

african american gospel music history

The Soulful Journey: A History of African American Gospel Music and its Industry Impact

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Abstract: This article explores the rich and complex history of African American gospel music, tracing its evolution from spirituals sung during slavery to its modern-day global influence. We examine the music's profound social and cultural impact, its role in the Civil Rights Movement, and its significant contribution to the broader music industry.

From Spirituals to Stadiums: The Genesis of African American Gospel Music History

African American gospel music history is inextricably linked to the African American experience. Its roots lie deep within the spirituals sung by enslaved people in the antebellum South. These songs, often coded messages of hope and resistance, served as both a spiritual solace and a powerful form of communication. They laid the foundation for the vibrant gospel tradition that would flourish in the decades to come. The emotional intensity, call-and-response structure, and improvisational nature of spirituals all became hallmarks of later gospel styles.

The post-Reconstruction era witnessed the emergence of distinct gospel styles. The early 20th century saw the rise of jubilee songs, characterized by their polished harmonies and professional arrangements. These songs often featured uplifting themes and were performed in churches and concert halls, bridging the gap between the spirituals of the past and the more formalized gospel music of the future.

The Golden Age and the Rise of Gospel as an Industry

The "Golden Age" of gospel music, spanning roughly from the 1930s to the 1960s, witnessed the emergence of iconic figures like Thomas A. Dorsey, often dubbed the "Father of Gospel Music," Mahalia Jackson, and Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Dorsey, a former blues pianist, blended blues and jazz elements into his compositions, creating a sound that resonated with a wider audience. Jackson's powerful vocals and commanding stage presence made her a global superstar, while Tharpe's electrifying guitar playing pushed the boundaries of the genre. This period marked a significant turning point in African American gospel music history, as the genre gained mainstream recognition and commercial success. Gospel music transitioned from primarily being a church-based activity to a viable professional career path for many talented musicians.

Gospel Music and the Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s profoundly impacted African American gospel music history. Gospel songs became powerful anthems of hope, freedom, and resilience. The music provided solace and strength during times of oppression and served as a rallying cry for social justice. Many gospel artists actively participated in the movement, using their platforms to advocate for equality and inspire change. The music's message of faith and perseverance resonated deeply with activists and ordinary citizens alike. This inextricable link between gospel music and the Civil Rights Movement cemented its place in American history as more than just religious expression – it was a vital component of a social and political struggle.

The Evolution of Contemporary Gospel

The latter half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st saw gospel music diversify and evolve. Contemporary gospel incorporated elements of R&B, pop, and hip-hop, broadening its appeal to younger generations. Artists like Kirk Franklin, Yolanda Adams, and Mary Mary achieved massive commercial success, blending soulful vocals with modern production techniques. This period showcases the ongoing dynamism of African American gospel music history, demonstrating its ability to adapt and remain relevant across generations while staying true to its core values.

The Impact on the Music Industry

The influence of African American gospel music history on the broader music industry is undeniable. Gospel music's rhythmic complexity, emotional depth, and powerful vocal delivery have significantly shaped numerous genres, including R&B, soul, and even pop. Many iconic secular artists have drawn inspiration from gospel traditions, highlighting its enduring legacy and its pervasive impact on the sonic landscape. The entrepreneurial spirit within the gospel music industry has also shown its strength, leading to the creation of successful independent labels and the establishment of major gospel music festivals and award ceremonies. The industry itself has built a substantial economic engine, supporting countless artists, musicians, and related businesses.

Conclusion

The history of African American gospel music is a testament to the enduring power of faith, resilience, and artistic expression. From its humble beginnings in the spirituals of enslaved people to its current global presence, gospel music has consistently served as a source of inspiration, hope, and social change. Its influence on the music industry is profound and lasting, underscoring its significant cultural and historical importance. Understanding African American gospel music history is crucial to comprehending the broader landscape of American music and its complex relationship with social movements and cultural identity.

FAQs

1. What are some of the key differences between spirituals and early gospel music? Spirituals were often coded messages of hope and resistance, sung in secrecy, while early gospel music became more formalized, often performed publicly in churches.
1. Who are some of the most influential figures in African American gospel music history? Thomas A. Dorsey, Mahalia Jackson, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Kirk Franklin, and Yolanda Adams are among the most influential figures.
1. How did the Civil Rights Movement impact gospel music? The movement fostered gospel songs that became anthems of hope, freedom, and resilience, often used as rallying cries for social justice.
1. How has gospel music evolved over time? It's evolved from spirituals and jubilee songs to incorporate elements of blues, jazz, R&B, pop, and hip-hop.
1. What is the significance of Thomas A. Dorsey in gospel music history? He is often called the "Father of Gospel Music" for his blending of blues and jazz into gospel music.
1. How has gospel music influenced other genres of music? Its rhythmic complexity, emotional depth, and powerful vocal delivery have profoundly influenced R&B, soul, and pop.

1. What is the current state of the gospel music industry? It is a thriving industry with successful independent labels and major festivals and awards ceremonies.
1. How did gospel music help shape African American identity? It provided a means of cultural expression, spiritual sustenance, and community building, strongly contributing to the African American identity.
1. Where can I find more information on African American gospel music history? You can explore academic databases, libraries, and reputable online resources dedicated to music history and African American studies.

Related Articles:

1. The Spirituals of Slavery: A Window into the African American Soul: This article explores the origins and significance of spirituals, examining their coded language and social function.
1. Thomas A. Dorsey: The Father of Gospel Music: A biographical exploration of Dorsey's life, work, and contribution to shaping the genre.
1. Mahalia Jackson: Queen of Gospel: A detailed look at Jackson's life and career, highlighting her impact on gospel music and the Civil Rights Movement.
1. Sister Rosetta Tharpe: The Godmother of Rock and Roll: This article investigates Tharpe's groundbreaking guitar skills and her influence on both gospel and rock and roll.
1. The Golden Age of Gospel Music: 1930s-1960s: An in-depth analysis of this pivotal period, showcasing key artists and musical developments.

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1. Contemporary Gospel Music: A New Generation of Voices: This article analyzes the evolution of gospel music in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, focusing on contemporary artists and styles.
1. The Business of Gospel Music: An Industry Overview: This article examines the economic aspects of the gospel music industry, its growth, and its impact on the wider music market.
1. African American Gospel Music and its Global Impact: An examination of how gospel music has spread globally and the cultural exchanges that have resulted.

african american gospel music history: People Get Ready! Bob Darden, 2004-01-01 From Africa through the spirituals, from minstrel music through jubilee, and from traditional to contemporary gospel, *People Get Ready!* provides, for the first time, an accessible overview of this musical genre.

african american gospel music history: Singing in My Soul Jerma A. Jackson, 2005-12-15 Black gospel music grew from obscure nineteenth-century beginnings to become the leading style of sacred music in black American communities after World War II. Jerma A. Jackson traces the music's unique history, profiling the careers of several singers--particularly Sister Rosetta Tharpe--and demonstrating the important role women played in popularizing gospel. Female gospel singers initially developed their musical abilities in churches where gospel prevailed as a mode of worship. Few, however, stayed exclusively in the religious realm. As recordings and sheet music pushed gospel into the commercial arena, gospel began to develop a life beyond the church, spreading first among a broad spectrum of African Americans and then to white middle-class audiences. Retail outlets, recording companies, and booking agencies turned gospel into big business, and local church singers emerged as national and international celebrities. Amid these changes, the music acquired increasing significance as a source of black identity. These successes, however, generated fierce controversy. As gospel gained public visibility and broad commercial appeal, debates broke out over the meaning of the music and its message, raising questions about the virtues of commercialism and material values, the contours of racial identity, and the nature of the sacred. Jackson engages these debates to explore how race, faith, and identity became central questions in twentieth-century African American life.

african american gospel music history: Encyclopedia of American Gospel Music W. K.

McNeil, 2013-10-18 The Encyclopedia of American Gospel Music is the first comprehensive reference to cover this important American musical form. Coverage includes all aspects of both African-American and white gospel from history and performers to recording techniques and styles as well as the influence of gospel on different musical genres and cultural trends.

african american gospel music history: A City Called Heaven Robert M. Marovich, 2015-03-15 In *A City Called Heaven*, Robert M. Marovich follows gospel music from early hymns and camp meetings through its growth into the sanctified soundtrack of the city's mainline black Protestant churches. Marovich mines print media, ephemera, and hours of interviews with artists, ministers, and historians--as well as relatives and friends of gospel pioneers--to recover forgotten singers, musicians, songwriters, and industry leaders. He also examines the entrepreneurial spirit that fueled gospel music's rise to popularity and granted social mobility to a number of its practitioners. As Marovich shows, the music expressed a yearning for freedom from earthly pains, racial prejudice, and life's hardships. Yet it also helped give voice to a people--and lift a nation. *A City Called Heaven* celebrates a sound too mighty and too joyous for even church walls to hold.

african american gospel music history: Cleveland's Gospel Music Frederick Burton, 2003 *Cleveland's Gospel Music* documents the history of black gospel music from the 1920s through the 1980s. The gospel quartet groups, radio announcers, solo artists, and promoters established Cleveland as the gospel singers' metropolitan hub. An integral part of Cleveland's history and its rich African-American community, gospel singers didn't sing for money or fame, but sang to the glory of God, often beyond the point of exhaustion. This work is a celebration of the past praises of those who sang tirelessly for some 60 years.

african american gospel music history: British Black Gospel Steve Alexander Smith, 2009-09-18 The first exploration of the history of UK black gospel music, featuring a foreword from a leading figure in British gospel. Gospel music is a rapidly emerging genre and its effect and influence on other areas of the record industry cannot be underestimated. The style of gospel is wide, and apart from the traditional hymn-based choir arrangements there is a whole range of subgenres incorporating soul, jazz, funk, reggae, r'n'b, calypso, classical music, hip hop, and praise and worship which form part of this colorful and inspirational market. The roots of modern black gospel are traced here from 19th-century black pioneers such as Thomas Rutling and the Fisk Jubilee Singers to the contemporary sound of the London Community Gospel Choir. Steve Alexander Smith tells this story with a wealth of anecdotes, photos, and research that includes more than 100 personal interviews. An accompanying audio CD celebrates the spectrum of British black gospel.

african american gospel music history: The Emancipation Proclamation United States. President (1861-1865 : Lincoln), 1994

african american gospel music history: The Golden Age of Gospel Horace Clarence Boyer, 2000 Presents the history of gospel music in the United States. This book traces the development of gospel from its earliest beginnings through the Golden Age (1945-55) and into the 1960s when gospel entered the concert hall. It introduces dozens of the genre's gifted contributors, from Thomas A Dorsey and Mahalia Jackson to the Soul Stirrers.

african american gospel music history: When Sunday Comes Claudrena N. Harold, 2020-11-16 Gospel music evolved in often surprising directions during the post-Civil Rights era. Claudrena N. Harold's in-depth look at late-century gospel focuses on musicians like Yolanda Adams, Andraé Crouch, the Clark Sisters, Al Green, Take 6, and the Winans, and on the network of black record shops, churches, and businesses that nurtured the music. Harold details the creative shifts, sonic innovations, theological tensions, and political assertions that transformed the music, and revisits the debates within the community over groundbreaking recordings and gospel's incorporation of rhythm and blues, funk, hip-hop, and other popular forms. At the same time, she details how sociopolitical and cultural developments like the Black Power Movement and the emergence of the Christian Right shaped both the art and attitudes of African American performers. Weaving insightful analysis into a collective biography of gospel icons, *When Sunday Comes* explores the music's essential place as an outlet for African Americans to express their spiritual and

cultural selves.

african american gospel music history: Woke Me Up This Morning Alan Young, 2012-09-29
Creators and Context. Starting in the mid-1980s, a talented group of comics creators changed the American comic industry forever by introducing adult sensibilities and aesthetics into popular genres such as superhero comics and the newspaper strip. Frank Millers Batman The Dark Knight Returns 1986 and Alan Moore and Dave Gibbonss Watchmen 1987 in particular revolutionized the genre. During this same period, underground and alternative genres began to garner critical acclaim and media attention, as best represented by Art Spiegelmans Maus. The Rise of the American Comics Artist is an insightful volume surveying the

african american gospel music history: The Sound of Light Don Cusic, 2002 The Sound of Light is a sweeping overview of the history of gospel music. Powerful and incisive, it traces contemporary Christianity and Christian music to the 16th century and the Protestant Reformation after examining music in the Bible and early church music. From the psalms of the early Puritans through the hymns of human composure of Isaac Watts and the social activism of the Wesleys, gospel music was established in 18th century America. With the camp meeting songs of the Kentucky Revival, the spirituals that came from the slave culture, and the hymns from the great revival after the Civil War, gospel music advanced through the 19th century. The 20th century brought recording technology and electronic media to the table. Gospel music has developed with Christian revivals and the history of American gospel music is the history of Christianity in America. Gospel music reflects the American spirit of freedom and the free market as a Christian culture emerges in the 20th century, providing a spiritual as well as economic foundation. The Sound of Light presents gospel music as part of the history of contemporary Christianity. It is a work broad in scope that defines a music essential to understanding American culture as well as American music in the 20th century. Don Cusic is the author of ten books, including the biography Eddy Arnold: I'll Hold You in My Heart and an encyclopedia of cowboys, Cowboys and the Wild West: An A-Z Guide from the Chisholm Trail to the Silver Screen. He joined the faculty at Middle Tennessee State University in 1982, teaching courses in the music business. He earned a Masters and Doctorate in Literature from MTSU. Since August of 1994, Cusic has been Professor of Music Business at Belmont University.

african american gospel music history: The Black Church Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 2021-02-16 The instant New York Times bestseller and companion book to the PBS series. "Absolutely brilliant . . . A necessary and moving work." —Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., author of Begin Again "Engaging. . . . In Gates's telling, the Black church shines bright even as the nation itself moves uncertainly through the gloaming, seeking justice on earth—as it is in heaven." —Jon Meacham, New York Times Book Review From the New York Times bestselling author of Stony the Road and The Black Box, and one of our most important voices on the African American experience, comes a powerful new history of the Black church as a foundation of Black life and a driving force in the larger freedom struggle in America. For the young Henry Louis Gates, Jr., growing up in a small, residentially segregated West Virginia town, the church was a center of gravity—an intimate place where voices rose up in song and neighbors gathered to celebrate life's blessings and offer comfort amid its trials and tribulations. In this tender and expansive reckoning with the meaning of the Black Church in America, Gates takes us on a journey spanning more than five centuries, from the intersection of Christianity and the transatlantic slave trade to today's political landscape. At road's end, and after Gates's distinctive meditation on the churches of his childhood, we emerge with a new understanding of the importance of African American religion to the larger national narrative—as a center of resistance to slavery and white supremacy, as a magnet for political mobilization, as an incubator of musical and oratorical talent that would transform the culture, and as a crucible for working through the Black community's most critical personal and social issues. In a country that has historically afforded its citizens from the African diaspora tragically few safe spaces, the Black Church has always been more than a sanctuary. This fact was never lost on white supremacists: from the earliest days of slavery, when enslaved people were allowed to worship at all, their

meetinghouses were subject to surveillance and destruction. Long after slavery's formal eradication, church burnings and bombings by anti-Black racists continued, a hallmark of the violent effort to suppress the African American struggle for equality. The past often isn't even past—Dylann Roof committed his slaughter in the Mother Emanuel AME Church 193 years after it was first burned down by white citizens of Charleston, South Carolina, following a thwarted slave rebellion. But as Gates brilliantly shows, the Black church has never been only one thing. Its story lies at the heart of the Black political struggle, and it has produced many of the Black community's most notable leaders. At the same time, some churches and denominations have eschewed political engagement and exemplified practices of exclusion and intolerance that have caused polarization and pain. Those tensions remain today, as a rising generation demands freedom and dignity for all within and beyond their communities, regardless of race, sex, or gender. Still, as a source of faith and refuge, spiritual sustenance and struggle against society's darkest forces, the Black Church has been central, as this enthralling history makes vividly clear.

african american gospel music history: Slave Songs of the United States William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, Lucy McKim Garrison, 1996 Originally published in 1867, this book is a collection of songs of African-American slaves. A few of the songs were written after the emancipation, but all were inspired by slavery. The wild, sad strains tell, as the sufferers themselves could, of crushed hopes, keen sorrow, and a dull, daily misery, which covered them as hopelessly as the fog from the rice swamps. On the other hand, the words breathe a trusting faith in the life after, to which their eyes seem constantly turned.

african american gospel music history: The Cambridge Companion to Blues and Gospel Music Allan Moore, 2002 From Robert Johnson to Aretha Franklin, Mahalia Jackson to John Lee Hooker, blues and gospel artists figure heavily in the mythology of twentieth-century culture. The styles in which they sang have proved hugely influential to generations of popular singers, from the wholesale adoptions of singers like Robert Cray or James Brown, to the subtler vocal appropriations of Mariah Carey. Their own music, and how it operates, is not, however, always seen as valid in its own right. This book provides an overview of both these genres, which worked together to provide an expression of twentieth-century black US experience. Their histories are unfolded and questioned; representative songs and lyrical imagery are analysed; perspectives are offered from the standpoint of the voice, the guitar, the piano, and also that of the working musician. The book concludes with a discussion of the impact the genres have had on mainstream musical culture.

african american gospel music history: Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit Gwendolin Sims Warren, 1999-11-15 For over 200 years in African-American churches throughout the country, gospel and spiritual music have offered solace and been a source of celebration, leaving a mark not only on the Christian world, but on popular music as well. *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit* contains the lyrics and music of 101 of the most widely known and cherished of these pieces, ranging from heartrending spirituals sung during slave times (*Steal Away*; *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*) to songs of unity from the civil rights movement and contemporary times (*We Shall Overcome*, *I'll Fly Away*). The book also presents a biography of each composer and the history of the evolution of each song, examining the role it played in enabling African-Americans to develop the strength to carry on in the face of adversity. An important historical document as well as an inspirational gift, the book captures the rich connections between song and experience as no other volume does.

african american gospel music history: The Gospel Sound Anthony Heilbut, 1985 Spotlights the careers of the gospel singers who have made a distinctive contribution to the world of music

african american gospel music history: Saved by Song Don Cusic, 2012-09-25 *Saved by Song* returns to print with its sweeping overview of the history of gospel music. Powerful and incisive, the book traces contemporary Christianity and Christian music to the sixteenth century and the Protestant Reformation after examining music in the Bible and early church. In America, gospel music has been divided between white and black gospel. Within these divisions are further divisions: southern gospel, contemporary Christian music, spirituals, and hymns. Don Cusic has provided

background and insight into the developments of all these rich facets of gospel music. From the psalms of the early Puritans through the hymns of Isaac Watts and the social activism of the Wesleys, to the camp meeting songs of the Kentucky Revival, the spirituals that came from the slave culture, and the hymns from the great revival after the Civil War, gospel music advanced through the nineteenth century. The twentieth century brought the technologies of recordings and the electronic media to gospel music. *Saved by Song* is ultimately the definitive and complete history of a uniquely American art form. It is a must for anyone interested in the musical and spiritual life of a nation.

african american gospel music history: *Woke Me Up This Morning* Alan Young, 1997

Many studies of African-American gospel music spotlight history and style. This one, however, is focused mainly on grassroots makers and singers. Most of those included here are not stars. A few have received national recognition, but most are known only in their own home areas. Yet their collective stories presented in this book indicate that black gospel music is one of the most prevalent forms of contemporary American song. The author is a New Zealander who came to the South seeking authentic blues music. Instead, he found gospel to be the most pervasive, fundamental music in the contemporary African-American South. Blues, he concludes, has largely lost touch with its roots, while gospel continues to express authentic resources. Conducting interviews with singers and others in the gospel world of Tennessee and Mississippi, Young ascertains that gospel is firmly rooted in community life. This book includes his candid, widely varied conversations with a capella groups, with radio personalities, with preachers, and with soloists whose performances reveal the diversity of gospel styles. Major figures interviewed include the Spirit of Memphis Quartet and the Reverend Willie Morganfield, author and singer of the million-selling *What Is This?* who turned his back on fame in order to pastor a church in the heart of the Mississippi Delta.

african american gospel music history: *Lift Every Voice* Burton William Peretti, Jacqueline M Moore, Nina Mjagkij, 2009 Looks at the history of African American music from its roots in Africa and slavery to the present day and examines its place within African American communities and the nation as a whole.

african american gospel music history: *Mahalia Jackson and the Black Gospel Field*

Mark Burford, 2019 Drawing on and piecing together a trove of previously unexamined sources, this work is a critical study of the renowned African American gospel singer Mahalia Jackson (1911-1972).

african american gospel music history: *Black Diamond Queens* Maureen Mahon,

2020-10-09 African American women have played a pivotal part in rock and roll—from laying its foundations and singing chart-topping hits to influencing some of the genre's most iconic acts. Despite this, black women's importance to the music's history has been diminished by narratives of rock as a mostly white male enterprise. In *Black Diamond Queens*, Maureen Mahon draws on recordings, press coverage, archival materials, and interviews to document the history of African American women in rock and roll between the 1950s and the 1980s. Mahon details the musical contributions and cultural impact of Big Mama Thornton, LaVern Baker, Betty Davis, Tina Turner, Merry Clayton, Labelle, the Shirelles, and others, demonstrating how dominant views of gender, race, sexuality, and genre affected their careers. By uncovering this hidden history of black women in rock and roll, Mahon reveals a powerful sonic legacy that continues to reverberate into the twenty-first century.

african american gospel music history: *Roosevelt's Blues: AfricanAmerican Blues and Gospel Songs on FDR* Guido van Rijn, 1997

african american gospel music history: *In Spirit and in Truth* Melva Wilson Costen, 2004-01-01 Costen concludes by offering models and suggestions for helping those who plan worship to listen for the leading of the Holy Spirit and ultimately challenges music and worship leaders to reclaim traditional African American spirituality and its presence in the music experienced in African American worship.--BOOK JACKET.

african american gospel music history: *Lining Out the Word* William T. Dargan,

2006-06-27 This book, a milestone in American music scholarship, is the first to take a close look at an important and little-studied component of African American music, one that has roots in Europe, but was adapted by African American congregations and went on to have a profound influence on music of all kinds—from gospel to soul to jazz. Lining out, also called Dr. Watts hymn singing, refers to hymns sung to a limited selection of familiar tunes, intoned a line at a time by a leader and taken up in turn by the congregation. From its origins in seventeenth-century England to the current practice of lining out among some Baptist congregations in the American South today, William Dargan's study illuminates a unique American music genre in a richly textured narrative that stretches from Isaac Watts to Aretha Franklin and Ornette Coleman. Lining Out the Word traces the history of lining out from the time of slavery, when African American slaves adapted the practice for their own uses, blending it with other music, such as work songs. Dargan explores the role of lining out in worship and pursues the cultural implications of this practice far beyond the limits of the church, showing how African Americans wove African and European elements together to produce a powerful and unique cultural idiom. Drawing from an extraordinary range of sources—including his own fieldwork and oral sources—Dargan offers a compelling new perspective on the emergence of African American music in the United States. Copub: Center for Black Music Research

african american gospel music history: The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music

Timothy Rice, James Porter, Chris Goertzen, 2017-09-25 First published in 2000. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor & Francis, an informa company.

african american gospel music history: The History of Gospel Music Rose Blue, Corinne J. Naden, 2001 Traces the history of gospel music, from its roots in Africa to the present day.

african american gospel music history: Exploring Christian Song M. Jennifer Bloxam,

Andrew Shenton, 2017-06-12 This essay collection celebrates the richness of Christian musical tradition across its two thousand year history and across the globe. Opening with a consideration of the fourth-century lamp-lighting hymn Phos hilaron and closing with reflections on contemporary efforts of Ghanaian composers to create Christian worship music in African idioms, the ten contributors engage with a broad ecumenical array of sacred music. Topics encompass Roman Catholic sacred music in medieval and Renaissance Europe, German Lutheran song in the eighteenth century, English hymnody in colonial America, Methodist hymnody adopted by Southern Baptists in the nineteenth century, and Genevan psalmody adapted to respond to the post-war tribulations of the Hungarian Reformed Church. The scope of the volume is further diversified by the inclusion of contemporary Christian topics that address the evangelical methods of a unique Orthodox Christian composer's language, the shared aims and methods of African-American preaching and gospel music, and the affective didactic power of American evangelical "praise and worship" music. New material on several key composers, including Jacob Obrecht, J.S. Bach, George Philipp Telemann, C.P.E. Bach, Zoltan Kodály, and Arvo Pärt, appears within the book. Taken together, these essays embrace a stimulating variety of interdisciplinary analytical and methodological approaches, drawing on cultural, literary critical, theological, ritual, ethnographical, and media studies. The collection contributes to discussions of spirituality in music and, in particular, to the unifying aspects of Christian sacred music across time, space, and faith traditions. This collection celebrates the fifteenth anniversary of the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music.

african american gospel music history: African Art in Motion Robert Farris Thompson,

1979-01-01

african american gospel music history: Homer Rodeheaver and the Rise of the Gospel

Music Industry KEVIN. YEO MUNGONS (DOUGLAS.), Douglas Yeo, 2021-05-15

african american gospel music history: African American Music Earl L. Stewart, 1998

African American Music provides an introduction to all of the richness and diversity of African American musical styles, focusing on the distinct characteristics and development of each genre. This book is divided into four parts: folk traditions; the jazz aesthetic; black popular styles since 1940; and black theatrical and classical music. Using brief musical examples, the author illustrates and explains the basic concepts that unite all African American styles before discussing each style

individually. Among the many types of music explored in individual chapters are spirituals, blues, gospel, ragtime, jazz, pop and classical. Biographical portraits of major musicians and composers, as well as detailed stylistic analyses of each musical genre, make this book not only required reading for any introduction to the field, but a pleasure to read for anyone interested in all of the different styles that comprise African American music. Includes information on Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, bebop, Chuck Berry, blues, boogie woogie, James Brown, call and response, classical music, classic jazz, Sam Cooke, cool jazz, William Levi Dawson, doo wop, Antonin Dvorak, Duke Ellington, free jazz, gospel music, Isaac Hayes, jazz, James Weldon Johnson, Motown Records, Charlie Parker, rags and ragtime, rap music, rhythm and blues, soul music, spirituals, swing, etc. [Publisher description]

african american gospel music history: Readings in African American Church Music and Worship James Abbingtion, 2009-03 Readings in African American Church Music and Worship features important articles and essays on music and worship written by some of the most influential voices of the past century, including W. E. B. DuBois, Wendell P. Whalum, V. Michael McKay, Wyatt Tee Walker, J. Wendell Mapson Jr., and others.

african american gospel music history: Together Let Us Sweetly Live Jonathan C. David, 2007 Together Let Us Sweetly Live THE SINGING AND PRAYING BANDS By Jonathan C. David UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS Copyright © 2007 the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois All right reserved. ISBN: 978-0-252-07419-6 List of Hymn

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Index.....221 Introduction IN THE EARLY YEARS of the twentieth century, according to the older people of today, many African American residents of tidewater Maryland and Delaware would, in late summer, set aside their tools, leave their cornfields just when the tassels on each stalk turned golden and the tips of each blade changed from green to brown, abandon their tomatoes when a soft blush of red appeared on the hard green fruit, allow, for a time, their beans and sweet potatoes and melons to mature on their own, and make their way by horse and wagon, by car, or by bus to a Methodist camp meeting to attend to their sacred work. Those who had moved to the nearby cities of Baltimore, Wilmington, or Philadelphia in search of the higher wages and the excitement that urban life seemed to offer returned home by land or by water, traveling perhaps on one of the ferries that plied the Chesapeake or Delaware bays from city to town, from shore to shore, and back again. If the camp meeting was nearby, some individuals, families, or groups of unrelated church members might attend nightly services and return home to sleep, to work the next day perhaps, but then steadfastly to make their way right back to that same camp meeting for the next night's service, and the next, until that camp meeting's final, cathartic day. During several of the old-time country camp meetings, however, many would unhitch their horses, arrange all the separate wagons into a circle around a wooden-roofed tabernacle, arch a sheet of canvas over each wagon, and stay right there on the church ground for the duration of the meeting. Women would bring baskets and cheese boxes filled to the brim with

fried chicken, home-smoked ham, biscuits, cabbage, and green beans. Men and boys would dig up old pine stumps and pile them high on the campgrounds, to be placed on fire stands and set ablaze to give light to each evening's spectacle. In the heat of the summer, when the ground might be parched and dust might billow-when you couldn't even walk across the ground barefoot, it was so hot-everyone lived in the shade, and everyone had a good time, as one person recounted later. For two weeks, an intense but relaxed, joyful, communal laboring in the Spirit manifested itself in a day-after-day pattern of an exuberant testimony service, followed by a rousing preaching service, followed at last by a climactic, regionally distinct Singing and Praying Band service. During this latter service, in a maneuver that scholars might refer to as a ring shout, participants formed a circle with a leader in the center; singing and clapping their hands, stamping their feet, and swaying their bodies all the while, they slowly raised several hymns and spirituals to a raucous, rejoicing, shouting crescendo, concluding the meeting with an ebullient march around the entire encampment. Although these bands shocked some outsiders and reminded other observers of Africa, committed participants considered them to be the foundation of the church. Camp meetings were not unique to this area or to that time at the dawn of the twentieth century. Drawn by the heady combination of religious salvation and spiritual democracy advocated in these festivals, Americans of various backgrounds had been making such yearly treks to camp meetings for over a hundred years. Those early meetings gave form to a religious movement attuned to the ethos of the new nation. In the frontier areas of Tennessee and Kentucky where they began, camp meetings sponsored by various Protestant denominations became temporary sacred cities, places of equality of souls and social solidarity that tempered the struggle to survive in the wilderness. In the states of the upper South and in Pennsylvania, these meetings also thrived. Here, where the camp meetings were predominantly organized by Methodists, both free and enslaved African Americans participated in large numbers along with English- and German-speaking European Americans. Perhaps because of Methodism's original antislavery witness, in Maryland, for example, this denomination received most of the black converts, while in 1800, approximately one-fifth of the Methodists in Virginia were black. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, white and black people alike frequently attended the same religious services, though often in segregated and unequal seating arrangements. Yet that century witnessed a complex and powerful movement to establish separate religious institutions for black Methodists. First came the effort to set up separate churches for Africans. Eventually the Methodist Episcopal Church organized a separate conference for all black churches within its denomination. A related movement led to the founding of independent, African Methodist denominations. Finally, beginning before Emancipation but accelerating after freedom, a similar but less-remarked effort saw African American Methodists starting camp meetings of their own. In the mid-Atlantic region in particular, these large, outdoor, African American religious events were the meetings that the grandparents and great-grandparents of today's participants built and today's older people witnessed when young. These camp meetings continue even in the twenty-first century. The camp meetings that the old soldiers of today recall were not unique; they were merely one echo of the religious festivals that became a new secular democracy's first religious mass movement. Yet the old-timers of today recall, above all other things, those aspects of their camps that were unique. That is, they speak mostly about the Singing and Praying Bands, for whom the camp meetings in this area became the primary regional showcases; these bands made these meetings special. They tell of the prayer meetings from which the camp meetings originated. They speak also of the march around Jericho, in which the Singing and Praying Bands led those at the camp meeting in a grand march around the entire campground on the final day of the meeting. * * * The Singing and Praying Bands of this area were special not just for the generations of participants in the African American camp meetings of the Atlantic coast states of the upper South. The antecedents of the twentieth-century bands seem to have played a clandestine but significant role in the development of African American culture in general. Therefore, the bands can stake a claim as important forces in the cultural and social history of America as a whole. Here is how it happened. At the end of the eighteenth century, when enslaved Africans in this area began to take to Methodism in a big way, the process of culture

building by which Africans of various ethnic backgrounds began to transform themselves into one people was well underway. Yet that process was still incomplete. The new African American identity became consolidated throughout the South only during the first half of the nineteenth century, when hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans were traumatically sold from the states of the upper South to cotton-growing areas of the Deep South. In the eighteenth century, prior to this mass transfer of human property, there had been two primary centers of slavery on the Atlantic coast of North America: coastal South Carolina and the Chesapeake Bay area. The ethnic mix of Africans imported into the two areas differed somewhat, leading to the possibility that the emerging African American cultures of these areas might also have differed. Of these two centers, the Chesapeake area had the larger number of slaves. In 1790, of all thirteen states, Virginia had the largest population of Africans, with 305,493 people. Maryland was second, with 111,079. Virginia also had the largest number of enslaved Africans-292,627-while Maryland's enslaved population of 103,036 was third largest. These two states also had the largest population of non-slave Africans at the time. In 1790, nearly 53 percent of the African population and 58 percent of the enslaved Africans in the country were in the upper South, in the states of Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. The nearby black populations of southeastern Pennsylvania and southwestern New Jersey had extensive cultural ties to their brethren in the upper South. This area where the upper South meets the mid-Atlantic states seems to have been one of several areas central to the formation of African American culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Among the Africans in America of that time, for example, those who lived in the mid-Atlantic region and upper South were pioneers in building specifically black institutions. In 1787, Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and others founded a mutual aid organization in Philadelphia called the Free African Society, initiating, in the words of W. E. B. DuBois, the first wavering step of a people toward organized social life. Numerous other grassroots benevolent and mutual aid organizations sprouted up at this time, aiming to provide members financial assistance in case of sickness or death in the family. Under the leadership of Richard Allen in Philadelphia, a group of black Methodists established the Bethel African Church in that city in 1794. In 1816, Bethel joined ranks with other independent black Methodist churches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Baltimore to form the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) denomination. In Wilmington, the denomination called the Union Church of Africans was established just prior to the founding of the A.M.E. Church. Along with new institutions, a distinctly African American expressive culture was emerging in the upper South and mid-Atlantic region at the dawn of the nineteenth century. In 1819, for example, a white minister named John Fanning Watson, who lambasted many Methodists for what he saw as excesses in their worship, gave us one of the earliest reports of a specifically black religious song tradition, writing that the coloured people get together, and sing for hours together, short scraps of disjointed affirmations, pledges, or prayers, lengthened out with long repetition choruses. In the same paragraph, Watson's description of these sacred performances by black worshippers is strikingly evocative of outdoor singing circles that the Singing and Praying Bands continue to this day. This account predates by over twenty-five years the earliest known description of a ring shout from the Atlantic coast area of the Deep South. Another writer, a Quaker schoolboy from Westtown School outside Philadelphia, described black worshippers at an outdoor camp meeting in 1817 marching around an outdoor tabernacle, singing a spiritual chorus and blowing a trumpet, in a reenactment of the march around Jericho by Joshua and the Israelites that is similar to the march that the Singing and Praying Bands continue to do today. If we look at these historical references with minds informed by the bands of today, we can project the current tradition to have been already thriving two hundred years ago, in the early years of the nineteenth century. This nascent African American expressive culture articulated new belief systems that were forming among Africans in this area, also to a certain extent in the context of Protestant evangelism. Africans in America developed a variant of this branch of Protestantism that expressed protonationalist African American identity. According to this theology of resistance, African American Christians began to associate their experience in America with that of the Israelites in Egypt, and the person of Jesus took on some of the qualities of Moses, who would not fail to liberate

the enslaved. It was to some extent in the religious meetings of the upper South and in the language of this distinctive African American perspective that Gabriel Prosser and Nat Turner situated their rebellions in Virginia. (Continues...) Excerpted from *Together Let Us Sweetly Live* by Jonathan C. David Copyright © 2007 by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. Excerpted by permission. All rights reserved. No part of this excerpt may be reproduced or reprinted without permission in writing from the publisher. Excerpts are provided by Dial-A-Book Inc. solely for the personal use of visitors to this web site.

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