

2-2-1997

Harlem Spiritual Ensemble

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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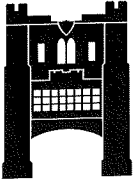


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Sunday, February 2, 1997 at 8pm

Carpenter Center for the Performing Arts

The George M. Modlin Center for the Arts
at the University of Richmond

presents

Harlem Spiritual Ensemble

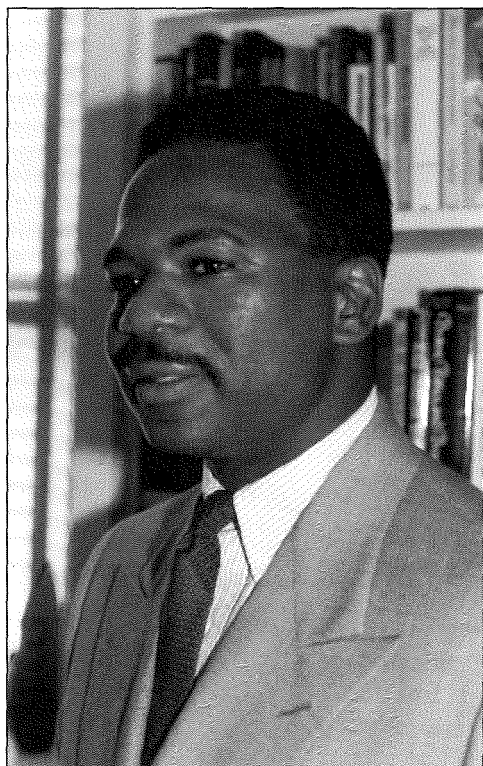
Sunday, February 2, 1997 at 8pm

Carpenter Center for the Performing Arts

This performance of the Harlem Spiritual Ensemble
is sponsored by the
E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

An introduction will be given
before tonight's concert by

Jon Michael Spencer



Jon Michael Spencer is the Tyler and Alice Haynes Professor of American Studies and Professor of Music at the University of Richmond, where he also teaches for the Department of Religion. He holds a bachelor's degree in music from Hampton University, a master's and Ph.D. in music from Washington University in St. Louis, and he later earned a master's degree in theology from Duke University. His previous professorial affiliations include the Curriculum in African and Afro-American Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Department of Popular Culture at Bowling Green State University, the Divinity School at Duke University, and the Department of Music at North Carolina Central University. He is the author of a dozen books on African American music and culture.

Harlem Spiritual Ensemble

Dr. Francois Clemmons, Founder/Director

Intro-Processional	Traditional
Motherles' Chile	
Go Down Moses	arr. William Farley-Smith
Steal Away	arr. F. Clemmons
	soloists: Clemmons, Hutchins, Thompson
You Better Min'	arr. HSE
Ah Wanna Be Ready	arr. James Miller
	soloist: Clemmons
Sit Down Servant	arr. Louis Smart
	soloist: Lewis
Oh What a Beautiful City	arr. Clemmons/Smart
	soloists: Clemmons, Thompson
Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round	arr. Clemmons
	soloist: Gayles

INTERMISSION

"Sisters of Freedom" (A Cantata)*

Music by Linda Twine
Lyrics by Frances Harper

- I Told Jesus It's Be Alright If He Changed Ma Name
soloists: Hutchins, Thompson
- The Auction
soloists: Lewis, Thompson
- In Dat Good Old Righteous Way
soloist: Clemmons
- Go Down Moses: If He Changed Ma Name - Reprise
- The Runaway
- Tis the Ole Ship of Zion
soloist: Hutchins
- Finals: Ah'm Goin' Through
Swing Down Chariot
Tis the Ole Ship of Zion
In Dat Great Gettin' Up Morning
I Gotta Song
If He Changed Ma Name
soloists: Hutchins, Gayles, Clemmons

* This work is dedicated to Maestro Francois Clemmons and the Harlem Spiritual Ensemble and all those sisters who gave their lives for the cause of Freedom.

This program is subject to change without notice.



Harlem Spiritual Ensemble

FRANCOIS CLEMMONS, tenor and founder of the **HARLEM SPIRITUAL ENSEMBLE**, received his Bachelor of Music degree from Oberlin College, his Master of Fine Arts degree from Carnegie-Melon University and an honorary Doctor of Arts degree from Middlebury College, Vermont. He has recorded *Porgy and Bess* for London Records. This talented singer has performed with the New York City Opera, the Houston Grand Opera, the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera and many other companies. A true international performer, he has made a permanent place for himself in America through his regular appearances on the television program, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. He has worked as a chorus master for the Berlin Opera under Professor Goetz Friedrich and taken his other chorus, the Harlem Choral Ensemble, all over the world. Mr. Clemmons is the Founder/Director of the American Negro Spiritual Research Foundation, Inc.

VERONICA LEWIS, Coloratura Soprano, is a native of South Carolina and received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Marian College in Indianapolis and continued her studies at Ohio State University. She has performed extensively in Europe in such productions as Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and Bernstein's *West Side Story*, and in America in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*. Her versatility also includes work on television and radio in commercials and voice-overs. When not performing with the *Harlem Spiritual Ensemble* she flies single-engine planes.

LATANYA HUTCHINS, Lyric Soprano, hails from Hoboken, New Jersey, and received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Born in Kansas City, Kansas and raised in Denver, Colorado, she has performed throughout the United States in concerts and recitals, most notably in New York's Steinway Hall. Ms. Hutchins has performed major roles in Puccini's *La Boheme* and Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. When not performing with the *Harlem Spiritual Ensemble*, she serves as the Employment and Training Program Director at the American Indian Community House, a multi-faceted social support agency and cultural center for Native Americans.

MARION GAYLES, Mezzo-Soprano, is a native of Newark, New Jersey, and began her musical studies at Westminster Choir College. Subsequent studies at Montclair State University led to major roles in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Ms. Gayles has also been very active in professional church choirs, one of which, the Sacred Heart Cathedral Choir, has performed for such distinguished spiritual leaders as Pope John Paul XXIII and Mother Theresa. When not performing with the *Harlem Spiritual Ensemble*, she works part-time at the Newark Police Department and continues her studies towards a Bachelor of Arts degree.

ARTHUR THOMPSON, Baritone, is a graduate of the Hartt School of Music and the Julliard School. An award-winning singer, he made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1974 and was heard there for nineteen seasons. Mr. Thompson has also performed with the Julliard Opera Theater, the Chautauqua Opera, the Aspen Summer Opera and the Yale Summer Opera Theater. He sang in Virgil Thompson's *Four Saints in Three Acts* at Carnegie Hall in the gala performance produced in celebration of the composer's 85th birthday, and recorded with the same forces for Nonesuch Records. In addition to his operatic appearances, he has also appeared as soloist with numerous symphonies around the world.

RANDY WILLIAMS, Bass, is a native of Baltimore and began his musical stage career in two consecutive runs of *Show Boat* and *42nd Street* while a student at Virginia Union University. Since then he has appeared in the New York area in such opera productions as *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *La Boheme*, *The Tender Land*, *The Magic Flute*, *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*. He recently appeared as a soloist in Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony" with the Queens College Orchestra and Chorus. Mr. Williams enjoys his hobby as a pastry chef and baking cakes when not touring with the *Harlem Spiritual Ensemble*.

JEFFREY MARDER, Pianist, was born in Philadelphia and earned his Bachelor of Music degree from William Paterson College and Master of Arts degree from New York University, both in jazz studies as a student of Jim McNeely. At age twelve he made his classical concerto debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra as a Young Artist Competition winner. In addition to his classical and jazz piano performances, he composes and arranges in a number of genres, including jazz, cabaret and musical theater. When not concertizing with the *Harlem Spiritual Ensemble*, Mr. Marder enjoys mountain biking.

PAUL VALDEZ, Percussion, was born in Houston, Texas, where he attended the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, and continued his studies at New York University. He has toured the United States and abroad with many different groups of different genres. When not touring with the *Harlem Spiritual Ensemble*, he enjoys recording and performing throughout the New York City area with various jazz and pop artists.

SISTERS OF FREEDOM

A Cantata by Linda Twine

Program Notes

"Sisters of Freedom" was commissioned by William Jewel College, Rockhurst College, Oklahoma State University, the Black Liberated Arts Center of Oklahoma City, the Emporia Kansas Arts Council, and Austin College. Funding for the project was provided by the Mid-America Arts Alliance, the Missouri Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, Meet the Composer, Inc., Sprint and the American Negro Spiritual Research Foundation.

Isabella Baumfree Hardenberg, (1797-1883) born in Hurley, New York, alias Sojourner Truth; Araminta Ross Broadus, (1826-1913), born in Dorchester County, Maryland, alias Harriet Tubman Davis; Both were born into slavery and dared to take the mantle of freedom from the jaws of injustice to chart the course of their own lives. Long before the voices of women's liberation and 'free choice' were heard and long before our modern-day civil rights movement was launched, these courageous women were determined to direct the course of their own destiny in a society, and indeed a world, which not only denied them basic freedom but their God-given right to 'human-ness.' The efforts of both women on behalf of the anti-slavery movement and among the abolitionist community were legendary long before President Abraham Lincoln and his supporters found the political clout and will to enact the *Emancipation Proclamation*. The *Emancipation Proclamation* of 1863 would free all the slaves of the southern states in opposition to the Officers of the Confederacy: President Jefferson Davis, General Lee and their supporters.

Sojourner Truth

Armed with her Bible and a 'mission' from God, the young Sojourner Truth traveled all over America as she eloquently railed against the abuses heaped on her people by a methodical and insidious slave system simply because of the color of their skin. She witnessed the slaves' Pinkster rituals, during which music, masquerades, spectacle and intensely symbolic dances took place which were reminiscent of African festivals. These experiences transformed the young Isabella. IN the form of God's breath, the Holy Ghost commissioned her to travel, to "'sojourn' the land" and "speak God's truth," and therefore to call herself 'Sojourner Truth.'

This telling of the 'truth' took her before many hostile crowds that booed, heckled and even attacked her physically for her out-spokenness. Efforts to silence her were useless and served only to intensify her dedication to her mission. She persisted in spreading her brand of oratory throughout the land.

Sojourner Truth's oratory consisted of part singing and part lecture mixed with spicy, coarse epithets, pithy retorts, liberal biblical quotations and her extemporaneous ex-

hortations. They took place on street corners and in meeting houses. Wherever she addressed a crowd, she challenged them to rise up and end this abominable institution of slavery. She was blessed with an embarrassingly generous supply of optimism. Her daily anthem seemed to be 'Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round.' Sojourner Truth was one of the first black women to speak out not only at abolitionist meetings, but also at women's rights rallies during the slave era. It's a great irony that such an outspoken woman — who at the age of 67 met the equally great and eloquent Harriet Tubman during a trip to Boston — implored the younger Harriet to be more patient towards our embattled President Lincoln who was doing the best he could to 'free the slaves.'

Harriet Tubman

What could be fraught with more karmic weight than to be labeled the 'Moses' of your people? Is such a title earned by accepting the insurmountable challenges of life and somehow overcoming them victoriously; or is it an outgrowth of some incident during one's youth or some wrong one has committed unwisely and perhaps unknowingly; or is it a destiny thrust upon one which endures patiently and earnestly with dignity and without complaint, and looks toward the day when this burden will be lifted from one's shoulders and one's soul shall be set free? Rhetorical though this question may be, it is, nevertheless, at the seat of the mighty accomplishments and struggles attributed to the name of Harriet Tubman.

In 18th and 19th century America it was unthinkable for a woman not to stay assigned in her 'place' assigned by the greater society-at-large. Women were supposed to yield to the will of the superior male species, whose duties were to protect womanhood, preserve her 'femininity', and direct her in all important issues affecting her daily life. However, these gracious 'airs' did not extend to the slave women. On the surface one would think a slave woman was relieved of these tiresome, limiting customs of 'societal gentility.' Not so: In reality, a slave woman was even more limited and restricted, and had fewer privileges and opportunities, if any, to express her sense of individuality and creativity than the average, 'imprisoned' white woman.

Given this historical and social context, where did this 'Harriet Tubman' come from? What motivated her to be so uncontainable, so singularly directed in her mission and why, in God's name, was she so lucky? She was never caught by the 'pattyrollers' in her work on the underground railroad, and never lost a passenger in her often dangerous journeys through the backwoods and swamps on her way to the North...to freedom. She was not born with the financial means of a white lady of society, and was not educated formally or informally in any sense of the word. There were no protectors for her and no one to advise her on important decisions. The only solution to these baffling questions for the historian and/or sociologist is Harriet Tubman's unshakable and abiding faith in God.

When Harriet walked...walked and ran away from that Broadus plantation in Dorchester County, Maryland on that long hot day in September 1849, she was not alone as has

so often been reported, surmised and speculated by those who think they see the obvious answer. Harriet was traveling with the great company of angels and heavenly hosts as she was cradled in the arms of the Lord, her Comforter and Protector. To the end of her days, she never lost the feeling that 'Someone' was with her, 'Someone' was talking to her, telling her 'to go this way' or 'not to go this day,' or 'wait and travel over the water this time,' 'wait until Saturday night before you leave,' 'follow the North Star,' 'etc.' This invisible force advised her, a force only she could hear, and sometimes feel and sense.

Sisters of Freedom

Music, it seems, was an important part of the lives of both Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth. The texts, if not the melodies, of many of the old psalm tunes and spirituals of the time were often referred to in their biographies as 'signal songs'. These songs sent messages to would-be escaping slaves and heavenly sent white abolitionists who often volunteered their cellars and basements as well as barns and sheds to conceal the whereabouts of the fleeing slaves en route to freedom on the Underground Railroad. Both women sang in deep, rich and resonant voices. Though unlearned, and innately humble and at the same time proud, they seemed to mesmerize audiences easily with their eloquence and ability to 'spin a tale.' Clearly these ladies were neither careless nor brash. So much of what they did was well thought out, courageous and daring. It seems that they were not only 'armed' with moral righteousness but also possessed an indomitable will and self-knowledge. They were not willing to sit passively by and wait for someone else to direct the course of their lives. To quote the gospel song, they set about "to make a way out of no way!" and gain their Divinely ordained freedom.

The cantata Sisters of Freedom is a dramatic musical presentation based on spirituals and the lives of these two extraordinary women: Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman. It opens with the tune, "I told Jesus It's Be Alright If He Changed Ma Name!" These words address the basic theme of their lives: that the change of one's name is akin to a change of one's nature and purpose in life; their recognition of their goal and purpose changed their station in life. They no longer felt or acted like slaves. This spiritual indicates that one is no longer under the laws of man, but takes orders directly from God Almighty. The edicts from 'on high' were to be obeyed at the peril of one's own soul, a threat far more effective than any harm that could be done to one's body or possessions by mortal man. As a 9 year old slave, Sojourner Truth was sold for \$100.00. She witnessed the sale of all her brothers and sisters. In spite of these obvious trials and humiliations she was not defeated or overwhelmed, but rather was able to stand tall and say, "I am who I say I am. I am Sojourner Truth."

The "Auction" text by Frances Harper (1825-1911) depicts the obviously degrading public and common practice of the buying and the selling of the human flesh to the highest bidder. Slave traders routinely ignored family units. Slave families were often separated: mother from children, or husband from wife, father from children,

etc. The ethics of the day did not recognize familial bonds. The prevailing thought was that these half-human, half animal beings would soon recover and completely forget about the superficial relationship adults may presume to have with their offspring or with one another. Frances Harper's auction text refutes this sentiment. Truth freed herself from slavery in 1849, one year earlier than New York State law would legally have done so. Her master promised her that he would free her a year earlier if she worked hard. She did, he didn't, so she left.

The hymn "Bless the Lawd, I Got My Seal" was sung by Sojourner Truth at a huge tent revival meeting where an unruly crowd had gathered. Out of all the ministers present, she was the only one who had the courage to confront them. After she calmed the people with her preaching and singing for about an hour, the group promised to disperse quietly if she would sing one more song. She chanted: Will you go quietly if I sing? They responded, 'Yes!' She then began her song.

Upon hearing that she may be sold, Harriet Tubman ran away to freedom and later made 19 dangerous journeys back to the South. She helped over 300 slaves escape to the North and Canada. "I have reasoned this out in my mind: There is one of two things I have a right to; liberty or death. If I cannot have one, I will have the other, for no man will take me alive. I shall fight for my liberty as long as my strength lasts, and when the time comes for me to go, the Lawd will let them take me." 'Tis The Old Ship Of Zion': Before one of her trips to the South she wrote a coded letter to a free black who could deliver the message to her brothers that she would be in the area soon and to be ready to leave. "Read my letter to the old folks and tell my brothers to always be watching unto prayer, and when the old ship of Zion comes along, be ready to step aboard." The signal to leave was this song.

"Ain't I a woman": Speech given by Sojourner Truth in 1852 at the Women's Rights Convention in Akro, Ohio.

Finale: 'Swing Down Chariot.' Harriet Tubman was frequently referred to as "the Chariot". She was coming down to get them. It culminates triumphantly: "Tis the old Ship of Zion! Come on and get on board!"

It is our sincerest wish that the presentation of this dramatic, musical cantata will serve to enlighten, inspire, and enfold our audiences into a deep and sympathetic understanding of the profound legacy of these two great black women. It would indeed be a tragedy for future generations all over the world in their struggles for equal rights and self-determination to miss the opportunity to understand the clear vision of those giant footsteps that paved the way. Truly, we are the lucky ones. Through the heroic efforts of Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, so eloquently recognized by their contemporary abolitionists, freedom fighters, biographers and journalists, both black and white, we can also bear witness to their great impact on American and world history. It is an honor to have been involved in such an inspiring project.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Our Young Men Are Dying And Nobody Seems To Care

Monday, February 10, 1997, 7:30pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

~ A contemporary play about issues facing African-American men

King Lear, starring Ralph Waite

February 13-15, 1997 at 8pm and February 16, 1997 at 2pm

Jepson Theatre

~ Famed screen and stage actor Ralph Waite joins the University Players as Tucker-Boatwright Artist-in-Residence to play the powerful King Lear.

(tickets: \$7 adults, \$6 seniors/students)

Jeanette Thompson, soprano

Kenneth Merrill, piano

Wednesday, February 19, 1997 at 8pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

~ Performing works by American composers, including a selection of spirituals in celebration of Black History Month

(tickets: \$10 adults, \$8 seniors, \$5 students)

Michael Davison, trumpet and Anne Lewis, piano

Sunday, February 23, 1997 at 8pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

~ Featuring works by Alexander Arutunian, Gershwin, Johan Pezel, Herman Bellstedt and Meg Bowles

Shanghai Quartet with Ruth Laredo, piano

Monday, February 24, 1997 at 8pm

Carpenter Center for the Performing Arts

Sponsored by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation

~ Featuring *Brahms Piano Quintet in F minor, Opus 34*

(tickets needed for this free concert)

Passionate Visions

University Dancers' Twelfth Annual Concert

February 27, 28 & March 1, 1997 at 8pm

March 2, 1997 at 2pm

~ A dramatic, creative performance about the passion for life and dance. This features live music, special effects, adventure, beauty and fun for all. (tickets needed for these free concerts)

Beverly Sills, speaker

Tuesday, March 4, 1997 at 8pm

Presented by the Jepson Leadership Forum

Co-Sponsored by WILL and the Modlin Center for the Arts

~ Ms. Sills, who is considered one of the greatest coloratura sopranos of the twentieth century, will speak on the impact artists have in influencing and shaping our society and culture.

(tickets needed for this free event)

Affetti Musicali/Chorus Ad Hoc

Saturday, March 8, 1997 at 8pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

~ Members of the period instrument chamber ensemble Affetti Musicali will join James Erb and the Chorus Ad Hoc in a program highlighting two great Baroque masters. The program will feature madrigals of Monteverdi and the oratorio "Jepthe" by Carissimi.

CURRENTS

Friday, March 21, 1997 at 8pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

~ The resident professional ensemble for new music at the University of Richmond will present a concert featuring several premieres and other works by Luciano Berio, Fred Cohen, Witold Lutoslawski, Steven Stucky and Michael Torke.

All events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. For tickets and further information, please call the Modlin Center Box Office at 289-8980 between the hours of 3-5pm, Monday through Friday.

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Please remember to silence digital watches and paging devices before the performance. Doctors expecting emergency calls should register with the House Manager. The use of cameras - with or without flash - recorders or other electronic devices inside the theatres is strictly prohibited. No eating, drinking or smoking is allowed inside the theatres or galleries.

Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of house management.