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THE LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE AND SINFONIA ORCHESTRA ROGER WAGNER, MUSIC DIRECTOR

ALBERT McNEIL JUBILEE SINGERS

ALBERT McNEIL, *Director*
MICHAEL KELLY, *Assistant Conductor*
LARRY FARROW, *Instrumental Arrangements*
CHARLOTTE NEVEU, *Movement Concepts*
HARRY JOHNSON, *Lighting*

I. SPIRITUALS

Everytime I Feel the Spirit Arr. Larry Farrow
Witness For My Lord Arr. Albert McNeil
Victor Graham, Bass
When I Was Sinkin' Down Arr. Hall Johnson
Walk Together Children Arr. William H. Smith
Veronica Howell, Soprano
Ain't Got Time to Die Arr. Hall Johnson
Jon Nix — McReynolds, Tenor
You Must Have That True Religion Arr. Nathan Carter
Dolores Davis, Soprano
Ride On King Jesus Arr. Robert De Cormier
Wilbur Howard, Tenor
The Amen Chorus Arr. Jester Hairston

II. SELECTIONS FROM "PORGY & BESS": George Gershwin

Summertime	It Ain't Necessarily So
A Woman is a Sometime Thing	Gone, Gone, Gone
Oh, I Can't Sit Down	Overflow
Bess, You is My Woman Now	Oh Lawd, I'm On My Way
My Man's Gone Now	

Intermission

III. WEST INDIES & AFRICA

Forever Young Arr. Larry Farrow
Ugly Woman Arr. Leonard de Paur
Harry Johnson, Baritone
Common Ground and Haraje Arr. Larry Farrow
Colleen Browning, Contralto

IV. BLACK MUSICAL THEATRE

Ease on Down the Road from ("The Wiz") Arr. Larry Farrow
Ellingtonia (Duke Ellington Medley) Arr. Larry Farrow

V. SPIRITUALS

Soon I Will Be Done Arr. William Dawson
Rock My Soul Arr. Howard Roberts
Victor Graham, Bass
O Happy Day Arr. Larry Farrow
Virginia White, Contralto

This performance has been made possible, in part, through the sponsorship of the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, the Los Angeles County Music and Performing Arts Commission, the California Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Latecomers will not be seated until the first convenient pause in the performance / Invited guests are welcome backstage after the performance; use performers entrances Grand Ave. side of Plaza for Pavilion, corner of Temple & Grand for Ahmanson and rear of theatre for Forum / Use of tape recorders and/or cameras prohibited in auditorium / Your use of a ticket constitutes acknowledgement of willingness to appear in photographs taken in public areas of The Music Center and releases The Music Center Operating Co., its lessees and all others from liability resulting from use of such photographs / Program and artists subject to change / Patrons cannot be paged during a performance. Individuals expecting emergency calls must leave their seat numbers with the House Manager.

PROGRAM NOTES

by

Richard H. Trame, S.J., Ph.D.
Loyola Marymount University

Where a program such as this evening's comprises numerous selections from Afro-American musical traditions, it will be well to investigate something of the background to and elaboration of this attractive music, particularly the black spiritual. These considerations, it is hoped, will enhance our enjoyment of so many of the songs which in large measure are arrangements created for and designed to convey through choral presentation the essential qualities of the originals.

Early in the Nineteenth Century during the period of the "Great Revival" in areas of pioneer settlement, the camp-meeting became the organ through which religious revivalism attempted to reinvigorate the Christian faith of the populace. Such camp-meetings fostered open-air religious services lasting several days and attracting thousands of settlers from every denomination. In the southern states blacks attended these meetings, mingling with the whites, although they provided for their own religious services.

From these revivalist camp-meetings arose the white and black spiritual song, abbreviated simply to "spiritual." These spirituals utilized folk tunes and folk hymns characterized by textual simplicity and the frequent repetition of phrases and refrains. Since the camp-meetings engendered a high degree of religious fervor, the spiritual in turn reflected this emotionalism. Moreover, concurrent white and black cultural traditions continually interacted with one another.

The element of direct African influence on the black spiritual remains the subject of much debate among those scholars who have researched the origins of this music. Some see the spiritual as the innovation of the black slaves, whereas others see the slaves who often attended the white churches interacting with and transforming the hymn tunes they encountered there. Paul Oliver, who authored the article on the Black Spiritual in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 1980) summarizes the impact of the spiritual on black life as follows: "The black spiritual created at this time (mid-nineteenth century) provided a source of strength and expressed many aspects of the blacks' condition during slavery and just after its abolition."

Dr. Wendall Whalum, Professor of Music at Atlanta's Morehouse College and Minister of Music at the city's famed Ebenezer Baptist Church, has recently observed that the spiritual is rooted in the Biblical aspects of the Hebrew emancipation from Egypt. The slaves found a parallel between the escape to the land of Canaan and their longing to reach freedom in the North.

The spiritual encapsulated a very simple, straightforward idea upon which the "lead singer" ingeniously elaborated through re-

lated ideas, together with the repetition of key phrases by the "basers" who provided the vocal groundwork and interpolations.

Afro-American music in the West Indies, particularly in those areas where English and Protestant influences predominated, developed from the Christian Revivalist cults. This Revival cult music was characterized by the constant presence of harmonized choruses exhibiting less African rhythmic influence than in the music of the Cuban, Haitian, or Brazilian cults. Jamaican revivalist music retained in its call-and-response approach more direct African influence. Here the "lead singer," either a man or woman, would initiate and elaborate a musical phrase to which a chorus would then respond monophonically, though occasionally individual singers would deviate from the principal melodic line. The similarity in development of the West Indian music to the American spiritual appears evident.

George Gershwin (1898-1937) summarized all the various influences which had been brought to bear on his musical development in the composition of *Porgy and Bess*. He called the work a "folk-opera" spun from his natural musical language made up of ragtime, the blues, jazz, and influenced by the melodic contours of the spiritual.

Porgy and Bess emerged from a novel *Porgy* by the black folklorist DuBose Hayward, who subsequently with the help of his wife, Dorothy, converted the novel into a play and then into a libretto for Gershwin. Gershwin commenced the composition of this "folk opera," a story about a Charleston beggar, in 1934, while residing on an island near that city. Its ever-popular songs such as "It Ain't Necessarily So," were directly influenced by the life-style, vocal music, and speech of the local blacks he encountered there.

Gershwin's music clearly demonstrated his natural dramatic instincts. The enduring success of *Porgy and Bess*, both in America and Europe, attest to its authentic American character and to Gershwin's assimilation in it of the feeling for the simple but inherent inspiration of the black folksong and spiritual.

Duke Ellington (1899-1974) achieved fame and recognition as the most important composer in the history of jazz music. Although the exact count of his enormous compositional output is not known with certainty, he did create some 6000 works and arrangements.

With *Mood Indigo* in 1930, his reputation was firmly established. As the extraordinarily gifted band leader he was, his most distinctive contribution was his unrivaled ability to devise orchestral accompaniments permitting spontaneous solo improvisation, whether vocal or instrumental.



Founder-Director **ALBERT McNEIL** and his singers, a travelling company of 13, a resident group of 23, have garnered international acclaim and focused worldwide attention on the vast body of folk music termed "Afro-American." The Singers have become one of America's finest exponents of the rich and vital body of music that is such an integral part of the Black experience. They have been hailed as one of Southern California's major cultural assets by official proclamation of Los Angeles City Mayor Tom Bradley.

They have performed in the Greek Theatre, the Music Center and just recently (July 4) at the Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, over coast-to-coast radio and television, and in motion pictures. Afro-American poets and composers Langston Hughes, William Grant Still, Hall Johnson and Margaret Bonds have written works for them. Their new album "Gospel Mass", a work by composer Robert Ray, will be released soon on the Dark Orchid label.

Thirteen years ago the Singers undertook their first European tour. Today they are among the most honored singing ensembles in the world. Their performances before the American Choral Director's Association last March in New Orleans evoked an unparalleled tribute to the singing group. Three times they have been selected to serve with the U.S. State Department (Inter-communication Agency) cultural exchange program in various parts of the world including East Germany, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, and Lebanon.

Instrumental Arrangements by Larry Farrow

Musicians:

Greg Porre, *Guitar*
Kevin Brandon, *Bass*
Tucker Washington, *Percussion*
Larry Farrow, *Piano*

Choir Personnel

Larry Ayers
Colleen Browning
Eric Browning
Victoria Burnet
Dolores Davis
Mark Corey
Victor Graham
Veronica Howell
Wilbur Howard
Sidney Jacobs
Harry Johnson
Juanda Marshall
Andrea McCreary
Albert McNair
Joseph Nalls
Charlotte Neveu
John Nix-McReynolds
Paul Smith
Jacquelyn Sebastian
Jackie Townsend
Virginia White
Richard Wyatt

For biography of Albert McNeil, see page L-8.