So You Want to Sing Spirituals

Appendix 8 -- Art Songs by African American Composers in Musical Anthologies

By Randye Jones and Emery Stephens

The hallmark of African–American art songs is that they serve as soulful expressions of the experiences of the people. Projected through many of these musical expressions are important narratives on the emotional, cultural, and spiritual history of African Americans. Though these art songs are used most often as a means of artistic/aesthetic vocal expression, their lyrics and musical structure contain much valuable and useful information on the cultural and historical circumstances and the development of African Americans as a people in this land. Given the variety of musical genres from which they borrow—jazz, blues, ragtime, as well as spirituals—they illuminate the evolution of a people’s music. Herein lies the greatest potential for art songs to be used as teaching and learning tools. As such, they are woefully underutilized. It is clear that, given the sociological and academic difficulties of the times, we can ill afford to ignore any mechanisms that offer the potential to make valuable contributions to a more complete understanding of ourselves as Americans and of American history. African–American art songs represent an important contribution to that process—not only for the group from which they originate but also for all Americans.¹

Below is a selected list of musical score compilations containing art songs by African American composers. Only the relevant song(s) contained in the compilations are listed--with composer and accompanying recording note where applicable. Negro spirituals are listed in Appendix 3 - Spirituals in Musical Anthologies.


Love Response / Paul Laurence Dunbar -- Love Memory / Paul Laurence Dunbar -- Amazing Grace / text by the composer -- Alone / Nikos Valance -- Advocation / Suzanne Hassler -- Christmas Lullaby / text by the composer

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On this day -- Love Union (Christ at a Wedding) -- In the Midnight of My Soul -- Cantus -- Anniversary Song -- Daybirth -- Flying -- From a Hotel Room -- Love Request -- Lullaby Eternal -- Midas Poor Midas -- Song to Baby Jesus -- Song of Thanks -- Song of the Innkeeper's Children -- Wave and the Shore -- Contentment -- Night People


The Meadow Lark -- He(Sh)e Gave Me a Rose -- The Valse


Wild Swans -- Branch by Branch -- For You There Is No Song -- The Return from Town -- Gone Again Is Summer the Lonely


Prayer; Drums of Tragedy / Langston Hughes -- The Heart of a Woman / Georgia Douglas Johnson -- Night Song / Clarissa Scott Delany -- Sence You Went Away / James Weldon Johnson -- Creole Girl / L. Morgan Collins


To the Road / Paul Laurence Dunbar -- Homesick Blues / Langston Hughes -- Li’l Gal; My Man / Dunbar -- Love Come and Gone / Georgia Douglas Johnson -- The Wider View / R. H. Grenville -- Love Rejoices / James Dillet Freeman

Summer voices -- Harvest moon -- Bell tones -- Unknown flower


Dream variations -- I, too -- Minstrel man


Song to the Dark Virgin / Florence Price (Langston Hughes)


From *Dream Cycle*: I. Dreams; II. Dream dust; III. I dream a world / Cedric Adderley (Langston Hughes) -- From *Biblical Women*: I. Sing ye to the Lord; III. God hath chosen / Lettie Beckon Alston -- From *Song of the Seasons*: III. Autumn / Valerie Capers -- What does it mean?; My voice / Roy Cotton -- The awakening; Tell me trees: What are you whispering?; From *Three Simple Songs*: II. The daffodils / Adolphus Hailstork


Worth while -- The jungle flower -- Kashmiri song -- Among the fuchsias -- Till I wake


Her eyes twin pools -- Your lips are wine -- Your eyes so deep -- The glory of the day was in her face

Almona -- O, night of dream and wonder -- His helmet's blaze -- I hear his footsteps, music sweet -- Thou art weary -- This is Nirvana -- Ahmed's song of farewell


A Mona Lisa (A. Grimke); Dusk at sea (Thomas S. Jones) / John W. Work -- A sailor's song (Paul Laurence Dunbar); I think, oh my love (Thomas Moore) / Edward Margetson -- Dawn; Mandy Lou / Frederick Hall (Dunbar) -- Entreaty / Carl Diton (William Henley) -- Epitaph for a poet (Countee Cullen); Four winds (Sarah Teasdale) / Cecil Cohen -- Impression (Oscar Wilde); Northboun' (Lucy Ariel Williams) / Edgar Rogie Clark -- Iorana / R. Nathaniel Dett (J. Henry Quine) -- Li'l gal / J. Rosamond Johnson (Dunbar) -- Longing (Matthew Arnold); May Day song (Mark Fax)/ Mark Fax -- Night (Louise C. Wallace); Out of the south blew a wind (Fannie Carter Woods) / Florence B. Price


Breath of a rose / William Grant Still (Langston Hughes)


My heart to thy heart -- Invitation to love -- Longing -- Good-night

I shall keep singing -- Answer July -- As children bid the guests goodnight -- Perhaps you'd like to buy a flower -- Over the fence -- It's easy to invent a life -- If I can stop one heart from breaking -- This is my letter to the world -- Tie the strings to my life


All that I am; Arkansas; Bayou home / Verna Arvey -- Brown baby / Paul Henry -- Citadel / Virginia Brasier -- Memphis man / Paul Henry -- Mississippi; Song for the lonely; Song for the valiant / Verna Arvey


A white rose / John Boyle O'Reilly -- An April day / Joseph Cotter -- Because; Beside the sea / Paul Laurence Dunbar -- Bewilderment / Langston Hughes - - Dawn's awakening / James Joseph Burke -- Feet o' Jesus / Langston Hughes -- Four encore songs. Tobacco / Graham Lee Hemminger ; A flea and a fly / Anonymous ; "Come, come," said Tom's father / Thomas Moore ; Song of the open road / Ogden Nash -- God gives me you / Nora Connelly -- Hold fast to dreams / Langston Hughes -- I grew a rose / Paul Laurence Dunbar -- Love-in-a-mist / Mary Rolofson Gamble -- My neighbor / Paul Laurence Dunbar -- Night / Louise C. Wallace -- Out of the south blew a wind / Fannie Carter Woods -- Resignation / Florence B. Price -- Song to the dark virgin / Langston Hughes -- Sunset / Odessa P. Elder -- Sympathy / Paul Laurence Dunbar -- The glory of the day was in her face / James Weldon Johnson -- The moon bridge / Mary Rolofson Gamble -- The poet and his song / Paul Laurence Dunbar -- The washerwoman / Otto Leland Bohanan -- To my little son / Julia Johnson Davis -- Travel's end / Mary Folwell Hoisington -- Trouble done come my way / Florence B. Price -- We have tomorrow / Langston Hughes -- What's the use / Paul Laurence Dunbar -- Words for a spiritual / "Capricorn"

I cannot stay here by myself -- John Henry -- On the dusty road; At the feet of Jesus / Langston Hughes -- The Courtship -- David / Dwight Strickland -- The Foundling / Hall Johnson -- I’m callin’ / Oscar O. Cozad -- Mother to Son / Langston Hughes -- River chant


Songs of love: Silence (Paul Laurence Dunbar); The unlucky apple (Dunbar); If I could give you all I have (Spencer) -- My love (Nathaniel McLin) -- Day (Dunbar) -- The year’s at the spring (Robert Browning) -- The frog in the spring -- He came to Alabama -- He had a dream (Manuel McLin)


Flowers of darkness / Frank Marshall Davis -- Creole girl / Leslie M. Collins -- Harlem sweeties / Langston Hughes -- At early morn / Binga Dismond -- The glory of the day was in her face / James Weldon Johnson -- O Daedalus fly away home / Robert E. Hayden


Breath of a rose / William Grant Still (Langston Hughes)


Border line -- Night: Four Songs -- Dustbowl -- Burden -- One -- Beale Street -- Gifts -- Circles -- Graveyard -- Convent -- Poppy flower -- Gypsy melodies -- Montmartre -- Fragments -- Desert -- The end

Desire -- Dream -- Juliet -- Man


Fremde Stadt -- Eine Geige in den Gärten -- Im Nebel


Vorfrühling -- Die Beiden -- Manche freilich


The cottager to her infant / Dorothy Wordsworth -- Hope / Emily Dickinson -- A complaint / William Wordsworth -- Could I but ride indefinite / Dickinson


To Eleanora Duse -- To a picture of Eleonora Duse in “The Dead City” -- To a picture of Eleonora Duse in “The Dead City” -- To a picture of Eleonora Duse as “Francesca da Rimini”

Heart -- Remembrance -- Girl -- Havana Dreams -- For dead mimes


If / Paul Laurence Dunbar -- No Images / William Waring Cuney -- The secret / Dunbar


A House in Taos -- Little Song -- Jaime -- Faithful one -- Genius child


Le Dormeur du val (Asleep in the Vale) -- Au Cabaret-Vert (The Green Cabaret) -- Rages de Césars (The Emperor's Rage) -- Rêvé pour l'hiver (A Winter's Dream)


In time of silver rain -- Fulfillment -- Night song -- Silence -- Carolina Cabin -- Songs -- Sleep

Vagabonds -- Luck -- Exits -- Walls -- Chippy -- Dancers -- Grief -- Prayer


Border Line, op. 24 / Langston Hughes -- Three Songs, op. 41 / Claude McKay -- Three Songs, op. 18 / Emily Jane Brontë -- Drei Lieder, op. 20 / Hermann Hesse -- Drei Lieder, op. 47 / Hugo von Hofmannsthal -- Tearless, op. 9 / Hughes


From the dark Tower -- Yet do I Marvel -- For a Poet


The Lynching -- If we must die -- To the white fiends


The old stoic -- Tell me, tell me -- Sleep brings no joy


A song -- The Secret -- The sparrow

I am Part of the Load -- Drum Sound Rises on the Air


For you there is no song (Edna St. Vincent Millay) / Leslie Adams -- Early in the mornin'; A good assassination should be quiet; Status symbol / David Baker (Mari Evans) -- Three dream portraits; Minstrel man; Dream variations; I, too / Margaret Bonds (Langston Hughes) -- The barrier (Claude McKay); Song without words / Charles Brown -- Death of an old seaman / Cecil Cohen (Hughes) -- Two songs for Julie Ju / Noel Da Costa (George Houston Bass) -- Cassandra's lullaby (Owen Dodson); Love (Jo Ann Harris) / Mark Fax -- A charm at parting (Mary Phelps); I loved you (Alexander Pushkin) / Adolphus C. Hailstork -- Absalom; Nunc dimittis / Eugene W. Hancock -- Riding to town / Thomas H. Kerr, Jr. (Paul Laurence Dunbar) -- Compensation (Paul Laurence Dunbar) / Charles Lloyd, Jr. -- If there be sorrow; Marrow of my bone (Mari Evans) / Wendell Logan -- Chanson triste; Sweet sorrow / Maurice McCall -- Weary blues / Dorothy Rudd Moore (Hughes) -- Love let the wind cry… How I adore thee / Undine Smith Moore (Sappho) -- Faithful one; Genius child / Robert Owens (Hughes) -- A child's grace (Robert Herrick); Melancholy (John Fletcher) / Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson -- Night (Louise C. Wallace); Song to the dark virgin (Hughes) / Florence B. Price -- Velvet shoes (Elinor Wylie) / Hale Smith -- Grief (Leroy V. Brant) / William Grant Still -- A death song (Dunbar); I will lie down in autumn (May Swenson); The Negro speaks of rivers (Hughes) / Howard Swanson -- Lament (Countee Cullen); A red, red rose (Robert Burns) / George Walker -- Wry fragments / Olly Wilson (James Cunningham) -- Dancing in the sun (Howard Weedun); Soliloquy (Myrtle Vorst Sheppard) / John W. Work, Jr.


Prayer (Langston Hughes); Flying (Joette McDonald); Midas, poor Midas (McDonald); Christ at a wedding (McDonald) / Leslie Adams -- Words My Mother Taught Me: The future; I want to be free; People; Life / T.J. Anderson ([Anita Turpeau Anderson]) -- Hymn to Parnassus / R. Nathaniel Dett (Anon./Dett) / John W. Work III -- Music I heard / Roger Dickerson (Conrad Aiken) -- I dream a world / Uzee Brown Jr. (Langston Hughes) -- If he only walked in gardens ([Grace O'Dethed]) / Mark Fax -- Slave song / Adolphus

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Hailstork (Frederick Douglas) -- Songs of Love and Justice: Justice; Difficulties; Decisions; Love / Hailstork (Martin Luther King, Jr.) -- Four Love Songs: My heart to thy heart; Invitation to love; Longing; Goodnight / Hailstork (Paul Laurence Dunbar) -- If we must die / Hailstork (Claude McKay) -- Three Simple Songs: Not In vain (Emily Dickinson); The daffodils (William Wordsworth); Christmas everywhere (Phillips Brooks) / Hailstork -- Lil' gal / J. Rosamond Johnson (Dunbar) -- Crossing the bar / Hall Johnson ([Alfred Lord] Tennyson) -- The foundling / Johnson (Hall Johnson) -- Entreat Me Not to Leave Thee / Fax -- Thou art my lute (Dunbar) / Thomas Kerr Jr. -- In memoriam (Dunbar) / Kerr, Jr. -- When you feel a little blue / James Lee III -- Three Dunbar poems: Compensation; Theology; Dawn / Betty Jackson King (Dunbar) -- Hatred / Robert L. Morris (Gwendoly B. Bennett) -- Soliloquy (Haunted) / Kerr, Jr. -- Ubique / Coleridge Taylor Perkinson (Joshua Sylvester) -- The faithless shepherdess / Perkinson -- From Thirteen Jazz Settings: In case you put me down; They all say you're lovely; No babe we never swing; You are not quite; In your arms baby / Perkinson -- One day / Howard Swanson (Norman Rosten) -- Snow dunes / Swanson (May Swenson) -- Breathe on me, breath of God / John W. Work, III (Edwin Hatch).


Dreamin’ town ; What’s the use / Paul Laurence Dunbar


Hold fast to dreams / Langston Hughes -- Travel's end / Mary Folwell Hoisington -- To my little son / Julia Johnson Davis -- Fantasy in purple / Langston Hughes -- Sympathy / Paul Laurence Dunbar


The heart of a woman / Florence Price (Georgia Douglas Johnson) -- The glory of the day was in her face / Price (James Weldon Johnson)

Amazing grace / Leslie Adams -- Nightsongs. Creole girl / Leslie Adams (Leslie M. Collins) -- The Wider View. Love come and gone (Georgia Douglas Johnson); My man (Paul Laurence Dunbar) / Leslie Adams -- Child's world. Seven days; Birthday song; Seasons / Mable Bailey -- Black sheep, black sheep; Leisure cruise (Huynh Quang Nhuong); Pied beauty (Gerard Manley Hopkins) / Charles S. Brown -- The Giovanni Songs. Three/Quarters time (Nikki Giovanni) / Wallace McClain Cheatham -- Songs of love and justice. Difficulties (On texts of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.) / Adolphus Hailstork -- Five Dunbar Lyrics. The awakening ; Good night / Adolphus Hailstork (Paul Laurence Dunbar) -- Create in me / Adolphus Hailstork -- On consciousness streams. On consciousness streams; Thou alone canst inspire (Beethoven); The season of remembrance (Howard Thurman) / Jacqueline B. Hairston -- Five songs for soprano and piano. Valentine's day; How should I your true love know / William H. Henderson (William Shakespeare) -- Five art songs for voice and piano. I'll not forget (Max Ellison); We met by chance (William Curtis) / Jeraldine Saunders Herbison -- Theology; Compensation / Betty Jackson King (Paul Laurence Dunbar) -- Four love songs. Gramercy Park; Union square / William Foster McDaniel (Sara Teasdale) -- Lyric for Truelove / Undine Smith Moore (Florence Hynes Willette) -- The moods of my people. Daedalus, fly away home (Robert E. Hayden); Mae's rent party (Ernest J. Wilson, Jr.); Club woman (Mary Carter Smith) / Byron Motley and Barbara Sherrill -- Heart; Girl; Havana dreams / Robert Owens (Langston Hughes) -- Clear water / Nadine Shanti -- Singing for the sake of my soul / Frederick Tillis -- Velvet shoes (Elinor Wylie); Nails (James Kilgore); That black reef (Kilgore) / Dolores White -- A song / Julius P. Williams (Paul Laurence Dunbar)


Idolatry / Arna Bontemps -- Poème / Philippe Thoby Marcelin -- Parted / Paul Laurence Dunbar -- If you should go / Countess Cullen -- A black pierrot / Langston Hughes

Little mother -- Coquette -- Midtide -- Bereft


Three glimpses of night / John W. Work (Frank Davis)


In the springtime / Betty Jackson King (William Shakespeare) -- Love let the wind Cry...How I adore Thee (Sappho); I am in doubt (Florence Hynes Willeté) / Undine Smith Moore -- The Negro speaks of rivers; Three dream portraits: Minstrel man, Dream variation, and I, too / Margaret Bonds (Langston Hughes) -- My dream (Langston Hughes); Song to the Dark Virgin (Langston Hughes); Night (Louise C. Wallace) / Florence Price


The breath of a rose (Langston Hughes); Grief (Le Roy V. Brant); Winter’s approach (Paul Laurence Dunbar) / William Grant Still

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