables a scholarly approach that challenges the perpetuation of the distribution of rights under a regime of majority supremacy that often remains untested, and provides an insightful methodological tool to address the concerns of marginalized communities. CRT encourages scholars to revisit historical events and reexamine the historical record. When reexamined, the biographical details of the careers of *Pioneering African American Teachers of Singing* may instruct the pedagogical community about the social reality encountered by minority persons in academia that have been ignored in traditional research.

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42 Ibid.
43 Ibid., 8.
44 Ibid.
Researcher Bias

Research that examines the experiences of minorities is sometimes viewed by traditional, and typically non-minority scholars, as lacking in rigor. Because CRT has developed to incorporate feminist, Asian American, Latino, and queer studies, it is presumed that this approach has its own validity gained from the contrast that it presents to standard narratives. When considering bias, it is important to note the source of any potential accusation, as the author Jerome Culp wrote in an article for the University of Illinois Law Review:

We accuse ourselves of bias only when we take the side of the subordinate . . . [W]e join responsible officials and the man in the street in an unthinking acceptance of the hierarchy of credibility. We assume with them that the man at the top knows best. We do not realize that there are sides to be taken and that we are taking one of them.

Both the researcher and the subjects in this document identify as African American. Rather than being a detriment to the validity of the research, this enhances the likelihood that this subject will be evaluated from a dynamic standpoint by a researcher with access to the complexities of race relations in a theoretical and personal context.

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47 Delgado, et al., 7.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

For education among all kinds of men always has had, and always will have an element of danger and revolution, of dissatisfaction, and discontent.

- W.E.B. DuBois, Souls of Black Folk

This literature review will demonstrate a gap in the current literature regarding the contributions of African Americans in the vocal arts and explain why the conservatory can also be considered a racialized space that required attention. First, an exploration of the themes often discussed with African American singers will orient the reader to how the topic has traditionally been handled while highlighting the scarcity of recognition of the singers’ participation in the conservatory as teachers. Next, sources that detail the rise of America’s music education system are examined for their recognition of identity politics, or lack thereof. Following that is an explanation of the significance of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This looks forward to the fourth chapter, as that piece of legislation provides an important dividing line for the categorization of teachers presented there. Lastly, literature focused on the experience of marginalized groups within academia has been included in order to acquaint the reader with the challenges that minority faculty often meet when entering the professoriate. In sum, this review will position the ensuing chapters as relevant to past and future conversations on identity and music education.

The Singers

Angel Mo’ and Her Son, Roland Hayes

There has been a wealth of scholarship centered on African American singers, but decidedly less scholarly attention on their second careers as pedagogues. Tenor Roland Hayes (1887-1976) was the first African American to have a biographical book on his
career published.\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Angel Mo’ and her Son, Roland Hayes}, was written in first-person but certain passages are on the fault line of minstrelsy, as even the title indicates, and a clear editorial voice is detected in the book’s approach by contributor McKinley Helm. The following passage is one such example: “In the late summer a nocturnal hunt usually came to an end in a watermelon patch . . . they would sit down to gorge themselves until they fell asleep. At daybreak my father would carry me, the carrier, home, still full as a tick of watermelon flesh.”\textsuperscript{50} This line seems intended to evoke a \textit{sambo}\textsuperscript{51} image in the reader’s mind, as do lines like “Many of our friends had no shoes at all.”\textsuperscript{52} This fits the common narrative of a black artist growing up in blissful poverty but being lifted out of these circumstances by an uncommon talent and the financial support of white audiences. This subtly implies that poverty is the black person’s natural state and that performative talent, legitimatized by white audiences, is the natural remedy.

In a similar fashion to literature written about other African American singers of his generation, the importance of his success as a black artist in America is a principle theme, as the passage below illustrates:

Leipzig and Vienna, the most fastidious cities in the world, had liked me well enough, but now I was come to judgment in my own country. Success at home was of greatest moment \textsuperscript{sic} to me. Ever since the color of my voice had been revealed to me, I had given myself wholly and deliberately to being, above all, a Negro artist, and I needed now either public approval or redirection.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{49} MacKinley Helm, \textit{Angel Mo’ and Her Son, Roland Hayes} (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1942; reprint, 1947).

\textsuperscript{50} Helm, 14.

\textsuperscript{51} Oxford English Dictionary, “Sambo, N.1” (Oxford University Press). This term was used in popular literature and parlance as a nickname for a black person referencing the appearance or subservient attitude held to be typical of the black American slave.

\textsuperscript{52} Helm, 64.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 194.
This biography, however was written too early to account for Hayes’ appointment as “Instructor of Voice” in 1954 at Boston University, as confirmed in an email to the author on March 12, 2014, from Katherine Kominis, Assistant Director for Rare Books at the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center. Prior to that, the Boston University Music Library and Reserves coordinator, Kate Stringer, wrote in an email on March 4, 2014, that Hayes held an appointment from 1941-1942 at the BU School of Theology. None of the published accounts of Hayes life mention this valuable information. Furthermore, details about the length of his tenure and conditions of his appointment have been difficult to ascertain.

*African American Concert Singers Before 1950*

There are many sources about Hayes, which is noted in the preface to Darryl Glenn Nettles’ book, *African American Concert Singers Before 1950*.\(^\text{54}\) Nettles also includes Marian Anderson, William Warfield, Leontyne Price, and Paul Robeson also into this category of well-documented singers.\(^\text{55}\) Nettles’ book seeks to chart their artistic lineage by expounding upon the lives of the African American singers who began in a less politicized and less publicized age; in addition to the performing accolades there are significant references to their second careers as teachers.\(^\text{56}\) Of the eighty-seven African American singers chronicled, nineteen taught on the collegiate level.\(^\text{57}\) Eight singers were referenced as faculty members of HBCUs, seven as professors in predominately white institutions (PWIs), and four teachers began teaching at HBCUs before accepting


\(^{55}\) Ibid.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., xiii.

\(^{57}\) Ibid.
positions at PWIs (Appendix A). Each biographical entry is organized so that the
significance of their artistic triumphs takes precedence over their academic ones. The
institutions they taught at are named, however, there is little substantive information
given about their tenure as teachers.

Some of the singers listed also appear as personalities in Glenda E. Gill’s book,
No Surrender! No Retreat! African American Pioneer Performers of Twentieth-Century
American Theater. Gill references artists from the diverse disciplines of the operatic
stage, the concert stage, vaudeville, Broadway, musicals, and the silver screen. She
tackles the psychological struggle that black performers have faced when dealing with
overwhelming discrimination while creating triumphs on stage, but like most historians
limits her scope to focusing on the performing arena.

Rosalyn Story’s book, And So I Sing, similarly addresses issues of identity and
racism but only focuses on African American females in opera. Typical of the genre,
teaching positions are usually mentioned as an afterthought. The last sentence written in
reference to Mattiwilda Dobbs (1925- ) reads “In the 1970s she returned to the United
States and accepted a teaching post at Howard University in Washington, D.C.” Further
investigation revealed Ms. Dobbs had a much more expansive teaching career than just
Howard (Appendix A). Of Gloria Davy (1931-2012) she wrote, “Throughout the 1980s,

58 Ibid.
59 Glenda E. Gill, No Surrender! No Retreat! African American Pioneer Performers of Twentieth-
60 Ibid., 4.
61 Ibid.
62 Story.
63 Ibid., 128.
Davy maintained a home in Geneva, and like Camilla Williams, taught at Indiana University in Bloomington.\(^{64}\)

When prompted by a teacher’s apparent dedication to education, Story does seem to reciprocate the enthusiasm with more detail. This is the case when discussing mezzo-soprano Betty Allen (1930-2009):

Teaching was always Allen’s passion. Besides her work overseeing the Harlem School, in 1973 she directed a program of gifted inner city youths at the Marlboro Festival (conceived by pianist Rudolf Serkin), taught at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, and was a faculty member of the North Carolina School of the Arts.\(^ {65}\)

Though she mentions African American soprano Adele Addison (1925- ), she does not note the appointments that Addison held as visiting voice professor at Eastman nor does she mention that the soprano eventually became chair of the voice department at the Manhattan School of Music.\(^ {66}\) She does, however, reference the “mood of the times” in the 1960s that she felt was reflected in the achievements of the African American singers detailed in her book.\(^ {67}\) She also acknowledges that there were very influential white allies in management at several leading opera houses. Rudolf Bing at the Metropolitan Opera House, Lazlo Halasz at City Opera, and Kurt Herbert Adler at San Francisco as well as influential composers like Leonard Bernstein, Thomas Schippers, and Virgil Thomson who were integral in the successful singing careers of many black artists.\(^ {68}\)

\(^{64}\) Ibid., 130.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., 136.

\(^{66}\) Ibid., 137.

\(^{67}\) Ibid., 139.

\(^{68}\) Ibid.
Interest in the stories of groundbreaking African American concert and operatic singers culminated in the documentary *Aida's Brothers and Sisters: Black Voices in Opera and Concert*.\(^{69}\) In it, many of the personalities and voices familiar to audiences as operatic performers were given a chance to speak candidly about their experiences as pioneers in various dimensions of the music business, their affinity for Negro spirituals, in addition to some of the challenges that still remained.\(^{70}\) For example, the film linked Leontyne Price’s meteoric rise to stardom with the simultaneously occurring Montgomery Bus Boycott, noting that in retrospect one can see Price’s career serving as a timeline for the pursuit of civil rights for African Americans in this country.

The documentary references Marian Anderson’s concert at the Lincoln Memorial, the implications of George Gershwin’s folk opera *Porgy and Bess*, and the first opera by a black composer produced in a major opera house, *Malcolm X*; the film even invites the singers to discuss whether there is a truly “black sound.”\(^{71}\) Bass-baritone Simon Estes talks about the drought of black males in opera and the specter of black males as a sexual threat, and soprano Martina Arroyo humorously admits that coach Sylvia Olden Lee, a focal point of this essay, scolded Arroyo’s presentation of Negro spirituals as being “The whitest Negro spirituals I’ve ever heard!”\(^{72}\) In addition to Estes and Arroyo, Shirley Verrett, George Shirley, Betty Allen, Reri Grist, Camilla Williams, and Grace Bumbry share their insights as performers in this documentary. However, recognition that these

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\(^{69}\) Schmidt-Garre.

\(^{70}\) Ibid.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.

\(^{72}\) Ibid.
trailblazing singers also contributed significantly to changing the landscape of important musical institutions in the United States and abroad is missing. In fact it appears that tenor, George Shirley, is interviewed in his office at the University of Michigan, but this otherwise thorough film does not broach that subject.

William Warfield

Among autobiographies, William Warfield’s narrative is unique because he discussed in detail the significance of being the first African American on the voice faculty at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana in William Warfield: My Life and My Music. He noticed that upon joining the faculty in 1976 there were far fewer African American students and professors on campus at that time than fifteen years later, when he wrote his memoirs. He relayed how he believed himself to be much more approachable than the average professor; students, especially black students, who had never been so far away from home, found a new home at his house where socializing and home-cooked meals were the norm. In a conversation with the author, pianist and University of Illinois alumni Alan Johnson confirmed what a congenial atmosphere “Uncle Bill,” as Warfield liked to be called, made during this anticipated events. Warfield even counted the first African American vocalists to receive their doctorates from the University of Illinois as his pupils. In addition to his presence being a mitigating factor to the strain of being a minority on a white campus, Warfield is clearly convinced that his appointment

74 Ibid., 223.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
and tenure accelerated the process of black students attending and successfully matriculating from the music department. However, when referencing his career as a teacher, Warfield is not as candid as he was in speaking about his singing career, leaving topics relevant to this research unexplored.

**The Conservatory**

Whereas most of the literature about African American singers downplays the importance of their contributions as teachers, sources that examine the legacy of higher music education in the United States rarely acknowledge the conservatory as a racialized space in its past or present incarnations. Nonetheless, when information about this topic is found, it helps to contextualize the environment that African American teachers of singing entered during the 1960s and 1970s. Historically, collegiate education was far more progressive than schools on the elementary and secondary level in terms of integration: Maryville College admitted the first African American student in 1819, Dartmouth in 1824, and Oberlin in 1835.\textsuperscript{77} Conservatories were also in the avant-garde when it came to accepting black students, as author Eileen Southern notes in *The Music of Black Americans: A History*.\textsuperscript{78} When blacks were still barred from participation in symphonies and opera companies, they were admitted as students to conservatories.\textsuperscript{79} In *Autobiographical Reminiscences of African American Classical Singers, 1853-present*, Elizabeth Nash notes that once allowed to enter, African American women began successfully graduating from conservatories after having had to go abroad to study for the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77} Lovett, 373.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
better part of America’s history before then.⁸⁰ Oberlin graduated its first black woman in 1865, Boston Conservatory followed in 1867, then the New England Conservatory in 1867, and the National Conservatory in 1885.⁸¹ A notable example of an African American conservatory student in the nineteenth century was the baritone, composer, and noted spiritual arranger Harry Burleigh, who entered the National Conservatory in New York City in 1892.⁸² Another was J. Rosmond Johnson, brother to James Weldon Johnson, and composer of the Negro National anthem, who enrolled in the New England Conservatory in 1893.⁸³

Yet conservatories were not the only tertiary schools training voices. Institutions designed to train teachers, termed *normal schools*, incorporated music pedagogy into their curriculums as well in nineteenth-century America.⁸⁴ By 1878, thirty-two of the thirty-eight states had vocal instruction in the normal schools, according to Rodney E. Miller’s book, *Institutionalizing Music: the Administration of Music Programs in Higher Education*.⁸⁵ Evidence suggests that the doors of these music programs were open to African American students as well; soprano Emma Azalia Hackley received her music

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⁸¹ Ibid.


⁸⁵ Ibid.
degree from the University of Denver in 1900. These sources show that black musicians were accepted into the conservatory as students, capable of learning from an AngloAmerican culture. However, it would take another hundred years for these prestigious conservatories to embrace African Americans as teachers thought capable of contributing to the conservatory atmosphere as faculty members.

Julliard School of Music

The performance-based nature of the conservatory acted as a powerful incentive to admit and educate talented students despite entrenched practices of segregation and exclusion in the larger American society. As a result, the number of black students receiving musical educations steadily grew; by 1936 Julliard counted four African Americans out of seventy-one students in its graduating class. Author Andrea Olmstead wrote in *Juilliard: A History* that the racism rampant in American society was not as prevalent in music, and was even less of a factor in classical music. Nevertheless, Olmstead notes that some members of the Juilliard Graduate School also perpetuated the country’s nativist and anti-immigrant feelings. She explains how these prejudices affected the search to appoint a new dean:

> The preponderance of foreign-born artists working in the United States (and at both the JGS, Juilliard Graduate School, and the IMA, Institute of Musical Art) had presented a quandary to the chauvinistic JMF board. Adhering to the prevalent anti-Semitism, some on the board would have vetoed the choice of a Jewish musician to head the School, and that bias eliminated many artists.

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86 Story.


88 Ibid.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid., 99.
Eastman School of Music

Vincent A. Lenti’s book on the history of Eastman School of Music, *Serving a Great and Noble Art*, focuses on a formative forty-year timespan between 1932-1972.\(^91\) Despite that timeframe, race within the conservatory is not addressed in this historical account on the faculty or student bodies, no African American faculty members are mentioned in its appendix, and it is possible that no African Americans were considered during that timespan to join Eastman’s faculty.\(^92\) There is a reference to a ballet composed by African American William Grant Still during the school’s American Composers’ Concerts in 1933, and in that same year the Hall Johnson Negro Choir performed in Eastman Theatre.\(^93\) The civil unrest in the city of Rochester, however, does get mentioned as a “serious urban disturbance.”\(^94\) In addition to the white-flight precipitated by the violence, the author notes that the civil rights movement and anti-war protests were altering student life on campuses all across the country, and Eastman was no exception.\(^95\)

Indiana University

In contrast to the institutional histories of Eastman and Julliard, George Logan is careful to note the significance of one particular faculty appointment in his account of the

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\(^92\) Lenti.

\(^93\) Lenti, 41.

\(^94\) Ibid., 143.

\(^95\) Ibid., 144.
history Indiana University’s School of Music. He notes that Camilla Williams was “recruited” in 1977 and “her singing career had spanned thirty years, including the barrier-breaking moment in 1946 when, as Butterfly in a New York City Center Opera production, she became the first black woman ever to be put under contract by a major American company.” Gloria Davy, Martina Arroyo, and Reri Grist are all mentioned as teachers but are only qualified by their achievements on stage, not by their color.

Charles Webb, dean of Indiana University’s School of Music from 1973-1997, is described as holding the power of faculty appointment largely in his own hands, as did his predecessor Wilfred C. Bain (1947-1973). According to Vincent Lenti’s account of Eastman, the same was true for Howard Hanson (1932-1964). Lenti wrote:

> It would appear that the process of dealing with faculty appointments was occupying a large portion of Howard Hanson’s time as director. These appointments were made long before the advertising of vacancies and the appointment of search committees. Hanson made the decisions himself, after having made discreet inquiries to seek out someone he felt would be the best candidate for the position. The entire process was quite simple, and essentially it worked very well.

**Ethnomusicology and the Conservatory**

If the power to hire new faculty members rested primarily with these deans, understanding the profile of the administrators that often held this position would be helpful to understand their choices. Music administrator Rodney E. Miller depicts the

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97 Ibid.

98 Ibid., 267-268, 291.

99 Ibid., 267.

100 Lenti, 102.

101 Ibid.
average dean as a tenured male faculty member around the age of fifty in his book, *Institutionalizing Music: The Administration of Music Programs in Higher Education*, and indeed the aforementioned Howard Hanson and Charles Webb fell into that category during their tenure as do all of the deans that described in Olmstead’s history of Juilliard.\(^{102}\) However, there is no mention that all of these men were white, or recognition that this could have potentially contributed to a hiring bias. Miller and fellow ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl do, however, make a point to assess female participation in the sphere of higher music education as an often marginalized group.

Nettl noted that although men held the majority of the seats in the orchestra, women made up more than half of the professional singers, and determined the vocal arts were much more hospitable to women.\(^{103}\) Collegiate music programs often have corresponding levels of inclusion for women, and this sense of inclusion is extended to other groups; Nettl points out, “male members of minority groups are more likely to be found in the vocal realm.”\(^{104}\) However, the voice department’s higher likelihood to be populated by women and minorities coupled with the absence of a mechanized instrument, can result in a perceived lower esteem for the voice department compared to the instrumental departments. Nettle proposes that valuations within a “white, male-dominated, intellectually inclined, and technologically oriented society” are operative even within the performance-based environment of a music school.\(^{105}\)

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\(^{102}\) Miller, 54.


\(^{104}\) Ibid., 63.

\(^{105}\) Ibid.
After observing music programs housed within the universities of the Midwest, Nettl determined that the proportion of female students and teachers was largest in the vocal department, with women accounting for slightly more than half of the voice department’s faculty members. The voice department’s inclination towards gender diversity stems from the sexed vocal categories that must be taken into account to accommodate the needs of the students. The conservatory has realized that voice departments need women, and the hiring process has successfully brought parity among the representation of both sexes in the voice department. Still, upon closer examination of the statistics relating to promotion and tenure among voice teachers, Miller acknowledges that there is an achievement gap that favors men.

During the 1960s and 1970s some conservatories began to recognize that representation of black voice teachers was also important just like that of both genders. The sense of urgency that spurred action and got results, however, was supplied by the federal government.

The Origin and Enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act

In order to better understand the nature of the pressure to hire African American faculty members and how the educational system responded to this pressure, literature was explored concerning race relations in academia during the turbulent 1960s and the years leading up to them. During the 1950s the federal government involved itself only reluctantly in the fight to end discrimination for fear of trampling on states’ rights, as was

106 Nettle, 63.
107 Miller, 94.
108 Ibid.
the case when President Eisenhower sent troops to Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957.\textsuperscript{109}

Even under President Kennedy’s watch, violence against black protestors in Birmingham, Alabama, had prompted little reaction from the executive branch until angry black citizens reciprocated such aggression by throwing rocks after a bombing incident, thereby indicating willingness toward a new militant course of action by black citizens in the South.\textsuperscript{110} It became clear that without legal intervention to address the grievances being aired, demonstrations would continue to contribute to an uncomfortable national climate, which would have made Kennedy’s re-election almost impossible.\textsuperscript{111} The resulting Civil Rights Act 1964 prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin, and as a result had a greater effect on American education than any other federal law enacted in the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{112}

The Civil Rights Act and American Education

Although the 1955 decision \textit{Brown v. The Board of Education} is often celebrated as a huge legal victory for integration, in 1964 President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law while 98\% of Southern blacks and nearly 100\% of Southern whites still attended segregated schools.\textsuperscript{113} Many congressmen of the North considered this bill aimed squarely at the Southern states, and did not intend it to have any practical effect on the lives of their constituents in spite of the subtle and overt forms of racial discrimination.

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{110}] Ibid., 12.
\item[\textsuperscript{111}] Ibid., 13.
\item[\textsuperscript{113}] Ibid., 93.
\end{itemize}
discrimination in the North. Yet, by conditioning federal aid for education on compliance with the Civil Rights Act, the federal government began the social revolution that many Southern politicians had feared and had warned explicitly against. President Johnson’s Executive Order 11246 in 1965 further strengthened the Civil Rights Act by stating, “The contractor will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex or national origin.” Section 203 of this order required that contractors and their subcontractors file compliance reports with the Secretary of Labor, which essentially forced the state universities to prove they had attempted to fulfill the executive order. This encouraged the hiring of African Americans in academia that might have been previously overlooked, but it did not, and could not amend the societal influences that made this environment inhospitable in the first place.

Racialized Spaces

This executive order compelled the American academy in the 1960s and 1970s to search for and incorporate members previously socialized in segregated spheres. A tall order considering this needed to occur quickly in order to maintain funding and it had to happen without interrupting the expanding role the American university had appropriated

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114 Filvaroff and Wolfinger, 29.

115 Orfield, 95.


117 Ibid.

in the American way of life. For black participants, this executive order also raised their expectations to finally receive the same college experience that their white colleagues enjoyed, but it quickly became apparent that their privileges were limited. In these circumstances, underrepresented became a new constituency with the capability and the need of setting an agenda and calling attention to itself for its survival. Once inside of education’s ivory tower, black academicians discovered that full inclusion would require continuing a familiar struggle, or starting a new one.

Critical race theorist, Zeus Leonardo, confirms academia is a racialized space by arguing, “Racial inequality and its vestiges in education are products of historical events, not the least of which are the examples of slavery, cultural and physical genocide, and labor exploitation. These injuries would have been enough, but their reach and influence into daily practices should not be underestimated.” Leonardo is suggesting that it would be naïve to assume that any institution such as academia could be divorced from the environment from which it stems. Confronted by this reality, the underrepresented groups of the university system began agitating their institutions and demanding change. On this issue, University of Minnesota Professor Roderick A. Ferguson wrote:

For many student militants throughout the United States . . . the question of minority difference and representation was never simply about increasing the numbers of minoritized bodies. Instead, the question of minority difference was

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119 Ferguson, 49.
120 Ibid., 50.
123 Ferguson, 29.
an attempt to make sure that demographic growth would contract with epistemological and institutional transformations.\textsuperscript{124}

**Minority Faculty in Higher Education**

A central conceit to the significance of *Pioneering African American Teachers of Singing* is that these persons confronted a myriad of professional challenges unique to their identity due to America’s long history of racial oppression. Though this document focuses primarily on events in the 1960s and 1970s, the vestiges of racial oppression’s legacy continue to have implications in the modern educational system and have motivated a wealth of consequent literature. In order to extrapolate the challenges that Willis Patterson, Sylvia Olden Lee, Camilla Williams, and Thomas Carey might have faced, research was consulted to describe commonalities in the experience of the black professoriate. The scarcity of literature directly related to minority voice teachers or music teachers in schools of music and conservatories is complemented by the abundance of information about minority teachers in the larger academic community.

**The Challenges**

Harvard Graduate School of Education researcher Cathy A. Trower identified five key areas of adversity that particularly affect African American hires:

1. being stereo-typed or pigeon-holed
2. having research discredited, especially when it deals with minority issues
3. bearing the burden of tokenism, and feeling the need to represent an entire race by working harder but achieving less
4. feeling the need to represent one’s race on multiple committees and mentoring/advising many same race students, thereby spending a large amount of energy on activities that do not count towards tenure or promotion
5. suffering from the negative consequence of being perceived as an affirmative action hire\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{124} Ferguson, 51.

Black professors experiencing one or more of these realities find that they do not have the privilege of classroom students assuming that they are credible teachers simply because of their position.\textsuperscript{126} The cumulative effect of dealing with micro-aggressions, macro-oppressions, feeling different, and feeling doubted is what amounts to an emotional and psychological tax for being a black presence in a historically white space.\textsuperscript{127} Black professors in the academy can feel like they are facing a lonely and an uphill battle.\textsuperscript{128} Furthermore, black students and faculty alike may perceive that they are not valued members of the community and are rather there to meet certain quotas, expected to abandon their cultural inclinations in order to capitulate to the \textit{white} way of doing things in the process.\textsuperscript{129}

Co-authors Gail Thomson and Angela Louque explore the problematic side of academia further in their 2005 book, \textit{Exposing the “Culture of Arrogance” in the Academy}.\textsuperscript{130} Thompson and Louque identify underrepresentation, an inhospitable racial climate, and opposition to black scholarship as factors preventing full inclusion of blacks into the faculty of PWIs. They propose that black professors hired in small numbers and isolated from each other within the university framework cannot acquire the “critical mass needed to effect change.”\textsuperscript{131} In \textit{Faculty Socialization as Cultural Process: A Mirror of Institutional Commitment}, a Higher Education Report compiled by William G. Tierney

\textsuperscript{126} Tuitt et al., “Teaching in the Line of Fire: Faculty of Color in the Academy,” 65.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 70.
\textsuperscript{128} Thompson and Louque, 19.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 23.
and Robert A. Rhoads, the authors attribute this lack of representation to academia’s tendency to “promote and sustain social boundaries” more than most organizations.\textsuperscript{132} As a result, it is safe to assume, according to \textit{Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet Success}, that the majority of students at PWIs have never had any classroom experiences with a teacher of color.\textsuperscript{133} Sylvia Olden Lee, Willis Patterson, and Camilla Williams would have been teaching students who had never had a black teacher before, and would have been interacting with faculty members who had never had a black colleague before.

Diversity As a Motto

Christine Stanley of Texas A&M University maintains that although many institutions place a value on diversity, habitual policies and practices that unintentionally disadvantage certain social, racial, or cultural groups are rarely scrutinized with any consequence.\textsuperscript{134} This indicates that there has been a hesitancy on behalf of all institutions of higher learning to recognize that the status quo can be exclusionary for non-dominant cultures. The concept of merit is of particular importance to this issue. After surveying twenty-seven faculty of color from diverse disciplines, Stanley concluded that institutions of higher learning rarely engage in genuine conversations of how diversity factors into merit.\textsuperscript{135} She claims diversity in and of itself has merit, particular to the learning environment because of the pedagogical and human richness that it is able to exhibit.


\textsuperscript{133} Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner and Samuel L. Myers, \textit{Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet Success} (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000), 61.

\textsuperscript{134} Stanley, "Coloring the Academic Landscape: Faculty of Color Breaking the Silence in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities," 724.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 723.
through the educational experience.\textsuperscript{136} When this attitude towards inclusivity is not actively promoted, the contributions of minority faculty can be easily dismissed and therefore discounted.

Stanley also verified that African American faculty often spend much more of their time mentoring students than their colleagues, just as William Warfield confirmed in his autobiography, but such activities are rarely factored in when faculty are evaluated.\textsuperscript{137} This puts them at a distinct disadvantage because the time spent mentoring is time not being applied to research activities, even though it does a significant service to the academic atmosphere. That time spent mentoring is crucial to many students’ success.\textsuperscript{138} In order for black students to have confidence in the administration at PWIs black advisors and faculty are considered essential “because of the estrangement in race relations that has occurred over the years,” according to observer Charles Vert Willie in his book, \textit{The Ivory and Ebony Towers: Race Relations and Higher Education}.\textsuperscript{139} A system that truly appreciated and encouraged diversity would value this contribution and seek ways to facilitate it. The fact that, as of yet, no codified measure exists to quantify its impact simply exacerbates the problem.

More than just a watchword, a diverse faculty can have a tangible positive effect on the academic community. Jeffrey Milem of the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Arizona found that increased faculty diversity resulted in

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  \item \textsuperscript{136} Stanley, “Coloring the Academic Landscape: Faculty of Color Breaking the Silence in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities,” 723.
  \item \textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
more (1) student-centered approaches to teaching and learning, (2) diverse curricular
offerings, (3) research focused on issues of race/ethnicity and gender, and (4) faculty of
color involvement in community and volunteer service.\textsuperscript{140} Paul Umbach at the University
of Iowa found that faculty of color were “More likely to interact with students, to employ
active and collaborative learning techniques, to create environments that increase diverse
interactions, and to emphasize higher-order thinking activities in the classroom.”\textsuperscript{141}
Female College Band Directors

Within a collection of diverse faculty, female college band directors form a group
of marginalized music educators that have received attention in the research literature,
and therefore form a correlating area of research to African American Teachers of
Singing. Elizabeth Gould has written extensively about the subject and notes that this
type of segregation endures on the collegiate level in spite of gender affirmative
employment practices.\textsuperscript{142} According to her research, the reason women constitute little
more than 5\% of the U.S. college band directors is because homosocial reproduction
continues to be the norm among band directors, as it has been historically among other
professions as well.\textsuperscript{143} Leaders in the profession often recruit and mentor people like
themselves.\textsuperscript{144} Gould recognizes that changing any culture can be a slow one, but
suggests that professional organizations and music education programs encourage visits

\textsuperscript{140} Tuitt et al., "Teaching in the Line of Fire: Faculty of Color in the Academy," 72.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} Elizabeth Gould, "Cultural Contexts of Exclusion: Women College Band Directors," \textit{Research
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
and forums that acknowledge groups with less power.\textsuperscript{145} A “total education”, she continues, would also focus on the margins of the profession and the marginalized communities that are part of the profession and could eventually proliferate more identity possibilities for future college band directors, therein transforming the profession.

In a 2005 article entitled “Nomadic Turns: Epistemology, Experience, and Women University Band Directors,” Gould, before narrowing her focus on female band directors, states, “In all cases and all levels, the vast majority of band directors are white.”\textsuperscript{146} The findings referenced in this article confirm the hypothesis that historical precedent, discrimination, segregation, and lack of mentors or role models have impeded efforts to make the profession of college band directing less gendered or raced.\textsuperscript{147} Here again, Gould finds it pressing to mention that despite thirty years of enforcing affirmative action laws, the number of women has not increased to desired levels and may even be declining.\textsuperscript{148} The structure of the profession is resistant to change, as are the values of the people in power.\textsuperscript{149} Only through reflective discussions to understand the profession of music education, she posits, will the persistent occupational gender and racial segregation be addressed.\textsuperscript{150} \textit{Pioneering African American Teachers of Singing} is a step in the direction Gould suggests.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{145} Gould, “Cultural Contexts of Exclusion: Women College Band Directors,” 8.
\item \textsuperscript{146} Elizabeth Gould, "Nomadic Turns: Epistemology, Experience, and Women University Band Directors," \textit{Philosophy of Music Education Review} 13, no. 2 (2005): 147.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 148.
\item \textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Summary

The literature surveyed in this chapter has identified sources relating to African American singers of the operatic and concert stage and conversely the lack of attention to their careers as teachers. It has also examined the history of African Americans in higher music education and touched upon the challenges marginalized demographics often encounter in academia as well as the value of their presence. The lack of substantive explorations into the topic of African American faculty in higher music education, and voice teachers in particular, has been made all the more apparent when put into relief by these other research areas. As a response to this oversight, the next chapter will use the histories of Willis Patterson, Sylvia Olden Lee, Camilla Williams, and Thomas Carey to detail the forces and factors that positioned each one to be among the first African American voice teachers at PWIs in the 1960s and 1970s.
Chapter 4

The Pioneers

There is no place for bitterness in singing. It works on the cords and ruins the voice. In His own good time, God brings everything right. It may take a long time. I have seen people who thought they were the most almighty fall from their pedestals, but I’m still here like Ol’ Man River, going, going, going. I don’t have hate in my heart. I wasn’t brought up with hate. But I’ve experienced hate. You should do unto others as you’d like them to do unto you.

-Camilla Williams, A Day with Camilla Williams

This chapter will identify several important pioneers who were chosen for the historical significance of being the first to engage a space previously off-limits. The first section references Elizabeth Taylor-Greenfield, Emma Azalia Hackley, and Marie Selika. Though these three did not operate in conservatories with national reputations, they created opportunities to teach and nurture students that were groundbreaking in their time. Black Mountain College and its administration is also mentioned for its role in the conscientious efforts to integrate the world of art music through pedagogy. Lastly, a discussion of Thelma Waide Brown, the first African American teacher of singing to join a predominately white institution on a full-time basis, concludes the section of teachers who were hired before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 began to transform the employment landscape for African Americans.

That act, by enforcing non-discrimination policies and encouraging affirmative action, positively affected the number of African Americans teaching at the university level. Shortly thereafter, Edna C. Williams, Sylvia Olden Lee, Willis Patterson, Thomas Carey, and Camilla Williams joined the faculties of large land-grant institutions in the Midwest. Because Lee, Patterson, and Camilla Williams taught at highly regarded music
schools, the majority of this chapter will focus on them, the racial climate at the institutions they entered, and their contributions to the field of vocal pedagogy. Where possible, the historical record has been complimented by interviews conducted for this project.

**Prior to the 1964 Civil Rights Act**

Elizabeth Taylor-Greenfield (1820-1876)

Before the faculties of this country’s premier schools of music and conservatories invited black artists into their ranks, those interested in teaching music joined black colleges of the South or began their own music studios. Soprano Elizabeth Taylor-Greenfield was the first vocalist noted to have accomplished success in opening her own music studio. After returning from giving a command performance for the Queen of England in Buckingham Palace in 1853, Taylor-Greenfield opened a vocal studio in her adopted home of Rhode Island in 1854. The soprano was born a slave in Natchez, Mississippi, and was a mostly self-taught singer who received no formal musical training herself, though that did not stop her from training others. Rosalyn Story suggests that reputable teachers of the day would not take on black singers for fear of jeopardizing their career—which could explain both why Taylor-Greenfield had to train herself and why she was so interested in training others. It is unclear how many pupils she taught, the age of the students, or their race, but it can be assumed that all were black. Her

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151 Southern, 281.
153 Ibid.
154 Ibid.
155 Story, 21.
groundbreaking singing career has been documented by Rosalyn Story, but as the first African American to open a voice studio and as a female entrepreneur in the mid-nineteenth century, she was a pioneer in the field of vocal pedagogy as well.

Emma Azalia Hackley (1867-1922)

More than fifty years later, Emma Azalia Hackley founded the Vocal Normal Institute as a training ground for young black singers in 1908. Hackley graduated from the University of Denver in 1901, and shortly thereafter began her singing career by giving recitals in Colorado and Detroit. She studied in Paris for a year with Polish tenor Jean de Reszke in 1907, then returned to the United States and became a committed crusader for the musical education of black singers, even prioritizing this goal above her own musical career. In an article for the Philadelphia Tribune in 1912, Hackley was quoted as saying:

I have never cared for public singing. I prefer to teach[,] for to me teaching is but recreation, as long as I had people dependent upon me I was compelled to do both singing and teaching. My future plan is to open a permanent normal vocal training school in Chicago for preparing teachers . . . and to have vocal institutes in various sections of the country for those who cannot come to me.

In addition to teaching, funding scholarships, and sponsoring the careers of young musicians, Hackley also arranged “Folk Song Festivals” which celebrated the Negro Spiritual as an impetus for social reform. These festivals represent the first concerted

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156 Story, 36.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Nash, 112-113.
160 Ibid.
effort by a voice teacher to utilize African American solo music simultaneously for political and pedagogical aims.

Marie Selika (1849-1937)

Like Taylor-Greenfield and Hackley, Marie Selika was also a well-regarded concert soprano in her day. Upon an invitation by President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1878, Selika became the first African American entertainer to be hosted by a United States president at the White House. She is mentioned in several texts for her singing abilities, but there is little information to distinguish her as a teaching artist. She retired from the concert stage in 1911 and began teaching at Harlem’s Martin-Smith School of Music in 1916. James Weldon Johnson’s book on the cultural and intellectual scene of New York City’s black artists, *Black Manhattan*, identified Selika as a teacher at the Martin-Smith School of Music as late as 1930, indicating that her teaching career lasted at least twenty-four years in Manhattan, albeit exclusively in the environment of an all-black preparatory setting.

Black Mountain College

While HBCUs continued to remain favorable environments for black artists to teach during and after their performing careers, Black Mountain College in North Carolina provided the first bridge to institutions that served mostly white students. This college was noted for the unique role it played in the avant-garde artistic scene in mid-

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162 Ibid.

163 Story, 30.

twentieth century America, for some adventurous collaborations between Merce Cunningham and John Cage, as well as its enthusiasm for Arnold Schönberg.\textsuperscript{165} It was also in this artistic community, housed in a rural Southern town, that two African American teachers of singing were appointed alongside other black artists and scholars in 1945, only one year after the first blacks were admitted as students.\textsuperscript{166} Though recruited for month-long residencies and not regular full-time appointments, the hiring of contralto Carol Brice and tenor Roland Hayes represented a concerted effort at integrating the music faculty by the director of the institute, musicologist Edward Lowinsky, and it electrified the intellectual community in the enclave.\textsuperscript{167} Lowinsky even ordered student ushers to inform visitors that the seating would not be segregated at Hayes’s recital, which included European art song, African American spirituals, Creole, and Afro-Brazilian music.\textsuperscript{168}

Yet it must be noted that the Julis Rosenwald Foundation funded the recruitment of Brice and Hayes through a grant established to support African American artists, therefore this was not a traditional teaching appointment, but more similar to an artist-in-residence arrangement.\textsuperscript{169} The foundation’s director, William C. Haygood, compiled an article entitled “Negro Teachers in White Institutions” published in the 1946 issue of \textit{The Phi Delta Kappan}; it listed all of the African Americans known to be teaching in


\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., 247.

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{169} Mary Emma Harris, \textit{The Arts at Black Mountain College} (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1987), 101.
PWIs.\textsuperscript{170} Of the forty-six professors he identified during the 1945-46 and 1946-47 academic years, only twenty-two were on regular appointment, the remaining twenty-four were part-time or visiting faculty like Brice and Hayes.\textsuperscript{171} There is an obvious feeling of excitement in the article as Haygood explained that in the 1930’s black scholars could only expect invitations to lecture as a guest on black culture or something similarly impermanent and Afrocentric, however, after 1940 enrollment of black students increased in tandem with the qualified black men and women appointed to faculties.\textsuperscript{172}

Thelma Waide Brown (1896-1975)

One year after Carol Brice and Roland Hayes became the first African Americans on a voice faculty of a PWI through temporary appointments, Thelma Waide Brown continued the incremental gains and became the first hired as a permanent faculty member.\textsuperscript{173} The Chicago Musical College later joined with the music department at Roosevelt University in 1954, but maintained the college’s name and the personnel, including Brown.\textsuperscript{174} An article written in 1957 in Chicago’s daily newspaper for African American readers, \textit{Daily Defender}, celebrated the soprano’s tenth year on the faculty of Roosevelt University, therefore giving her the distinction of being the only black vocal

\textsuperscript{170} William C. Haygood, "Negro Teachers in White Institutions," \textit{The Phi Delta Kappan} 28, no. 2 (1946).

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{174} Don Draganski, “The Music Conservatory,” accessed June 23, 2014
pedagogue hired on a permanent basis at a majority institution with a start date in the first half of the twentieth century (Appendix D).175

The article mentions that Brown was the recipient of a rich musical background as the daughter of parents who were former slaves and also mentions her repertoire of “great Italian classics; German Lieder; operatic arias and American art songs, with equal appeal,” before asserting that in the repertoire of Negro folk songs and Spirituals she was, “in a class almost to herself.”176 Brown’s obituary from 1975 explains that after graduating from college she began teaching first in her native Kentucky, while performing locally as a soloist and dramatic reader.177 It is unclear when she moved to Chicago, but once in the city she began her musical studies in earnest at Chicago Musical College and consecutively at Roosevelt University, prior to the merging of the two schools. The operatic roles she performed were exclusively in the Midwest (Amneris with the Chicago Civic Opera House, and Little Buttercup with the Great Northern Theatre), but as a concert artist she toured through the United States and Canada.178

Several honorifics indicate that she was well-respected among her colleagues and also a very dedicated teacher. As early as 1954 she was chosen as the “Woman of the Year” by the Chicago chapter of the National Association of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs. In 1961 and 1962 she received a Certificate of Award from the National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM) and the Chicago Music Association respectively. The Chicago Musical College honored her at a dinner in 1969 celebrating a

175 Brown.
176 Ibid.
177 Obituary. Thelma Waide Brown Collection. Roosevelt University Archives, Chicago.
178 Ibid.
fifty-year career in singing and teaching; she was honored again by NANM for “Outstanding Achievements” in 1973.\textsuperscript{179}

\textbf{After the 1964 Civil Rights Act}

As mentioned before, the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the executive order that linked federal funding to minority hires had a major impact on the American educational system. Once financial support was conditioned on the hiring of women and minorities, universities began expending a considerable amount of energy to locate and attract talent along those same lines. As an example, compare the one African American voice teacher permanently hired by a PWI prior to this act, Thelma Waide Brown, to the four voice teachers hired before the decade was over, Edna C. Williams, Sylvia Olden Lee, Willis Patterson, and Thomas Carey (Appendix A). Significantly, Lee, Patterson, Carey, and Camilla Williams (who followed in the next decade), were each engaged by large land-grant institutions of the Midwest most heavily dependent on federal funding, and in areas where minority representation was especially fraught with tension throughout the campus.

\textbf{Edna C. Williams (1915-1994)}

The second black voice teacher found to have been permanently hired by a PWI was soprano Edna C. Williams in 1965 at Northern Illinois University; she remained on faculty until her retirement in 1994 at the rank of Professor of Music.\textsuperscript{180} Edna C. Williams received her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University in 1957 and 1959 respectively, and was a pupil

\textsuperscript{179} Obituary. Thelma Waide Brown Collection.

of Harvey Ringwald.¹⁸¹ She won the John Hay Whitney Fellowship and was able to study for fifteen months in Vienna with Baron Hans Karg-Bebenburg and renowned accompanist, Professor Erik Werba.¹⁸² Upon her return to the United States, Williams toured through the Midwest and often appeared as a soloist with the Chicago Chamber Orchestra.¹⁸³ The significance of Thelma Waide Brown’s and Edna C. Williams’s academic posts lie in the unceremonious way they appropriated space as voice teachers through the traditional sequence of studying, performing, and teaching. This was an achievement that eluded the black artists that preceded them; however, it would be left up to the next group of pedagogues to break in to highly-ranked music programs that enjoyed the national spotlight.

Revolution

The 1967 appointment of vocal coach Sylvia Olden Lee at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music (CCM), the 1968 appointment of bass-baritone Willis Patterson at the University of Michigan (UM), and the 1977 hiring of Camilla Williams at Indiana University a decade later, were extraordinary because of the national visibility of these institutions. In that aspect, these three figures represent the first appointments of African Americans at institutions that enjoyed influential national reputations, as defined in the second chapter. Moreover, the confluence of prestige and social activism on those


¹⁸³ Ibid.
respective campuses make these particularly interesting cases for claiming vocal pedagogy as a space for racial progress.

The fact that music schools in the Midwest outpaced the private conservatories on the East Coast to integrate their faculties is perhaps no coincidence at all. Though all work places were required as of 1961 to take “affirmative action” to insure that their ranks were integrated, the slow rate of change left black student groups on large campuses unconvinced that their administrators truly cared about changing what they considered “second-class citizenship.”184 So they organized and held campus protests in a way only feasible on a large university campus. Both Lee and Patterson received the distinct impression that they were hired because the school had sought a black candidate specifically to appease this unrest, and attested to that fact.185 The institutions in the Midwest had larger black student populations with more solidarity from communal living than was possible in the comparatively small conservatories in big cities on the East Coast without student housing. Though the students at the heart of these movements were concerned with the academic environment as a whole, the effects were felt in the voice departments, and Sylvia Olden Lee was the first to answer the call.

Sylvia Olden Lee (1917-2004)

Sylvia Olden Lee was considered by all accounts to be the preeminent scholar and authority on African American music during her lifetime, and was equally sought after for coaching standard vocal repertoire.186 She had a direct connection to the Negro

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186 Ibid.
Spiritual tradition as a descendant of one of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers, which she described in her 2001 book, *The Memoirs of Sylvia Olden Lee, Premier African American Classical Vocal Coach*. Her grandmother, Liz Merry, was one of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers, but missed the tour because her religious father did not want his daughter touring through Europe. Lee’s grandfather, Grandpa Olden as she referred to him, was born in 1845 as a slave, and swam across the Ohio River to freedom when the Civil War broke out, eventually fighting in the Union Army. Their daughter, Lee’s mother, was born in New Orleans in 1889, and showed an early inclination for music even before majoring in voice and piano at Fisk University. She almost made history herself in 1912 when Paul Cravath, who was on the boards of the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera, heard her sing at a function in Nashville. He offered the young singer a chance to come to New York City and sing with the Metropolitan Opera if she agreed to use her light skin complexion to her advantage, pass for white, and postpone the marriage to her fiancé, which might have given her away as black. She declined and married Lee’s father, who was also a singer and member of the Fisk Quartet along with Roland Hayes. Had she accepted Cravath’s invitation, she would have become the first black singer at the Metropolitan Opera, but the house was still segregated and Lee’s mother was defiantly in love.

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187 Ibid., 3.
188 Ibid., 1.
189 Ibid., 6.
190 Ibid., 10.
191 Ibid., 11.
192 Ibid.
Sylvia Olden began studies in piano at Howard, but eventually transferred to Oberlin; she graduated from there in 1938. She accepted a teaching post at Talladega College immediately thereafter.\textsuperscript{193} An all black institution, Talladega College would be Lee’s first teaching post and she counted contralto Carol Brice as one of her first students.\textsuperscript{194} Her second post was at Dillard University in 1942, an HBCU in New Orleans.\textsuperscript{195} She then married, added Lee to her moniker, moved to New York City and began a career of concertizing as a recital accompanist.

She and her husband, conductor Everett Lee, received Fulbright awards to study in Italy during 1952-1953 academic year.\textsuperscript{196} It was upon her return to New York, however, that she began making history. Max Rudolf hired Lee in 1954 as the first black member of the Metropolitan Opera staff.\textsuperscript{197} She began by working with singers in the company’s young artist program, the “Katharine Turney Long Opera Courses,” and eventually found herself playing for auditions.\textsuperscript{198} She relates in her memoir that it was she who suggested to Sir Rudolph Bing that the role of Ulrica in Un ballo in Maschera be used as a vehicle to introduce the Metropolitan Opera audience to a black singer.\textsuperscript{199} Because this character was a gypsy, already representing a form of otherness, her rationale was that it would be believable to have an African American sing this role, in


\textsuperscript{194} Lee and Nash, The Memoirs of Sylvia Olden Lee, 30.

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 33.

\textsuperscript{196} Lee and Nash, The Memoirs of Sylvia Olden Lee, 66.

\textsuperscript{197} Ibid., 72.

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 73.
particular her former student and frequent recital partner contralto Carol Brice. That history-making role would eventually be cast with Marian Anderson, as discussed in the introduction, but by making the successful suggestion that the role by used as a vehicle to break racial barriers, Lee was already a voice using her position to advocate for the advancement of racial relations.

While working and living with her family in Europe, Lee received a call that would invite her once again to be a pioneer:

Out of the blue in Sweden, I received an invitation to teach at the University of Cincinnati’s College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) in 1967. I wondered why they asked me because I’d had no contact with them. It took me six months to find out the reason for picking me. Someone had suggested that they must have one black on the faculty.

Further investigation into the social climate on campus reveals that there might have been a groundswell of support for hiring black faculty, and that “someone” was probably a spokesperson for many who felt troubled by the monochromatic faculty. In an article entitled “African American Heritage at UC” the University of Cincinnati Magazine notes that the University was witnessing its most visible efforts at integration during the early 1960s. As a sign of improvement, black students were finally admitted to the dorms; though modest by today’s standards, this represented a decided step forward at the time. In that same article Dwight Tillery, who would go on to become Cincinnati’s first elected black mayor, describes founding the United Black Action (UBA) and the

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200 Lee and Nash, The Memoirs of Sylvia Olden Lee, 73.
201 Ibid., 93.
203 Ibid.
excitement they were able to generate on campus to reflect the social changes of the civil rights movement elsewhere in the country. “Our actions were driven by the attitude that we had better take care of each other because we were barely hanging on,” admitted Roland West, an undergraduate student at this time.  

The UBA’s main concern was changing the “second-class citizenship” of black denizens on campus by making their collective voices heard. The presence of African Americans on campus was not uncommon to academia in the 1960s, and not on the Cincinnati campus either, but their numbers were small. The University of Cincinnati News Record shows how the University responded to those critical of their hiring efforts:

Dick Baker, director of Community Relations spoke first, answering the Negro charge that UC employs only one full time black professor and one black campus policeman, and that there is a lack of Negro clerical help. Baker pointed out that the UC employs 418 Negros (sic), including six full time faculty members and four administration officials, and that six new professors will be added to the staff next year.

Though she is not mentioned by name, it is very likely that Sylvia Olden Lee is one of the six professors that had been invited to join the faculty, and her future employment was being used to deflect accusations of bias to prove that the administration was making earnest efforts at hiring black professors. The dates on her contract below support this theory (Appendix E).

In her memoir, Lee details the inhospitable environment she entered as CCM’s first black faculty member. She asked about arrival dates and accommodations but

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received no response.\textsuperscript{207} She informed the dean with the arrival time of her plane, but no one came to pick her up.\textsuperscript{208} Though the school had just built a brand new music building, the dean told her that there was no studio for her.\textsuperscript{209} “I was walking around in that rainy season with nowhere to put my umbrella or books. I felt so homeless. We didn’t have a place to live, and I didn’t have anywhere to teach.”\textsuperscript{210} At the welcoming cocktail party for new faculty she was introduced to two other new music professors, both from England.\textsuperscript{211} Not only were they met at the airport, but the school had also provided them with lodging.\textsuperscript{212} All three had traveled from Europe, but only two were treated as welcomed additions to the faculty.

Yet even in a seemingly hostile work environment, Professor Lee continued to advocate for her students and for music of the African-American tradition alongside traditional repertoire in the academic setting. On April 4, 1969 she put together a program to commemorate the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King’s passing; it also happened to be Good Friday, and the symbolism was not lost on Lee.\textsuperscript{213} On that program Lee asked Dorian Harewood, then a student in the Theatre Department, and an eventual star of the television series \textit{Roots} and \textit{The Jesse Owens Story}, to sing \textit{Take My Mother Home}. She put this Negro spiritual, which she described as “a magnificent narrative sung in that typical lower class person folksy way,” and several other spirituals on the program

\textsuperscript{207} Lee.
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{209} Ibid., 94.
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid., 96.
alongside an improvisation on Bach’s *Ach Golgatha* from the Saint Matthew Passion, *How Beautiful Are The Feet* from Handel’s *Messiah*, and *Miriam’s Song* from the film *The Robe*.\(^{214}\) Despite the fact that University did not publicize the program, Lee was able to draw a diverse group with her offerings. She wrote, “I had blacks and white, a Jew, a Catholic, and Protestants contributing to an ecumenical service in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was marvelous.”\(^{215}\) Lee was advocating for inclusivity in her programming.

The first year Lee spent at CCM ended with her being summoned to an ad hoc meeting by the board of trustees. Among the grievances lodged against her was the accusation that she did not allow the students to perform their operatic repertoire in Italian.\(^{216}\) Lee vehemently denied the accusations because she had been adamant in suggesting that music be performed in its original language instead of in English translation, this fact forced the new head of the opera department, Bob MacIntyre to recant and apologize.\(^{217}\) She later learned that the same Dean Watson, who hired her and showed such disregard to her travel from Sweden and accommodations in Cincinnati from the outset, had dictated the letter to MacIntyre.\(^{218}\) According to MacIntyre, he had been forced to make the accusation with the threat of losing his job.\(^{219}\)

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\(^{214}\) Lee, .96.

\(^{215}\) Ibid., 98.

\(^{216}\) Ibid.

\(^{217}\) Ibid.

\(^{218}\) Ibid.

\(^{219}\) Ibid.
Obviously, Lee was unhappy in that environment, but she would not stay that way for long. Max Rudolf had just been hired as head of the Opera Department at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. He invited her to join his team at Curtis, having already worked with Lee at the Metropolitan Opera. As she so simply put it, “In 1970 I was the first black hired at the Curtis Institute.” Helene van Rossum, the archivist at the Curtis Institute of Music, confirmed in an email to the author that she remained on faculty until 1990, a twenty-year tenure.

Kevin Short, Assistant Professor at the University of Miami, was introduced to Sylvia Olden Lee while a student at the Curtis Institute of Music and was interviewed for this project about his history with Lee (Appendix F). Short worked with her for three years and subsequently concertized extensively with her throughout the country. He recalled being taught spirituals, work songs, and coon songs orally by Lee, a teaching method she preferred to transcription for this type of music. As a student and recital partner, Short was impressed by her expansive repertoire that encompassed work songs that no one else knew—even African chants. As a coach, Short observed that Lee’s style was consistent, whether coaching Schubert lieder or Negro Spirituals. She insisted on prompting, finding the motivation behind each individual phrase, and linking each successive idea to the next in a chain.

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220 Lee, 100.
221 Ibid., 100.
222 Ibid., 100.
223 Helene van Rossum, e-mail message to the author, July 11, 2013.
224 Kevin Short, interview by author, Coral Gables, November 11, 2013.
When asked how the students responded to this type of approach, Short responded that the students loved her, as long as they did their homework. She believed singers should wake up very early and study their music every day. Lee preferred commitment and hard work to beautiful voices disconnected from the meaning of the text. As such, he felt her genius was best revealed in stripping away artifice and getting to the core of an aria or song. When applied towards the folk songs of the African-American tradition, Short is convinced this approach instilled in him a love of African-American music that no one else could have.

Mark Fairchild worked with Lee as a member of a quartet dedicated to singing Negro Spirituals, and shared a similar sense of amazement at her abilities as a coach.²²⁵ What Kevin Short referred to as prompting, Mark Fairchild describes as the Socratic Method of teaching. He describes Lee asking a series of simple questions verging on naïve like, “What is the mood of the person singing this song?” or “Who is speaking in this portion of the song?” in order to encourage a singer to communicate a sequence of ideas. He confirms that Lee had little tolerance for singers who simply wanted to show off a beautiful sound and that she often categorized such efforts as “pitiful,” accompanied with an unforgettable facial expression of reproach. To work with her, a singer had to come prepared and have the entire song, notes, dynamics, timing, and pronunciation, completely memorized. Both Short and Fairchild remarked on how she used vivid and heart wrenching stories of the slave experience to bring a student closer to the origins of a Negro spiritual.

²²⁵ Mark Fairchild, "In Memoriam - Sylvia Olden Lee"
Sylvia Olden Lee’s most enduring legacy was the amount of formidable collaborations she made with many—if not most—of the worlds leading African American musicians singers, in addition to the students she taught. These singers included Kathleen Battle, Jessye Norman, Paul Robeson, Lawrence Winters, Osceola Davis, Martina Arroyo and Simon Estes.

**Willis Patterson (1930 -)**

Willis Patterson began his teaching career at Southern University in Louisiana, then moved to Virginia State College, all the while still concertizing actively as a recitalist and opera singer.\(^{226}\) Interviewed by the author at the National Association of Negro Musicians in Nashville, Tennessee, in 2013, Patterson admitted being surprised when the University of Michigan first contacted him about a possible opening (Appendix G).\(^{227}\) He had just been recently tenured at Virginia State College when voice faculty chairman, John McCollum, asked him in a letter dated September 22, 1967, if he would be interested in applying for the position (Appendix H).\(^{228}\) Patterson was exactly what the school was searching for: an Ann Arbor native, a former Fulbright fellow, and an alum of the University of Michigan’s bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree programs.\(^{229}\) Although Patterson fit the school’s needs, he was concerned that the University of Michigan no longer fit his.\(^{230}\) His singing career was based mostly on the East Coast, and

\(^{226}\) Willis Patterson, interview by author, Nashville, TN, July 30, 2013.

\(^{227}\) Ibid.

\(^{228}\) John McCollum to Willis Patterson, September 27, 1967, Willis Patterson Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

\(^{229}\) Patterson, interview.

\(^{230}\) Ibid.
in the South making his homebase in Virginia much more practical than Ann Arbor.\footnote{Patterson, interview.} In addition, Patterson was very happy with the musical community at Virginia State College, and his family’s fondness for the Petersburg area made him understandably apprehensive about uprooting them and moving to Michigan.\footnote{Ibid.} Nevertheless, the appeal of the University of Michigan and an agreement to allow Patterson to transfer his rank to Ann Arbor tipped the scales, and he accepted.\footnote{Ibid.}

When Patterson joined University of Michigan he was not only the first black voice teacher on faculty, but the first black professor in the School of Music entirely. Patterson corroborated that black students had begun applying pressure to the administration in the form of student uprisings on Michigan’s campus to achieve more representation in the student and faculty bodies.\footnote{Ibid.} He indicated that while there was no explicit acknowledgement linking his hiring as a direct response to these student-lead actions, the dissatisfaction was already palpable and the time for University of Michigan to make concerted efforts to integrate had come.\footnote{Ibid.}

The sentiment that fueled the movement Patterson referenced started before he arrived on campus as an associate professor, and continued even after his appointment. The city of Detroit, home to the majority of black students at UM, was rife with racial tension and strife during the preceding years.\footnote{Max Arthur Herman, \textit{Fighting in the Streets: Ethnic Succession and Urban Unrest in Twentieth-Century America} (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2005), 79.} High-profile cases of police brutality in
1962 and 1964 intensified the feeling of powerlessness and disenfranchisement that the city’s residents felt despite prominent appointments of black leaders made by Detroit’s then mayor, Jerome Cavanagh.\textsuperscript{237} Black citizens realized that deindustrialization had taken a greater toll on their community than that on their white counterparts who had fled to the suburbs with the help of discriminatory lending practices enforced by the federal government; as a result they became resentful and militant, especially the youth.\textsuperscript{238}

In 1962, University of Michigan was advised to take steps to increase integration at every level because a federal investigation found a substantial amount of racial bias in their hiring process.\textsuperscript{239} As a result, a committee appointed by University of Michigan president, Harlan Hatcher, established The Opportunity Awards Program, but this program only managed to increase black enrollment from 2 percent to 3 percent between 1964 and 1969.\textsuperscript{240} Black students, unhappy with this rate of progress began flexing their political muscle with a sit-in at the UM administration building in 1968, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.\textsuperscript{241} One year later black student groups were still unimpressed with the University’s efforts and coalesced to form the Black Action Movement (BAM), deciding it was time to be even more proactive about their goals.\textsuperscript{242} On February 5, 1970 they initiated demonstrations that eventually led to the eighteen-day shutdown of University of Michigan’s Ann Arbor campus and garnered considerable

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\textsuperscript{237} Herman, 82.
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\textsuperscript{238} Ibid., 260.
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\textsuperscript{240} Ibid.
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\textsuperscript{242} Ibid.
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media attention.\textsuperscript{243} Their aims were to increase black enrollment to 10% by the 1973-1974 school year and hire black faculty in proportion to that increased enrollment.\textsuperscript{244}

John McCollum’s explorative letter to Willis Patterson arrived before student discontent erupted on the Ann Arbor campus, but also after the federal investigation officially recognized that the hiring and admission processes at UM maintained an academic culture out of touch with the educational needs of the larger community. Apparently, the administration of UM sought Patterson’s appointment in order to address the black community’s growing concerns. The fact that Patterson’s hiring did not mollify the black students and that their dissatisfaction with the rate of minority representation on faculty reached its zenith more than a year after Patterson began at UM signified that African Americans there wanted more than the administration’s mere acquiescence to hire blacks. They wanted even more African Americans who could make significant contributions and transform the environment of tolerance to one of affirmation. Willis Patterson proved to be an ideal addition to the faculty precisely for that reason.

As the first African American teacher on faculty in the University of Michigan’s Department of Music, Patterson felt the environment was, “By and large . . . positive—but mixed.”\textsuperscript{245} His presence was a dynamic change to the face of the voice faculty and he was aware of this, especially as a former student of the University, now elevated to the level of his former teachers.\textsuperscript{246} Patterson reported being well received in the whole; the


\textsuperscript{245} Patterson, interview.

\textsuperscript{246} Ibid.
only incident of true tension that Patterson expressed when interviewed occurred when he took over the reins of the Glee Club, becoming its first African American conductor.\textsuperscript{247} 

The Glee Club, according to Patterson, had the habit of functioning as a de facto white fraternity, and had its own structure of self-governance to which the men adhered.\textsuperscript{248} Patterson’s insistence on being the ultimate authority in the group caused, in his words, “quite a bit of friction,” for the first six years of his tenure, but eventually he won their hearts and minds.\textsuperscript{249} 

During his time as a recitalist, Patterson often dedicated a portion of the evening to works by black composers. But on April 8, 1973, while giving the concluding recital in the Black Music Series at University of Michigan, he sang a complete program of works by black composers.\textsuperscript{250} On this concert, sponsored by the School of Music and the Martin Luther King Jr. Fund, the bass-baritone sang art songs and arrangements of spirituals.\textsuperscript{251} In the article that appeared in the \textit{Ann Arbor News} the day prior to the concert, the professor explained that although the names of the composers Harry T. Burleigh, John W. Work, Margaret Bonds, and Florence Price had already appeared before the public in connection with their arrangement of Negro spirituals, their art songs had gone mostly unnoticed.\textsuperscript{252} Performing these art songs and making them available for others to perform became an important cause for the remainder of his career.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}[\textsuperscript{247}]
\item Patterson, interview.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\item “Patterson to Conclude Series on Black Music,” \textit{Ann Arbor News}, April 7, 1973.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Willis Patterson compiled and published the *Anthology of Art Songs by Black American Composers* in 1977.\(^{253}\) The need arose when he was surveying the available collections of American art songs to assign his students like any teacher would do, and realized, after thumbing through eight different collections representing one hundred and thirty-nine compositions and over eighty different composers that a significant group of composers had been mostly overlooked.\(^ {254}\) Only four of the composers in those eight anthologies were black.\(^ {255}\)

Patterson’s solution, much in keeping with the Black Nationalist sentiment sweeping the nation, was to create something that celebrated exactly those characteristics that song publishers had conveniently ignored. His compilation was not the first of its kind, but it was the first to be deemed indispensable, according to a review written in 1980 by Harvard University’s Josephine Wright.\(^ {256}\) Writing for the *Black Music Research Journal*, Donald Ivey commented, “When a collection as important as the *Anthology of Art Songs by Black American Composers* comes along, it should stir more than the usual amount of interest among musicians of all varieties, not only vocalists and vocal pedagogues.”\(^ {257}\) Patterson’s anthology had not only given America’s black songwriters a discernable group identity, but for the first time, also rendered their music accessible for analyzing, teaching, and performing in both academic and professional concert venues.


\(^{254}\) Ibid.

\(^{255}\) Ibid.

\(^{256}\) Josephine Wright, "Anthology of Art Song by Black American Composers, for Voice and Piano by Willis Patterson," *Notes* 37, no. 2 (1980).

The lineage of the *Anthology of Art Songs by Black American Composers* was brief, but had historically significant predecessors. The first compilation of art songs published by a composer of the African diaspora was Ignatius Sancho’s *A Collection of New Songs* published in London in 1769. The next compilation was “Negro Art Songs,” a 1946 collection published by the same Edward B. Marks Music Corporation that would eventually print Patterson’s anthology. Composers in subsequent years, however, had produced a flourishing of lyrical writing that was not being published, and consequently not being sung. In his foreword to the compilation, Patterson identifies a small number of African American composers who had been able to independently get their art songs published. Those names were Harry T. Burleigh, Howard Swanson, Hale Smith, William Grant Still, Margaret Bonds, Dr. Clarence Cameron White, and George Walker. The Handy Brothers Music Company of New York had published a large number of art songs by African American composers, including female composers like Lillian Evanti, Jean Stor, and Florence Price under the title “Unsung Americans Sung,” but this group of composers formed the exception. Despite the growing literary popularity of Black authors dubbed the “Harlem Renaissance,” music publishers remained uninterested in the art songs these texts had inspired composers to pen.

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258 Wright, "Anthology of Art Song by Black American Composers, for Voice and Piano by Willis Patterson."

259 Patterson, vii.

260 Ibid.

261 Ibid.

262 Ibid.

263 Ibid.
The next milestone was an unpublished, but widely circulated study by Aldrich Adkins of the University of Texas in 1971 entitled, “The Development of the Black Art Song.” Adkins parsed the songs into separate groups and labeled the first era “Song Period I, 1934-1949.” In those years, black songwriters implemented syncopated rhythms, jazz-inflected blue notes, and pentatonic sonorities under the words of black poets to more intensely reflect the peculiarity of the black experience in America. This marked a departure from the previous generation of black art song composers like Harry T. Burleigh, who operated in a decidedly European musical idiom and choose texts by white authors in conjunction with that aim. Patterson considered the songs selected for his anthology to be stylistically different enough from their predecessors to be dubbed “Song Period II.” There are examples of atonal, polytonal, and polyrhythmic compositional devices as well as texts by both black and non-black authors. Rather than a retrenchment from black idioms, this represented an incorporation of all the tools available.

The volume had limitations, some of which were addressed by Patterson himself in his prefatory remarks. He explains that not all the composers he wanted to include made it into the book. Patterson singles out Ulysses S. Kay as being a particularly lamentable omission, but understandable in light of his reputation as an important figure

264 Patterson, vii.
265 Ibid.
266 Ibid.
267 Ibid.
268 Ibid.
269 Ibid.
among his contemporary composers.\textsuperscript{270} Patterson was implying that Kay’s songs would eventually make it into the public’s consciousness even without the help of this anthology.\textsuperscript{271} He also mentioned other composers whose innovative writing and instrumental practices pushed them out of the self-selected boundaries of the volume, which was meant more as an introduction than a survey.\textsuperscript{272} Among the included composers, female composers made a strong showing in comparison with other volumes of American art songs; the works of Margaret Bonds, Dorothy Rudd Moore, Undine Moore, and Florence B. Price are all represented.\textsuperscript{273}

Another drawback to this anthology is that it is only printed in one edition and there are no high- or low-voice versions. The range of the songs varies so a bass and a soprano will both find suitable songs, but this puts constraints on the available songs within the volume for each singer. Even considering these factors, Cori Ellison describes Patterson’s 1977 publication as ground-breaking for assuming the herculean task of bringing black song out of the shadow of Negro spirituals, blues, and jazz.\textsuperscript{274} Patterson would go on to write a very persuasive essay for the \textit{Black Music Research Journal} in 1996 entitled, “The African American Art Song: A Musical Means for Special Teaching

\textsuperscript{270} Patterson, vi.

\textsuperscript{271} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{272} Patterson.

\textsuperscript{273} Ibid.

and Learning,” in which he eloquently asserts the necessity of black voices and black art songs in the cannon.\textsuperscript{275} The article ends with a particularly moving tribute:

> The art song is indeed, not antithetical to the African American experience. To the contrary, the art song represents a marvelous and unique opportunity to teach and preserve some of the very best and most noble aspects of American musical and cultural history. For those who will avail themselves of their wisdom, African American art songs are musically beautiful and vocally challenging. They bestow cultural enrichment and empowerment upon performers and audiences alike.\textsuperscript{276}

Patterson was eventually named associate dean of the University of Michigan School of Music, and served in that capacity for 20 years.\textsuperscript{277} He attributed his success as a voice trainer to his time spent at HBCUs because there he had to do “everything in the field or in the area and discipline of vocal music—choral conducting, directing operas, training voice, [and] teaching pedagogy.”\textsuperscript{278} He also became very involved in recruiting minority students and faculty to the University of Michigan by his continual contact with HBCUs through concertizing and his connections to other singing teachers in the field.\textsuperscript{279} He helped train Jessye Norman while she was a student at the University of Michigan and he recruited internationally renowned African American singers George Shirley and Shirley Verrett to join the faculty.\textsuperscript{280}


\textsuperscript{276} Ibid., 310.


\textsuperscript{278} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{279} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{280} Ibid.
Thomas Carey (1932-2002)

The teaching career of baritone Thomas Carey at the University of Oklahoma (OU) is briefly included here because several aspects of his appointment have similarities with other pioneering African American teachers of singing that are worth exploring. The University of Oklahoma began dealing with the issue of integration in a very public way in 1948. George McLaurin, a seventy-year-old black school teacher, applied to the doctoral program at the University’s School of Education, and was admitted, but forced to sit in his own row, and sometimes his own room during lectures. McLaurin appealed the school’s treatment of him to the Supreme Court, who decided in *McLaurin V. Oklahoma* that this type of segregation denied the plaintiff the intangible benefits of discussions that would prepare him to be a leader in society.

Not surprisingly, twenty years later the atmosphere on campus was still tense; George Henderson’s account, *Race and the University: a Memoir*, vividly describes the environment that he entered as a newly hired black professor of sociology at the University of Oklahoma in the 1960s. The city of Norman, which housed the University, had become a haven for whites of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area who did not want their children attending the schools recently segregated by court order. Most property owners would not rent to blacks, and Professor Henderson discovered that Norman property owners would not sell to a black family either, after his family’s first,

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281 Gates, 322.
282 Ibid.
283 Ibid.
285 Ibid., 10.
second, and third choice of homes were taken off the market once they expressed interest. 286

Many of the students felt the same sense of unwelcome on the college campus. Henderson wrote, “Hidden deep beneath [the] chamber of commerce propaganda featuring friendly white Oklahomans were disillusionment and rage among countless black citizens who had reached out in vain for their friendship.” 287 Black students shared the same space as their white counterparts but did not feel like they shared a sense of the University’s community. Hoping for better conditions, they viewed any black faculty hire as a positive sign of improvement. 288 Henderson continued:

Shortly after I began teaching in August 1967, a group of black students asked me what I was going to do about ‘our situation.’ They rattled off some shocking data regarding the Norman campus: relatively few black students were enrolled at the University. There were no black administrators or coaches, and only ten or so blacks were employed there, as extension specialists and in lesser staff positions. 289

The value black students placed on having representation on the faculty was made explicit when the University’s Afro-American Student Union (ASU) drafted the Black Declaration of Independence and presented it to President J. Herbert Hollomon on March 4, 1969. 290 The preamble stated that little progress had been made that did away with the University’s “institutionalized racism inherent in its creation, government, and administration,” and cited the president’s “treachery and deceit” in his claim that there

286 Henderson, 10.
287 Ibid., 20.
288 Ibid., 22.
289 Ibid., 26.
290 Ibid., 106.
was not enough money to attract black professors to campus.\textsuperscript{291} The ASU also demanded that a faculty exchange program be established with black schools.\textsuperscript{292} They explained that with only three full-time black professors, not only was the student body being shorthanded due to a lack of exposure to different views, but that the University was implicitly condoning the “erroneous myths and prejudices against black people” they suspected were being harbored by white students.\textsuperscript{293}

A few months later, a letter dated June 9, 1969, from Kyle McCarter, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, offered Thomas Carey the job title of visiting professor effective September 1, 1969 [Appendix J].\textsuperscript{294} Carey’s time as an artist-in-residence during the previous academic year had proven to be a successful.\textsuperscript{295} The Fine Arts Department at OU was very happy to have Carey, and a letter from the director of the School of Music, indicated that he would personally pick up Carey from the airport and give him the key to the apartment the University had provided for him.\textsuperscript{296} Carey was in the middle of a flourishing performing career, so initially his time in Norman was limited, but he made a big impact.\textsuperscript{297} According to George Henderson’s memoir, Carey and his wife, contralto Carol Brice who was hired a few years later, brought the number of black faculty from three to five and increased the number of black-owned homes in the town to

\textsuperscript{291} Henderson, 106.

\textsuperscript{292} Ibid., 116.

\textsuperscript{293} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{294} Pete Kyle McCarter to Thomas Carey, June 9, 1969, Thomas Carey Papers, Oklahoma University, Norman, OK.


\textsuperscript{296} C. M. Stookey to Thomas Carey, August 11, 1969, Thomas Carey Papers, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.

\textsuperscript{297} Henderson, 116.
OU’s President J. Herbert Hollomon expressed gratitude to Carey in a letter dated July 1, 1970, for the support he showed in the president’s efforts towards increasing tolerance and sensitivity on the Norman campus; this demonstrated that although Carey was hired as a voice teacher, his contribution to improving the campus went beyond the studio. As professors, he and helped changed the face of the student body by effectively recruiting and training black singers. An interoffice communication with the subject heading “FYI” contains a list of four black students Carey identified as potential talent for the School of Music, indicating this was an area that he took special interest in. Even as late as 1998, four years after retiring at the rank of Distinguished Regents Professor of Music, Carey was still in communication with the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office of The University of Oklahoma, voicing his concern about its commitment to a multiracial university community in the School of Music’s faculty search process.

Carey also sought to extend his influence outside of the school. In 1971 he served on the newly formed Norman Human Rights Commission. This commission was purposed and authorized to handle the complaints of discriminatory practices in housing,

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298 Henderson, 94.

299 J. Herbert Hollomon to Thomas Carey, July 1, 1970, Thomas Carey Papers, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.

300 Henderson, 94.

301 Rick to Mary Esther, “FYI: Black students indentified by Professor Thomas Carey, School of Music,” Thomas Carey Papers, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.

302 Jerry E. Jensen to Thomas Carey, July 13, 1998, Thomas Carey Papers, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.

public accommodations, and employment.\textsuperscript{304} Together with wife Carol Brice, Carey co-founded the Cimarron Circuit Opera Company in 1975.\textsuperscript{305} Apparently the two noticed a dearth of performing outlets for their students, and established this opera in order to give more stage opportunities to aspiring singers.\textsuperscript{306} In order to raise money for the Cimarron Circuit Opera Company, he co-produced a jazz concert in 1984 that attracted three-hundred people and the interest of the Norman Arts and Humanities Council.\textsuperscript{307} With the support of that council Carey’s brainchild blossomed into an annual event called “Jazz in June” that has become a staple on the city’s calendar.\textsuperscript{308}

Carey was the recipient of the Governor’s Artist of the year award in 1975, and the Oklahoma man of the year in 1976.\textsuperscript{309} He was honored with the OU Distinguished service award in 1985 and appointed as OU Regents Professor in 1994.\textsuperscript{310} The president of the University of Oklahoma, who knew Carey for over thirty years, noted that Carey’s investment in his students and his teaching came at the expense of what could have been a formidable performing career, but also noted, “He leaves a great legacy through the lives of all of those students who have known him.”\textsuperscript{311}

\textsuperscript{304} Henderson, 224.

\textsuperscript{305} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{306} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{308} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{309} "O.U. Prof. Baritone Thomas Carey Dies."

\textsuperscript{310} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{311} Ibid.
Camilla Williams (1922-2012)

Before Camilla Williams came to Indiana University (IU) Bloomington campus as the first African American teacher of voice, race-relations were already part of the consciousness of students and administrators. The assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968 encouraged the members of Indiana University’s Afro-Afro-American Student Association (AAASA) to become increasingly vocal about the limited number of African Americans at the administrative, faculty, and student levels of the University.\(^{312}\) Founded in the spring of 1968 the AAASA was organized to improve the relationship between African and black Americans on campus, but also coalesced the concerns of these two groups.\(^{313}\) Their first order of business was an open letter to the president of the University, Elvis Jacob Stahr, demanding more concrete measures be put into place for the hiring of black faculty and the admission of black students.\(^{314}\) President Stahr’s response came in a speech he delivered at the National Conference of Negroes in Higher Education shortly after AAASA’s letter was publicized. Stahr stated that he believed white universities should avoid hiring black faculty from black institutions because they were an important part of those colleges and universities.\(^{315}\) He also informed the group that he did not want to actively recruit more black students until the University developed


\(^{313}\) Mary Ann Wynkoop, "Dissent in the Heartland: The Sixties at Indiana University," (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002).

\(^{314}\) Ibid., 122.

\(^{315}\) Ibid.
“effective methods of instruction, geared to meet the special need they may have – so that they are likely to succeed, not fail, when they do enroll.”\footnote{Wynkoop, 122.}

His argument can be explained by the fact that black students at Indiana University were much more likely than white students to drop out of school; almost half of those students left without graduating.\footnote{Ibid.} Although black students in the 1960s found IU Bloomington to be among the more racially tolerant of the Midwest’s college campuses, and even though IU was the first major American university to approve a black studies program, the small numbers of black representation left members feeling vulnerable.\footnote{Ibid., 116.} African Americans made up approximately six percent of Indiana’s population in the 1960s, yet only two percent of the student body.\footnote{Ibid., 119} There were less than ten black faculty members, and no black administrators on the entire campus.\footnote{Ibid.} President Stahr’s predecessor, Herman B. Wells, was held in high regard for his progressive policies in regards to students of color, but the strong influence of the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana state politics, and the southern cultural roots of south-central Indiana, made Indiana University a challenging environment for the black students and faculty members alike.\footnote{Ibid., 116.}

The black students’ unsuccessful attempts to get white administrators to focus their attention on inequality at the Bloomington campus felt increasingly frustrating in the
aftermath of Dr. King’s assassination.\textsuperscript{322} In the aftermath, the idea of watching the exclusively white fraternities race their bicycles around the university stadium in the annual \textit{Little 500} race, a highlight to the social activities at the university, felt like adding insult to injury.\textsuperscript{323} So the black students organized a sit-in to protest the Greek sororities’ and fraternities’ discriminatory practices, and in doing so captured the attention of the entire campus.\textsuperscript{324} The day before the annual race would be held, fifty black students barricaded themselves inside of the stadium, enduring the cold April rains, and prevented the race from taking place on schedule.\textsuperscript{325} Their cause was presented to the school’s administration in a very simple way, saying, “We are concerned that a number of houses, by law, can operate in a racially discriminatory matter,”\textsuperscript{326} and their protest was successful.\textsuperscript{327} The race was postponed for a weekend (also a result of the inclement weather), and the University forbade any organization from participating that had discriminatory clauses in their charter; all but one group complied.\textsuperscript{328} The Little 500 sit-in marked the first time that the administration of IU responded proactively and recognized the concerns of an alliance of African American students.

Students and teachers at IU, however, still continued the struggle for their ideal of racial justice and the hiring of more minority faculty, in particular ones that would have

\textsuperscript{322} Wynkoop, 116.

\textsuperscript{323} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{324} Student Life at IU, “1968 Little 600 Sit-Ins,”

\textsuperscript{325} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{327} Wynkoop, 126.

\textsuperscript{328} Wynkoop.
real power as administrators to address issues of discrimination on campus. As a result of their efforts, Orlando Taylor was offered the vice chancellorship in addition to being the head of the new Black Studies Institute, the first of its kind at any large state university. In 1972, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act was amended to apply to the states, making the University subject to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and all universities were required to develop and maintain written affirmative action programs. George Taliaferro was appointed in 1972 as “Special Assistant to the President” and cited two major purposes for developing an Affirmative Action Plan for IU: he thought the plan would “discourage discrimination and highlight inequity.”

Speaking a year later to the student newspaper, Taliaferro explained the necessity of this plan further: “The historical explanation that employers give for not hiring minorities and women is that they can’t find them . . . A good Affirmative Action plan would enumerate methods employers could use to locate minorities and women applicants.”

The Affirmative Action Plan eventually approved by the Indiana University Board of Trustees was incredibly thorough and addressed many of the students’ and teachers’ concerns that had been simmering since the 1960s. In its introduction, administrators recognized that being race-neutral in their recruitment and hiring practices was not yielding satisfactory progress, that qualified pools of talent had been overlooked, and  

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329 Ibid.
330 Ibid., 130.
334 Indiana University Board of Trustees, “Indiana University Affirmative Action Plan.”
and that this deprived everyone from the potential enrichment of a truly integrated faculty and student body.\textsuperscript{335} Significantly, the apprehensions that these policies would lead to reverse discrimination were also addressed. In the same section touting the importance of these new policies it was made expressly clear that “it is not the intention of this Plan [sic] that there should be, or will be a lowering of standards in terms of achieving academic excellence or that qualified persons must be admitted as students or hired for academic or staff appointments.”\textsuperscript{336} The \textit{Implementation Document for Academic Appointments Section of Affirmative Action Plan} expressly stated that the recruitment process was the primary goal of this affirmative action plan.\textsuperscript{337} So even though the music department boasted David Baker in the jazz department, and Michael Gordon in the music education department as black faculty members, attention needed to be turned to the largest and arguably the most renowned department at the Indiana University School of Music: the voice department.\textsuperscript{338}

When Camilla Williams joined the faculty of Indiana University in 1977 as the first black voice teacher, she added another accomplishment to the list of firsts in her career.\textsuperscript{339} Professor Williams debuted as Madama Butterfly with the New York City Opera in 1946 and by doing so earned a place in history as the first African American female opera singer to appear with a major American opera company. With that accomplishment, she brought “democracy to opera” according to the New York

\textsuperscript{335} Trustees, I-2.

\textsuperscript{336} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{337} Ibid., A-2.

\textsuperscript{338} Camilla Williams and Stephanie Shonekan, \textit{The Life of Camilla Williams: African American Classical Singer and Opera Diva} (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2011), 201.

\textsuperscript{339} Ibid., 202.
In the 1960s Williams frequently served as a cultural ambassador for the State Department touring Africa, Southeast Asia, the Far East and Israel.\textsuperscript{341} It was also she who sang at the 1963 March on Washington right before Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his historic “I Have a Dream” speech, when Marian Anderson got stuck in traffic.\textsuperscript{342}

Williams was teaching at Queens College in New York City in 1975, when she began to receive phone calls from Charles Webb, dean of the Indiana University School of Music, and Hermann Hudson, professor and chair of the African American studies at Indiana University.\textsuperscript{343} Margaret Harshaw, had recommended her name according to Williams’ autobiography \emph{The Life of Camilla Williams: African American Classical Singer and Opera Diva}, and they wanted her to become the first black professor of voice.\textsuperscript{344} Dean Webb and Professor Hudson enlisted Undine Smith Moore, and Michael Gordon, a young black professor in the Music Education division who happened to also be a fellow alumnus of Williams’ alma mater, Virginia State College, in the two-year campaign to convince Williams to move to Bloomington.\textsuperscript{345} Yet, it still took an act of God for her to accept the position, and that came during her visit when the choir at the First United Methodist Church sang her mother’s favorite hymn “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”\textsuperscript{346}

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\textsuperscript{342} Ibid.
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\textsuperscript{343} Williams and Shonekan, 201.
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\textsuperscript{344} Ibid.
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\textsuperscript{346} Ibid.
Williams felt that the move to Indiana was the best move she ever made, but it was still a difficult one.\textsuperscript{347} Returning to campus after lunch with her colleagues, Williams noted a very handsome condominium apartment complex, and said, “I would love to live there.”\textsuperscript{348} To which another professor in the car responded, “You can’t live there, Camilla.”\textsuperscript{349} It was then made clear to Williams that her professional success could not completely insulate her from the borderlines still drawn because of her skin color. She wrote, “Shaking my head silently, I looked away across the road at the not-so-impressive apartments opposite Woodcrest. I swiped at the stubborn and familiar tears that threatened the corners of my eyes and we rode back to school in a stony sad silence.”\textsuperscript{350}

Professor William’s teaching philosophy was based on her love of teaching the technical side of singing, according to a 2002 interview in \textit{The Opera Quarterly}.\textsuperscript{351} She focused on how to place the voice and develop good diction.\textsuperscript{352} She also felt that her teaching, her musicianship, and her singing all benefitted from the concert and chamber music that had become a mainstay of her career.\textsuperscript{353} In her autobiography she wrote, “I had high expectations of all my students and did not compromise standards. They had to

\begin{itemize}
\item[347] Williams and Shonekan, 201.
\item[348] Ibid., 203
\item[349] Ibid.
\item[350] Ibid.
\item[352] Ibid.
\item[353] Ibid., 228.
\end{itemize}
work hard and listen to my instructions. I did not just care about their vocal performance, but also the quality of their lives and their self-esteem.”

Williams became a particular favorite of Dean Charles Webb, who described her as “bigger than life” in an interview. The two performed often in recitals together as a duo, and their last performance was at the invitation of President Bill Clinton in the White House. Webb described Williams as both a pacesetter and a pioneer, because of her accomplishments on the stage and on Indiana’s faculty. He was also convinced that her presence, as an “advertised commodity” drew black talent to the school’s voice department, some of which sought her out as a voice teacher, others simply appreciated the presence of an African American on faculty and studied with other teachers.

As a faculty member, Williams continued to advocate for the black students and their teachers at IU by attending many of the events sponsored by the Black Culture Center and the Groups Program for young black students, whether she cared for the styles of music often featured or not. She felt her presence at performances was important because she “could perceive that black people—students, staff, and faculty—were marginalized at Indiana University.”

In addition to being the first African American professor of voice at Indiana University, Williams also became the first African American professor to teach at Beijing’s Central Conservatory when she was a guest there in 1983. By the time she

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354 Williams and Shonekan, 219.
356 Williams and Shonekan, 213-214.
357 Ibid., 214.
358 “The Jacobs School of Music Mourns the Passing of Opera Star Camilla Williams,”
retired in 1997 from IU, she had become a beloved faculty member known for her furs, her wit and her charm. She received one of the highest honors the university president could bestow when in 2009 she was the recipient of the Indiana University President’s Medal for Excellence. In 2010, she was awarded the Sagamore of the Wabash, the highest honor the governor of Indiana can bestow, for bringing distinction and honor to the state.

The Indiana University Jacobs School of Music administered a blog set up to mourn the teacher’s passing titled, “Remembering Camilla Williams: 1919-2012.” The responses were unanimous in their admiration for her talent and appreciation of her unique spirit. Diane Coloton who was a master’s student of voice in 1977 met Williams soon after her arrival in Bloomington, “She was so glamorous, so ebullient, so warm and pleased with her new adventure. . . Years later, when I returned to IU, she was just as glamorous, just as sunshine-y [sic] and arguably the fanciest shopper at the grocery store, dazzling in her hats and furs and heels and jewels, but just as nice as she could be to everyone.” Lawrence Frank Gee wrote on February 19, 2012 “Her wisdom and heart of compassion were as all encompassing as her knowledge of singing was.” Like William Warfield, Williams enjoyed nurturing her students even outside of the vocal studio, according to Randy Elkins. On February 2, 2012 he wrote, “She loved to feed

359 “The Jacobs School of Music Mourns the Passing of Opera Star Camilla Williams,”
360 Ibid.
362 Ibid.
363 Ibid.
students and I had more ‘drop’ biscuits, baked chicken, homemade macaroni and cheese and various other Southern delicacies.”

For Dean Webb, her impact was unmistakable. He said, “I have called her a role model, a mentor for young musicians, and her contributions to the world of music are really history now. She will be remembered as a beautiful, courageous, giving and loving person by generations long into the future.”

**More Pioneers**

The self-selected boundaries of this project excluded many teachers who were pioneers in their own right but came later or operated at other institutions. Eastman School of Music and The Juilliard Conservatory did eventually hire Seth McCoy and Simon Estes as the first black voice teachers in those institutions respectively; however, this was in the 1980s. Other teachers who taught during the 60s and 70s at institutions outside of the five highlighted schools were identified and contacted when possible to provide context for the discussion that follows in the next chapter. Edited interviews with Carolyn Stanford, and Robert Brewster have been included in the appendix to provide context for the environment for African American teachers of singing during this time. Professor and *Kammersängerin* Grace Bumbry was also interviewed for her work as the first African American to teach at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. Her long singing career and frequent contact with students of all nationalities, including American students, provided a unique perspective to the teaching experiences detailed in this chapter.

The next chapter will synthesize the historical and sociological information presented in the literature review, the biographical material covered in this chapter, and

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364 “Remembering Camilla Williams: 1919-2012.”
the interviews preserved in the appendix. By engaging with the primary source material collected for this document, a convincing case can be made that the first African American teachers of singing who integrated the music faculties of the United States during the 1960s and 1970s took considerable risk in assuming those positions within academia, and provided a substantial benefit to the musical community, thus justifying their assignation as pioneers.
Chapter 5

Analysis

They said we couldn’t do ballet because of the shape of our feet, or that we couldn’t learn certain languages. Well, they can’t say that anymore.

—Sylvia Olden Lee, And So I Sing

Vocal Technology

The African American teachers of singing who acted as pioneers are important because they challenged conceptual parameters for African Americans that were operative, even if they were unspoken. The first, is that a black voice teacher would not be ideal for teaching European music due to a dissimilar musical sensibility, ability, or physiology. As detailed in the introduction, black singers and their instruments have been consistently categorized as something other than the white European norm. As a result, Camilla Williams’s debut was as Madama Butterfly, a Japanese geisha, like Marian Anderson’s debut as the swarthy gypsy, Azucena, or Grace Bumbry’s debut as the sexually illicit goddess, Venus, could be interpreted as the musical establishment’s way of keeping these artists on the societal margins, even as it prepared to accept them into the musical fold. Williams had auditioned for the New York City Opera singing a Mozart aria, and later mentioned in an interview that she considered her voice ideal for the Countess or Susanna in Le Nozze di Figaro, but was kept away from that repertoire because, “They were afraid to put me in a white wig and whiter makeup.”

Willis Patterson, as the black King Balthazar in the televised version of Amahl and the Night Visitors, and Camilla Williams as Madama Butterfly were cast in roles seemingly geared
to their perceived exoticism as well as their vocal ability. In that same vein, Sylvia Olden Lee was asked by James Levine to be his consultant for the Metropolitan Opera House’s first production of Porgy and Bess in 1985, but was not consulted by the maestro again, until it was time to organize a spiritual concert with Jessye Norman and Kathleen Battle.\textsuperscript{366} Williams, Patterson, and Lee were clearly appreciated for their artistry, but also somewhat marginalized by having a designated place removed from some the standard repertoire. If that marginalization was more indicative of their talent, than an impresario’s perception – a black voice teacher might have a difficult time reconciling their experience in this subsection of Western classical music with the broad range of repertoire needed to effectively prepare students for successful careers in the field.

Black singers were often categorized as having a “black sound,” thought to be a result of a different morphology. Nina Sun Eidsheim, in her dissertation, Voice as a Technology of Selfhood: Towards an Analysis of Racialized Timbre and Vocal Performance, traces modern classical vocal pedagogy to its progenitor, Manuel Garcia II, and his conception of the effect of singers’ skull shapes and sizes on timbre.\textsuperscript{367} Eidsheim explains how at that time, research on the human body was a tool to justify colonial expansion.\textsuperscript{368} She continues with, “from the moment human anatomy became part of the vocal timbral equation, the idea that vocal timbre would sonically reveal racial essence was implied.”\textsuperscript{369} If black voice teachers had a different vocal apparatus that produced

\textsuperscript{366} Lee.

\textsuperscript{367} Nina Sun Eidsheim, “Voice as a Technology of Selfhood: Towards an Analysis of Racialized Timbre and Vocal Performance” (University of California, San Diego, 2008).

\textsuperscript{368} Ibid., 51.

\textsuperscript{369} Ibid., 55.
what was perceived as the black sound, training voices that did not share the same structure would be equally problematic. Today, most voice teachers share a similar philosophy to renowned pedagogue Richard Miller, who wrote, “Fibrotic/stroboscopic observations reveal no racially classifiable features of uniform laryngeal construction,” but the fact that Miller addressed the issue in his 2004 book, *Solutions for Singers: Tools for Performers and Teachers*, indicates that he was refuting a previously held supposition.³⁷⁰

But in the 1960s, the realization that race was more of a social concept than a scientific one, bolstered by the mapping of the human genome, was still years away. Though the presence of African American students in the conservatories had proven that blacks were trainable in the realm of classical vocal music by white teachers, white intellectuals training black students was an already well-established paradigm not exclusive to the field of music. The pioneering African American teachers of singing who proved that they could teach music from the Western tradition as well as perform it at the highest levels provided a transgressive pedagogical model for what was possible. By teaching, they demonstrated a complete synthesis of the method that they had acquired and affirmed the similarities of the vocal apparatus. Being a teacher of the standard repertoire and that associated with African Americans showed a musical multilingualism that made Camilla Williams, Willis Patterson, and Sylvia Olden Lee greater assets to their students and institutions.

Skepticism and Scarcity of Black Talent

The second conceptual parameter African American vocal pedagogues challenged was a prevalent skepticism of the amount of black talent appropriate and available for the professoriate, which subsequently deemed qualified black teachers as a scarcity. A consistent implication found when exploring the topic of faculty integration is that an emphasis on race when hiring means a de-emphasis in the quality of the candidate. Or plainly said, hiring candidates based off of a consideration of color means lowering academic standards. Using a Critical Race Theory lens on documents from University of Michigan, Indiana University, and the University of Cincinnati reveals that the academic environments Willis Patterson, Camilla Williams, and Sylvia Olden Lee entered harbored this view. In a letter dated June 25, 1968, the University of Michigan’s Dean of the College of Literature, Science, and Arts wrote to Vice President Allan Smith. He had recently returned from a meeting in Iowa City where the topics concerned recruitment and retention of disadvantaged students, personnel policies, and student activism among others. The following is taken directly from his letter reproduced in full in Appendix I:

My major emphasis was that the pool from which Negro faculty is to be recruited was extremely shallow. Consequently, we need to discuss (a) whether we should recruit from Negro colleges, and (b) the qualitative problem; that is whether we should “lower standards” and recruit Negro assistant professors on the basis of different criteria than we employ for non-blacks.

A close reading of this statement reveals a paradox. Haber first contends that the pool is “extremely shallow” which would indicate that there has been an exhaustive or at

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371 William Haber to Allan Smith, June 25, 1968, Black Action Movement Collection, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

372 Ibid.

373 Ibid.
least an earnest search for black candidates. However, the word “whether” in the next sentence suggests that much of the black talent in the nation at the time was not considered because of their association with “Negro colleges.” The passage goes on to assert that any different criteria used to recruit African Americans would equate to a lowering of the academic standards, showing a conscious link in the writer’s mind between African Americans and low standards. Implicit in this thinking, is that contending with this issue was a white man’s burden, while maintaining the status quo, which favored white candidates and those educated at white institutions, was more amenable to the ideal academic atmosphere.

In that same letter Haber concedes that his points were controversial and that African Americans at the conference resented the way he expressed his concerns. They agreed that there should be no hesitation to recruit from HBCUs, that African Americans with PhDs should be considered of the same quality as whites with similar qualifications, and that good teachers should be kept and bad teachers let go regardless of race. Haber concluded the letter with the following paragraph:

My own conclusion is that we clearly should urge the departments to take risks in the engagement of Negro Ph.D.’s at the assistant professor level. To raise all the questions about risks and hazards, about promotion and terminal appointments, is in effect to conclude that we will do nothing. The spirit of the times requires us to do something rather than emphasize the obstacles. This will not be easy, but I think it must be done.374

Here too, Haber’s rhetoric reveals a deep-seated bias that he is exuding from his position of power and privilege. By closely reading his own wording, it seems likely that Dean Haber is convinced the risk of hiring a “Negro Ph.D.” at the assistant professor

374 William Haber to Allan Smith.
level is greater than that of a non-black assistant professor. Prior in the letter he reveals a concern for lowered academic standards, but it is also possible that the dean is using that as a euphemism to address the risk of change inherent to diversity.

The previously referenced Indiana University Affirmative Action Plan, approved by the Board of Trustees June 29, 1974, expresses similar concerns, albeit in a different way. Strengthening previous commitments to affirmative action, the trustees authorize action to “accelerate the final elimination of such vestiges of discrimination as may still exist,” recognizing that neutrality had not been sufficient enough to complete the process on its own. Preemptively broaching the subject of reverse discrimination, the trustees wrote

... it should be expressly stated that it is not the intention of this Plan that there should be, or will be, a lowering of standards in terms of achieving academic excellence or that unqualified persons must be admitted as students or hired for academic or staff appointments... Affirmative action does not preclude a university from continuing to provide logical and balanced programs which meet the educational needs of a broad spectrum of society. Nor, does affirmative action automatically take priority over all other legitimate goals and policies of the university.

This document was obviously crafted with care to address a politically explosive issue with the potential for liability. Yet, by negating hypothetical scenarios of lowered standards, unqualified persons, and a change of University priorities, this document reveals an uneasiness about the idea of assuming equality and parity with the persons this document was aimed to help. It is noteworthy that the text references “educational needs of a broad spectrum of society,” a goal that the University hardly met. The rhetoric

375 Indiana University Board of Trustees, Indiana University Affirmative Action Plan, June 29, 1974, I-2.
376 Indiana University Board of Trustees, I-3-4.
377 Indiana University Board of Trustees I-3-4.
here also separates affirmative action from “all other legitimate goals and policies,” reinforcing the marginal status of African Americans and strengthening the centrality of the white male power structure. Since Indiana University had been originally established as a land-grant institution that did not even allow African Americans entrance, how could such an institution accommodate a multiplicity of learning and cultures without making significant changes at every level and with every policy?

It is reasonable to assume that for many school administrators during this time, the pressure to hire African American faculty carried with it the concern of consequently lowering the quality of the education given. One of the purposes of this essay is to completely refute that notion with evidence showing that music schools were able to hire exemplary voice faculty members of color, pedagogues who added value to the institutions of which they became a part. When they were sought, they were found. There is also no evidence to suggest that these conservatories had to go to incredible lengths to find what they were looking for. Sylvia Olden Lee jumped at the opportunity to join the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music faculty even though she was living in Sweden at the time, and Willis Patterson only required that he be able to keep his tenure status. Of course, Camilla Williams claimed it was an act of God that led the local choir to sing “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” which convinced her to accept the Bloomington position, but the campaign to convince her this was the right move (including the divine intervention) was entirely appropriate for a diva of her stature.

**Tokenism**

The third parameter of this study was one of tokenism. A token in this case would be someone hired not because of his or her credentials, but because of skin color.
Tokenism implies that blacks, having been specifically sought out because of their racial identity, were not as qualified as their white counterparts who would have competed against a larger pool of white candidates in order to acquire their positions. The drawback of government-influenced identity-based hiring practices was the introduction of a new value system that was never fully explained or embraced by all. Often, majority white faculty members never realized how their identity had entered into the hiring process, or realized what an advantage it provided. This sometimes led to resentment. Carolyn Stanford, who was the first African American voice teacher at Drake University and then SUNY Buffalo remembered encountering this while at the latter school. When the dean introduced her as a new addition to the faculty a colleague exclaimed, “Now all we need is a homosexual Jew!”

In addition to Carolyn Stanford, Robert Brewster of the University of Miami, and the aforementioned Sylvia Olden Lee and Willis Patterson all reported being sought out because they were black, therefore leaving them vulnerable to be considered “tokens” by colleagues despite their academic and performing credentials. Studies published as late as 2014 quote African American faculty saying, “Feeling different, doubted, and emotionally taxed is an everyday challenge of simply existing in the world of academia as a person of color.”378 By risking the appearance of tokenism, these teachers put their reputations and psyches on the line in order to make vocal pedagogy more inclusive.

**Academic Value of African American Music**

As Willis Patterson demonstrated when he published *Anthology of Art Songs by Black American Composers*, there was a wealth of music that languished unpublished and

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378 Tuitt et al., "Teaching in the Line of Fire: Faculty of Color in the Academy," 70.
unsung before his intervention. The Negro Spiritual had long been confirmed as a necessary and anticipated part of the African American singer’s concert repertoire, but there was no analogous response to the art songs. Crucially, those art songs often spoke of a more realistic and contemporary black American experience, one perhaps more difficult to applaud than the antiquated anguish in the songs of former slaves—but just as important. Philosopher bell hooks [sic] identified the power in this type of literature when she wrote, “Often the messages of education for critical consciousness first came to the people through performance art, in places where music and the spoken word converged.”

The critical consciousness provided through the music of black art song composers had been excluded to a significant degree and Patterson’s volume of songs made that omission more apparent.

Patterson dedicated the *Anthology of Art Songs by Black American Composers* to his family and to Sylvia Olden Lee. In the acknowledgements he wrote:

> A special word of acknowledgement must be made to Sylvia Olden Lee, pianist, coach and teacher. Her dedication to the teaching of the art songs of black American composers right along with the teaching of the works of the European masters is exemplary [emphasis added]! In many instances, compositions were retained in her memory and taught with unerring faithfulness to the notation of the composer, even though the printed record of the song had long since ceased to be available. She is one of the prime motivators in the development of this anthology.

If Patterson’s intervention was making African American art music accessible to voice teachers and students through his publication, Lee’s intervention was preserving said music in her encyclopedic memory until it could be published. Recreating any piece of

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380 Patterson, v.

381 Ibid.
music with “unerring faithfulness to the notation of the composer” is a remarkable feat that is worthy of skepticism; however, multiple accounts of Lee’s ability to perform without looking at the score exist, including videos of her playing from memory. By teaching and coaching African American art music and Negro spirituals in the same conservatory space, in the same academic manner, and with the same attention to detail that was lavished upon the standard operatic and song repertoire, Lee made a powerful case for the inclusion of these works into the musical cannon. Just like the Fisk Jubilee Singers raised the Negro Spiritual from minstrelsy to music in the public consciousness, the efforts of Patterson and Lee to sustain black art songs propelled that music from obscure to obtainable.

**Hospitable Environment**

Patterson, Lee, and Camilla Williams also contributed to making the prestigious conservatory atmospheres they inhabited more hospitable to incoming students. The majority of campuses can have an alienating and chilling effect for minority students because of the new spiritual and physical environment. By maintaining their identity as African Americans and strengthening this affiliation through the advocacy of black music, Patterson, Lee, and Williams were able to engender an environment more hospitable to black students and to other the black professors. Williams was rather adamant about visibly and vocally maintaining her identity and leveraging her position of power to support others. The following passage from her autobiography illustrates that point:

> The Dean [sic] knew where I stood on this matter of black identity. I once asked him why there were not more black professors at the music school. I would go to so many events and be the only black person there. The Dean had answered pleasantly, “Well, Camilla, you are one of us.” I know he was being nice and

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382 Willie, 69.
inclusive but that raised my feathers. I told him clearly, “I am black, and proud of it.”

She and the other voice teaching pioneers featured in this study demonstrated over and over again their commitment to raising and strengthening the presence of African Americans among institutions of higher musical education.

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383 Williams and Shonekan, 221.
Chapter 6

Conclusion

Suggestions for Future Research

The narrow focus of this essay has left many other related topics unexplored. The findings presented here could be contextualized by researching influential African American teachers in other departments within the music conservatory or outside of the 1960s and 1970s timespan. For example, the first African American on faculty at Oberlin Conservatory was a professor of African American music and Jazz, Wendell Logan, and as noted before Indiana University’s venerated jazz professor David Baker, had begun teaching at Indiana ten years before Camilla Williams was hired. Understanding how these teaching artists impacted the spaces they taught in would be beneficial to the academic community.

Pioneers, by definition, chart paths for others to follow, making inhospitable environments more accommodating through their experience, knowledge, and presence. Women, Latinos, people with disabilities, and members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender communities have also made significant contributions to the faculties of premiere conservatories and schools of music despite facing discrimination in society. Identifying trailblazers in these other communities informs and inspires future musicians to follow in their footsteps, contributing to our understanding of how to deal with and overcome challenges, and thereby serving as a case study to future deans and administrators seeking to hire and maintain diverse faculties. Particularly relevant would
be a study on the intersection between two marginalized identities such as black and gay, or female and disabled.

Diversity has emerged as a buzzword and focal point of many organizations including conservatories. The efforts made so far have resulted in incremental gains, but as a special report commissioned by the National Association of Schools of Music bulletin demonstrates, a truly diverse conservatory remains out of reach. A few statistics culled from their survey indicates participation among African American and Latino graduate students and professors is still an area of concern.

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<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>&gt;0.01%</td>
</tr>
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385 Ibid.

386 Ibid.
This data is helpful in identifying areas that need improvement and setting goals around inclusivity, but here too, more research could greatly benefit the conservatory community. Collecting qualitative data about the student and faculty experiences of underrepresented groups in schools of music could shed light on the reason these numbers do not show the growth that the music community desires.

One key area in the conservatory that was outside the scope of this project, but not unrelated, is the issue of leadership. The highest levels of arts administration in the collegiate and on the professional level have maintained a lack of diversity despite the nation’s changing demographics and the changing needs of the arts organizations. Research that evaluates this power structure is sorely needed to determine how to bring more diverse viewpoints and experiences to the table in order to best serve all communities.

**Long-term effects**

The central tenet of this project is that the contributions of the first African American teachers of singing hired by prestigious predominantly white institutions in the 1960s and 1970s had an extramusical significance with long-term effects. By engaging in a space previously reserved for white Americans or Europeans during the mid-twentieth century struggle for civil rights, their experience would have been different not only from their white colleagues, but also the black Americans who would follow in their footsteps decades later. Moreover, their visibility as members of highly regarded vocal departments affirmed the ability of African Americans to be full participants at high levels of competition and responsibility within the musical establishment. This same visibility also
brought a new awareness to students of every hue by witnessing African Americans endowed with and executing positions of authority within the conservatory system.

Institutionalized racism has been so systematic in the United States that the fight for racial uplift had to be waged on every available front; vocal pedagogy was no exception. Even in the absence of a conspiracy to prevent African Americans from joining the professoriate, there was an effective system that managed to exclude teachers of color, even though African Americans had participated in art music for many years as students in conservatories, and performers on stage.

Professors Willis Patterson, Sylvia Olden Lee, Camilla Williams, and all the others referenced here boldly shattered the lingering cognitive barrier to African American participation on the voice faculties of America’s premiere conservatories and schools of music. They were aided by the mid-century Civil Rights Movement on the national agenda, black student organizations’ demands for greater faculty representation, administrators who were allies in the cause, and the implementation of federal statutes that tied diversity to dollars. They were prepared through excellent training in the United States and Europe, successful international concert careers, and in some cases teaching experience gained from employment at HBCUs. Once they had assumed duties at those artistically demanding institutions, they fulfilled their jobs expertly and were rewarded with long tenures and increasingly higher rank.
WORKS CITED


Fairchild, Mark, "In Memoriam - Sylvia Olden Lee"


APPENDIX A

Listing of all of the African American Teachers of Singing referenced within the text of the document. The dates of tenure, rank, and residency status have been left black when not available.

Addison, Adele (1925 - )
soprano
  Eastman School of Music, Visiting Professor 1970-1972
  Philadelphia College of Performing Arts
  SUNY at Stony Brook
  Aspen Music Festival, Festival Head
  Manhattan School of Music

Allen, Betty (1930 - 2009)
mezzo-soprano
  Manhattan School of Music
  Curtis Institute of Music, Master Class Faculty 1988-1990
  Harlem School of the Arts, Executive Director 1979-1992

Brice, Carol (1918 - 1985)
contralto
  Black Mountain College 1946
  Oklahoma University 1974-1985

Brewster, Robert, Ph.D (1947 - )
tenor
  Miles College, Associate Professor of Music 1960-1962
  Dillard University, Chair of Department of Music 1974
  Jackson State University, Chair of Fine Arts and Music 1962-1964
  University of Miami (FL), Professor of Music 1974-1983

Brown, Thelma Waide (1896 - 1975)
soprano
  Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University 1946-1973

Bumbry, Grace (1937 - )
soprano/mezzo-soprano
  Summer Academy of the Mozarteum, Masterclass Faculty 1989-1995, 2002

Carey, Thomas (1932 - 2002)
baritone
  Oklahoma University, Distinguished Regents Professor 1970-1994
Davey, Gloria (1931 – 2012)
soprano
Indiana University, Professor 1985-1993

Dobbs Janzon, Mattiwilda (1925 - )
soprano
University of Texas at Austin, Visiting Professor 1973-1975
Spelman College
University of Georgia
Howard University

Duncan, Todd (1903-1998)
baritone
Howard University, Professor of Voice 1930-1945
Curtis Institute of Music 1970-1990

Estes, Simon (1938 - )
bass-baritone
Juilliard School of Music 1985-
Iowa State University 1985-
Wartburg College 2002-
Boston University 2004-

Grist, Reri (1932 - )
soprano
Indiana University
Hochschule für Musik und Theater, München

Graham, Elizabeth
soprano
University of Florida, Professor of Voice 1979-2014

Hayes, Roland (1997 – 1977)
tenor
Black Mountain College 1945
Boston University

Lee, Sylvia (1917 – 2004)
coach
Talledega College 1938-1938
Dillard College 1942-1943
Tanglewood Opera Center 1952
Metropolitan Opera Katherine Turney Long Opera Courses 1954-1956
Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, Assistant Professor 1968-1970
Curtis Institute of Music 1970-1990
Maynor, Dorothy (1910 – 1996)
soprano
Harlem School of the Arts, *Founder/Executive Director* 1964-1996

McCoy, Seth (1928–1997)
tenor
University of Michigan, *Visiting Professor* 1981-1982
Eastman School of Music 1982-1997

Patterson, Willis, Ph.D. (1930 - )
bass
Southern University (LA) 1960-1962
Virginia State College 1962-1968
University of Michigan 1968-1999

Verrett, Shirley (1931 - 2010)
soprano/mezzo-soprano
University of Michigan, *Distinguished Professor* 1996-2010

Williams, Camila (1922-2012)
soprano
Queens College 1975-1977
Indiana University, *Distinguished Professor of Voice* 1977-1990

Williams, Edna C. (1915-1994)
soprano
Northern Illinois University, *Professor of Voice* 1965-1994

Warfield, William (1920-2002)
bass-baritone
University of Illinois, *Chairman of Voice Division* 1974-1994
Northwestern University 1994-2002
APPENDIX B

U.S. News and World Report
Best Graduate Schools 1997

Music (Master of Music)

1. Univ of Rochester-Eastman School of Music (NY) 4.9
2. Indiana University-Bloomington 4.8
2. Juilliard School (NY) 4.8
4. University of Michigan-Ann Arbor 4.7
5. Curtis Institute of Music (PA) 4.5
6. New England Conservatory of Music (MA) 4.4
6. Northwestern University (IL) 4.4
6. Juilliard School (NY) 4.4
6. University of Cincinnati 4.4
6. University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign 4.4
6. Yale University (CT) 4.4
12. Florida State University 4.3
12. Manhattan School of Music (NY) 4.3
12. University of Southern California 4.3
15. Johns Hopkins University-Peabody (MD) 4.2
15. University of North Texas 4.2
17. Cleveland Institute of Music (OH) 4.1
17. University of Texas-Austin 4.1
19. Arizona State University 4.0
20. Mannes College of Music (NY) 3.9
20. Rice University (TX) 3.9
20. University of Colorado-Boulder 3.9
20. University of Wisconsin-Madison 3.9
24. Ohio State University 3.8
24. University of Hartford-Hartt (CT) 3.8
26. San Francisco Conservatory of Music 3.7
26. SUNY-Stony Brook 3.7
26. University of Kansas 3.7
26. University of Miami 3.7
30. Boston University (MA) 3.6
30. Michigan State University (MI) 3.6
30. Temple University (PA) 3.6
30. University of Maryland-College Park 3.6
30. Westminster Choir College (NJ) 3.6

387 Koerner, "The Arts. (Cover Story)."
APPENDIX C

_United States News and World Report_  
Best Graduate Schools 1997

Top Specialty Programs:

*Opera/Voice*

1. Indiana University-Bloomington  
2. Juilliard School (NY)  
3. University of Cincinnati  
4. University of Rochester-Eastman (NY)  
5. University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

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388 Ibid.
Thelma Waide Brown In 10th Year At R. U.

Soprano soloist and teacher of voice now in her 10th season as member of the faculty of Roosevelt University, Mme. Thelma Waide Brown, has prepared many students. Mme. Thelma Waide Brown, has prepared many young singers for their careers. She is often heard in concerts, oratorio, at guest appearances on radio, and in musicals.

Mme. Brown, the daughter of a minister inherited a rich musical inspiration and background from her ex-slave parents.

She sings the great Italian classics; German Lieder; Operatic arias and American art songs, with equal appeal and in the area of Negro folk songs and Spirituals this artist is in a class almost to herself.

In a recent performance of the old Spiritual "Steal Away to Jesus" the soprano disclosed an ethereal quality in her voice. Mme. Brown is a "first" in the truest meaning of the word.
APPENDIX E:

 Archives and Rare Books Music Library  
 University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music
APPENDIX F:

Personal interview with Prof. Kevin Short regarding Sylvia Olden Lee
Miami, FL
October 15, 2013

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(photo courtesy of Professor Kevin Short)

Kevin Short: Yeah. So he actually...my senior year of Morgan [State University], he wrote a letter to Sylvia
And I met her when I graduated from Morgan [State University].
September when I went to Curtis [Institute of Music] and enrolled there in September 1984.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Before you were born?

Carl DuPont: No, I was born in March 1984.

Kevin Short: Okay, so you were just...?

Carl DuPont: Yeah. Oh...[chuckles]

Kevin Short: [Laughs]

Carl DuPont: So she had already been told about you. You had already been told about her?

Kevin Short: Right.

Carl DuPont: And what had you been told about her?
Kevin Short: She was an outstanding coach. But Morgan [State University] [chuckles]...did not; at that time have a good opera department. So I really didn’t have an idea of what a coach – especially a coach of her level, was about and what it all entailed. I was just as ignorant as can be. I won a couple of competitions. Walter Symphony competition; sang in the chorus of *Porgy and Bess* in 1983. Donnie Ray Albert was the Porgy and so my experience was limited.

Kevin Short: I was told about her and she was assigned to me.

Carl DuPont: But you still had a primary voice teacher?

Kevin Short: A voice teacher.

Carl DuPont: And who was that?

Kevin Short: That was Raquel Adonaylo.

Carl DuPont: Okay. So Todd Duncan was also on the faculty?

Kevin Short: Yes.

Carl DuPont: Did you have any interaction with him?

Kevin Short: Just peripherally.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Master classes. The ironic thing about my training until I got to Juilliard, is there was an outstanding base at Morgan [State University]. And I worked with a woman. This bass has recently passed. Joe Eubanks—real bustle, but I worked with a mezzo. Back to Curtis [Institute of Music], and I worked with Raquel Adonaylo and Todd Duncan was on faculty.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Yeah, I was assigned.

Carl DuPont: Right. Okay, but back to Ms. Lee. How long did you study with her?

Kevin Short: I studied with her the two to three years (2-3 yrs.) I was there. And then we maintained our working relationship, until she passed.

Carl DuPont: What does that mean, working relationship?

Kevin Short: She played for the majority of my recitals.
Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Yeah. She coached me. She was my coach. Much the way Elaine and folks here are coaches. And she would be the first person to tell you that she knows nothing about the voice, in terms of being a technician.

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.

Kevin Short: Yeah. And then we just did recitals around the country.

Carl DuPont: What kind of repertoire did you do on these recitals?

Kevin Short: We did everything. We did Schubert, we did all the classics. I mean, I don’t know what I did not do.

Carl DuPont: [Guffaws]

Kevin Short: But I always...with her, especially on...I always included work songs and spiritual songs. And “coon songs.” And all kinds of...

Carl DuPont: What is a “coon song?”

Kevin Short: It’s sort of like a work song.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Railway songs; John Henry; I would sing...

Carl DuPont: So “John Henry” is a “coon song?” Or that’s more of a work song?

Kevin Short: Work song. Yeah.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: A “coon song” is also just another name for “work songs” back in the day.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Yeah.

Carl DuPont: And how did she teach you these “work songs?” These “coon songs”—how did that happen?

Kevin Short: It was pretty much by an old method.
**Carl DuPont:** Okay.

**Kevin Short:** She didn’t write too many things down.

**Carl DuPont:** So she would sing them to you? She would sing them...?

**Kevin Short:** She would sing them, and I remember learning a good amount of Hall Johnson spirituals from her.

**Carl DuPont:** Hm-mmm.

**Kevin Short:** And then receiving...the music I showed you?

**Carl DuPont:** Uh-huh.

**Kevin Short:** I received that from Bill Warfield. And then I thought, “Oh, that’s that.” And there were sometimes some notes that weren’t accurate and Hall Johnson always wanted...she was very good friends with him; and she loved Hall Johnson and he wanted things as accurate as possible.

**Carl DuPont:** Uh-huh.

**Kevin Short:** So sometimes with her...sort of teaching me these songs – then maybe I may have been a third below...maybe the eighth should have been a sixteenth or quarter or something like this.

**Carl DuPont:** Okay.

**Kevin Short:** I learnt them in that manner. It was very interesting.

**Carl DuPont:** And did she talk about her relationship to Hall Johnson? How that started? And how...? Was that...?

**Kevin Short:** No. She just thought he was the best of any judge. He was her favorite.

**Carl DuPont:** Okay.

**Kevin Short:** Her favorite singer was not Paul Robeson, whom she knew. Well, she loved George Goodman—a wonderful bass-baritone that worked a lot in Germany, and Larry Winters—fantastic baritone.

**Carl DuPont:** Hm-mmm.

**Kevin Short:** She loved working with men. She never spoke at length about Leontyne Price.
Carl DuPont: She worked with Leontyne Price?

Kevin Short: There is no one she didn’t work with. She worked with everyone.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Yeah.

Carl DuPont: Why do you think that was?

Kevin Short: I just think she had an affinity. She believed in these spirituals, and she loved this kind of raw, masculine kind of singing and approach.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Yeah.

It wasn’t necessarily she disliked...it was that she liked [male voices more]

Carl DuPont: So when you first were a student, on your first day of working with her...

Kevin Short: Hm-mmm.

Carl DuPont: What was your impression? What were you thinking?

Kevin Short: My mind was blown, actually. Because literally I went from...Morgan [State University] is such… a far more advanced school now with emphasis on opera. And I only had maybe that summer before, just a bit of an introduction to opera and coaching. And her way of looking at a score or a piece of music—everything had meaning and nothing was “un-mined.” She dealt in everything. [She said], “Why are you saying this?” And she had a way of finding the art of a phrase and the punch line or the...not punch line, but the major point in every sentence and phrase.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: And the piece. And this whole thing when I talk about prompting; I mean, that’s a big thing that she did. So you had a point of view.

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm. And she did that prompting with all songs?

Kevin Short: With all.

Carl DuPont: Okay.
Kevin Short: She felt that way; she coached the same way, whether it was Schubert or Hall Johnson. Or [Harry] Burleigh.

Carl DuPont: What do you think the benefit of that is? That kind of prompting that she did?

Kevin Short: Nothing was ever left to chance. You never checked out one, two, or three phrases. You always hear while I sing this. And you constantly thought on the same thing because of this. Because of that, it was just like a chain.

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm. How did the other faculty members and others students at Curtis [Institute of Music] talk about her? And how did they respond to her?

Kevin Short: They loved her. She was very unconventional. I think, because she was sort of a maverick in many ways, and she wasn’t a “cookie-cutter” kind of instructor. I think the other faculty members—and anyone in a position of authority, would like her because she was a good person...a sweet lady, but she was very unconventional and she wouldn’t conform to probably what they would want in an institution.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: The students they loved her as long as they did their homework.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Because she would challenge you. She would not allow a phrase [just] to be sung. She hated just pure pretty voices without any connection.

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.

Kevin Short: To the emotional content and the text.

Carl DuPont: Did she make a big deal about being the first black voice teacher on faculty? Or did anyone say anything about that? Was that...?

Kevin Short: No. It was never brought up. It wasn’t too long after I arrived that I realized she was special and a big deal.

I had to prompt her. I had to get things out of her. Whether it was music. What would happen then, she would talk about her grandfather, who was a slave, and on our drives...invariably on our drives to a recital or concert or whatever, I would just pepper her with a bunch of questions, and then the stuff would start coming out. But she never felt like she had to talk about it. She never volunteered that information.
Carl DuPont: But she would talk about it?

Kevin Short: She would talk about it.

Carl DuPont: Yeah.

Kevin Short: And it was the same thing with learning these spirituals. She would not, in the beginning teach them to me.

Carl DuPont: How did you know she knew them? That she could teach them?

Kevin Short: Because there were a couple of times, she would hear me sing and then at the end of a lesson, she would say, “You know, you would sound good if you were to sing this.” And she would start playing something and I would go, “I don’t know that.” I remember the Five Towns competition in Long Island. And I had to give a recital. And I programmed a lot of these things... [Chuckles]...this music. I would ask her, “What was the name of that song you...? Remember a couple of weeks ago, you played that song; what was the name of that?” And she would tell me, and I would go back later and put it down in the program. And I submitted this program with all of this, and I said, “You know, I have to give this recital...”

Carl DuPont: [Laughs]

Kevin Short: “...I have all this programmed and you really have to teach it to me.”

Carl DuPont: And what did she say?

Kevin Short: She was fine with it but she knew she had been...[Laughs]

Carl DuPont: [Laughs] Yeah!

Kevin Short: So that’s how it started. With us working and then once she saw that I was sort of a disciple, and...It was fantastic! And no one was doing these things. And her arrangements were so unique. I mean the spirituals that you see, the normal spirituals, they’re so... homogenous in a way and swing this way. She had work songs and songs no one knew. And we could do a full program. At Morgan [State University] we did a full program, starting off with African chants. “Lord a-come we here” was what we started off with. It was coming off the boat all the way till we got to Hall Johnson. I could do two or three programs like that, back then.

Carl DuPont: And if you asked her why she never wrote it down, what would her response be?
Kevin Short: She wouldn’t...she wouldn’t say.

Carl DuPont: Yeah.

Kevin Short: I just surmised that she just wanted me to work with her, I guess. I don’t know.

It was a shame that I said, “You need to put this down.”

Carl DuPont: So at Curtis [Institute of Music], was race ever an issue? Even...not so much as her being faculty member as you being a student. Did it come up? Or was it never a problem? Or never a consideration or anything?

Kevin Short: No, not at all.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: I was cast as Figaro. When they [were] casting.

Carl DuPont: So blind casting?

Kevin Short: Blind casting...

Carl DuPont: Same thing at Juilliard?

Kevin Short: Same thing at Juilliard.

Carl DuPont: Blind casting.

Kevin Short: Yeah.

Carl DuPont: Okay. So it wouldn’t have mattered if there was a black person or no black teachers on faculty, you think? It would have been the same treatment for all of the students?

Kevin Short: As far as I can tell...it was very insular especially at Curtis [Institute of Music], and we were really like a family. And there were an awful lot of black students that came through. Philly [Philadelphia] was sort of a place that if you didn’t want to go to New York, Philly was loaded with singers, especially black singers, that had come through the poor South, out of D.C or Baltimore. Who worked in Philly stayed rather than going to New York. Because you could access New York an hour and a half to two hours [away].

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.
Kevin Short: And a lot of them came through Curtis [Institute of Music]. So for years and years I knew singers that were twenty years my senior. Black singers that were Curtis [Institute of Music] graduates.

Carl DuPont: And had stayed in Philly?

Kevin Short: Yeah.

Carl DuPont: And were working?

Kevin Short: And were working. It felt very integrated actually.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Yeah.

Carl DuPont: Were there any particular phrases or mantras that she would say over and over again? Things that really stick out in your mind as being something she would say?

Kevin Short: [Silence] Hmm. May I get back to you on this?

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Trying to think. [Long silence] Not really. She would say – you know I think I’ve mentioned to you that she believed that singers should wake up very early, be very quiet and study their music, and she said her husband Everett Lee, conductor, and I forget the time; so if you’re going to quote me, I may have to get back [to you]. She would say to Everett, “It’s five o’clock where’s six o’clock? White folks been up there studying their music, since such-and-such and others should have never gone to bed.” [Laughs]

Carl DuPont: [Laughs and snorts]. Well...[chuckles]

Oh, well...so did you do that? Did you take her advice and wake up?

Kevin Short: Yeah. I was a very good student.

Carl DuPont: Uh-uh.

Kevin Short: Yeah. I graduated from Curtis [Institute of Music] with honors, and yeah.

Carl DuPont: Waking up at six every day?

Kevin Short: Not necessarily at six [am] but on time.
**Carl DuPont:** Okay.

**Kevin Short:** You see, because Curtis [Institute of Music] was the first situation I found myself actually swimming along with the stream. Morgan [State University] was a wonderful school but I felt like a fish out of water there.

**Carl DuPont:** Okay.

**Kevin Short:** I wasn’t the only one...the talent was off the charts. The most talented singers still to this day.

I’ve ever heard. But there was no one there that thought like me.

**Carl DuPont:** Okay.

**Kevin Short:** So when I got into Curtis [Institute of Music], it was just exciting to be in this environment where people...so I just absorbed it.

**Carl DuPont:** Hmm.

**Kevin Short:** And see when I got there, because I didn’t have experience, I wasn’t accepted into the Masters program at first.

**Carl DuPont:** Okay.

**Kevin Short:** I was accepted into the Voice program, and they said, “You do not have any stage experience; any operatic experience.” But they wanted my voice.

**Carl DuPont:** So in the Voice program, you just worked towards a diploma?

**Kevin Short:** You could get a B.A. [Bachelor of Arts]

**Carl DuPont:** Okay.

**Kevin Short:** So...but I took all of the Masters Level courses. After the first semester, I said, “Wait a minute. I’m doing more [than the others]. I’m the only bass here; yet I’m doing [only a B.A.]...[so] I said no.”

You see the way I worked I wanted the Master of Music course and that’s how I switched in. So I said that to say, I literally went there just like eyes wide open. And I was in this environment, [and] with her especially – it was just incredible!
Carl DuPont: Do you think she had more of an influence on you than your actual voice teacher did?

Kevin Short: Yeah! [Sigh] In some ways. She really fed this whole spiritual thing. She really fed that in a way no one else could have.

Carl DuPont: Was she a singer herself?

Kevin Short: She was a singer.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Singer and a pianist.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: Just incredible. So it’s hard to say that Sylvia would eclipse...Sylvia was...She was very skilled, but her genius was in stripping away stuff and getting to the core. This woman had...she would take you someplace...it was...how do I explain this? I haven’t even thought about this. Sylvia could take the complicated and make it quite simple and get right to the point and make it direct and believable. She would be like what Bill Clinton is to President Obama – the great explainer or whatever. She could take any piece of music and strip it away, and you could find its essence.

Carl DuPont: Are there any things that you teach, that you inherited from Sylvia only?

Kevin Short: I think it’s this thing. For instance if we sing “I’ve got plenty of nothing”.

“I got plenty of nothing and nothing is plenty for me
Why? I’ve got my gal, I’ve got my song
I’ve got him the whole day long...”

Carl DuPont: The prompting.

Kevin Short: The prompting; the use of the language.

Carl DuPont: Can you talk a little bit more about that? The use of the language and how she encouraged you to find that?

Kevin Short: Again, going back to this whole thing of getting to the essence. She had me before coaching sit down with the doorman and start talking to him.

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.
**Kevin Short:** Because he was a real rough older Philadelphian. Migrated from the South. And “Steal Away to Jesus”

[Starts singing]
“Steal away, Steal away to Jee-sus”

[Talks normally] And just the inflection of the language. What does it say? Sing the way you speak.

**Carl DuPont:** Hmm.

**Kevin Short:** “Got to...I ain’t got long to stay, I ain’t got long, I ain’t got long to stay here”

[Talks normally] And she spoke that way herself, normally.

**Carl DuPont:** She was a Southerner.

**Kevin Short:** Yes, she had this twang.

Yeah. [Starts singing]
“Steal away, steal away to Jesus...”

[Talks normally] If I was singing,

[Starts singing]
“Oh Glory, oh Glory
There is a home in paradise
To have a home in Glo-rhee”

[Talks normally] Not to revel in your sound but to make sense of the phrase.

[Resumes singing]
“I am a poor pilgrim of sorrow...”

[Talks normally] This for instance, when I started singing “City called Heaven”, I just wanted to sing it,

[Resumes singing in deep bass]
“I am a poor pilgrim of sorrow
I’m tossed in this wide world...”

[Talks normally] That didn’t make any sense to her.

**Carl DuPont:** Okay.
Kevin Short: [Still singing]
“I am a poor pilgrim of sorrow
I’m tossed in this wide world
A-lone...”

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.

Kevin Short: To make it more conversational so that really stayed in my head.

Carl DuPont: So she wanted the spiritual [songs] to still be conversational?

Kevin Short: Yes! Even if you sing it like this, then you’re going to take the time and it can’t be,

[Starts humming in monotone]
“I’m going to dah-da-dah-dum...”

[Singing in bass - strong]
“I am a poor pilgrim of sorrow
I’m tossed in this wide world
A-lone...
No home have I
For to-morr-ow
I started to make heaven my home.”

Carl DuPont: Okay. Started...

Kevin Short: Started to make heaven my home.

Carl DuPont: And so these markings are from her.

Kevin Short: Yeah. These are hers. [Resumes singing]

“Sometimes I’m tossed and driven...”

[Resumes talking normally] That driven should have a shallow vowel, between these, just like the Germans would do. Sometimes we would sing,

[Resumes singing out loud]
“A-live and...” Bleiben

Carl DuPont: Uh-uh.

Kevin Short: [Resumes singing out loud] “Driven...” I mean blithely Bleiben in an operatic sense; people don’t like to hear this in an “art song”.
Carl DuPont: Right.

Kevin Short: She would have me sing my lieder like this way too
[Sings] “I don’t know...Don’t know...” and she believed that rests...Rests made it sound “folksier”.

Because when you hear regular folk, you know...they take rests. Sometimes unfortunately in the middle of a word.

Carl DuPont: Yeah.

Kevin Short: So she insisted, even if you could get through a phrase and remember earlier on – I would be [saying],”Why am I taking a breath when I could sing the whole phrase?” and she would say, “No, because it doesn’t sound authentic. And she’s right. “Old river mustn’t...” If I....[sang] like here

[Sings]
“Oh heaven is one beautiful....”

[Talking normally] So she took breaths.

Carl DuPont: How’d she do that?

Kevin Short: [Demonstrating breathing technique] “Ohh, heaven...” [talking normally] Is one beautiful place...beautiful, beautiful place I know. See no one would do that normally.

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.

Kevin Short: [Softly]
“Heaven is one beautiful place I know
See heaven is one beautiful place
I know...”

[Talks normally] This is a very good song for you

Carl DuPont: Okay. I get...This one...[Paper rustlings]

Kevin Short: [Sings]
“Though I keep so busy praising my Jesus
Keep so busy praising my Jesus
Keep so busy praising my Jesus”

[Talking normally] Yeah, so this is what’s at stake with me, and I apply that to all of my repertoire – when it’s apt.
Carl DuPont: Yes.

Kevin Short: Just to make sense.

[Sings]
“I’ve got to lie down
Hush I’ll have eyes...”

[Talking normally] Look at this; now this is a copy of...now you’ll see

[Sings]
“I’ve got to lie down
How shall I rise
I got to lie down
How shall I rise”

[Talking normally] Most people will say

[Sings in deeper bass]
“I’ve got to lie down
Hush I’ll have eyes
I got to lie down
Hush I’ll have eyes.”

Carl DuPont: Yes.

Kevin Short: And she would make a big deal about how you would say that “H”, and how

[Sings]
“I’ve got to lie down
Hush I’ll have eyes
I got to lie down
Hush I’ll have eyes

Carl DuPont: I think I want to do this one too.

Kevin Short: [Laughs] This may have her original markings. [Sounds of paper] It does.

Carl DuPont: Wow.

Kevin Short: Okay.

Carl DuPont: Now did she give you these copies or were these your copies? You brought to her?
Kevin Short: No, these are from “William Warfield.”

He got them from Hall himself.

Carl DuPont: William Warfield got these from Hall Johnson?

Kevin Short: Yes. All right. I heard William Warfield. We sang in a concert together and I said, “I would love to sing some of these spirituals.” I think it was “Heaven is one beautiful place.” Within two days, he FedExed me his whole spirituals.

Carl DuPont: Wow. These are copies of William Warfield’s music?

Kevin Short: Yes.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Kevin Short: But do you see my...And I think I placed it...Oh; this is one thing she wrote. This is her writing. “Calvary.”

Carl DuPont & Kevin Short: [Together] “Cal-va-rheee...”

Carl DuPont: She wrote this down?

Kevin Short: She wrote that down for me.

[Sings]
“Cal-va-rhee...Calvary”

Carl DuPont: And she would just play these chords on the downbeat?

Kevin Short: Yes.

Carl DuPont: And nothing else?

Kevin Short: Yes!

Carl DuPont: So this is like the only thing that she wrote down?

Kevin Short: There’s one other thing that...a little strip of something is “Wake Me, Shake Me.”

Carl DuPont: And why did she write this one down?

Kevin Short: I don’t know.
**Carl DuPont**: What was the other one?

**Kevin Short**: I can’t remember...Now that you’re drumming up all this...This is like going back in the old family album.

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**Carl DuPont & Kevin Short**: [Laugh together]

**Kevin Short**: I hadn’t thought about any of this stuff. Really.

**Carl DuPont**: Can you talk to me a little bit about knowing William Warfield? And singing with him and how he influenced you or just that whole relationship?

**Kevin Short**: He, obviously, you know his recording of “Showboat”. [It] had a huge influence on me...

**Carl DuPont**: That one... “Take my mother home right now.”

**Kevin Short**: Huh?

**Carl DuPont**: “Take My Mother Home”

**Kevin Short**: You have this?

**Carl DuPont**: Yeah. That’s my jam.

**Kevin Short**: Yep...So I would go into the bathroom to try and sing like him. And he would sing “Ol’ Man River” and he was a fantastic singer. He could interpret spirituals really well. The way she would want. He and Bobby McFerrin, I heard her play for both of them a few times. And he was a sweet man. I mean, you know I just mentioned how I would like to put my hands on some of his music and without even realizing—I didn’t even give him my address and he must have looked my address up somehow. He got it and sent me all this music.

**Kevin Short**: Then I went to her and said, “Okay.”

**Carl DuPont**: Hm-mmm.

**Kevin Short**: Other than that, I only had occasion to see him at gatherings. When there was some kind of “black thing” [African American-centric themed events] happening, maybe something in honor of her or the Schiller Institute, Rosa Ponselle... there’s a poster around here with me saying, “I’m back
“together” and I just loved the man. And he always...was an encyclopedia for all kind of jokes – dirty and otherwise. [Laughs]

**Carl DuPont:** [Laughs]

**Kevin Short:** Do you sing “Witness”?

**Carl DuPont:** I haven’t sung that one.

**Kevin Short:** Yeah.

**Carl DuPont:** So...

**Kevin Short:** [Song playing in background] You see what happens when he goes into a woman’s voice on this. You know this one.

**Carl DuPont:** [Imitating song] “Tell me why your strength lies...”

**Kevin Short:** [Imitating falsetto] “Tell me why your strength lies...”

**Carl DuPont:** [Guffaws]

**Kevin Short:** Like that.

**Carl DuPont:** Does she work with Denise Graves, too? Do you know if they ever had anything together?

**Kevin Short:** I think so. They must have.

**Carl DuPont:** Because the first person I heard do that was Denise Graves. And she did it just like you just did it, right there.

**Kevin Short:** That’s Sylvia.

**Kevin Short:** And she didn’t like my singing “Ol’ Man River” in the beginning.

[Singing in bass] “There’s an old man called the Mis....

[Speaking normally] There’s an old man called the Mississippi...

[Singing in bass] “There’s an old man called the Mississippi... That’s the old man I want to be What does he care if the world’s got troubles? What does he care if the land ain’t free?”
Carl DuPont: Was that a difficult adjustment? For you to go and give her exactly what she wanted? Was that hard?

Kevin Short: No. No. I was young, open, and I hadn’t sung a lot of spirituals.

Carl DuPont: Even at Morgan [State University]...even going to HBCU?

Kevin Short: No. Because I did a lot of choir stuff. And there wasn’t a lot of opportunity to do [spirituals]...I gave a few recitals, but it wasn’t until I got to Curtis [Institute of Music], that I started doing these titles. So she was dealing with someone very green.

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.

Kevin Short: She had to just strip away the classical singer aspect of what I was doing; more than anything.

Carl DuPont: Okay. And that’s what she did with everybody?

Kevin Short: She did it with everyone. That was her genius. She could strip that away. When I mentioned the teacher, the teacher did the other thing. She would build...

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.

Kevin Short: Upon...Now this is...try that...try that...try this...Sylvia’s thing was taking it away.

Carl DuPont: Hmm.

Kevin Short: One was adding. This is going to be an awful analogy, but if you wax a car...

Carl DuPont: Hmm. [Guffaws] I’ve done it...

Kevin Short: If you wax a car, and it has scratches in it, you can buff it out and cars have a layer of paint and you can buff it to a certain point where you eliminate some of the paint that you get to a layer underneath....

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.

Kevin Short: And you can get a really nice shiny car that way. It can look pristine Sylvia worked in stripping things away, and getting to the essence. My voice teacher, once it was stripped away would then build and show you avenues that you hadn’t even considered before.
APPENDIX G

Personal interview with Professor Willis Patterson.
Nashville, Tennessee
July 30, 2013

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Carl DuPont: What part of Germany?

Willis Patterson: I went to Freiburg and Breisgau.

Carl DuPont: Ok, I lived in Cologne for . . .

Willis Patterson: Achso!

Carl DuPont: Yeah.

Willis Patterson: When were you there?

Carl DuPont: I was there 2010, 2011, and then I went back 2012, I was singing with the Collegiate Chorale.

Willis Patterson: So you lived there for a while?

Carl DuPont: I had an appointment in the opera chorus at Leipzig.

Willis Patterson: You didn’t do any opera chorus work at the Kölner Opernhaus?

Carl DuPont: No, No, in Cologne I was actually living.

Willis Patterson: You weren’t there during the time of a tenor, black tenor, who is now freelancing, but he had a Fest Contract?

Carl DuPont: The only thing I saw was Meistersinger, and there were no black faces in that one.

Willis Patterson: Wonderful tenor, I say that because it’s true, but also he is a former student of mine.

Carl DuPont: When did you start teaching at Michigan University?
Willis Patterson: Oh, I started there in 1968.

Carl DuPont: And you were the first Black voice teacher on faculty?

Willis Patterson: Right, right . . . well, first Black teacher period.

Carl DuPont: Oh, first Black teacher period?

Willis Patterson: Yeah.

Carl DuPont: There was nobody else Black on faculty?

Willis Patterson: On the School of Music Faculty, no.

Carl DuPont: Did you apply for the position, or did they kinda invite you?

Willis Patterson: I’m a Ann Arbor native, I graduated from there, they knew me, there was a certain amount of pressure on the faculty in 1968 in response to the student uprisings. There it was called the “Black Action Movement”, and they wanted to get some black teachers and more Black students.

Carl DuPont: So the students were demanding it and the faculty were encouraging it?

Willis Patterson: There’s no solid evidence that this was in response to the students, there were no students in the school of music . . .

Carl DuPont: There were no black students?

Willis Patterson: There were very few, to cause an uprising there, and each unit at the University of Michigan has a certain amount of autonomy. But, the time was right, and they knew they were gonna have to make some additions to the faculty in response to the times. So they asked me.

Carl DuPont: And at that time you were teaching . .

Willis Patterson: Virginia State College
Carl DuPont: Is that an HBCU?

Willis Patterson: Right.

Carl DuPont: Ok.

Willis Patterson: And at that time it was Virginia State College, it is now Virginia State University. But I had been teaching there for 6 years, and prior to that I was teaching down at Southern University in Baton Rouge for two years, but I had just come back from Germany for two years, and gone back to Virginia State when I got the invitation to come to Michigan.

Carl DuPont: And you went right away? Did you hesitate at all?

Willis Patterson: Yes quite a bit.

Carl DuPont: Why was that?

Willis Patterson: Because, I was enjoying a great amount of autonomy myself. I had just been promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure. My living conditions there were very favorable for my young family. I was doing a lot of performance up and down the East Coast in Opera and concert and oratorio. So I gave in, in fact, we went back and forth in deliberations about whether I would go, and the conditions under which I would come back to Michigan, which surprised me at a time because that is a very fine school with a big reputation. I thought that if ever, I never even would have imagined, I would be asked to come back, but if that chance were to be offered me and waved in front of my face. My early reaction as a singer and teacher would have been to say “Wow! Let’s Go” when it came though, I was very hesitant, very reluctant

Carl DuPont: Were you able to take your rank as Associate Professor?

Willis Patterson: That was one of the negotiations. I had to take my rank and my tenure. I decided I wasn’t going to take a lateral movement, or less than a lateral movement. I went there as the first black faculty member with tenure as an Associate Professor.
Carl DuPont: What was the environment like among the other faculty members when you started?

Willis Patterson: By and large... positive, but mixed. To have a Black student, in those days when I was a student in the early and mid 50’s, to have a black student, be one of the few is comfortable. But to have that student come and be on the faculty.

Carl DuPont: That changes things.

Willis Patterson: And I was aware of that dynamic, ad they were too. And it was hard for them not to have that impression.

Carl DuPont: What about the students? Were there ever any issues with students?

Willis Patterson: Not as a voice teacher, that I was aware of. I also spent a tenure as the first African American glee club conductor, it was a men’s glee club. World famous glee club. And the director was right at the point of retirement. Two years after I got there he retired. And asked me if I would take it over. The glee club there was like a white fraternity. You know, they had their -isms and their sense of self-government. And I came with a sense of myself as a conductor. If I was going to be the conductor I had to be the conductor first, and last word. So that caused quite a bit of friction. Six year we went round and round, it wound up being a very fine experience for both them, and for me.

Carl DuPont: Were you instrumental in bringing George Shirley to the faculty?

Willis Patterson: Yes.

Carl DuPont: Can you talk to me about that process, and why you sought him out, and what he brought to the faculty?

Willis Patterson: First off, George was not the second member of the faculty. After I came in ’68, there was a black professor hired in Music Education, prior to him there was also a black voice professor, Veronica Tyler. Who was a part... I am missing the correct nomer for people who
are not permanent, she was full time, but she was there for a year and a half. And that by her own choice…

Carl DuPont: Visiting Faculty?

Willis Patterson: She took leave of her position with the New York City Opera company.

Carl DuPont: What was that name one more time?

Willis Patterson: Veronica Tyler.

Carl DuPont: Soprano?

Willis Patterson: Soprano, fine Soprano. Then we must have had Rae Linda Brown who is now the vice president of Mary Mount in California. She came to the musicology faculty for three years. Then George Shirley came followed by Shirley Verrett, then Daniel Washington.

Carl DuPont: So George Shirley was the next voice teacher?

Willis Patterson: Next to Veronica Tyler, I beg your pardon there was one other in between. Seth McCoy.

Carl DuPont: Chef McCoy?

Willis Patterson: Seth McCoy, he was at the Met. And he came to Michigan from there, he was a visiting professor at Eastman, he came, and I guess he stayed for a couple of years, two to three years. So George was at the time at, Maryland University, College Park.

Carl DuPont: Was that a HBCU?

Willis Patterson: No. University of Maryland. I don’t think George ever taught at an HBCU. We had always wanted to get George, because George is originally from Detroit, and I had known George in New York, during the time that I was there to do the NBC TV opera. I knew he was at the University of Maryland and that he was a distinguished professor there. So there was not a natural attraction to come back home because he was performing naturally all over
the place. And Maryland was in a lot of ways a more ideal vantage point to go to Europe and around the county than Detroit. So I got together with the dean, by then I had become associate dean.

**Carl DuPont:** You were the associate dean?

**Willis Patterson:** Yes

**Carl DuPont:** What year did you become associate dean?

**Willis Patterson:** 1979, and I retired as associate dean, but we got together and finally worked out a deal. We had George to come to Interlochen for a couple of sessions. Where the University School of Music had a summer division at Interlochen, he came there once, did some work, we got him “sucked in”. He was a wonderful addition to the faculty. And confesses that, I was of the one main reasons why he came is because I had already been there and laid the groundwork for him.

**Carl DuPont:** Is that the same way Shirley Verrett ended up there?

**Willis Patterson:** Absolutely.

**Carl DuPont:** Because then there was both you AND George Shirley.

**Willis Patterson:** Right.

**Carl DuPont:** She didn’t have any other Michigan connections, did she?

**Willis Patterson:** No, and she hadn’t taught at an institution. She was a private teacher in New York in between her performing, but she knew George and had performed with George. And I knew her from New York.

**Carl DuPont:** One of the things I’ve noticed about casting UM, only from what I’ve seen and the friends I’ve known who have gone there, it seems to be more color blind than other places. Do you think that had something to do with the number of black faculty members?
Willis Patterson: (laughs) That was a job. That didn’t come about automatically because of their natural proclivity toward colorblindness. One of the things that happened was, since I had had a very active connection with two HBCU’s and I had performed in concert rather frequently with several others, while I was both on the faculty at HBCUs, and my early years at the University of Michigan. Geez, I guess I had performed at least of a dozen HBCU’s over the years. So I made a lot of connections and acquaintances. So I began, then, to be able to actively recruit School of Music graduate students from these HBCU connections. My connections in Detroit because I was native enabled me to attract more undergraduates. So right away we began to have a heavy infusion with African American graduate students. Well, heavy is a relative word. Heavy by comparison to other peer institutions. So that gave us a cadre of highly talented African American students who made their presence irresistible for casting purposes.

Carl DuPont: Were you sitting on casting committees?

Willis Patterson: There are no casting committees per se in the University of Michigan School of Music. At least there were not as of 13 years ago when I retired. And I’m sure that is pretty much the case. The voice department acts in collaboration with the opera producers, directors, and stage directors as the casting committee.

Carl DuPont: So being that you were one of the first, and you have now been retired for 13 years do you see that it was completely shifted now as far as White universities hiring Black voice teachers? Or do you see anything similar to like it was when you first started.

Willis Patterson: It’s a mixed bag, it’s fair to say that Michigan wound up with the major number, the larger number of black faculty for institutions of its kind, meaning size and prestige. It also wound up having the largest number of African American students for the reasons that I’ve just articulated. Indiana came in very close because of its very wide opera program and it had Camilla Williams, Martina Arroyo, and somebody . . .

Carl DuPont: Reri Grist?
Willis Patterson: Yeah, she was a visiting professor. In fact Reri Grist, when she went to Indiana had promised to come to us, I had been trying to recruit Reri Grist because I had known her in Germany when she was in Munich. And she came to the country and said she was going to come and interview for us, but word got out that she was coming to the country, and Indiana…

Carl DuPont: And they snapped her up.

Willis Patterson: Ohio State had McHenry Boatwright. Very fine lyric Baritone who has since passed. But he was the only one at Ohio State at the time. Iowa, a lot of these are all Big-ten Schools. Iowa had a black faculty member. Michigan State did not have a Black faculty member at the time, I don’t know if they’ve had one since then. Purdue never had one. Where the conservatories on the East Coast are concerned there were representatives in small numbers. There was Hilda Harris in Manhattan. Leontyne and Bill Warfield did some guest teaching at both Manhattan, Juilliard, and that sort of thing. But by in large outside of Michigan and the few schools at the big ten for quite a while things never changed with faculty improvement. I think it’s probably a little bit better now.

Carl DuPont: But you wouldn’t say it’s completely fine…

Willis Patterson: Not by any stretch of the imagination.

Carl DuPont: What would you like to see in 2013 as far as Faculty representation of African American singers?

Willis Patterson: It would be great if every state in particular state institution had at least one to serve as an attraction to the African American student who might join. Not to suggest that African American students would particularly prefer to study only with African American teachers or vice-versa, but their presence on the faculty tends to be a qualifying and comforting element.
September 22, 1967

Professor Willis Patterson
Department of Music
Virginia State College
Petersburg, Virginia

Dear Willis:

I have been authorized to explore with you in an unofficial capacity the possibility of filling a new position in voice here in the School of Music next Fall.

I must caution you that we are in a tight budget situation right now and the position has not as yet been authorized. But we all, the Dean and the voice faculty, are anxious to have you consider the possibility of joining us, should that position materialize.

May I ask confidentially that you inform me of your present academic status and salary and, perhaps, of your plans for the future. And may I ask that, inasmuch as we cannot make a firm offer at this writing, you reserve first refusal for us before committing yourself for next year.

Let me add that I am very happy indeed about the enthusiasm the faculty here has shown toward the prospect of having you with us again.

Cordially yours,

John McCollum
Chairman, Voice Faculty

Willis Patterson Archive
Bentley Historical Library
University of Michigan
APPENDIX I: LETTER FROM DEAN WILLIAM HABER

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
ANN ARBOR

WILLIAM HABER, Dean
WILLIAM HAYS, Associate Dean

June 25, 1968

Dear Allan:

The meeting in Iowa City was worth attending. You may wish to cast your eye over a copy of the agenda. It is attached. There were about thirty-five people present from the eleven institutions which attend CIC meetings. As you can see from the program, the topics concerned recruitment and retention of disadvantaged students, remedial programs, counseling problems, personnel policies, financial aid, Afro-American studies, and student activism.

Since I left late Monday afternoon, I was not present throughout the session which adjourned Tuesday noon. We were, however, well represented by Chavis, Smith, and Briggs. Perhaps other representatives from Michigan will have something to say to you about some of the topics. This note is concerned only with the discussion of Negro faculty, which I led.

1. My major emphasis was that the pool from which Negro faculty is to be recruited was extremely shallow. Consequently, we need to discuss (a) whether we should recruit from Negro colleges, and (b) the qualitative problem; that is, whether we should "lower standards" and recruit Negro assistant professors on the basis of different criteria than we employ for non-blacks.

2. How the pool could be enlarged; namely, should all of us, the eleven schools, each commit ourselves to bring in annually for the next five years fifteen or twenty Negro B.A.'s and try to sustain them intellectually and financially until they complete their Ph.D.'s.

The above were the main items I outlined. As you can gather, some are highly controversial, and the Negro members of the conference--about ten--may have resented my introducing them.

It was clear to me that there was a definite consensus concerning the following: (a) We should not hesitate to recruit from Negro colleges. Otherwise we would in effect be discriminating against scholars and teachers, whom we can use, because of their present location. This is a problem for the Negro colleges to meet; and I was told that were we to inquire from the heads of Negro colleges, they would advise us not to worry about them -- that's their problem. (b) Concerning the qualitative problem: criteria and standards for employment; this was vigorously debated. The group refused to believe that Negro candidates with Ph.D.'s are of a "lower quality"; that for the assistant professor rank, they are probably as good teachers as others we employ. They were certainly as good as teaching fellows we use for undergraduate classes. (c) With respect to the question about what happens when we may not be able to promote them and it would be almost impossible to give them a terminal appointment, the group was most vigorous in stating that merely raising this question indicated a "racist approach." We do not raise this kind of
June 25, 1968
Page 2

question about white people whom we have to release. We should not raise it with regard to black people. If they are good teachers, we ought to retain them as teachers, even though their productive scholarship measured in publications is not as prolific. In brief, since we are short of good teachers and stress research, perhaps the Negro assistant professor, if he does not turn out to be a productive scholar, can still be retained and advanced on the basis of his teaching competence. If he turns out to be poor and is not a scholar, we should treat him like everyone else. (d) I tried to suggest the difficulties that arise from general conservatism of the department, growing out of their quest for national visibility, and therefore for the teacher-scholar rather than only for the teacher. I did not make much progress. If this is an age of change, the department must change also.

Naturally there were other facets of this topic involved in the discussion. On the whole I found it useful. Very few schools have much experience. There are no experts in this field. My own conclusion is that we clearly should urge the departments to take risks in the engagement of Negro Ph.D.'s at the assistant professor level. To raise all the questions about risks and hazards, about promotion and terminal appointments, is in effect to conclude that we will do nothing. The spirit of the times requires us to do something affirmative, rather than to emphasize obstacles. This will not be easy, but I think it must be done.

Sincerely,

William Haber

Vice President Allan F. Smith
Administration Building
APPENDIX J

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
June 9, 1969

Mr. Thomas Carey
C/O A. Williams
Apt. 13 E, 433 Lafayette Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11238

Dear Mr. Carey:

Upon recommendation of the School of Music and of the deans concerned, I am happy to offer you appointment as Visiting Professor of Music, College of Fine Arts, at a salary based on the rate of $4,838 for 4½ months, .75 FTE, effective September 1, 1969, and $6,588 for 4½ months, full time, effective January 16, 1970. This offer is contingent upon the approval of the University Regents.

Your duties will consist of teaching in the School of Music and such related work as may be normally expected of a member of the faculty of the University. Your direct administrative relationships will be to Professor C. M. Stookey, Director of the School of Music, and to Dean F. Donald Clark of the College of Fine Arts.

If you desire to accept the appointment, please notify this office in writing as soon as possible.

An Act of the 1968 Legislature requires that each new University faculty member -- like other state employees and officials -- must sign a loyalty oath, file it with the Secretary of State at the State Capitol, Oklahoma City, and send the President of the University a statement certifying that the oath has been signed and filed. The forms necessary to accomplish this are enclosed.

A regulation of the Board of Regents requires that the President's Office obtain a routine credit report on each new faculty member. A form which you may use to supply references is enclosed. If you can give trade and personal references all from the same community, it will be greatly appreciated. Please return this form at your earliest convenience.

We should also like to have the enclosed Personal Data Form filled out for our files.

Thomas Carey Archive
Western History Collections
University of Oklahoma Libraries
APPENDIX K

Interview with Charles Webb regarding Camilla Williams
Bloomington, IN
August 2, 2013

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Carl DuPont: Were you already acquainted with Ms. Williams?

Charles Webb: I knew about her. I knew something of her career. She never sang at the Met, but she sang in many leading opera companies. It’s interesting to me that, I think it was in 1946 when she sang at City Center, Cio-Cio San, the leading role in Madama Butterfly. Nine years later Marian Anderson made her debut. Anderson was a bigger name and she became a household word. Camilla Williams did not. Most people, if you just ask them who was the first black woman who made it big, they would say Marian Anderson. But that is nine years after Camilla Williams made her debut. So she was a pioneer, there is no doubt about it.

I have likened what she did to Rosa Parks, 1955 was the date when Rosa Parks did not give up her seat on the bus to a white man. Now if anybody had said, in knowledgeable circles, this woman will be the first woman of any color, black, white, red, yellow, to lie in state upon her death at the capital rotunda in Washington, D.C. The first woman. People would have said, are you crazy? A black washerwoman who just paid a ten-dollar fine because she didn’t give up her seat?

Well it happened. In 1946, if somebody had said to you, this woman who has just sung at the City Center, upon her death her picture will be on the front page of the New York Times. Not just the amusement section, the arts section, the front page! And there were two pictures on the inside page where they wrote a huge story.

So that was a major thing that happened. So Camilla Williams was a pace setter, was a person who pioneered in a number of ways. She was not the first African American to be appointed to this
faculty. We had had African Americans in other areas but not in voice.

I remember when she came she was also still singing then. And she and I gave a recital at Indiana very shortly after she came. I wanted to “present her” to the public here and it was a huge hit. She was still singing very well in those days.

Carl DuPont: So when you came, you gave a recital with her?

Charles Webb: I performed with her several times. The last time was very interesting because it was in Washington D.C. and it was at a dinner given by President Clinton. It was a meeting for all of the democratic governors. She was invited to sing there and she asked me if I would play, so the two of us went to Washington.

Carl DuPont: Had she taught before?

Charles Webb: I don’t think so. She might have taught individual students. She was also married to a very fine lawyer.

Carl DuPont: Did she apply to the position?

Charles Webb: No. She was sought out. I knew about her, but I didn’t know a lot. However, voice faculty members here did. The way I found out about a lot of prospective faculty was through faculty members who were already here.

So I got in touch with her and invited her to come. And she came and looked around. It was a good time for her. Her husband died. He died right in mid-career, had a heart attack. She was a widow and she was ready to settle down some place. And she was willing to come here.

As a matter of fact, now that I think about it, we also did a concert at Virginia State. Virginia State was her school, she graduated from there. And they kept in touch with her and she kept in touch with them. So very shortly after she was appointed at Indiana, she was asked to sing a concert there, and she asked me if I would play.

Carl DuPont: Was she generally liked by her colleagues?

Charles Webb: Oh yes. Camilla was bigger than life! And she always wore big hats that had big brims. And it didn’t make any difference if she was going to a concert or to Kroger’s, she dressed the same way. She dressed for the occasion and the occasion was always
something that presented Camilla Williams. So, she had her little idiosyncrasies, but she was a very nice person, never vindictive, she was never ugly. She could take the successes of others very nicely, not all faculty could do that, “nobody but my students can sing anything” but she wasn’t like that. She got along with, really with everybody. People liked her.

**Carl DuPont:** When she came along were there already lots of black students in the school of music?

**Charles Webb:** There were some, I wouldn’t say lots, and probably even now not lots, not as many as we should have. But we do have very talented ones. I’m happy to say we gave them what they deserved, and by that I mean that if somebody was ready to sing a leading role and there was a black boy and a white girl, or whatever, we paid no attention to that. They got the roles. So they had good experiences I think.

And she drew black students here. The fact that she was here advertised the faculty. She was a known commodity so to speak, so people came because of her. And they didn’t always study with her. People would come and then they could study with whomever. We’ve had a number of very distinguished African American Singers who have gone on to do important things.

**Carl DuPont:** So was it the same when Reri Grist came along?

**Charles Webb:** Reri Grist was a different kind of person. She was much quieter, she also had a major career, but it was mostly in Europe. She was known here, she did sing, and after she came, I remember I conducted *Porgy and Bess* and she sang the role of Bess. She also sang *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, she did Baby Doe. She was also in the midst of her career when she came here, but Reri was just a quieter person. On stage she could present the character very well. She wasn’t in the same mold of Camilla or Angela in that sense. She stayed for quite a few years, we were very sad when she decided to go, but she was married to the general director of the Hamburg State Opera, and he said, “We are going to live in Hamburg, not in the United States.” Well she didn’t want her marriage to dissolve. They had a daughter, who is still living, Reri just finally said, “I’ve got to go and live in Germany”, and we were all quite sad about that.

**Carl DuPont:** Gloria Davy, how did her employment come about?
Charles Webb: The very same way. Somebody said to me one day. . . It seemed like we were always looking for voice faculty. We had about fifteen or sixteen voice faculty members. And there was always somebody who had retired or moved, or this or that and we were looking. And, she was called to my attention. I looked into that just a little bit, and she was well known. Again I think it was at the right time, she was ready to do something like that. And she came, and did fantastically. She just died recently,

Carl DuPont: That's another thing that I am noticing. These people are passing away. Before the appointment of any of these, you said there were already black people on faculty?

Charles Webb: Yes, there was a black percussionist for example. His name was Richard Johnson; it was a terrible thing because he committed suicide. I forget the year, but it was long, long time ago. He had mental problems, because I remember distinctly he said, “There is a helicopter that has landed on top of my office and they are coming to get me!”

I said, “Who is coming to get you?”

He said, “The authorities.”

“Have you done anything?”

“No.”

But he just couldn’t overcome these anxieties. He shot himself in his office, and I could not get another faculty to move into that office until somebody came who had never known him. But it had nothing to do with being harassed or anything like that. He was a great percussionist, it was a terrible shame.

Carl DuPont: So it seems like in general, there was always an atmosphere based on respect for people’s careers and what they had accomplished. And the color thing played very little into that?

Charles Webb: Exactly, very little into it. Just as degrees played little into it. You could say, well this is a degree granting institution, and you give bachelors and masters, and doctoral degrees, so what did the faculty have to have to get here? Absolutely nothing. All they had to do was make the kind of contribution to students that we knew needed to be done.
I can’t tell you how many times I would have telephone calls while I was dean, which was a quarter of a century, and was asked “What percentage of your faculty has to have a doctorate?” I loved my answer, because I always said, a little smart-alecky “The same percentage the Harvard requires. Zero.” Yes we wanted to have people who had doctorates if they measured up. The key was, what kind of contributions could they make to the students. That’s why Camilla Williams came, Gloria Davy, and the others. They came because they could get the job done.

Carl DuPont: Do you think IU was unique in that?

Charles Webb: I don’t know. Probably not unique, a. But I can say that IU for a long, long time has given the deans the authority to run their schools. We were never micromanaged, by the dean of faculties, or the president, or somebody who would be above us. They hired people who they felt could do the job and that made a huge difference.

Carl DuPont: I’m inspired by the fact that it was more of a meritocracy.

Charles Webb: Let me say this. Not every great performer can teach. We had a few examples of people who came, who were internationally known in their fields, but in the studio . . .

Carl DuPont: As a dean, how do you keep track of who is a good teacher, and who is not?

Charles Webb: There are several ways. First of all we never hired anybody without having them do a two-hour Masterclass. We had our best students in there. And if you sit for two hours, and you watch somebody teach, and you know what you are talking about, it doesn’t take a brain surgeon to figure out. Is this person communicating with the students? And we would have meetings of the people who were in the Masterclass.

So we observed that. There were also student evaluations that students did every year. Its not that they know everything, but the best evaluations of faculty were not done by colleagues. You might think that would be the way to do it, It isn’t because they didn’t know, but they couldn’t be that objective. But the students have nothing to lose and everything to gain. That’s what they are paying tuition for, to come here and learn something. It didn’t take long to learn who was cutting the mustard, so to speak.
Carl DuPont: When you look at the school now and where it’s going, particularly in terms of diversity, how do you feel?

Charles Webb: I am very happy with the current administration. I say that without hesitation. Dean Richards is a wonderful Dean; he has now been Dean for over 15 years. And he knows his stuff; he has made some outstanding appointments in area after area. Of course, if you dig a little bit you can find people who are dissatisfied, but you could have found them with me too. No doubt.

On the other hand, as I take just one step back and look at the whole school. I am absolutely amazed. The quality is excellent, the school continues to thrive. In areas of diversity, yes, he is attentive to that. He is a person who feels the importance of having a diverse faculty as well as student body. Whether we always find who we want is another matter. Sometimes you don’t. But we’ve had persons of color doing all kinds of things. We’ve had guest conductors, guest stage directors, regular faculty, and visiting faculty. I’m happy in general with what’s going on.

Carl DuPont: Thank you.

Charles Webb: Have I answered all your questions?

Carl DuPont: Yes!

Charles Webb: One thing, I wanted to be sure that you added about Camilla, she also sang with leading symphony orchestras as a soloist. For example The Philadelphia Orchestra, you can’t do better than that; The New York Philharmonic. She sang with a number of opera companies besides the City Opera, where she made her debut, she sang with the Boston Lyric Opera, Vienna State Opera and other companies.

I have called her a role model, a mentor for young musicians, and her contributions to the world of music are really history now. And she will be remembered as a beautiful, courageous, giving and loving person by generations long into the future.

Carl DuPont: That’s a beautiful tribute to her, and to you, and to the University this environment allowed her to really flourish.

Charles Webb: I think she really did flourish. Because first of all, she had the opportunity to pick the students who she wanted. Of course, all faculty, if you are going to get your money’s worth need a full load. Most of the faculty are sought by this person or that person. At this
moment we have students from every state and 53 foreign countries. So, they come from everywhere, and they know who they want to study oboe with, or voice, or whatever.

When they come, the faculty also has the opportunity to say, “I will teach that person, I don’t care to teach that one.” It’s a win-win situation right from the start.

**Carl DuPont:** She was a sought after voice teacher?

**Charles Webb:** Oh yes! Oh yes, she was a sought after voice teacher. And interestingly enough, men and women. Both. She taught a number of male singers. And not all African Americans. She taught everybody!

**Carl DuPont:** Is there anybody that comes to mind that I should look up or look into as far as her legacy is concerned?

**Charles Webb:** What I ought to do is have her roster. The one that comes to mind quickly is Janet Williams. She has had a very good career, and she would know some others to tell you to interview.

**Carl DuPont:** Thank you so much!
APPENDIX L

Introduction:

Personal Interview with the author
Miami, Florida
Professor Carolyn Stanford
June 21, 2014

Carolyn Stanford: And who was the guy? My agent in Europe, Ferdinand Visser, somehow or another heard about an agent in San Francisco, (I am from Philadelphia), who was just getting started. And he sent me her name and then she took me on. Her name was Mariedi Anders. And she took me on, and that’s where my career got started in the United States.

And I went to Alaska, and all over the United States. Under her, I went to Russia. and Czechoslovakia and I mean, I just went everywhere; everywhere. But you know, as a singer you don’t sing fifty two weeks (52 weeks) for the year. So then I was between engagements and sitting at home in Darby, Pennsylvania.

And I got a call from Drake University. Because the Dean there loved singers and he knew about me or something like that, he asked me if I would consider coming there to teach.

Carl DuPont: So when was this?

Carolyn Stanford: That was in 1969. So I taught at Drake University. I was hired as an Assistant Professor, but Drake is here in Iowa and my home is in Pennsylvania. During this time I was married to a patient and understanding husband. I don’t remember how, but I got a call from the State University of New York n Fredonia.

Carl DuPont: Okay.
Carolyn Stanford: Which is Upstate New York, but just over the lake from Cleveland? Okay, it’s on Lake Erie. So I went there and auditioned and got that job.

Carl DuPont: So did you teach at Drake for a while?

Carolyn Stanford: I taught at Drake for four years.

Carl DuPont: For four years, and were you the first African-American teacher on faculty?

Carolyn Stanford: I never thought about that, but I guess I was.

Carl DuPont: What was that experience like? Was that ever an issue or was it...?


Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: And those people they just accepted me.

Carl DuPont: Right.

Carolyn Stanford: And I never had a racial incident.

Carl DuPont: So you would travel back and forth between Darby [Pennsylvania] and Drake [University]?

Carolyn Stanford: Yes, but I would only go on semester break and holidays, not every week. Airfares were impossible in those days. In summertime I would go home and return to Drake for the Fall semester. But then the offer came from SUNY and I accepted.

Carl DuPont: At Fredonia at SUNY [State University of New York], Fredonia.

Carolyn Stanford: At Fredonia, excuse me. Why did I say Stanford, goodness? Then I got the job at Fredonia.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: And then I taught there. And one day, I guess it was Christmas holiday break. I was at home...By now, it’s 1978.
Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: So I get this call and it’s from Robert.

Carl DuPont: Brewster.

Carolyn Stanford: Robert Brewster, right. Would I consider coming to the University of Miami to teach? And I said, “Oh, no that’s too far away.”

Carl DuPont: [Laughs] I think that’s what we all say. I’m from Florida, but I was living in New York when I decided to come down here. And my first thought was, “Oh, it’s just so far away.”

Carolyn Stanford: Yes, I said, “That’s so far away.” I said, “I don’t think so.” So I called him back because I got to thinking about it. Let me show you. Here is Fredonia and here is Buffalo.

And here is the Philadelphia airport. Darby isn’t too far from the airport. I would have to fly to [Washington] D.C. change planes then fly to Buffalo. From Buffalo, I had to drive 51 miles south to Fredonia.

So when I got this call from Robert Brewster, the reason I was home in Darby was because the snow was so bad up there, you know the snow fell badly up there, That all the roads were closed. You couldn't even drive to the airport; you couldn't drive to Buffalo and you know I said, “This is crazy.”

And I got on the telephone and just checked with Eastern Airlines and asked, “Do you have any direct flights from Philadelphia to Miami?” And they did. I could be there in two and a half hours. And the airfare was half the fare and that sort of thing.

Carl DuPont: So it was...?

Carolyn Stanford: So I called Robert Brewster back and I took the job. My first position at the University of Miami was in 1978.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

The Dean of the Drama Department wanted to have a Musical Theater Program and hook up with the School of Music. The Dean of the School of Music knew I had Broadway experience so he asked me to start the Musical Theater Program which I did. And by that time he had also made me the Head of the Voice Department.

Carl DuPont: So that was really quick, that you became Head of the Voice Department.

Carolyn Stanford: I was appointed head of the Voice Department by the dean when Robert Brewster resigned. Now I am head of two very large programs which meant I worked from nine a.m. until sometimes midnight doing: the administrative paperwork, arranging rehearsals, performances and auditions and in the end finding theaters where our Musical Theater students could perform because the Drama Department, after a few years, withdrew from our joining program so we no longer had the Ring Theater to perform in. I also taught all day long, my private voice students preparing them for exams and recitals

Carl DuPont: And did you like that job?

Carolyn Stanford: Oh, I didn’t know what being the Head of the Voice Department was. Because when you taught at Curtis and people told you to jump, you said, “How high?” I became Head of the Voice Department, so now I’m Head of the Voice Department and Head of the Musical Theater program.

Which meant I worked from 9 o’clock in the morning till sometimes 11pm and 12am at night, when I would leave campus. But I taught all day long. And then I, you know would have all this paperwork to do. And when we did musicals, in conjunction with the Ring Theater – I had to do all that paperwork and with that; and organize that; and the auditions and the rehearsals, and find theaters and then when the Ring theater decided they didn’t want us as a part of their program anymore, because I think we were just taking away from them. And I guess it was in 1960 that I started touring. So I only toured professionally, as a singer I
would say from 1960 to 1971. Oh, and my agent in San Francisco was furious!

**Carl DuPont:** When you started teaching?

**Carolyn Stanford:** When I started teaching yes. But I needed a job. And so I just stopped performing professionally. But if people asked me to perform, or people who knew about me and asked me to perform I would. But I mean going on tours and doing that sort of thing.

**Carl DuPont:** So at Drake, you were probably the first African-American teacher?

**Carolyn Stanford:** I don’t know.

**Carl DuPont:** And at SUNY at Fredonia? Probably the first there also?

**Carolyn Stanford:** Yes, let me tell you about the experience there. We had a faculty meeting...

**Carl DuPont:** And this is 1975, right?

**Carolyn Stanford:** No, this would have been 1974.

I think that Fredonia, in order for them to get money from the government, they had to hire all kinds of people. So we went to the first faculty meeting, and one of the faculty, when the Dean introduced me, one of the faculty said, “Now all we need is a homosexual Jew and we’ll be fine!”

**Carl DuPont:** [Laughs] He said that out loud?

**Carolyn Stanford:** Oh yeah. And some people turned to him and nobody said a word.

**Carl DuPont:** And nobody came to your defense? No one said anything?

**Carolyn Stanford:** I think everyone was too embarrassed, and I pretended I didn’t even hear it. With my tough skin, I pretended I didn’t even hear it. My Fredonia students did very well, because my way of teaching was totally different.

But I was very hard on them. So a lot of kids wouldn’t stay with me. Because I was too hard on them. I really made
them work really hard because they...and it was the same with the University of Miami also. When students would come from high schools where they had been the big stars, and their voices...They didn’t want to be told anything about their singing. And to make them understand they needed theory that they needed to sight-read.

**Carl DuPont:** Do you think your presence on faculty as an African-American has had any difference for African-American students?

**Carolyn Stanford:** Oh, I think so. Career-wise, you know I didn’t have one of those careers that lasted years and years, as a performer. But as a teacher I think that...I’ve done very well as a teacher. Because I’ve been able to pass onto the students what I think they need.

I don’t want you to think about singing vocally...About vocal technique. Because your brain is like a computer. If you start telling your brain what it already knows, it’s going to stop! So that’s what I think I’m successful in.

I teach at...Oh, when I retired from the University of Miami...

**Carl DuPont:** When was this? What year did you retire?

**Carolyn Stanford:** In 1974.

**Carl DuPont:** From the University of Miami?

**Carolyn Stanford:** No, not ’74...what am I saying? [Chuckles] I’m crazy. You see how interested I’ve been in my career?

**Carl DuPont:** In ’94 [1994].

**Carolyn Stanford:** In ’94 [1994]? Okay.

**Carl DuPont:** Yes, and so...You threw me off there...

**Carolyn Stanford:** Sorry, so you said once you retired from the University of Miami, and then you went on to do...I think that’s where you were.

**Carl DuPont:** Oh! Yes! FIU had heard that I had retired.
Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: And asked me if I’d come over there.

Carl DuPont: And so you taught there?

Carolyn Stanford: So I went over to FIU and taught there for two years.

Carl DuPont: Full time?

Carolyn Stanford: Full time.

Carl DuPont: Sure. Do you think you were the first African-American teacher at FIU?

Carolyn Stanford: Oh, no.

Carl DuPont: No, they already had some. Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: Oh, no.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: Yeah, I really did love teaching and I loved teaching the students who were anxious to learn and who understood what I was asking them to do, and they did it.

Carl DuPont: So overall...You taught from 1971 to 1994?

Carolyn Stanford: Hm-hmm.

Carl DuPont: You taught at three different schools....Actually 1996! Then you also went and taught at FIU.

Carolyn Stanford: Oh yes I did!

Carl DuPont: And you said you loved teaching and...?

Carolyn Stanford: I love teaching, and I left FIU only because we decided to build a house in Tennessee.

Carl DuPont: Oh! Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: He had been teaching at public schools, and so I thought I’d just stop. And I missed it. I missed those students.
Carl DuPont: Yeah.


Carl DuPont: During your time as a singer in the 1960s or as a teacher in the 1970s and 1980s and 1990s, did you feel that you were being a pioneer? You were breaking ground as a black person? Did that ever feel that you were...?

Carolyn Stanford: Well I think this goes back to that original story I told you when I was in the third grade; well you see as a black person. I never thought of myself as a black person. I never thought of myself as a white person. Because of that experience, I just thought of myself as Carolyn. Carolyn Stanford.

Yes, and I knew that what I was seeing with the students or watching them perform at recitals and that sort of thing; that I needed to get them beyond a certain point. Beyond learning how to sing.

And I guess maybe in a way I did that, because I have several personal notes I can show you...Let me show you some...Where they thank me for everything that I did for them, and that wasn’t teaching them to sing.

Carl DuPont: Okay. It was something more than that.

Carolyn Stanford: You know one of the things I always told them is, “You are your own instrument.”

You know you can’t be yelling and screaming and drinking cold water. You have to take care of your voice. And that singing is only the bottom line. You have to take languages; you have to take an acting class. And know what you’re singing and how to portray that person. And you have to move...You have to take dance classes. Because you never know when a director is going to ask you, along with your singing to move. Oh, that’s something I forgot to tell you how. How I got into that second Broadway show?

Carl DuPont: Hm-hmm. The first one was “Jamaica”

Carolyn Stanford: No-no that was my second.

Carl DuPont: That was your second.
Carolyn Stanford: Yes, I forgot that.

Carl DuPont: Ohh

Carolyn Stanford: Okay, I got into....I’m talking about Broadway now.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: Okay. Because I just wanted to sing; I wanted to read about auditions. I would read the *New York Times* – don’t ask me why; I couldn’t afford the *New York Times* in those days.

But anyhow, I read they were auditioning for a show called “My Darling Aida”. And that had to have been in the early 1950s.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: This is before...Because I went to Curtis in 1954. So this had been in 1950 or something like that. So I got on the bus and I went to New York and I sang...I don’t know what I sang for that audition; I really don’t. Anyhow, they liked my look and they liked my voice. And I was probably no more than twenty (20) [years old] at that time.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: And I got hired. I had had a few acting lessons. But at that time, I wanted to be sure and do what the teachers told me. Now when the director gave me the script and said, “Carolyn, I want you to work with Carl or your character’s name, and tell him so-and-so-and-so-and-so. So that’s what I did. I did exactly what he told me. I walked to Carl, and then I told him.

Carl DuPont: [Laughs]

Carolyn Stanford: And he said, “No, do it again!” So I did it again, the same way. There was another girl sitting over there.

She said, “I can do that!” So she got up, and she did it. And when she walked to Carl, she said what he had told her to say, as she walked.

I had never been told I can walk and talk at the same time!
Carl DuPont: [Laughs]

Carolyn Stanford: With the union, the union tells Broadway, if someone has to be fired, if he keeps them for more than three days, they had to keep them. So I lasted two days; I got fired. I was back home in Pennsylvania in two days. And in my teeny tiny town, [I was asked], “What happened?”

Carl DuPont: [Laughs]

Carolyn Stanford: So after being embarrassed and ashamed with what I had done, I sat down again. It was like being hit in the head with that “Swanee River” thing. I told you about that “Oh darky” thing?

I said, “If I could do that, but what could I do if I learned something?”

And that’s what made me start taking those lessons again. “My Darling Aida” was my first show and I lasted one day. You know it’s an amazing learning experience, right?

Carl DuPont: Right! Because you never did that again! You studied your craft...

Carolyn Stanford: Sometimes people have to learn things the hard way. I sometimes tell my students what happened to me. You have to be very aware of your students, and their backgrounds and what you say to them.

They can’t perform and be thinking about the technique. Because many of the singers who are singing, their voices are just beautiful, naturally. And what makes them so successful, is because of what they put into their voices.

Carl DuPont: I was going to ask when you moved down here, were there any issues in regarding to finding housing, as far as “this is a place for blacks” or “this is a place for whites?”

Carolyn Stanford: No.

Carl DuPont: There was no issue?
Carolyn Stanford: No, but when I came down, a friend of mine from Fredonia, who had a house down here, lent me his house in Miami Beach.

Carl DuPont: Oh.

Carolyn Stanford: So off of Collins. What I would do, since I was trying to find a place to live since I had a job, I came down in the summer to find a place to live. And I would go across the causeway. To I-95. So you know when you go across the causeway, you don’t see any black people.

Carl DuPont: Hmm.

Carolyn Stanford: When you go down I-95, you don’t see any black people. So I went down to I-95 around the university, and I started looking for places to live. And my sister came and she was trying to help me; just looking at various places. And we stopped somewhere – I don’t know. There was a Howard Johnson’s near Kendall and a black lady waited on us.

So finally I said to her, “I don’t want you to think I’m crazy, but are there any black people in Miami?” She said, “What? Black people?” But all I had done is go across and down and around in that neighborhood, and there weren’t any black neighborhoods.

Once I found the place that was convenient and I could afford. There was no problem.

Carl DuPont: Okay. All right.

Carolyn Stanford: Oh, you thought maybe I had...?

Carl DuPont: Well I don’t know. I talked to Dr. Brewster and he said that there was a little bit of issue of him getting a house in Coral Gables, and that people were uncomfortable with it and...

Carolyn Stanford: Oh! Well, he bought a house.

Carl DuPont: Right.

Carolyn Stanford: Yeah, yeah.
Carl DuPont: So I was just wondering if that was the same years later when you came down?

Carolyn Stanford: No, I really didn’t have any racial issues.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: The only racial issues I thought that I had were the faculty’s attitude and I think it had to do with the combination with the fact that I was black and I was a boss and I didn’t have a doctorate. But in those days, the schools would hire you depending on your career.

Carl DuPont: Performance

Carolyn Stanford: Or your performance career or your degree.

Carl DuPont: Do you think there needs to be an effort on the part of the Administration to make sure a Voice faculty has African-American representation? Do you think that should even be a consideration?

Carolyn Stanford: I don’t think it should be a consideration. They should hire the person based on their audition.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: Their interview.

Carl DuPont: Right

Carolyn Stanford: What do you think?

Carl DuPont: Well, I wonder if when looking for new faculty, that they should make sure it also kind of represents what the students...

Carolyn Stanford: Oh yeah! If looking for new faculty; I thought you said hiring.

Carl DuPont: Yeah!

Carolyn Stanford: No. If looking for new faculty, they really should interview blacks...They should interview everybody.
Carl DuPont: Right! Making sure they’re hiring....If they’re hiring someone black, they need to be capable and fit the description. Just making sure that they are in consideration. What I’m finding is that in the 1960s and 1970s, with the “Executive Order” to take affirmative steps to hire African-Americans. . .

Carolyn Stanford: Yes! Now that’s really what happened. At Drake University? I was the result of that.

Carl DuPont: Affirmative action?

Carolyn Stanford: Affirmative action. Oh, yes! I was an affirmative action hire at Drake. Also at State University of New York. By that time made that comment.

The dean of the School of Music at that time was a very good friend of my colleague at Fredonia. And I think he asked him, because of affirmative action.

Carl DuPont: All right.

Carolyn Stanford: He asked him if he knew of a black person. And Harry John Brown said, ‘Oh yes, there’s one whose office is right next to mine.’

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: Yeah, and that’s how that happened.

Carl DuPont: So it seems to me when the schools went looking, they found an abundance of talent. They found people like Brewster; they found people like you. But if they weren’t forced to look by the Government....

Carolyn Stanford: Oh no, no, no, no.

Carl DuPont: They might never have...

Carolyn Stanford: Never!

Carl DuPont: And it doesn’t seem like the faculties had a conspiracy to keep black people out before then, but it wasn’t really a consideration, is what it looks like.
Carolyn Stanford: Well I think it never really occurred to them. And I don’t think that blacks even...I would just wait on my manager to call me...It never occurred to me to apply.

Carl DuPont: And so you didn’t apply to Drake; you didn’t apply to SUNY at Fredonia; you didn’t apply here. They always came looking for you?

Carolyn Stanford: Hm-hmm.

Carl DuPont: And FIU the same thing?

Carolyn Stanford: Hm-hmm. But FIU at that time knew about my reputation.

Carl DuPont: Right. Right. Do you have any advice for African-American teachers of singing? Like myself, coming up in the ranks? Getting ready to join a faculty and do what you’ve done?

Carolyn Stanford: The only thing I can say is that when you go for your interview? Don’t think of yourself as black.

Carl DuPont: Okay. [Silence] Just leave the color out of it.

Carolyn Stanford: Leave the color out of it. Don’t bring that up.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: Unless they bring it up.

Carl DuPont: And when you’re on the job?

Carolyn Stanford: Don’t bring it up. Because after all they forget...they see you as Carl.

Carl DuPont: Hm-hmm. Okay.

Carolyn Stanford: Be the musician that you are; the artist that you are.
APPENDIX M

Telephone Interview
Professor Robert Brewster
June 1, 2014

Carl DuPont: Yes. So you’re in Germany too?

Robert Brewster: I went to Germany as a Fulbright scholar, in 1966.

Carl DuPont: Okay. And how long did you end up staying?

Robert Brewster: And I worked and...I matriculated actually at the Musikhochschule in Stuttgart.

Carl DuPont: Oh. Okay.

Robert Brewster: And I stayed there for three to four years (3-4 yrs.) and the Fulbright granted me a second stay in terms of my stipendium. And I finally got the Konzertreif Diplom für Liedgestaltung.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Carl DuPont: Okay. And so were you singing over there as well with an opera?

Robert Brewster: My first engagement was in Vienna at the . . . . I think. Nevertheless that’s where I made my debut in Vienna. Then I went to the Mozarteum in Salzburg, and studied there with Erik Werba and Gerald Moore.

Carl DuPont: So you taught at Dillard University?

Robert Brewster: Well, my first professional job in America was at Miles College

Carl DuPont: Miles...where is that?

Robert Brewster: In Birmingham, AL.

Carl DuPont: And what kind of university was that?
Robert Brewster: It was a colored Methodist Episcopal liberal college for black students.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: You could call it a college.

Carl DuPont: And they...?

Robert Brewster: Do you know Miles College?

Carl DuPont: No, I don’t, unfortunately.

Robert Brewster: It’s a...been around for at least, almost a hundred years, but nevertheless let’s not get into that, but that was my first professional gig.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: And then I went off to Jackson State College at that time; now it’s Jackson University.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: In Jackson, Mississippi.

Carl DuPont: So do you mind...I know this will all be on your résumé, but do you mind giving me the years you were at these places? Is that possible?

Robert Brewster: If I can remember them.

Carl DuPont: Okay, but will be on your résumé?

Robert Brewster: It will be on the résumé.

Carl DuPont: Okay, all right. Great.

Robert Brewster: Yeah, All of that would be on the résumé.

Carl DuPont: All right.

Robert Brewster: You can have more details of perhaps what I can remember at the moment.

Carl DuPont: Okay. Well then...
Robert Brewster: I can email that to you as soon as I can pull it up, and get it off to you.

Carl DuPont: Okay, well...Okay, great! So I’m going to wait for all the dates and stuff to that, but do you mind talking to me a little about your experience here at the University of Miami?

Robert Brewster: In what regards do you want that?

Carl DuPont: So my project is looking at...it’s called “Pioneers of African American Teachers of Singing”.

Robert Brewster: Right.

Carl DuPont: And it’s about the first black teachers to enter white spaces as faculty members...of Voice faculty members, and I’m wondering if you were the first black teacher to be on faculty here, at the University of Miami?

Robert Brewster: I think you’re absolutely correct.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: In that assumption, although I want to make sure you know that I was the person to integrate that School of Music.

Carl DuPont: Okay, so you integrated the School of Music?

Robert Brewster: Right.

Carl DuPont: Wow. Do you mind...?

Robert Brewster: And that was in 1970, and you see it hadn’t been long ago.

Carl DuPont: Exactly, exactly. When I talk to people about my project, they’re a little surprised, because I’m looking at 1968 with Willis Patterson up in University of Michigan, and 1967 with Sylvia Olden Lee. It wasn’t very long ago.

Robert Brewster: No, and that’s the way it was. And for those of us who lived [it]... I mean, I should...And as the first PhD in the School of Music Department from Washington University where I got my doctorate.

Carl DuPont: Okay.
Robert Brewster: In Voice, musicology, and theory. And I was the first of that as well.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: So together with the Fulbright...I don’t know very many black people...black leaders who got Fulbright [scholarships].

Carl DuPont: Yeah.

Robert Brewster: At that time, I certainly was the first to get that as well. But I know Sylvia Lee, she lived in Stockholm, I believe for many years.

Carl DuPont: Right.

Robert Brewster: One of the northern countries. I don’t know specifically which one, but I do remember her and Patterson at Michigan.

Carl DuPont: Right. So, when you did integrate the faculty here at the University of Miami, what was that experience like?

Robert Brewster: [Sigh] Oh boy. The University did accept me with open arms.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: I have to say, but you know there was a mandate and I’d like to think that they hired me, on my credentials which I am sure they did.

But on the other hand, I was probably the one person with a PhD in those years of color. They were trying to find someone so I was hired, sight unseen.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: So I was called to Europe, and it worked out and. My details with the dean at that time, and that was...Oh God, what was his name? Lee, Bill Lee.

Carl DuPont: Okay.
Robert Brewster: Have you ever heard of Bill Lee?

Carl DuPont: No, I haven’t.

Robert Brewster: Oh God...he was like the head of the department, and Robert Parker? I’m sure you haven’t heard of him either?

Carl DuPont: No.

Robert Brewster: But I actually started this program for the Music School. Along with...the man who was chair of the...Dr. Harris. Have you heard of him?

Carl DuPont: Yes! That name I’ve heard before.

Robert Brewster: Dr. Harris was my mentor and I took over the reins of the department from him.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: After one year of being in the university. And then I became chairman and we did introduce seven new programs, like the Jazz and Music Theater.

We integrated those two programs at the University of Miami and looked at the instructors for the offerings for DMUS ....I don’t know if...Are you still doing MPMUS there?

Carl DuPont: Yes! I believe so. I’m not exactly sure, but I believe so.

Robert Brewster: Well those two programs when we started, Carmen Lundy was the first jazz singer who graduated from the program, and Dawn Lewis was the first graduate of the Musical Theater program. Both were my students.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: And both of those persons were my students and Dawn just did a stint in California. She lives out in California and Carmen is also living in California. Have you heard of Carmen Lundy?

Carl DuPont: No, unfortunately I haven’t.

Robert Brewster: She’s a jazz singer.
Carl DuPont: Okay. Jazz, and she was a voice student of yours?

Robert Brewster: Exactly.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: And so was Dawn Lewis.

Carl DuPont: You instituted the Jazz curriculum as well?

Robert Brewster: Exactly. With Larry Lapin together. Is Larry still there?

Carl DuPont: No, I don’t believe so. Because I haven’t seen that name.

Robert Brewster: I think he just retired, actually last year or the year before, but from the school he was probably of retiring age, but he stayed on a long time.

Carl DuPont: So when you came on to faculty in 1970, all of the faculty was supportive? There were never any issues about your race once you got there?

Robert Brewster: I can’t really say that, but I think for the most part, I was accepted. The other thing that really was a problem for me at that time was the housing, because I really wanted to buy a house. And I did buy a house in Coral Gables.

Carl DuPont: Uh-huh.

Robert Brewster: And that again was [chuckle]...I’m pretty sure I was the first black person to buy property in Coral Gables. I’m not sure if that would be a problem today, I don’t know. You would probably know that, better than me.

Carl DuPont: It’s still not a lot, because I live in Coral Gables myself and it’s still not a lot; it’s very rare.

Robert Brewster: That’s what I thought. Just think in 1970 how rare it was.

Carl DuPont: Yeah, did they...was it..?

Robert Brewster: It’s rarefied land as it was.

Carl DuPont: Did anyone try to put up obstacles to your buying a house in Coral Gables?
Robert Brewster: That’s what I was about to explain. When I bought the house, there were cliques like the Klu Klax Klan who said, “What is this nigger doing in Coral Gables?” And then on the street, I know they said, “Property values are going down” you know, the same kind of rubbish I’ve heard all my life.

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.

Robert Brewster: You’ve probably never heard as much as I have, but that was the way it was in those years. And I had the concerns that I might be bombed or somebody around me would do me harm, but the upshot of all of that is, once I sold the house—because I remodeled it and left it in better condition....now they said, “Now you’re going to raise our property values.”

Carl DuPont: [Laughs]

Robert Brewster: It was like, “Good if you do, but damned if you don’t.” you know?

Carl DuPont: Right.

Robert Brewster: I just found it all laughable and went on my way, as I do and have done all my life. Otherwise, I would not have been able to make the strides that I’ve made.

Carl DuPont: Right, right. Do you think that your presence on the faculty made it a more welcoming environment for black students?

Robert Brewster: Oh, God we did a lot of...bringing in black kids. Carmen had already been a Miami girl, so she had already been...but she was not privy to the University of Miami, and there were several others who were...but mostly jazz...people who turned out to be jazz people. But we all studied regular voice as a technique. There’s another girl, Jill Eber who was my student. That was another young lady, Ana Gloria Vazquez, who now is still in Germany singing after all these years, and married a husband there.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: There was...and there were four or five black students who came in during my tenure at the University of Miami.
Carl DuPont: Was Curtis Rayam one of them? Was he here while you were here?

Robert Brewster: Absolutely.

Carl DuPont: Okay. He’s...

Robert Brewster: Oh, and who else? Oh, Keith Tynes...he’s a jazz person.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: But Curtis Rayam was there. He’s down at Cookman, isn’t he?

Carl DuPont: Right! I’m from Daytona and my step-dad is on the faculty there at Cookman, and so Curtis Rayam is a friend of the family’s and I grew up listening to his concerts. Him and Gail Robinson-Oturu?

Robert Brewster: Yes.

Carl DuPont: They kind of gave me my first introduction to opera.

Robert Brewster: Oh lovely.

Carl DuPont: Yeah.

Robert Brewster: Well Curtis was there. He studied with Ms. Buckley.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: And Carmen also studied with Ms. Buckley for her first year and then she came to me. Because it was really quiet for her and she suggested in those years that she have a black professor that she found that special and meaningful, for her.

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.

Robert Brewster: And I also think the instruction was top-notch.

Carl DuPont: Awesome.
Robert Brewster: So that was my engineering to Curtis’ career. You say he’s still at Cookman; that means he’s been here for quite some years.

Carl DuPont: Right. He’s at the film Cookman and he teaches at Rollins College in Orlando, so he does both.

Robert Brewster: Oh, great! Wonderful.

Carl DuPont: You mentioned something briefly about a mandate that the school received? And it’s what I’m finding with my research, that schools...they kind of, at this point—because they were public schools, they had to put affirmative action plans into action after 1965.

Robert Brewster: That’s correct.

Carl DuPont: But I’m wondering, since the University of Miami is a private institution...

Robert Brewster: No, no what that involves is...if there are any schools that receive federal funds; so the public schools receive federal funds, as well as the universities.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: But Miami was a private college, but they also received federal funds.

Carl DuPont: Oh, okay.

Robert Brewster: Like many colleges, and they were mandated to integrate; otherwise they weren’t...that was the way it took place. Michigan had the same thing.

Carl DuPont: Right.

Robert Brewster: Michigan is a private school but nevertheless...after all these years, we’re still having problems with Michigan.

Carl DuPont: Yeah.

Robert Brewster: What the Supreme Court did with Michigan was that they separated private not feasible anymore and you don’t have to quotas anymore.
Carl DuPont: Right! Right. How do you feel about that?

Robert Brewster: Well obviously, I think it’s totally necessary until there is a level playing field that we as black people need to experience in this country and it’s not like we’ve made such strides that we don’t need that any longer.

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.

Robert Brewster: So obviously, I’m not keen on that and I think that anybody like Clarence Thomas who was on the Supreme Court would be a party to that is just heresy and anathema and I wouldn’t take that position.

Carl DuPont: So after the University of Miami, did you go and continue to teach somewhere else?

Robert Brewster: I’m not in an institution, because I came to New York and started a business.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: I started a fashion business and employed Europeans who tooled fashions from France, Germany and Italy. That’s what I did after the University of Miami. I did my last concert tour in black colleges in the South and in 1984, I believe. That was my last...that’s when I hung up “the rack” as it were.

Carl DuPont: Okay. So could you just discuss with me your reasons for switching careers? What your goals were with that?

Robert Brewster: Well, that’s always somewhat of a touchy subject. I did it because I felt that I...I just didn’t make the strides I should have made, as a black tenor and I remember there was great consternation in Europe when I auditioned for...they could see me as Tamino. They could see me as Othello, but they didn’t think the German public was ready to see the tenor who got the girl, kind of thing. And that was the prevalence in my years. And the only person who did anything as a tenor was George Shirley, who is a friend of mine, who came to the Met. The girls did well...

Carl DuPont: Hm-mmm.
Robert Brewster: Because somehow, they had acceptance even in Europe. Do you know the name Felicia Weathers?

Carl DuPont: Yes!

Robert Brewster: She was at IU with me together. You knew I graduated from IU?

Carl DuPont: No I didn’t know that.

Robert Brewster: And those were the...there were very few blacks there. Although Baker was the jazz person in those years, but he was one of the few.

Carl DuPont: So were you there in the sixties (1960s)?

Robert Brewster: And there were no voice faculty at all of color. Were there any people of color when you were there?

Carl DuPont: On the faculty?

Robert Brewster: Yeah.

Carl DuPont: They...do you know the name Marietta Simpson?

Robert Brewster: I’ve heard that before and that was a girl Camilla Williams.

Carl DuPont: Yes, so she had already...

Robert Brewster: She was long after me.

Carl DuPont: Right.

Robert Brewster: But Camilla Williams was there for...until she died, I think.

Carl DuPont: She was there until 1997 and then she was still around town, because I got to Bloomington in 2006. So she was still around, but she was no longer on faculty.

Robert Brewster: Right, right.

Carl DuPont: When I got there.

Robert Brewster: Well, she was probably one of the first...

Carl DuPont: Yes, she was the first of black voice teachers.
Robert Brewster: Well that’s all good as well.

Carl DuPont: Who did you study with there at Indiana?

Robert Brewster: Charles Kullman.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: He was a tenor from the Met.

Carl DuPont: And what was your experience at Indiana like?

Robert Brewster: It was great. I loved IU. It was freedom, almost, at last. [Chuckles]

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: The reason why I went to IU. There were three or four universities that allowed people of color to come to their schools, and because I could not go to the University of Alabama, because I’m an “Alabamamian” and that’s where I was born. George Wallace decided he would pay my tuition at IU. So that’s how I got to IU, because George Wallace decided rather than keeping the Negroes out of the University, and you know what that was all about. Even though you’re born much later, I’m sure. How old are you by the way?

Carl DuPont: I’m thirty years old.

Dr. Robert Brewster: You were born so much later. You didn’t get all the ruckus of what that was all about.

Carl DuPont: Was George Wallace at IU?

Robert Brewster: No, he was the Governor of Alabama.

Carl DuPont: Ohhh. My God! So he would rather have paid...?

Robert Brewster: The man would stand at the doors and say, “Don’t let the niggers in!”

Carl DuPont: Oh My God!

Robert Brewster: Yes.
Carl DuPont: And so he paid to send you to Indiana, rather than let you go to school in Alabama?

Robert Brewster: That is correct.

Carl DuPont: Wow. That’s commitment.

Robert Brewster: Isn’t that incredible? But the other thing...the up to the story is—and I always find an up somehow. The last time we was the govenor of Alabama, by that time he was crippled; was in a wheelchair and I sang for his inauguration.

Carl DuPont: Oh wow!

Robert Brewster: The last time.

Carl DuPont: That is something!

Robert Brewster: Can you believe it? That was history.

Carl DuPont: When you look around today at voice faculties, how do you feel that they’re doing as far as integration, and representation of black Americans?

Robert Brewster: Well, I still think that has a ways to go. I don’t think that it’s ever, but...I was just speaking to this with another friend who came from New Orleans and we were talking about blacks not being very responsible. Wanting to work in the classical area. How many people in black...who studies classical music today? Especially with singing. If you look at...in Germany, I’m sure they asked you - if you are a schwarzer, you’ve got to sing Jazz.

Carl DuPont: Right. They always wanted me to sing gospel. All the time.

Robert Brewster: And gospel, yes. Believe me, I went through that so often. Because I had friends who said, “Robert, you should sing popular [music], at that time there was a black guy named Roberto Blanco. And he was on television. And [my friends said], “You should be like Roberto Blanco, and sing all the jazz. I think he was a Cuban guy.

Carl DuPont: Okay.
Robert Brewster: Who would...in Germany. After all the transitions that took place over there. But you know, my spiel and my specialty was German lead. And I studied with the best teachers for that and especially in Stuttgart at the time. Hermann and I don’t know...all those names. Hubert Giesen was the accompanist for Heifitz and you know all these people. Who were really great and good masters of teaching. And who taught it to us who were able to get it, and again only one black person.

All my education was in white schools. And I think Eastman was a great choice for you although I’m sure by this time Eastman had a lot of black kids.

Carl DuPont: It did and before I got there, Seth McCoy, tenor, was on faculty, but by the time I got there, there was nobody else black on the voice faculty. Only one black teacher on faculty together at Eastman.

Robert Brewster: It was always that way.

Carl DuPont: Yeah.

Robert Brewster: Did I answer all of the questions that you asked to your satisfaction?

Carl DuPont: Yes! Yes you did. If I have any more, is it okay if I contact you again?

Robert Brewster: Oh you know it’s perfectly okay.

Carl DuPont: Okay.

Robert Brewster: And I am very pleased that something I started forty years ago is now in registration and people are like you who are able to do your dissertation, and contribute whatever I can to relive my experiences, and I’m delighted.

Carl DuPont: It’s an incredible program here, and I found that coming...I didn’t really want to leave New York City when I was there. But in coming down to Miami and doing this degree, I got everything that I needed – a great education; Kevin Short, bass-baritone; I don’t know if you’re familiar with him?

Robert Brewster: No, all these people are obviously after since I was there.
Carl DuPont: Okay. Well you...

Robert Brewster: Who is this Kevin now?

Carl DuPont: My voice teacher is Kevin Short. He’s a black bass-baritone and he’s been great...

Robert Brewster: Oh, really?

Carl DuPont: Yes! Yes. And then...

Robert Brewster: Kevin Short?

Carl DuPont: Kevin Short. And I’ve just gotten everything that I need. Great vocal education, and good research credentials – and I think it showed when I made it to the finals and I eventually got the job in Charlotte [North Carolina]. But I think they were very impressed. So you started a really great program.

Robert Brewster: Well I’m very excited and happy for you. Just who is the chairman of the Department?

Carl DuPont: The Chairman is Esther Jane Hardenbergh. She took over after David Alt.

Robert Brewster: I don’t know a lot about David Alt.

Carl DuPont: And she has been very supportive, especially of my project. “Pioneering African American Teachers of Singing.” She’s been very supportive. She put me in touch with Grace Bumbry, and I’m going to go over this summer to the Institute that Grace Bumbry does and I’m going to take some lessons with her Master Class.

Robert Brewster: Well I sang with Grace.

Carl DuPont: Oh yeah?

Robert Brewster: Back in St. Louis. When you’re here, maybe I’ll accompany you and go over, because I haven’t seen her in so long. So many years. But it would be nice to make your acquaintance.
APPENDIX N

Interview with *Kammersängerin* Grace Bumbry
July 10, 2014
Bad Häring, Austria

**Carl DuPont:** When and where did you begin teaching?

**Grace Bumbry:** I think, that was 1989. At the Salzburger Summer Academy. The Mozarteum Summer Academy. I think I had already started teaching privately before that, not many years before, maybe 1985, but privately at my home in Switzerland.

**Carl DuPont:** And did you teach in the Mozarteum year after year?

**Grace Bumbry:** I did every year until the year that my mother died, 1991, that’s not true. My mother died in 1991 and I didn’t teach that year, but continued until 1995. Then I stopped for a while, and went back in 2002.

**Carl DuPont:** What made you begin teaching? You were still singing at that point.

**Grace Bumbry:** Well, strangely enough, I had been asked to start teaching in the early 70s, I thought, “This is ridiculous.” I’d just started my career, and I thought, “What do I know to be able to impart to young singers at this stage?” My point of view is, they are putting their futures in my hands. And for the teacher not have enough knowledge is like committing murder. And I felt that I didn’t have enough knowledge to impart. I had it in my own studies, but I did not know how to impart it to another person, which is totally different. There are a lot of wonderful singers, but not everyone who knows how to sing well can teach well. And I just had this feeling of protectiveness for the students, so I said, “I will not do that, I don’t care how famous I have become. I don’t think that I am ready to teach.” And I didn’t have the time anyway. My career started in 1960, and it skyrocketed, and
by 1970 I had been singing only 10 years, and ten years is
really nothing in comparison to the long career I’ve had.
My main concern was the health of the singer’s voice, i.e.
the health of the singer’s throat.

_Carl DuPont:_ That goes to my next question, I was going to ask you to
describe your teaching style, and what is important to you
as a voice teacher.

_Grace Bumbry:_ For me the most important thing is the freedom of the
throat, not imposing a certain sound to that voice. I think a
teacher has to recognize where the voice wants to go. Does
that voice want to make a register change at an F, or F#, or
G? Does it have more than one register? I have to see what
the voice wants to do, i.e. what the throat wants to do.

Nobody can say how many registers there really are
without listening very carefully. A good teacher has got to
be able to know what to do as well as to listen, and they go
together. It’s important that a student does not force the
voice. That the voice be able to do what it wants. It goes
without saying that there are certain rules that we have to
abide by: clear vowels, proper breathing, all the wonderful
things of vocal hygiene of course. I don’t believe in
pushing it. I want you to do what is your maximum, not my
maximum. Not my piano, your piano. And that sort of thing.
But I need to get a reaction from the student in order to see
if they are comfortable, even if I ask you to exert yourself.
In that exertion are you comfortable? That’s why I was
reading to you about Garcia. So many people do not realize
that he negated so much of his early teachings. From fifty
years of teaching!

_Carl DuPont:_ That's a lot.

_Grace Bumbry:_ That’s a lot. When I mention that, they always look at me
like . . . Look in London Herald from 1894 and you will see
for yourself. He had to go back to the normal way of singing
like the old masters before him, not imposing anything on
the vocal chords. When you have had to deal with singers
whose throats have been operated on then you realize what
effect bad teaching has had on the singing community.

_Carl DuPont:_ You mentioned Garcia and that text. Are there other
teachers of singing that you look to or texts that you
incorporate when you are working with students?
Grace Bumbry: Only my own teachers. Kenneth Billips from St. Louis was my first teacher, who gave me a wonderful foundation. And my last teacher, Armand Tokatyan. The first was a baritone the second was a tenor and they were five or six years apart, and when you have had good teachers, or a good foundation you fall back on that. Other teachers that I agree with are Cornelius Reid, Oren Brown, and Giovanni Lamperti.

Carl DuPont: So you were definitely a pioneer with the opera. Do you think of yourself also as a pioneer being an African American teacher here in Europe?

Grace Bumbry: I never put it that way, but I think maybe I am. It’s interesting that you ask that question, because I get the impression that especially American white students are leery about studying with a black person.

Carl DuPont: Could you talk a little bit about that please?

Grace Bumbry: It’s almost as if they don't trust what you have to say; they don’t trust your knowledge. They will say, “Well yeah, maybe that’s right.” No it’s not maybe. I know what I’m talking about! I remember a friend of mine and colleague, a very good singer from Finland named Tom Krause. We were judging a competition where he was president of the jury. Tom said, “You know in this business of singing, a singer has to go wherever there is that teacher who gives you what you are looking for. Even if that means you have to go to Mt. Everest.

Carl DuPont: So you definitely notice a difference working with white American students versus white European students?

Grace Bumbry: Yes. I think it has to do with slavery. The American whites are accustomed to being the rulers who set down the laws, and we are to follow, not the other way around. I went to Lotte Lehmann, who didn’t teach voice, taught interpretation. As a matter of fact she put me on to my last teacher, Tokatyan, because she didn’t understand a thing about technique. I have taught the whole gamut, I teach Japanese, I teach Koreans, Chinese, American whites and blacks, Russians, Canadians, Swiss, Germans, Armenians, Polish, Italians, French, Mexicans, Spanish to name but a few. Italians think because opera was invented by them and it’s their language you are supposed to listen to what they
have to say. When I complain to them about their Italian, they get rather snooty about it. I always have an Italian coach on hand for my masterclasses. He always supports my theory, because my singing of Italian is very, very good. Maybe I don’t speak the Italian that they were brought up with, but every country has its stage language. Whether you speak wonderful Italian, and you come from Tuscany, if you are not singing it correctly, you are wrong. And I have to correct you. I will say “Giovanni come, this is one of your compatriots. Can you please correct her?” and he will give the exact same correction that I would give. But I never had any problem with them about vocal corrections. They want to hear what Bumbry has to say about the voice. It’s not by accident that I’ve been singing fifty years and can still sing. I think that’s what solves it. It’s all fine and good to have some theories, but to be able to give them the information and show them how it’s done is the proof. We say a picture is worth more than a thousand words. I can talk until I am blue in the face, but if I show them it’s easier for them to understand. Like you, the other day there was that word with an umlaut, which sounded like “her.”

Carl DuPont: “Jeden Höhn verlangt...”

Grace Bumbry: Yes, all I needed to do was relate. American English to you. How would we say it? How would we pronounce that umlaut, with an English equivalent, which in this case is “her.” You saw the mouth formation and you heard the sound. And immediately picked it up. I lived in France, and studied French, I lived in Germany and studied German and practiced it with my husband who was German. I lived in the Italian part of Switzerland and spoke Italian. I know what the sounds are and I know how to impart it to someone who might not be German. Someone who might not be French. I get a lot of Russians, whose French is very bad, even though they have good singing teachers there in Russia. As a matter of fact they are a very musical people but sometimes their languages are wanting.

We were talking about white teachers with black teachers... I can only go by my own experience; maybe Camilla Williams might have had a different experience or Reri. But I’m not so sure whether Reri taught in America or not.
Carl DuPont: Well she taught just for a few years at Indiana University, but her family was still in Germany and she didn’t like the distance, according to Dean Webb.

Grace Bumbry: That makes sense of course. It would be nice to know, it would be important for me to know what George Shirley has felt about it. There’s now Michelle Crider teaching in Salzburg at the Mozarteum. Perhaps you might ask her.

Carl DuPont: Do you think you were the first black voice teacher to teach at the Mozarteum?

Grace Bumbry: Yes, but I didn’t teach there all year round. I did the summer academy. She teaches totally the whole year. She has been there, I think three years. There is a black piano teacher from St. Louis, Stan Ford, whose been there over 25 years.

Carl DuPont: You mentioned yesterday that you had done a residency at the University of Michigan for a while. Did you do residencies at other schools?


Carl DuPont: And do you enjoy this type of residency?

Grace Bumbry: Yes, I say yes reluctantly.

Carl DuPont: Why reluctantly?

Grace Bumbry: You don’t always get the return. Their teachers will get the return. All I can get is a partial return, but that is what you have to expect.

Carl DuPont: Now that you are doing a lot of teaching, are there any surprises that you didn’t expect to see from this side of the vocal studio?

Grace Bumbry: Yes. I didn’t expect the students to be so ill prepared. I didn’t expect that because my generation of singers knew we had to be prepared, and I think it was because our ethos at that time was “I’m as good as anybody else, I can do anything that a white singer can do.” We prepared ourselves so that nobody could find any “fleas” on us. But the students today whether they are black or white or Chinese or whatever don’t have that work ethic. That’s not
totally true, because I find that the Asians probably study harder, with Korean students being the most aggressive of them. The Japanese are very good students theoretically, but they are not so good with expressing themselves, expressing their emotions, and that has to do with the way they were brought up. They were taught not to be expressive not to show their emotions. In a business such as this, which is so visual you have to be able to show expression. The face has got to light up. I had some wonderful Japanese students who had beautiful voices, but it was like pulling molasses in winter to get them to express. But then again you cannot work in generalities, because there was one girl who was expressive. She didn’t have the best voice but she was expressive.

Back to your basic question: I think that they are generally not prepared enough. They don’t have that sense of discipline. We knew what we were there for and we didn’t waste time getting the job done. I mean its not by accident that Leontyne Price became such a great singer; Martina Arroyo, Shirley Verrett, Reri Grist, Grace Bumbry. It wasn’t given to us, we had to work hard for what we got, and we were ready when opportunity knocked. You know, I think success comes from being prepared.

**Carl DuPont:** Do you have advice for other aspiring voice teachers?

**Grace Bumbry:** That singer should have enough performing knowledge, enough performance behind them that they can really pass on valuable information. It’s not good enough to have read some books about how a singer prepares. You have to have gone on to the stage to know what the obstacles are, what things you will be confronted with, and you have to know a lot about vocal hygiene. How to take care of the voice. How to prepare yourself for the profession. I have noticed that the singers in Salzburg who study at the Mozarteum, have their teachers who don’t know enough about the life of a performer. They might have been singers themselves for 3 minutes, but that is not long enough. You have to know what the pitfalls are and you have to explain that to a student. For example I would ask my students, “What did you have for lunch?” “Well I had a croissant and a cup of coffee.” “Well what’s that? How are you going to sing on that?”
You know there are certain things that you have to do in order to support that voice. It’s not just an accident. God gave you that voice but you have to pflegen. Not just what you ate, what time did you eat? If you have a lesson at 2:00 the voice lesson is as important as a performance. You can’t go to that voice lesson tired. Would you go to a performance tired? No. So if you’ve got to be at that voice lesson at 2:00, you have to have eaten and have had time for that food to digest. That last bite of your lunch had to be an hour before. The digestive tract is busy doing what its supposed to do and it takes about an hour. You cannot impose your voice and your vocalises on top of this work. Those are things they wouldn’t know because they never had to deal with that. The body changes from decade to decade, day to day.

I remember on the Met tour, in Detroit, and I was singing Carmen. Carmen is not vocally difficult for me. Especially at that time, and I remember, I did all the things that I was supposed to do. I had my dinner at 5:00. The performance started at 7, and suddenly my voice wasn’t working. Mr. Bing was in the wings, and I could see the concern in his face and of course I was concerned too. When we finished the first act he came to me immediately and asked, “Grace, what’s the problem?” I said, “I don’t know Mr. Bing I don’t have any energy. Can you call the doctor in?” She came and her first question was “When did you have your dinner.” I said “at Five.” She said, “First of all you’re hungry, because it’s been almost three hours.” Detroit at that time of the evening was dead, you couldn’t find anything, especially around that area. She said bring anything you can find. Somebody brought a hamburger, a hot dog, a snickers, and they held the curtain, because I’m in the beginning of the second act. All of my colleagues knew that’s not the way Bumbry sings, something had gone wrong. I remember Remandado came to my dressing room afterwards, and asked, “What did they give you to get your voice going again?” “The gave me some food.” (Laughs)

As a teacher, you have to know those things. And so when I got back to my hotel, wrote it in my little book. If you are going to have a really important career you have to remember how you worked. I remember also reading an article in the New York Times around 1975, but I’m not sure, it was about how athletes condition their bodies and how they remain in peak performance. And it was a huge
article. It was very helpful for me, how their trainers would film things, and would show all these positive moments. That was the period of Martina Navratilova, Jimmy Connors, John McEnroe. All of the things they were doing to stay fit! What their diets were and, what was their day-to-day working plan was.

**Carl DuPont:** Did you have any other offers to come and teach for a whole year?

**Grace Bumbry:** I can’t go for a whole year, anywhere!

**Carl DuPont:** Were there offers coming in the 60s and 70s from schools in the United States?

**Grace Bumbry:** In the 70s, however, I think those were European schools.

**Carl DuPont:** And you turned them down?

**Grace Bumbry:** Well yes, of course, I was too busy during those times.

**Carl DuPont:** And even now is there the possibility to teach a whole year at a place?

**Grace Bumbry:** I don’t want to. I don’t know if the possibility exists, because I never inquired.

**Carl DuPont:** And why not?

**Grace Bumbry:** It would take too much of my time.

**Carl DuPont:** ’Cause you are still singing. You were just at the Vienna Staatsoper last year. Do you have stuff coming up still?

**Grace Bumbry:** Let me just think, do I? I don’t think so. The offers just come sporadically. They might ask today for something for 2017, and I say, well, how do I know if I am still around then. To be singing at age 80? I don’t know. God has been very good, and I put all of my success onto God. He gave me wisdom, He gave me intelligence, He gave me this wonderful voice. My pianist used to say, “God gave you a master stroke.” And He did. He not only took care of my throat: the right size, the right length, the right thickness. He gave me the power to do what I need to do, and I leave it up to Him to decide if I sing something in 2017. I don’t know. I would like to.
I might have told you I am writing my autobiography, and I want to put a DVD in there of the present and of the past.

**Carl DuPont:** Thank you so much, this has been an honor. I’m still amazed that I am talking with you.

**Grace Bumbry:** You are welcome indeed. I am happy to be of help. Do you have that same feeling about the white students with the black teachers?

**Carl DuPont:** Well, there was a long time when they racialized black bodies and black voice. So of course black voices were different, we sound different, we do different things. I am saying. . .

**Grace Bumbry:** Now that you mention it, I have read that somewhere, and quite candidly I had forgotten.

**Carl DuPont:** And even though the vocologists have confirmed that there is no uniform physiology that is different between white and black, there is still a racialized concept of black sound. So I am saying that, just as African American singers in the 60s were proving that, well can do that too. African American teachers of singing are also in their way working towards erasing those boundaries. Yeah, we can sing, we can synthesize this information, and we can teach. We can help you with your German pronunciation even if you are German, your Italian pronunciation even if you are Italian. There were so many things that were shut off to us, and it was just assumed that we couldn’t do it, or it couldn’t be done. You are a perfect example. You did it your whole career and now you are doing it on another level as a teacher. I find that really interesting and I think it does a big service for us all.

**Grace Bumbry:** Let me go one step further. I think that the black voice has a very special sound, as you can hear in Leontyne, Shirley, Martina, and myself. Reri, I’m not so sure because Reri’s voice is so very high, she could fit into any racial category. But the basic sound of the black voice, I find warmer. Now whether its those particular singers, I don’t know. I’ve been asked this question a number of times about the black sound. Is there a black sound? And I say well yes there is. There is a Russian sound, isn’t there? There is a German sound, isn’t it? There is an Italian sound, so yes there is.
Why should there not be a black sound? We all come from Africa. It is an African sound. But ours is an African American sound, it is a mixture. Just as our jazz music is a mixture of African and American. So I think definitely we’ve been blessed, with a special sound.

**Carl DuPont:** And it’s an ambidextrous sound too, right?

**Grace Bumbry:** Yes! Yes!

**Carl DuPont:** I want to incorporate that. The singers that were the first black singers to break the barriers, Marian Anderson, yourself, Leontyne Price, Camilla Williams, there has been a lot of attention to those careers. I want to also bring attention to the teachers that are also doing work breaking down barriers making more space for us all.

**Grace Bumbry:** Now you have to also give credit to those schools.

**Carl DuPont:** Exactly! And the people that were in charge.

**Grace Bumbry:** That’s what I mean. You have to give credit because without *those* pioneers we would not have been able to do it.

**Carl DuPont:** That is a really good point. I never thought of them as pioneers as well.

**Grace Bumbry:** You see, maybe their school didn’t want it, and maybe their opera house didn’t want it, the board of trustees, I’m sure of that. But if you have an intendant who is forward thinking, and musical, and who wants the best for that institution, then that is a pioneer that you really need to lift up.

**Carl DuPont:** Yes, I will do that. I will add that in. Thank you so much! This has been really amazing.