

ARCHIVES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC AND CULTURE

# liner notes

NO. 23 / 2018-2019

**The Callows:**  
A Family Affair in Music  
and Entrepreneurship



## aaamc mission

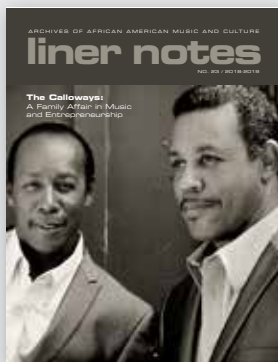
The AAAMC is devoted to the collection, preservation, and dissemination of materials for the purpose of research and study of African American music and culture.

[aaamc.indiana.edu](http://aaamc.indiana.edu)

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## On the Cover:



Vincent and Reggie Calloway, 2005.

## From the Desk of the Director

### Greetings,

As Director of AAAMC, I am excited to report that our premiere repository for Black music and culture at Indiana University has experienced an increase in collection acquisitions and visibility in ways that foster connections between academy, industry and community sectors. To date our holdings include 168 distinct special collections, graphic material inclusive of 180 posters and over 10,000 photographs, approximately 2,500 moving image materials in 14 different formats, 22,000 sound recordings in 12 different formats, 420 books and 4907 born digital files. Among these cultural materials are two major new special collections, donated during the 2018-19 academic year: the Calloway Collection and the Marietta Simpson Collection.

The Calloway Collection includes press clippings, photographs, correspondence, audio and video recordings, performance contracts, tour itineraries and other intriguing documents that chronicle the close kinship, music production, businesses, and community engagement of Reggie, Vincent, and Gregory Calloway, along with their mother and longtime manager Gloria Calloway Larson. One browse through this collection and the viewer will quickly realize how this unique family profoundly impacted the careers of artists at the highest echelon of the popular music industry, from electro-funk pioneers Midnight Star (founded by Reggie), to pop duo sensation Calloway (featuring Reggie and Vincent), to The Deele (with famed artists/producers Kenneth “Baby Face” Edmonds and Antonio “L.A.” Reid), to hitmakers Teddy Pendergrass, Gladys Knight, and LeVert. Gloria (affectionately called “mom” by numerous industry insiders and me) was the catalyst for the totality of the Calloways’ endeavors in music, business and service to their home community, Cincinnati.

The Marietta Simpson Collection consists of programs, press clippings, photographs, scrapbooks, awards, correspondence, memorabilia, posters, costumes, and audio and video recordings spanning from early childhood to the professional career of Marietta Simpson, an internationally acclaimed mezzo-soprano, IU Rudy Professor of Voice in the

Jacobs School of Music, and 2019 elected Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Simpson’s collection extends our holdings on African American performers of Western European classical music. It also documents the dualistic character of her creative output, as she successfully participates in two distinct musical worlds—African American and European performance traditions.

Along with new acquisitions, we have increased accessibility by “bringing our collections alive,” AAAMC’s motto, offering eclectic programs featuring exhibits, talks, and performances by groundbreaking artists and scholars who shed light on the content of our diverse holdings. One of our most highly praised artistic events was “The Archives of African American Music and Culture presents Marietta Simpson: Live in Concert,” in WTIU’s Studio 6 on February 17, 2019. This occasion was prompted by Simpson’s solo debut studio recording, *Crooked Stick: Songs in a Strange Land*. The album, which I produced and released on my own recording label Art Salad Productions, consists of eight arrangements of Negro spirituals and three spoken word originals penned by Simpson, who performed them in vernacular dialect.

Upon completion of the project, I invited Simpson to perform songs from *Crooked Stick* in front of a live audience. Simpson mesmerized audience members through her vocal interpretations embodying the tradition and spirit of Black folk expression couched in a contemporary eight-piece instrumental accompaniment, which riffed on blues, jazz, gospel and Latin music styles. This event continues to be touted by attendees who praise the performance as meaningful art centering the consciousness, voice and creative enterprise of the African American community. Filmed by WTIU for television, the concert is projected to air on PBS in February 2020. Simpson’s studio album, along with audio and video footage from rehearsals, will be added to the Marietta Simpson Collection. For more details, see Jamaal Baptiste’s descriptive summary of the concert event in this issue.

Another notable AAAMC event highlighted the paintings of Bloomington-

based African American visual artist Joel Washington. “Music and Art with the Archives of African American Music and Culture and Joel Washington” was presented as part of IU Arts & Humanities Council’s First Thursdays, a monthly festival “showcasing the diversity of arts and humanities on campus and throughout the Bloomington community.” “Music and Art” encompassed multiple platforms in the engagement of African American artistic expression. Mirroring AAAMC holdings, Washington’s paintings included iconic Black musicians associated with blues, gospel, soul, and rock. Listening stations, music scavenger hunts, coloring tables and live performances featuring IU students provided other means by which the public experienced Black art represented in our collections.

Along with inspiring public programming, AAAMC continues to build new relationships reflecting a more extensive preservation agenda to

document a cast of unsung creators and industry executives who shape iconic sounds and perceptions of African American featured artists. We are also working to increase support for collection development, accessibility, publication and programming. Additionally, the reformulation of our national advisory board and research associates is progressing toward completion this year, which will serve AAAMC’s goal to sustain meaningful engagement and relevance within academic, industry and community circles. These collective efforts, along with others not mentioned here, reflect the fact that there remains much work to do in accomplishing AAAMC’s vision to “bring inspiration and innovation to the documentation, exploration and sharing of Black music and culture.” Please consider supporting this novel cause through your presence at our public events, use of our resources in person and online, as well as donations of cultural materials and financial gifts. If

we are to be impactful in this endeavor, it will require the strength and resources of the entire “village” as we preserve and disseminate Black music and culture at Indiana University’s Archives of African American Music and Culture. I look forward to seeing you soon, and wish you the very best.

Yours,



**Tyron Cooper, Ph.D.**  
Director of AAAMC

## In the Vault: Recent Donations

In addition to the new collections featured in this issue, the following individuals and companies also generously donated CDs, DVDs, music, books and other materials over the past year. Many of these items were submitted for review in *Black Grooves* ([www.blackgrooves.org](http://www.blackgrooves.org)), the AAAMC’s online music review site.

All Eyes Media	Cindy Byram PR	JDI Records	Naxos	Secretly Canadian
Alligator Records	Concord Music Group	Jennifer Cowling	Now-Again Records	Shanachie Ent.
Archeophone Records	Conqueroo	Kris Gillespie	Numero Group	Shorefire Media
Audio Preservation Fund	De’caf Records	L. Elnaggar	Orlando Watson	Single Lock Records
Ballantyne Communications	Dennis Laffoon	L. Sabini	OWL Music+Media	Smithsonian Folkways
Basin Street Records	DL Media	Lightyear Ent.	Per Notini	Sony Legacy
Bear Family Records	Doreen D’Agostino	Louis Rosen	Peter McDowell Arts	Swiftpost
Blind Raccoon	Dust-to-Digital	Louisiana Red Hot	PIAS	Terri Hinte
Blue Engine Records	Elizabeth Mitchell	Lydia Liebman PR	Portia K. Maultsby	Tiny Human
Blue Note	eOne Music	Lynn Carratt PR	Press Junkie PR	TJ Jones Productions
Blues Images	Fat Possum	M.C. Records	Proud Papa PR	Tosin Aribisala
Bob Frank Ent.	Forced Exposure	Mack Ave. Records	Provident Label Group	Two Sheps That Pass
Bootsy Collins	Fully Altered Media	Marietta Simpson	Real World Records	Tyscot Records
Braithwaite & Katz	Glass Onyon PR	Mark Pucci Media	Resonance Records	Universal Music
Camilla George	GMWA Detroit	Mascot Label Group	Rhyme & Reason Records	Verve Label Group
Capitol Entertainment	Great Scott PR	Mason Jar Media	Rock Paper Scissors	W. J. Laws Jr.
Carol Spindel	Harbinger Records	Merlis For Hire	Ronald Lewis	William Vanden Dries
CEC Management	Integrity Music	Michael Nixon	Roni Music	WindingWay Records
Cedille Records	International Anthem	Michael Woods	Ropeadope Records	Wolf Records
Chase Music Group	JAG Entertainment	Motema	S-Curve Records	Woodward Avenue Records
	Jared Nickerson	MRI Assoc. Labels	Sam Rucker	Yugen Blakrok
	Jazz Promo Services	MVD Ent. Group		

*The AAAMC welcomes donations of photographs, film, video, sound recordings, music, magazines, personal papers, and other research materials related to African American music.*





Reggie Calloway, Gloria Larson, Vincent Calloway and Gregory Calloway, 1984.

## The Calloways: A Family Affair in Music and Entrepreneurship

*On April 15, 2019, the three Calloway brothers—Reggie, Vincent, and Gregory—were interviewed by AAAMC graduate assistant Bobby E. Davis, Jr. The conversation follows the careers of the Calloway brothers and their mother, Gloria Larson, through the formation of the bands Sunchild, Midnight Star and Calloway, as well as various business enterprises based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Following are excerpts from that interview, which have been edited for clarity and concision.*

**BD:** You obviously have very strong family ties, which are evident in both your music and business ventures. Was this encouraged by your mother, or did you all just like working together that much?

**GC:** I think that you will find it very unique for three brothers to be as close as we are, and then for the matriarch, who has such power and influence in a very

positive way. I was born on January the 5th. Reggie was born on January the 23rd, and Vincent was born on January the 5th. Three brothers and two that are born on the same day. So we have a unique perspective about our brotherhood...it is something that's imbedded in our DNA.

**RC:** Our mother's grandmother was very entrepreneurial, she was a landowner in Kentucky, and her goal was for every family member to have their own house, build their own house. That entrepreneurial spirit was passed on to our mother. Even though she had lots of jobs, she was a business person, an entrepreneur first. Her goal was always to own her own business and then to have us, her sons, work in that business so that we could grow and own something. That spirit finally materialized in her first major business, Larson's Flower Barn. She launched her flower shop with an ice cream parlor in the back for us to work

in while we were in junior high school.

**BD:** How did you all get started in music? What were your earliest experiences?

**VC:** Our father was a trumpet player. That's another thing we have in common. Reggie and I are both trumpet players. Mom's two brothers played piano and organ. We found out later that her dad played a little blues piano. Dad's middle brother was a singer and played classical piano. His oldest sister played piano and organ and was also a gospel and classical singer who wrote her own hymns. Both grandparents had pianos in their homes, so we would try to write our own songs. Once we moved to Cincinnati from Louisville, our next-door neighbor's dad had his own band, so we watched them practice through the basement window. So basically, a lot of different things sparked our interest in music.

**BD:** Could you talk about Sunchild?

**RC:** My high school bands were Motown Masters and MD Fire Department, the latter of which had just returned from a tour across the U.S. where we played in a lot of little small back rooms on the Chitlin' Circuit. At the end of that tour I realized that this band may not be going as far as I would like and I had a lot to learn about music. So I left the band and got a scholarship at Kentucky State University. I knew that I was going to major in music, so my concentration was composition and theory. All the previous bands that I played with only played cover songs, none of the guys wanted to do any original music, or so it seemed. I was always the youngest guy in the group. No one was interested in hearing my ideas, so I knew it was time to form our own group where we could do any kind of music that we want, and what better guys to do that with than your brothers. So Sunchild was our outlet to just play whatever we wanted to play, any way we wanted to play it. We could experiment with different time signatures and different key changes, and be really progressive. So it was the three of us, and then we had an additional bass player and guitar player, Johnny Jones. He was our next door neighbor and friend from elementary school, so he was like a brother. Another, Darryl Calloway—same last name, not directly related—was originally the first bass player but was later replaced by Pete Jordan, and there were a couple more musicians who interchanged as well. The beautiful part, after about our second Sunchild season, we brought in Bill Simmons, who later was a member of Midnight Star. Sunchild was kind of a summer band, because I also had a college band, but eventually it became too much. One day when we really wanted to

make Sunchild a permanent fixture, two of the guys quit, and that birthed a whole other future.

**BD:** Greg, what was your role in Sunchild?

**GC:** All three of us being so creative in our own right, it was just a natural gravitation, and we listened to a lot of the same music. Miles Davis had just released *Bitches Brew* and it had blown me away, and then he released *On the Corner*, so all of the electro, polyrhythmic, polyharmonic stuff that he was doing definitely influenced us. When we started to get creative on some of our original material, one of the favorite songs that we would perform was the one that we recorded, “Betwixt the Hump,” which was written in 10/4. Johnny and I had a major part in some of the writing. Reggie structured the song and added the lead, the melody, the keyboard line, and the flute. I named the song and I named the group, and I named our record label [Starbound]. This was probably the peak of my personal interest as a musician.

**BD:** From Sunchild was there a shift to Midnight Star? What was your role in music after Sunchild?

**GC:** During the time Reggie was in college, I was also in school, at Bowling Green State University. For some reason I didn't want to major in music, but Larson's Flower Barn influenced me on the business side, so I went into organizational development at BGSU.

Coming back home during the summers, Reggie was growing musically. Vincent was a natural, teaching himself every instrument

he picked up, so he was growing musically. At that time, Reggie was with Funkafied at Kentucky State University and Vincent was with TNT Powerhouse. I had my own groups too, and we all practiced down in the basement at 931 Avondale Avenue. My role became more focused on the business, and then I actually transferred to Kentucky State where I received my BS in Applied Accounting. Reggie was in school there already. I spent as much time in the music department as I did in the business department. I took my drums everywhere I went, so I never gave up my drums. I have this left brain and right brain thing, the analytical and then the creative stuff that is in conflict sometimes, but I try to nurture those two, and that's what I did.

To cut a very long story short, Reggie asked me at that time if I wanted to join Midnight Star. If my mom had said, “Greg, quit school and join this group,” I would have. That conversation, I think God didn't have that in the mix, so I stayed on and got my business degree, and the rest is history.

**BD:** It sounds like it all goes back to Larson's Flower Barn, right? So could you guys talk about that experience?

**VC:** I was the youngest. Greg and Reggie being older, they were able to run the ice cream parlor. I think we were probably the first original 36 flavors or more, like Baskin Robbins. I would help my mom out in the flower shop with a lot of the prep work. I think that's where I learned a lot of dexterity with my hands. To back up a little bit, before Mom opened the Flower Barn, she felt like she needed something to really kick off the grand opening, and she found out that James Brown was in town. His record company



Sunchild single, “Betwixt the Humps,” 1975.



Reggie Calloway in high school band uniform, 1972.



Calloway single, “All the Way,” 1989.



KENNETH GANT

BO WATSON

BELINDA LIPSCOMB

BOBBY LOVELACE

WILLIAM SIMMONS

VINCENT CALLOWAY

JEFFREY COOPER

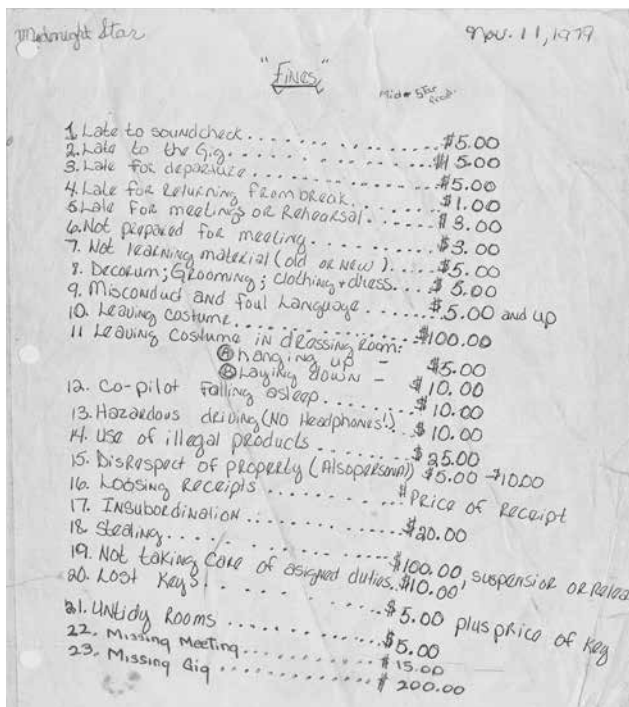
REGINALD CALLOWAY

MELVIN GENTRY



Distributed by Elektra/Asylum R

# MIDNIGHT STAR



Above: Promotional photo for Midnight Star.  
Left: Midnight Star "Fines Sheet" from 1979.

Below: Midnight Star's *No Parking on the Dance Floor* album, 1983.





was probably a few blocks from where we lived. Mom found out what hotel Brown was staying at—he didn't even have an alias, you just asked for James Brown and they'd connect you to his room. Brown picked up and she said, "Hi, my name is Gloria Larson. I don't sing or dance but I'm your sister in the community, and I'd like to see if you would like to come to my grand opening for my new business." And Brown said, "If you promise that it's not a big crowd, then I will come." And she promised, so he agreed to come and he flew back to town on his private jet, with his wife who was pregnant at the time, and he spent maybe three or four hours with us. This was the late '60s or 1970, around the time "Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud" was released. So for us, that was another connection with music, to meet one of the greatest artists that had ever walked this earth, and he was willing to come out and share his knowledge and his experience and promote our business. He was always helping in the community.

**GC:** Mom put me in charge of the bookkeeping in the flower shop, and Vincent was a master taster in the ice cream parlor. I learned single entry bookkeeping from her. I was basically the account bookkeeper for all the expenses and ordering of the ice cream and the sales and gave her reports when she needed them, and it was a great foundation. I was probably a sophomore or junior in high school, which made Reggie a freshman, then Vincent was in elementary school, so we were definitely young.

*The conversation shifts to Nati Live (1992-1993) and Back on the Block (1992-2000), the citywide youth talent shows the Calloways organized in Cincinnati.*

**BD:** I want to shift to some other things that you all were involved with, such as Nati Live. Could you all talk a little bit about how that was started?

**RC:** It goes back to the entrepreneurial spirit. If there wasn't a show, we would put on a show. Early in our high school career, there were some very prevalent talent shows within the school, and colleges also had talent shows. Huge shows, but then it kind of collapsed. So who was going to fill that void? That became us. In our high school we started a talent show called Woodrock, which eventually became a tradition at the school.

**GC:** Instead of Woodstock, it was Woodrock, and it was out in the football field.

**RC:** Then we took it indoors, and ironically, members of The Deele performed at one of our talent shows and actually won, so we began to help promote them. After the success of Midnight Star, and realizing what all of these opportunities had meant for us, we knew that we had to continue to give back to the community. So Nati is short for Cincinnati. They had LA Live and other things around the country, so Nati Live was another take on that, but it was a youth talent show that was an outreach to all the high schools in the city. Not a recital kind of performance, but more of a live performance where people are standing, they're cheering, they can vote, you can bring your own friends, have a chance to perform and get that feedback. This was a chance for them to perform in a way that was protected and safe, with security, with rules and regulations, no profanity. Our mother was instrumental in helping to promote Nati Live and making sure that it lived up to all those standards, and that we had the support of the city and the community as well.

**GC:** Back on the Block, which followed Nati Live, was her major, major project. This overlapped with songwriting seminars that Reggie was doing. I think by the time Back on the Block was over, Mom really just started to become more of a personal consultant for whatever we wanted to do.

**BD:** I want to shift gears again, because obviously the root of this entire conversation is your mother, Miss Gloria Larson, she's a visionary. She seems to have been the driving force behind many of your businesses and your music career. Could you all speak about her many business ventures?

**RC:** We talked about five different high school bands that we were all in, and most of the rehearsals were at our house in the basement, so Mom knew she was nurturing a business right there. My goal was to make one of the greatest bands in the world by choosing the most like-minded musicians and work ethics, and I'm happy to say we did that. In her business mind, that was Gloria's next business after Sunchild, managing Midnight Star. She was making things available to us that otherwise wouldn't be available, because you can't go out and just

hire a manager or a bookkeeper. You just don't have the money to do that as a young band, so her taking that on as an entrepreneur for management and guidance, whether it was teaching the band to cook and wash dishes, or whether it was organizing rehearsal times and start times and end times to breaking the houses up into certain areas and setting cooking schedules, I mean it was a major, major operation, a major business. It was like a huge machine that she kept well-oiled while we concentrated on the music. She had enough business acumen to either refinance the house or go to relatives and seek short term funding to get the truck to get to the next gig. Without that kind of business assistance, we would have worn ourselves out.

Then her business became solidified with Glo Management, not only working with Midnight Star, but she also began to work with other groups. As Midnight Star, we signed a deal with L.A. Reid and Babyface, and then they were also under Glo Management. There were more professional bands coming in, bands coming up, being developed. That was a whole side of artist management, development and growth. That part of her life went on for a very good while, and it was always her goal to not just be a manager, but be a director, a producer, a promoter. That's when all of the other concerts and events began to come in under the umbrella of this infrastructure. She could visualize the whole flow chart of the business from the top down to the bottom of the pyramid, so each area was accounted for.

**BD:** Thinking about Midnight Star and Kentucky State University being this kind of meeting ground, can you talk a little bit about how you all found each other?

**RC:** Midnight Star was probably my junior year, so a lot of the guys from freshman year to that point had been at the university, and we had some experience playing in the jazz ensemble, marching band and the orchestra, right there in the music department. Like I said, when Sunchild disbanded, we wanted to put together the final group, the mastermind group so to speak, with like minds. You didn't have to have the greatest talent in the world, but it had to be a high level of talent, because talent can get you nowhere if your mind is not right. Bill Simmons had already played in Sunchild, so we had a certain amount



Reggie Calloway, Gloria Larson, Cincinnati Mayor Dwight Tillery, and Vincent Calloway at the Back on the Block festival, 1993.



Gloria Larson at Cincinnati's Back on the Block youth talent festival, 2000.



Cincinnati's NIP (News in Pictures) magazine covers featuring Midnight Star (1986) and Gloria Larson (1988).

of confidence and bond, and what a great number two guy Bill has always been. So I went to Bill Simmons and said, "I'm ready to start the real group now. Do you want to be a part of it?" Bill said, "Yeah, let's go!" So then it was a matter of looking at the KSU music department and seeing who we would pick. The first people were Jeffrey Cooper on guitar and Kenneth Gant on bass, to draw up the rhythm section, and Belinda Lipscomb, who was such a versatile singer; she sang gospel, jazz, R&B, classical...whatever she sang was beautiful music. Then that particular year some freshmen had come in town. Bo Watson was a standout freshman keyboard player, but he also sang in many different styles. He didn't really read music but could hear anything and play it back to you almost immediately, so I talked to Bo and he was interested in joining the band. The next day Bo says, "I don't think I can be in the band. When I came to school, me and my friend said we'd always be in a band together." That friend was Melvin Gentry, he played guitar, drums, bass and sings. I said, "Let's check him out." Melvin was a super-standout. Everybody in the group played multiple instruments, so Jeff didn't just play guitar, he played trombone. Gant didn't just play bass, he played tuba, Bill played alto saxophone and was an amazing keyboard player as well.

**RC:** We only had a two piece horn section at the time, so we invited Vincent to join us, and the group was unanimous that he join. We moved into our grandparents' house in Louisville. This was the point when we were really totally committed, we were not going back to school and we're not going to break up and have a summer apart. My father, Irvin, and our Uncle Julius allowed us to live in our grandparents' house in Louisville, so we had virtually no rent to pay, we just had to feed ourselves and pay the utilities. We had a nine piece group, and seven of us all stayed there in one house and we began to pick up where Sunchild left off. One of the biggest keys to Midnight Star was one of our Sunchild connections. We had met a person from New York, P.J. Watts, while playing at the Viking Lounge. She said if you ever get a group that you want to try to really make it, let me know. Sunchild was breaking up, so I wrote an apology letter saying we're not ready right now, and then wrote her back once Midnight Star was up and running. She said, "Do you want to come to New York and do a showcase?" So



we were like, that sounds incredible, and we loaded up all the vans and all the trucks, and we were going to move to New York and stay there. That was a little too much to bite off, but we did the showcase...the right people saw us.

We left there and moved to Cincinnati, but word from the showcase got back to Dick Griffey, who later contacted us and we began the process of auditioning for him. That's when our mother stepped all the way up and says we'll move the band into the house, to her house. So the entire band, road crew and everybody moved to Cincinnati, moved into our home and set up all the beds. So now the band really began to flourish, and that's where we did the audition for Dick Griffey.

**BD:** Vincent was talking about some of his experiences in martial arts, and I wanted to talk about how that related to Midnight Star.

**VC:** I started martial arts in my early teens and had a great instructor who became like a big brother to this day. Cincinnati was really pretty amazing for martial arts, like music, and boxing. I started my training there and also competed. Then I got a call from Reggie to come and meet up with Midnight Star, so now we've got nine band members and three road crew guys staying in the same house. We would get up at 7:00 in the morning, work out, run three miles, come back to the house and do calisthenics, go through stretching exercises, breathing exercises. I'd walk on their stomachs, all kinds of stuff to focus on the singers' breathing. Even our choreography, we were a high energy band, so it was probably a big contribution to our making it as well. We went out on the road and did some dates, and in two weeks I was burned out and I was pretty much in shape. So at that point I said we've got to train like world class athletes, because when you get out on the road, you're not going to get in better shape, you can only deteriorate. Some of the guys wanted to start doing some extensive studying in martial arts, and I think that was another thread that kept us united. Later, once we started going out on major tours, instead of going out partying, we're on the bus writing songs. We're back at the hotel working out by the pool. Some of us were doing martial arts training, so we had a lot of things to keep us focused and on the straight and narrow.

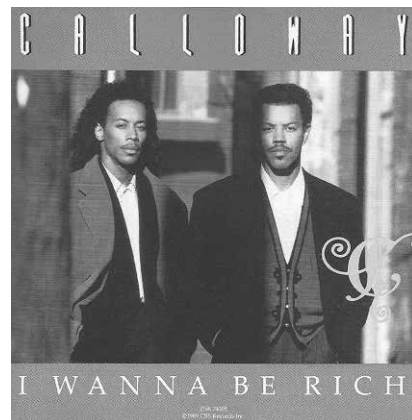
**BD:** I wonder if you could talk a little

bit about Midnight Star's music making process, about using synthesizers and the vocoder.

**RC:** In the early days of Midnight Star, the synthesizers were just being invented, and some of the early synthesizers had huge patch bays with 30,000 wires and you needed a specialist to know how to do that. On our first album we had Michael Boddicker, who was that kind of a specialist, a world renowned keyboardist we met through the contacts of Harvey Mason, and he was producing and introduced us to a lot of that. Also, you may have this synthesizer with all these plugs that could make one sound. You had horns and orchestration that you could do that was crazy. So on our early albums we had a lot of orchestration and strings, and not only our horns, but we'd use guys from Earth, Wind & Fire horns, session players. By the second or third album, it was time to scale back and create the music more in house so that we could get back to where we started as a live band, and not so much as a band that is heavily orchestrated, because it can take away from the funk, and we were trying to get back to the funk.

By that time, synthesizers had come a long way and you could actually afford to purchase one. You could do a lot of good things. We were fortunate that Bo Watson, an amazing keyboard player, was just a serious student and he would put in hours of study. Not only Bo, but also Bill Simmons. After we got our advance for our third album, we purchased a number of keyboards that would take us to the next level of sound. In trying to get back to the funk and trying to get a hit, a lot of us horn players began to get more involved in the rhythm, the foundation of the music, which led to songs like "Freak-A-Zoid" and "Electricity." And really concentrating on what the bass was doing, what that sound was, so the Minimoog was our go to bass sound, a very versatile instrument. It was used a lot.

Parliament Funkadelic's "Atomic Dog" was out and we were really trying to emulate that, and then create a whole new sound. At the time, rap was just kind of touching base. Disco was definitely long gone but there were certain elements of it that you could utilize. So when we began to create techno-funk, that's kind of what it stands for, funk with high tech sounds on top, but with melody and lyrics. That had never been done before



Calloway single, "I Wanna Be Rich," 1989.



Reggie (left) and Vincent (right) in studio producing Teddy Pendergrass's 1993 album, *A Little More Magic*.



Calloway performing at Back on the Block festival, circa 1998.



Calloway (Reggie and Vincent) featured on cover of the R&B Report, 1990.



Reggie, Vincent, and Gregory Calloway with Gloria Larson, 2010.

to that extent. You might have one or the other, but to bring all three together kind of created a brand new sound, which then led to the vocoder, taking it to a more electronic, more technical level.

**VC:** Once we finally got the vocoder, it was a game changer. It became more like another featured vocal. We already had three lead vocals with Bo, Melvin and Belinda, and then the vocoder kind of took on another personality. I don't think anybody at that point had really taken the vocoder in that direction, so we just had fun with it.

**BD:** Can you talk about Calloway? Why did you start Calloway and what was Ms. Larson's role?

**RC:** After *Midnight Star*, we took a hiatus and launched a very strong production career, and we had like four number one records back to back, but we still always wanted to be artists, so we were waiting on the right opportunity. Dick Griffey, with Solar Records, asked us if we wanted to do a record. Of course we already knew the answer to that was yes, so we formed the duo Calloway. Our first big pop hit, "I Want to Be Rich," was the number two pop record in the country, sort of a classic anthem that still lives today. We did two albums. *Let's Get Smooth* had a number of top 40 songs. Then Solar was sold, so that led us back to doing

more production projects.

**VC:** The last thing I would like to say, Mom always had perfect timing. She always knew that if you open yourself up at the right time, even if it means eliminating something else, you will allow something else to come in. She just told me if you want to get to that next level, even though band members are your friends, you may have to move on, otherwise you'll kind of get stuck in this rut. That's what changed my life and this is the kind of a thread that I live by now.

**GC:** Let me indulge you with a closing thought from my perspective. What we have shared with you is not contained with Gloria's three sons. She has children all over America. Everybody in *Midnight Star* calls her Mom. Bootsy Collins would call her Mom. Her influence is felt across generations. My son Andre, who is now a recording artist, was totally influenced by her direction. He performed at *Back on the Block* as well as Reggie's son, Cameron, and his daughter, Tamesha. Vincent's son, Vince II, his grandson Kamaree, and daughter Kiyomi are all pursuing music. I just can't even express enough how many people's lives she influenced. Even members of *Midnight Star*, to this day, have said, "I would not be the person I am now or have experienced any of the success I have experienced if it had not been for Mom." That is just the power of

Gloria Larson's beauty, of being able to guide and "unfold" without molding, and that's her legacy.

**BD:** Wow. Thank you so much, gentlemen, for sharing with me.

*Reggie and Vincent are still releasing new music collectively and as solo artists. Keep an ear out for Reggie's latest gospel single, "Be Alright," on the Spiral Galaxy Entertainment label. Reggie has since graduated from Kentucky State University with a BA in Music and serves as Director of Music Royalty Funding at Sound Royalties. Vincent has received his ninth degree black belt in martial arts, raising him to level of Grand Master. Gregory completed his executive master's degree at Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management and is CEO of Omicron Advisory Group and founder of the Calloway Spectrum Scholarship Fund. For booking contact: davidlombardmgt@aol.com.*

*In addition to this group interview with the three Calloway brothers, Dr. Tyron Cooper conducted separate video interviews with Gregory, Reggie, and Vincent Calloway on June 11, 2019, and followed up with additional interviews with Reggie and Vincent on June 27, 2019, and with Gregory on June 28, 2019. The complete videos for all seven interviews are available at the AAAMC.*

—Edited by Bobby Davis Jr. and  
Brenda Nelson-Strauss

## Featured Collection:

# Introducing the Calloway Collection

Within the boxes of the AAAMC's new Calloway Collection lies the story of Ms. Gloria Dean Gilchrist Calloway Larson, who moved her three sons from the projects of Louisville, KY in the late 1960s to start a new life in Cincinnati, Ohio. With grit and determination, she created a nurturing environment where the musical talents of Gregory, Reggie, and Vincent "Cino" Calloway could "unfold" and flourish amidst the emerging funk scene of the Dayton-Cincinnati corridor. From these roots arose the bands Sunchild and Midnight Star, in addition to multiple Calloway family business ventures that had a profound impact on the local community. Though the collection will eventually include deposits from all three brothers, the majority of the papers stem from Ms. Larson's files.

The documentation begins with an illustrated brochure for the first family business, Larson's Flower Barn, and then progresses to Sunchild's first 45-rpm single on Starbound Records. All three brothers performed in the group and the record company was their first music related business venture, with a label designed at the Calloway family's kitchen table and the name Starbound predicting their trajectory in the industry.

After Reggie formed Midnight Star with Vincent and friends from Kentucky State University, Gregory shifted his talents towards business, joining his mother in various enterprises. From 1976-1986, Mrs. Larson's primary focus was the management of Midnight Star with Gregory coming aboard in 1984 through the company Midstar Music. As the leader of the band, Reggie served as president, Gregory was vice president of business affairs, and Gloria was director of business operations. This portion of the collection includes contracts and accounts, correspondence, travel and tour itineraries, a mailing list for the international fan club, as well

as numerous folders of press clippings attesting to the rising fame of the band. Also included are copies of the many forms Larson designed to handle every aspect of band management, from the financial side (expense reports, accounts payable, payroll) as well as production (time sheets, equipment purchases, songwriter/lyrics log, performance schedules, etc). Midstar also signed other talent, most notably The Deele featuring Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds and Antonio "L.A." Reid.

Around 1985, another local band, Sharp, began garnering attention. Some of the members were childhood friends of the Calloway brothers. Recognizing Sharp's potential, Gloria and Gregory formed Soundway Management and for the next five years the band became their principle account. Business records from this period primarily detail the financial side of the company, as well as performance contracts, marketing, and biographies of individual band members. Larson later formed Gloria Larson Entertainment (GLE) which, according to flyers, handled "artist management, public relations, booking, consultation, and speakers." GLE also oversaw other ventures highlighted in the collection, such as New World Entertainment Seminars for artist and career development, and the non-profit Horizons Unlimited, a platform for Larson to convey her knowledge of multiple facets of the music business to young artists.

When Reggie and Vincent left Midnight Star in 1986, they also entered the production and business side of the music industry. Reggie wrote and produced with Vincent the 1987 Grammy-Nominated hit single "Casanova" for the group LeVert, and both brothers received writing credits on Teddy Pendergrass's 1988 hit single "Joy." Videos and publicity materials document these collaborations, as well as their R&B duo, Calloway, active from 1989-1993. Files also shed light on another business

venture, Crystal Clear Sound Studios in Cincinnati, where they laid the groundwork for "Casanova" and "Joy," recorded an album for Sharp, and wrote and produced Gladys Knight's Grammy Award winning hit song "Love Overboard."

A significant portion of the collection is devoted to the Calloway family's community related projects in Cincinnati. These include planning documents and press releases for Nati Live (1992-1993), billed as a monthly "musical extravaganza" to showcase local talent, and the Back on the Block Youth Talent Festival, which Larson produced from 1992-2000 as part of a broader citywide initiative to occupy and engage teenagers during the summer months. Correspondence reveals her fundraising acuity and promotional initiatives, while scrapbooks and videos provide visual documentation of the young performers at the festival.

Other parts of the collection include magazines featuring various members of the Calloway family on the cover, recordings such as Midnight Star's 1983 breakout album, *No Parking on the Dance Floor*, and coverage of additional projects and companies. Last but certainly not least, the personal papers from Gloria Larson include pages of manuscript notes that reveal the germination of ideas and trace their evolution through the project phase of implementation. Larson's papers also showcase her many passions outside of business, from menu planning and health and wellness research, to collecting inspirational quotes, of which there are many.

Through these papers, business records and media, the Calloway Collection encapsulates the life of Gloria Larson as both a mother and a Black woman in the male-dominated music industry, as well as the lives of her three sons who embody their mother's entrepreneurial spirit.

— Brenda Nelson-Strauss



The Calloway Collection includes singles and albums released by Midnight Star and the duo Calloway.



# one-on-one



**An Interview with  
Marietta Simpson**

(photo: Joseph Simpson)



Clockwise from above: Simpson family (Marietta, bottom right); Marietta in grade school; baby Marietta (center).

*On July 22, 2019, Dr. Tyron Cooper interviewed Marietta Simpson, Rudy Professor of Music (Voice) at the IU Jacobs School of Music, about growing up as a member of an illustrious Philadelphia musical family and her career as an internationally acclaimed mezzo-soprano and educator. These excerpts have been edited and condensed for clarity and concision.*

**TC:** I want to get to your family upfront. Anybody who knows the Simpsons is aware of their musical acumen. You were born in Philadelphia. Were your parents native Philadelphians?

**MS:** No, my father was born in Pittsburgh, and then his family moved to Washington, DC when he was five. My great-grandfather had a company in DC where they would travel with horse and wagon, and pick up trash from companies. He basically had a salvage company. My grandfather moved his family to DC to be close to his father's successful company where he could work.

**TC:** Now, if we're talking about your great-grandfather, this would have been late nineteenth century?

**MS:** Right! So, he was the son of a slave, and was originally from the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

**TC:** Tell me the names of your parents. How did they meet?

**MS:** Evelyn Queen Simpson. Smith was her maiden name. And Melvin Henson Simpson. My father moved to Philadelphia after he met my mother, who is from a little 'holler' in West Virginia called Northfork. She moved up to DC and was doing secretarial work. At that time, churches would do socials on the weekend because there were not a lot of places for young African American people to meet. Segregation was pretty much the rule of the day. She had been going to this social and people kept saying to her, "You sing, you should meet Melvin. He plays the piano."

**TC:** Is Melvin's family musical?

**MS:** My grandmother sang. She said she was a true alto. She had a beautiful voice, and at least three of her kids played the piano—my uncle Earl, my aunt Martha, and my father. My uncle Walter played the saxophone, so music was big in their

family. Aunt Martha played for Israel Baptist Church for over twenty years. They really were amateur musicians, but they all played and sang in the choir. My uncle Earl had a jazz combo and used to play all around DC. What I didn't know until years later is that my father used to play jazz, too. I didn't know that because by the time I grew up, my father was sure enough saved [a devout Christian].

**TC:** He didn't deal with the worldly [deemed sinful] music?

**MS:** No, but he always loved classical music. That wasn't considered worldly music, so classical and sacred music played in our house all the time. My mom was a singer with a beautiful voice but growing up, nobody ever made a big deal about it. She just sang because she loved it. She used to sing all the time, in church and in school, and people would say, "Stop all that noise." That's what they used to tell her. But she grew up in a little town with a bunch of siblings and nobody ever recognized her for being special. When she was older and started singing, people took notice and said, "You got a really beautiful voice, you got a special voice."



Marietta (left) with her father, Melvin H. Simpson, Sr., and Lareedia Williams.



Simpson (center) performing with the Time of Deliverance Television Singers in Philadelphia.



Simpson as an undergraduate at Temple University, 1977-1981.

**TC:** Did your father play in church? Did he learn to read music?

**MS:** Yes, but he read it slowly. My father had to stop school when he was in the fifth grade because he got sick, and he didn't graduate from high school. But he was really a smart man and whenever he wanted to learn something, he taught himself. And that's how he learned about so many things. There used to be traveling music teachers and he would get little bits of information from them, or he would sing in the church choir. He'd look at the music and figure it out. Then he'd ask questions and that's how he learned how to read music. I mean to tell you it blows me away, right? You know, if you could transmit that kind of drive to students! We say all the time, "You've got to be curious. I can't give that to you. I can teach you certain things, but you have to be curious about this." So he passed that on to me. When there's something you really want to know, you must have the drive to do it.

**TC:** Many people know Marietta Simpson based on what you've done in the classical realm, but what most people don't know is that you have an extended identity within so many other realms, particularly in gospel music. Your family had a gospel music group. Did everybody play in this group? Were all of them musicians?

**MS:** I have eight biological siblings [oldest to youngest]: Ana Claudette, Joy, Patricia, Melvin Jr., Gloria, Evelyn, me and Joseph. And then three adopted brothers: Aaron, Kevin, and Jason. Everybody is a musician of some kind. So the joke is that if





you want to have something to do with the Simpsons you've got to have some musical something because that's the only way you'll get into that family. So everybody in my family sings. When we get together even now, everybody sings.

**TC:** Tell me about your earliest musical experience.

**MS:** Singing around the piano, singing in the house. The earliest public performances were when we were really little. My family used to travel together as the "Singing Simpsons." This started when our church, Grace Baptist, asked us to do a concert. I must have been about five then, too young to really even be singing. Joseph, my brother who's only a year younger, and I didn't sing on all of the songs because they were doing anthem and hymn arrangements. Evelyn, who's five years older than me, was the one who had the solo. They were doing an arrangement of the Negro spiritual, "Hush, Somebody is Calling My Name," and there was a little solo at the end where Evelyn sang, "coming for to carry me home." And the audience was like, "awwww," because she had such a pure little voice. I remember saying, "I could sing that!" (laughs). I couldn't, I was only five.

**TC:** What denomination was this church?

**MS:** They were at Dauphin Street Baptist Church when they lived in North Philadelphia. Then they moved up to Germantown and we went to Grace Baptist Church. We moved from Grace Baptist to High Street Church of God [a Pentecostal denomination]. Every time we moved to a different church, our musical experience changed and grew, adding another dimension. So as my siblings grew as musicians, their roles are changing at these churches, the music is changing too. At Grace they were are still very young. Evelyn was only eleven or twelve and Joy and the rest of them were teenagers. When we get to High Street, Joy is the minister of music. She is leading the choir and is a fantastic pianist. Evelyn eventually is the organist.

**TC:** So in church, you're reading music, but you're also playing by ear as well?

**MS:** Yes. Joy played predominantly with music, she was taking lessons. Evelyn

was a child prodigy, so after the first couple of years of lessons she was playing by ear. Everybody took piano lessons. And after you played the piano for a while then you could pick another instrument to play.

**TC:** So, you got the gospel group. Y'all are singing...

**MS:** Spiritual arrangements and solo, and jubilee kind of songs. We never really sang hard-driving Mahalia Jackson. We didn't sing anything like that. We were not singing the Caravans.

**TC:** Well this is interesting because this is Philadelphia. This is the Davis Sisters, and other African American gospel icons' territory.

**MS:** We're not doing any of that because my mother has an operatic voice. My father has an operatic voice. This is their music. One of my mother's favorite pieces is "Pace," the aria from *La Forza del Destino*. These are my people from West Virginia. This is what they love. My father loves the triumphal scene from *Aida*. Where is that coming from? Well, that comes from his elementary school where he heard it. And my mom, that's what she heard. She loves country western. That's the flip side because that's also what she heard. And she loved hymns. So that's what we were singing.

**TC:** Did your family run in some of the same circles as Black gospel singers? Were you on some of the same programs with them?

**MS:** We were rarely on the same programs because we sang mainly in predominantly white churches. The "Singing Churches." We were an anomaly for them. They're like, "Oh my God, this is what Black people look like!" Nine times out of ten we were the first Black people some of them had seen up close. That's who we are. We're not going to the Black gospel programs where there are twenty-five choirs and we're just one. We did a lot of stuff in western counties in Philadelphia. In Lancaster, Mennonite country.

**TC:** Wow! I didn't know that. I pictured your family on Black gospel programs. How did your family get in that circle?

**MS:** Because my parents were a part of

Full Gospel Business Men, an organization of business people who were Christians. It was an international group that's predominantly white and their headquarters were right outside of Philadelphia. So my parents would go up there, sometimes we'd sing there as well. We even did a missionary film where we were dressed up in African wear. We spent the day filming, looking like some African family. We were so far removed from that experience! I must have been five or six at the time.

**TC:** So the church you went to was predominantly Black?

**MS:** Black, always.

**TC:** You've got your one foot in the Black community and one foot...

**MS:** Yeah, always outside of the community. That's where we minister, mainly outside of the community. It really was our church, Grace Baptist, who asked. At the time our pastor at Grace was Jeremiah Wright's father. His mom, Mary Wright, was my vice-principal in high school. So, imagine when I got in trouble in high school and my father is in there talking to Mrs. Wright. Yeah, that was uncomfortable (laughs).

**TC:** When did you start taking music lessons?

**MS:** Everybody else took lessons earlier. Evelyn started lessons when she was five or six, but my parents wanted to wait a little bit later with me. I was begging them to take piano lessons, but they wouldn't do it. I think they were tired of saying "get in there and practice" by the time Joseph and I came along. When you go through that with six other kids, they just wanted to take a break. So I begged them and kept begging them, and finally I had my father number the keys and I would write little songs with numbers. And I just played that way. I was eleven or twelve.

**TC:** So, you start on the piano and then you transition to cello?

**MS:** Yes, that was through school because at that time you could get lessons. The woman who taught me cello was Janet McCabe. You know, it's amazing what used to be available in the school system. Her parents were upper middle class Black

people. She was very educated and was friends with Joy. They had been in Temple University together. Joy and Patricia had both played the violin, so I wanted to play violin. But Janet looked at my hands like, “Nope, you can’t play the violin, hands too big. You can play the cello.” So I got the cello and I actually did like the cello, it was just cumbersome to carry around. After the first year I decided I’m tired of this, and I switched to trombone. We had one in our house because my sister, Gloria, played the trombone. Listen, I loved the trombone! I played it all through undergraduate school.

**TC:** And you majored in trombone?

**MS:** I did! I was a music education, trombone major. It was my way of having my own identity. I loved brass ensemble. I loved wind ensemble. You met a whole other group of people in music, whole other way of being. I didn’t like the singers. I thought they were too pretentious, too self-conscious. I just thought, “No I don’t want to be that. I want to be with the brass, they’re really cool.”

**TC:** So, you’re a trombone major at Temple, then all of a sudden you switch to voice?

**MS:** Yes, because I sang all along, I sang in the choir. We were doing *Scheherazade* and right before the big second trombone solo which I was playing, I got really, really nervous and I didn’t like that feeling. And I thought, “You know, I don’t get nervous like this when I sing.” So that’s when I knew trombone was not going to be everything that I did for the rest of my life. Then, when I did my student teaching, I knew I was not going to be a classroom teacher the rest of my life. So then I switched over to voice full time at the end of undergrad.

**TC:** And then you go to graduate school where?

**MS:** In Binghamton, New York. I was wondering where I should go and Joy said, “Listen, I’ve been to Juilliard, and I learned more in this program in Binghamton than I learned in my years at Juilliard. You should go sing for these teachers up there.” So I went up to Binghamton and sang for the teachers. I didn’t have arias and all that to sing, so I sang two pieces in English, a spiritual and something else. And they said, “We’ll take you over to the university and you can sing

for the associate dean.” I was like, “Okay.” Then I waited outside of the dean’s office and she came back and said, “If you would like to start in two weeks, we’ll have a scholarship for you.” I was like, “Thank you, Jesus!”

**TC:** Who did you study with?

**MS:** I studied voice with Carmen Savoca and Peyton Hibbitt at Tri-Cities Opera, which collaborates with Binghamton and offers an apprenticeship. I did my first operatic role there, Mamma Lucia in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, a Mascagni opera. The biggest role I did there was Adalgisa in *Norma*, and Joy sang *Norma*. That was an amazing experience to sing *Norma* with her. Everybody talked about the two sisters singing those roles. The thing about *Norma* is that the duets are the huge, especially the Adalgisa and Norma duets. So to hear our voices together was a really big thing. We also did *Porgy* together, we did *Nabucco* together, but not with those kind of duets, which were pretty incredible.

**TC:** Tell me about Robert Shaw.

**MS:** Robert Shaw was an amazing ride, that whole experience with him. If I could think of three recordings that we had in our house, one would’ve been the Robert Shaw *Messiah*, another would’ve been *God’s Trombones* with Fred Waring & The Pennsylvanians, and another would’ve been Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Robert Shaw was on two of them, so he was huge in our house. *The Many Moods of Christmas* was a big piece that we used to do and he was the arranger for that. So if there were pictures on our wall, it would’ve been Martin Luther King Jr., John F. Kennedy, Abraham Lincoln, and Robert Shaw. I mean, he was just a huge figure. In 1985 I got to audition for him. I was driving back from Philadelphia, going to my second year in the Houston studio program. I remember the dress I wore, a red and black dress I bought specifically for the audition. After the audition he called me out into the audience to sit next to him and said, “The Handel style that you used for the *Messiah* that you sang was excellent, was beautiful, but the Bach style is not quite ready yet.” The audition was for the Bach B Minor Mass, so I didn’t get that job, but he hired me for the *Messiah* that Christmas. Then a couple years later he did the B Minor Mass and hired me for that. When you get to sing with somebody who’s had that kind of influence

and who’s an idol, that’s a dream come true. I had no idea I would get to work with him for the next thirteen years. That work with Shaw really was the catalyst for my career.

**TC:** I’m just gonna call out some things and get your take on it. *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.

**MS:** (Laughs) I will say honestly, that was the second opera that I’ve ever done. The first was *The Play of Daniel* in elementary school. *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, however, brings back such fond memories ‘cause I was in high school and I had to convince my brother Joseph to play Amahl. He was in the boys choir at the time and I had to convince him to wear tights. And I remember saying, “Now you gotta wear a leotard!” That was a big deal, he did not want to wear a leotard! But he did, and that’s another case when our voices were such a beautiful blend. There’s a part at the end of the opera where the mother and the son are saying goodbye to each other, and when we were singing it we started bawling. We’re just singing our hearts out and sobbing and singing and the audience was very moved by that.

**TC:** Okay. I’ve got another one for you. Clara from *Porgy and Bess*.

**MS:** Out of my mind, should’ve never done it! The hubris of youth! I did it one time, the Lord have mercy. I think that man hired me because he liked the idea of two sisters being in that production, but oh my goodness. That role made me so nervous because really, Clara’s too high for me. But I was young and I did it. Joy and I were in it together. Met some fabulous people. You’re hard pressed in *Porgy and Bess* not to have a great experience from the community.

**TC:** Bach B Minor Mass.

**MS:** One of my favorite, favorite pieces ever. I’ve had so many fabulous experiences with that piece and I’ll tell you a couple of them. One, when I came to girls high, the music director for the choir was William Murphy. A great man, and I’ll tell you why. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful voice. Made the choice to have less of a career to take care of his family, so he taught at this high school. So I walk into high school in ninth grade and because I had all this chorale singing experience, I go to the music teacher’s office



Simpson as Maria in the Houston Opera production of *Porgy and Bess* at La Scala in Milan, Italy in 1996.



Simpson singing the role of Marcellina in August Opera's production of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, 1986.



Simpson in costume for her role as Katisha in Minnesota Opera's production of *The Mikado*, 1989.



and say, "I'd like to join the choir." And he says, "I don't generally admit freshmen into the choir." So he asked me to talk about myself and my experience and then takes out a book of Bach chorales. No words, you know, just the chorales in keyboard form. And he says, "Can you sight read, not the melody, but the alto part?" So I did, and he says, "Rehearsal is Monday..." (Laughs) I have such an affinity for Bach because one of the first recordings I ever heard was *The Life of Bach*, and we just listened to this recording over and over so I have a real connection.

**TC:** Evelyn Simpson-Currentin.

**MS:** There are so many memories. When Evelyn first started composing I used to write out the orchestral orchestrations for her. At the time she didn't do that by hand, she would write them out in books and then she would need them scored. So for her first orchestral score, I did the orchestrations.

**TC:** Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Stop playin'.

**MS:** I'm not playin'. I did that! She didn't transpose back then, so I wrote out all the transpositions. I was the instrumentalist, so I knew how to transpose for the french horn, the trumpet, the clarinet. When Evelyn made arrangements for George Shirley and Joy to sing with the National Symphony and they were using an orchestral score, I wrote that score.

**TC:** That is somethin'. You could have gone so many different ways in music. So that's why you and Evelyn are so connected organically. I mean of course you've got the family thing where you've just grown up doing music, but I think it's deeper than that.

**MS:** We had a lot of different musical experiences, right? So this is a funny Evelyn story. We're on the road doing concerts together, and at the time she was writing arrangements for Kathleen Battle and Jessye Norman. We're riding two or three hundred miles a day doing concerts at night. She'd be sitting there writing, sometimes sobbing, and then she'd hand me the score and say, "Look at this." And I'd look at the music and say, "Yeah that looks great (laughs)." Because I know she can hear all of what she just wrote. I'm looking at it thinking, "I can do this one line at a time, but honey I can not hear what you are hearing!"

**TC:** So your collaborations with Evelyn over the years. When did that start? What was the impetus?

**MS:** Well, first of all, I watched her collaborate with Joy. She and Joy did stuff together for a long time until Joy passed away. As a matter of fact, the last thing that Joy sang was Evelyn's arrangement of "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child." And she had an aneurysm and passed out on stage. So I had a long history of watching them. And then Evelyn, Joseph and I would sing together. So our whole lives we've been doing things together.

**TC:** Joy Simpson. How did she influence you?

**MS:** Joy Elizabeth Simpson was really an instrumental influencer in the lives of each and every one of her siblings. First of all, she was the classical singer. She was next to the oldest. I was next to the youngest, and I used to annoy the heck out of her. There was a twelve year age difference. She was the first to do so many things in our family. First one to move away from home, first one to have a classical career. She showed us what those steps looked like and because she also went through some of the pitfalls, it allowed me think, "Nope, don't want to go that way. Mmm, don't do that." Some things where I might have made different choices, I didn't because I saw what happened to her. She also stepped in like a surrogate parent for all of us. She was able to go speak to people on our behalf. In some places where my parents didn't always feel comfortable going, they would send her.

**TC:** What was your first breakthrough in the opera world?

**MS:** Getting into the Houston Opera studio was a big deal. Prior to that, I got into the Chautauqua summer program as an apprentice in 1984, and from there I auditioned for Houston. And from Houston, I auditioned for Glyndebourne and got the role of Maria in *Porgy and Bess*. So Chautauqua really set all of those other things in motion, because it's all about getting into the network.

**TC:** How did you get to IU?

**MS:** Once again the network. Sylvia McNair, who I sang with a lot under Robert

Shaw, called me one day and said, "I'm doing work with IU through the Foundation." And she's of course an alum of IU. And she asked me, "Would you ever be interested in teaching?" My daughter was in college already. I always assumed that I would teach and it was at the right point in my life. So I said to Sylvia, "You know IU is a lot different than any kind of educational experience that I've ever had. I'm used to smaller places." She said, "But I think you'd be a really good fit, and I think you would be surprised at what there is here. Would you mind if I put your name on the list of people to recommend to the department?" So I said, "Sure, that would be fine." So a couple months later I got a phone call from IU and a few weeks later they offered me the job. This was in August of 2005.

**TC:** Were there any challenges in this transition?

**MS:** Absolutely. One of the challenges of being predominantly on the road and then coming into academia is the sameness. Coming to the same place every day is a challenge... I think as educators our vision always has to be about something broader, because we're training people not for where we are, but for outside of this space. Because the music business and art is so much bigger than this space. What we're doing here is important, but it's important within the context of a broader field, a broader conversation—not just conversations that we're having within smaller spaces.

**TC:** Has teaching impacted your artistry?

**MS:** Absolutely. First of all, when you have to reexamine how to create art, in terms of the function and process, it makes you reexamine your own process. It makes me ask, "How do I do that? Am I doing things the way I'm teaching other people to do it?" I still take lessons. If I have to go do a job, trust me, I'm still preparing the music with somebody because number one, there's the embarrassment factor. Because we don't hear ourselves, I don't want to go out thinking something sounds a certain way and realize it doesn't sound like that at all. You always need to check in with an outside set of ears and then an outside set of eyes that can say, "Do you realize you're singing to the left, or you're pulling to the right, or your jaw is moving in such a way..." You need to have



(photo: Joseph Simpson)

an outside evaluator that keeps you true to the way you're trying to create art.

**TC:** Artists tend to get boxed into a certain category in the industry. You've got to fit within a label, but most artists are broader than the label. So how are you transcending these labels in practice and in performance? Are there any types of adjustments that you feel you have to make?

**MS:** You have to know your voice and know that it's okay that you don't sing everything. I know I can approximate certain things, but there's certain ways I can't sing. My voice is not at its best in those ways, so I don't even try to do that. I've gotten to that place where I can accept and admire that in other people's voices, but I don't have that in my voice. So I respect that and I don't try to be all the things to all people. I just try to sing it in the voice that I have. I also, generally, don't sing all things at all times because they require different ways of managing your voice. I had an opportunity to sing a classical concert, but it was literally two days after I had to sing a really belty Broadway piece and I thought that shift was too fast. I'm

not going to be able to really warm up into that classical music so I'm not going to do that. I also know what the boundaries are of my voice, and I'm not going to cross those boundaries. Because I've been singing now, I can hardly believe I'm gonna say this, for over fifty years. So I know what it is I need to do and if something feels odd, I stop.

**TC:** Since you've been in this business over fifty years now, singing in different sectors, what would you say your challenges have been?

**MS:** One of the biggest challenges is feeling, in some situations, if you're enough. Whether or not you feel Black enough. When you're around your own people, not feeling cool enough. When you are in certain situations, feeling enough of yourself. So what I have done recently is just try to occupy this space. Because sometimes as African American people, to speak really honestly, we try to make everybody else comfortable, right? I occupy so many spaces where I'm the only Black person, so part of the challenge, and this has been true throughout my career, is negotiating that space while remaining

true to yourself and carrying the weight of your community with you.

**TC:** So talk about the impact of your religion.

**MS:** When I think about religion, it is about faith in God. And faith in God's ability to order your life in such a way that even if there is a detour in your life, God has your steps ordered. There is no doubt in my mind that God's hand has been on my life from the beginning to this day. Because my faith is not a part of my life, it is my life, and the singing and the music comes from that place. So when people say, "There's something special about what you do," I know it is from that faith place and it's not separate from who I am. In Him we live, we move, we have our being. And I've had the opportunity to meet some incredible people.

**TC:** You amaze me!

*A video recording of the full interview with Professor Simpson is available at the AAAMC.*

—Edited by Dr. Tyrone Cooper and Brenda Nelson-Strauss

## Featured Collection:

# Introducing the Marietta Simpson Collection

Showcasing all stages of soprano Marietta Simpson's illustrious career, the collection recently donated by Simpson chronicles her early childhood concerts with her family's group, the "Singing Simpsons," continues through her college education, professional opera roles and concertizing, as well as her current position as Rudy Professor of Music (Voice) in IU's Jacobs School of Music.

Programs form one of the largest series in the collection with over 400 items, ranging from Simpson's grade school performances during the early 1970s to her concerts at IU in 2019. This series reveals the wide range of her repertoire, from Handel and Bach to Negro spirituals and twenty-first century works, performed throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. The programs also highlight Simpson's signature performances, such as Bach's Mass in B Minor, Handel's *Messiah*, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, in addition to lesser known works including Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, Hindemith's *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, and Janacěk's *Glagolitic Mass*. Some recurring opera roles include Maria from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, Prince Orlofsky from Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, and Addie from Blitzstein's *Regina*. Simpson also participated in several world premieres, notably Penderecki's *Credo*, Eötvös's *Of Love and Other Demons* in the role of Dominga, and Lembet Beecher's *Sky on Swings* as Martha.

Press clippings in the collection primarily consist of performance reviews, the earliest

dating back to Simpson's participation in the Young Artists Program at the Chautauqua Opera Company in the mid-1980s. Her musical influences and roles in upcoming productions, such as the premiere of Anthony Davis's opera, *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*, are also highlighted in specific articles.

Correspondence between Simpson and her managers discloses the business aspects of a professional singer, including travel itineraries, schedules, and contracts with various performing arts organizations. On the more personal side, there are many greeting cards sent to Simpson from fellow cast members and thank you notes from some of the many students she has mentored over the years.

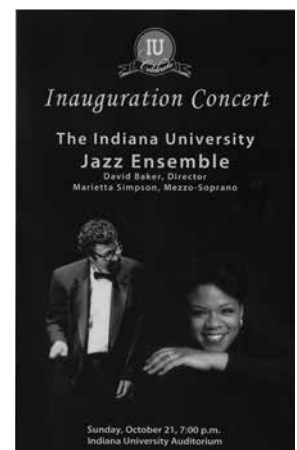
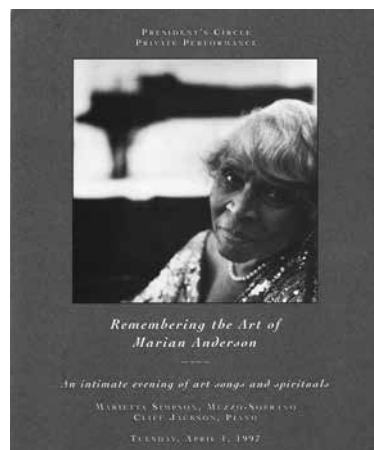
Members of Simpson's musical family are featured in several different series. Marietta often performed with her sister, composer and pianist Evelyn Simpson-Curenton, and also programmed Simpson-Curenton's compositions and arrangements of spirituals during their joint recitals. Other items show Marietta's relationship with her older sister, Joy, also an opera singer and pianist, who encouraged Marietta to follow a similar path. One poignant newspaper clipping describes Marietta's response to Joy's death, where she explained, "When you're singing you have to give so much of yourself, and [Joy's death] made it really hard to do that." The media series includes published and unpublished audio recordings of many of Simpson's opera and art music performances, as well as rehearsals and coaching sessions. The latter reveal

both sides of Simpson's career: there are recordings where Simpson is being tutored by a vocal coach, and others where she is coaching her own students. Compilations of family performances and events are found among the video recordings, including the memorial for Joy, and the homegoing service for her father, Melvin H. Simpson, Sr.

Photographs reveal multiple facets of Simpson's life. There are historical photos of her family, a scrapbook from a trip to Japan with the Temple University marching band, and images from Simpson's early career as an apprentice with the Chautauqua Opera. Among the professional photographs are publicity headshots and documentation of her operatic roles in *Regina* and *Julio Cesare*, and multiple stagings of *Die Fledermaus* and *Porgy and Bess*. Many candid photographs are also included, some capturing Simpson and her colleagues backstage and in the green room.

Also contained in the collection are several musical scores, notably the facsimile score for Eötvös's opera, as well as a number of Negro spirituals. Items indicating some of Simpson's own musical influences include a program from Maria Callas and Giuseppe di Stefano's recital at the Academy of Music, as well as a signed portrait of Leontyne Price. Rounding out the collection are opera props, such as a pipe from a performance of *Porgy and Bess*, custom gowns that Simpson wore for performances, and other memorabilia.

—Emily Baumgart



Programs from the Marietta Simpson Collection.





Dr. Tyron Cooper accompanying Marietta Simpson (photo: Joseph Simpson).

## Crooked Stick: Songs in a Strange Land

In celebration of Black History Month, the AAAMC presented acclaimed mezzo-soprano Marietta Simpson in concert on February 17, 2019 in IU's WTIU Studio 6. The event coincided with the release of Simpson's new album, *Crooked Stick: Songs in a Strange Land*, produced by AAAMC Director, Dr. Tyron Cooper, as well as the establishment of the Marietta Simpson Collection at the AAAMC. Featuring Negro spirituals newly arranged by Dr. Cooper, the concert also included songs from the album. Guest performers during the live performance included Simpson's sister, the well-known composer Evelyn Simpson-Curenton (piano), as well as Dr. Marcos Cavalcante (guitar), Tyron Cooper (guitar, music director), Kevin Cooper (guitar), Brennan Johns (trumpet), Dennis Perez (percussion), Kenny Phelps (drums) and Brandon Meeks (bass). The Crooked Stick concert was filmed live by WTIU and will air on PBS in February 2020.

The title "Crooked Stick" stems from the expression to "hit a straight lick with a crooked stick," which is the act of achieving outstanding exploits with limited resources. According to Simpson, this expression is analogous to the plight of African people who were "ripped from their native land, sold, beaten, plucked from families, and often treated worse than animals." Simpson states, "These communal songs served as vehicles for envisioning a better life in this world and beyond. The Negro spiritual is therefore a tangible representation of what it means to 'hit a straight lick with a crooked stick.' That is, slaves transformed the misery of their daily plantation life (i.e., crooked stick) into something beautiful and creative that would sustain the songs and souls of Black folk for generations to come (i.e., straight lick)."

The evening began with the band entering the stage, and without fanfare striking up a shuffle blues with slide



February 17, 2019  
6:00 PM (Doors at 5:30)  
WTIU Studio 6 in the Radio-TV building  
Free Admission  
Reception following in the NMBCC Grand Hall

Music Director, Dr. Tyron Cooper, with guest performers Evelyn Simpson-Curenton (piano), Dr. Marcos Cavalcante and Kevin Cooper (guitar), Brennan Johns (trumpet), Dennis Perez (percussion), Kenny Phelps (drums), Brandon Meeks (bass).

Co-Sponsored by the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center, WTIU-TV/PBS, the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies, and the Jacobs School of Music



Standing behind Marietta Simpson (left to right): Dr. Marcos Cavalcante, Brennan Johns, Kenny Phelps, Evelyn Simpson-Curenton, Dr. Tyron Cooper, Brandon Meeks, Kevin Cooper, and Dennis Perez. (photo: Joseph Simpson)

guitar, growling muted trumpet and Basie-like melodic fragments on piano over the rhythmic drive of the core instrumental section. Shortly after the band's intro, Simpson walked on stage to thunderous applause while the instrumentalists maintained a steady groove. Simpson quickly launched into a medley beginning with her soulful rendition of "Didn't It Rain," a song most closely associated with gospel icon Sister Rosetta Tharpe. The mood was cheerful, the musicians were enthusiastic, and Simpson was zesty and high-spirited. On Dr. Cooper's cue, the band transitioned into a fervent arrangement of "Home in Glory." Simpson's vocal phrasing, tonality, and interpretation expressed the urgent desire and resistance of the enslaved who sought an alternative reality (i.e., physical escape or the afterlife) from the inhumane conditions of slavery. The instrumentalists added to this haunting interpretation by employing specific devices to create a unique sonic image. For instance, Perez used an actual chain, which he dropped on a wooden plank on beat one of each measure to emphasize the monotony of

forced labor on a hot and muggy southern plantation.

As the medley concluded, the band commenced the second tune of the set, "No Hiding Place." At the top of this song, Simpson stepped to the side of the stage, leaving room for the audience to view Johns as he crafted an explosive improvised solo over the up-tempo bluegrass foundation provided by the rhythm section. Johns riffed on the blues, incorporating growls, slurs, and blue notes from the bottom to top registers of his horn, as Simpson, the band and audience members stomped their feet, bobbed their heads and shouted in the affirmative, "play Brennan!" Rejoining the band after Johns' introduction, Simpson's buoyant tone resonated across the room as she sang the lyrics, "there's no hidin' place down here."

Following these opening songs, Simpson officially welcomed everyone to her CD release concert. While the roving cameras in a television studio setting could have produced some anxiety among the performers and audience members, the artists' witty and thought

provoking comments quelled any concerns throughout the performance, thus shifting the environment to a more familial and communal space that encouraged participation among attendees. After the brief pleasantries, Simpson resumed her set with a heartfelt rendition of "Swing Low" featuring Simpson-Curenton and Dr. Cooper. Their profound trio rendering was followed by a dynamic percussive interlude by Phelps and Perez, which led into "Every Time I Feel the Spirit." The rest of the cast joined in with the robust percussive vocables "huh!" on beat one, essentially becoming human drums, as Simpson joyfully expressed the sentiments of the lyrics. The audience was then treated to a solo bass interlude before a medium-tempo rendition of "Ain't a Dat Good News." Reduced to just voice, bass, and trumpet, the setting shifted into a jazzy serene mood as Simpson told us all about the "good news": "I got a home up in a dat kingdom, ain't a dat good news?" As she transitioned to "Hold On," Simpson revisited the blues over a medium-tempo accompaniment of guitar and piano embellishing the



(photo: Joseph Simpson)

tonic chord. Along with providing the instrumental backing, Dr. Cooper and Simpson-Curenton supported Simpson by providing vocal backgrounds reflective of a traditional Black church congregation responding to the climax of a sermon. Guitarists Dr. Cavalcante and Kevin Cooper joined in later with tasteful solos that accentuated the grit of the words, “Hold on, keep your hand on the plow, hold on.”

After Simpson and the band exited the stage for a brief break, Dr. Cooper informed the audience about AAAMC’s mission to collect, preserve and disseminate Black music and culture in innovative ways; one of which the audience experienced on that night. Simpson then re-entered the stage and rendered a thought-provoking performance of “Steal Away,” supported sparsely by Dr. Cooper on acoustic guitar, which created a reposeful ambience that laid the foundation for the subsequent reflective a capella offering, “How Come Me Here.” During this song, Simpson’s lone, deeply resonant voice narrated the inner turmoil and strife of an enslaved woman lamenting the selling of her children, lack of freedom,

and her very existence in a world that would lend itself to such inhumane treatment of Black people: “Lawd, how come me here? I wish I never was born.”

In the midst of the ensuing silence and reverence, Simpson slowly proceeded from center stage to the piano and, once seated, improvised soft plaintiff chords while Simpson-Curenton sat next to her sibling with tears in her eyes. After playing for a few minutes Simpson then began to sing, “Oh Freedom,” one of the most meaningful spirituals illustrating the resolve of the enslaved who decided that death, and ultimately spiritual liberation would be their plight before they would voluntarily succumb to perpetual servitude: “And, before I be a slave, I’ll be buried in my grave and go home to my Lord and be free.” Towards the end of this piece, Simpson-Curenton gently transitioned back to the piano as accompanist, concluding with both sisters sharing a seat at the instrument before Simpson finally returned to the stage as the rest of the band re-entered.

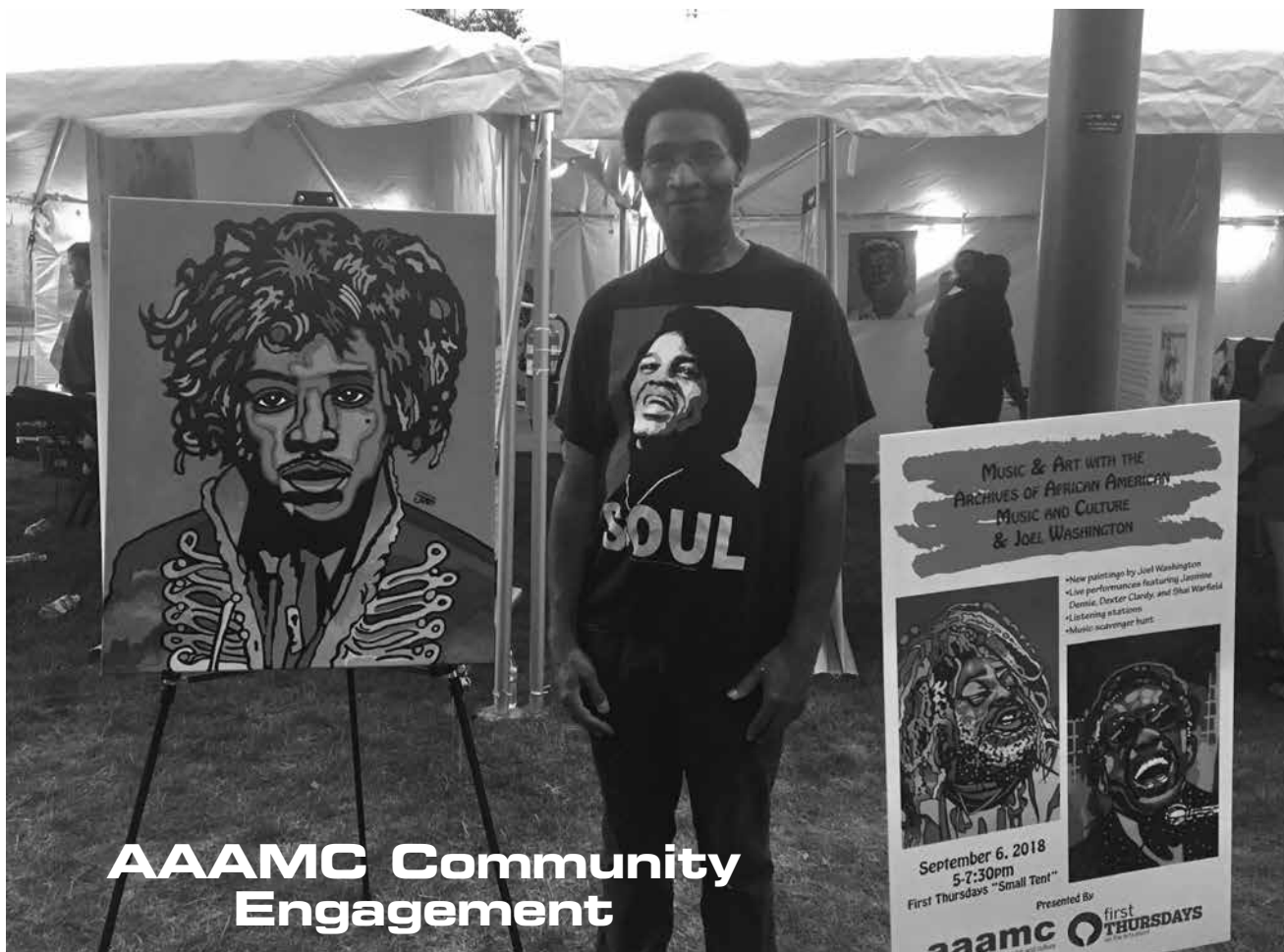
The performance continued with another heartwarming arrangement of

“Guide My Feet,” followed by Simpson introducing the band. The ensemble then performed “This Little Light of Mine,” supported by enthusiastic singing of the full audience. With the full-throated engagement of onlookers, the band quickly transitioned to what would be the final song of the set, “Done Made My Vow to the Lord.” Couched in an electrifying up-tempo, this piece really got the audience toe tapping and clapping along until the end of the show. After receiving a standing ovation, Simpson and her supporting cast returned to the stage for an impromptu version of “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” prompting attendees to sing along and concluding the concert on a joyful note.

At the reception following the concert, co-sponsored by the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center, Simpson signed copies of her CD for appreciative fans while another talented sibling, Joseph Simpson, documented the event through photographs.

— Jamaal Baptiste





## AAAMC Community Engagement

Artist Joel Washington standing next to his portrait of Jimi Hendrix.

Sharing the rich resources of the AAAMC outside of the Archives' physical space is an ideal way to reach more members of the IU campus and local community for the purpose of presenting cultural materials and expressions associated with our collections. Over the past year, the AAAMC had an opportunity to participate in two high profile public events that offered a venue for showcasing collections. Building on our mobile exhibit and educational activities, staff developed innovative events that engaged participants in the exploration of Black music and culture.

### Music & Art with the AAAMC & Joel Washington

Indiana University Bloomington's First Thursdays festival is a monthly campus celebration of the arts and humanities. For the 2018-2019 season kick-off on September 6, 2018, the AAAMC hosted an acoustic tent featuring a live music performance and paintings by celebrated

Indiana artist Joel Washington. Easels and the inner walls of the tent displayed new acrylic paintings of Black musicians by Washington, several created especially for this event. Featured musicians depicted in Washington's vibrant style included Prince, Aretha Franklin, Michael Jackson, Jimi Hendrix, and George Clinton.

To bring the educational potential of special collections to life in an interactive way, the AAAMC's mobile exhibit "Rock, Rhythm and Soul" was paired with a scavenger hunt newly created by graduate assistant Kennedy Johnson. Participants were invited to peruse the banners' captions to hunt for the answers to questions about hip hop, soul, rock, funk, gospel, R&B, Black radio, and the music and soundscape of the Civil Rights Movement. Upon completion, participants could select prizes including CDs and sweet treats. The activity was extremely popular with all age groups, including children still in elementary school as well as a few "in the know" faculty who sought bragging rights for correctly

answering questions without referencing the banners.

To stimulate event-goers aurally as well as visually and cognitively, the AAAMC's tent featured live musical performances by former IU Soul Revue students: Shai Warfield (lead singer of the Fat Pockets), Jasmine Dennis (Fat Pockets), and Dexter Clardy (lead singer of Huckleberry Funk). They were accompanied by guitarist Mike Gronksy (Huckleberry Funk) and AAAMC graduate assistants Bobby Davis Jr. and Jamaal Baptiste, alternating on piano and percussion, with Dr. Tyron Cooper serving as MC. Prior to the event, Jamaal and Bobby helped the singers dig into the Archives' extensive music collections for inspiration, then arranged their selections for solo and group performance, weaving in threads from Washington's paintings to create a rich experiential tapestry of Black music and culture.

Inside the tent, AAAMC's Digital Archivist William Vanden Dries, Head of Collections Brenda Nelson-Strauss,



Graduate assistant Kennedy Johnson at AAAMC's activity table, First Thursdays festival.

and undergraduate student assistant Jared Griffin operated listening stations for 45s, LPs, CDs, and cassettes. For participants inspired by Joel Washington's art, line drawings of his paintings of George Clinton and Ray Charles were available at a coloring activity table overseen by undergraduate student assistant Chloe McCormick. The First Thursdays event was a huge success offering something for folks of all ages to enjoy and learn about African American expressive culture.

### Bloomington Music Expo

Several months after the First Thursdays festival, the AAAMC was invited to participate in the Bloomington Music Expo at the downtown convention center. The inaugural event proved to be a lively, all-day celebration of music and art, as thousands of people strolled through booths hosting educational activities, record and poster sales, and information about music related opportunities around town. The AAAMC's "Rock, Rhythm and Soul"



AAAMC's "Rock, Rhythm and Soul" exhibit at Bloomington Music Expo.

exhibit was once again on display, and many visitors participated in the scavenger hunt mentioned above, while others stopped by the booth to learn more about AAAMC collections. A highlight was the AAAMC's musical showcase on the main stage featuring a group led by Bobby Davis Jr. The performance offered a survey of

Black popular music, ranging from message songs and love ballads to more festive party grooves. The event provided yet another opportunity for the AAAMC to bring its collections alive while engaging the broader community.

—Kennedi Johnson and William Vanden Dries



# sound bytes: digital initiatives



Michael Nixon (left) organizing "Rolling Rose Royce" promotion for the band Rose Royce, circa 1977 (Michael Nixon Collection).

## New Finding Aids

Over the past year, online finding aids to four AAAMC collections have been published on IU's Archives Online site:

- Undine Smith Moore Collection: includes compositions, photographs, and media documenting the composer's career from 1951-1981. The media portion contains videocassettes of the three part series, *Black Creative Artists Close-Up* (produced by IU Instructional Television and the Afro-American Arts Institute), featuring performances of Moore's works as well as interviews conducted by Lillian Dunlap.
- William Banfield Collection: documents the composer and scholar's career from 1983-2007, including his tenure at IU.



Dr. William Banfield

Included are manuscript scores of his original compositions, promotional material relating to performances, and recordings and transcripts of interviews Banfield conducted with a variety of African American composers. Some of these interviews were used in Banfield's radio series, *Landscapes in Color*, which is also included.

- Murray Forman Collection: includes an extensive collection of hip hop magazines utilized by Forman for his acclaimed book, *The Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* (2002). Forman donated more than 300 magazines published from 1989-2006, and the finding aid includes a brief contents list for each.
- Logan H. Westbrooks Collection: one of the AAAMC's largest collections is now fully described (see feature in *Liner Notes* 17). The professional and personal papers, photographs, sound recordings, video recordings, digital files, posters, books, memorabilia, and artifacts document the life and career of the music industry executive from the 1930s through the present.



All of the above collections are open for research; requests for further information regarding contents, access and use may be submitted to [aaamc@indiana.edu](mailto:aaamc@indiana.edu). Some of the above collections include photographs and media that have been digitized and are accessible through online platforms (see below). If you are interested in perusing a collection on-site you are welcome to schedule a visit.

## Image Collections Online

Five collections of photographs were published in IU's Image Collections Online (ICO) over the past year. The bulk of these new additions are from the Teresa Hairston Collection and include hundreds of images of gospel artists and events. AAAMC staff continue to scan the thousands of prints in this collection and more will be added in the near future. The new additions to ICO include:

- Teresa Hairston Collection (872 images)
- Michael Nixon Collection, circa 1969-2006 (78 images)
- Undine Smith Moore Collection, 1951-1981 (5 images)
- William Banfield Collection, 1983-2007 (7 images)
- Michael Lydon Collection, 1970-2002 (1 image)

We invite everyone to browse these images and assist with our cataloging efforts. If you have information to share, including the identities of the artists, please click on the "Contact the Curator" link at the bottom of the page and add a brief note.

## MDPI Updates

Through the Media Digitization and Preservation Initiative (MDPI), IU continues to digitize materials from collections across multiple campuses. As the project nears completion, the focus has shifted to moving image materials, including the following from AAAMC collections:

- 300 miniDV video tapes primarily from the Portia K. Maulsby Collection, the James Spooner Collection, and AAAMC

conference "Reclaiming the Right to Rock: Black Experiences in Rock Music."

- 6 open reel video tapes from the Mellonee Burnim Collection documenting gospel music concerts in Indianapolis and Texas.
- 76 film reels of 8mm home movies and field recordings from the Gertrude Rivers Robinson Collection (see feature in *Liner Notes 22*).
- 150 non-commercial VHS videos largely sourced from the newly donated Calloway Collection and the Teresa Hairston Collection.

As is the case for many obsolete media formats that are difficult to preview, the content on many of these films and videos are being seen for the first time in many years. The AAAMC looks forward to making the content from these films and videos accessible to researchers through Media Collections Online in the near future.

## Media Collections Online

The AAAMC continued to upload digitized and born-digital audio and video content to IU's Media Collections Online (MCO) site. Whenever possible, media is made available online without access restrictions; however, due to copyright, the majority of digitized audio and video files, as well as related transcripts, are limited to single-user authorized access. Please contact the AAAMC for details.

Of the thousands of AAAMC files added to MCO over the last year, the bulk of the audio represents the LPs in our vinyl collection. Now that the digitized content has been uploaded, staff are beginning the process of adding the LPs to the online library catalog, IUCAT, with links to MCO. The LP audio files will be accessible to students, faculty and staff on all IU campuses, as well as to individual researchers off-campus on a case-by-case basis.

Special recognition goes to AAAMC graduate assistant Jamaal Baptiste for his work on digitizing, describing, and uploading the collection of interviews recorded on microcassettes in the Teresa Hairston Collection. One of the few formats not digitized at MDPI, microcassettes have

presented various challenges, but Jamaal has diligently worked to preserve their content.

In 1998, the AAAMC collaborated with the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Ohio on the exhibition *Something in the Water: The Sweet Flavor of Dayton Funk*. AAAMC staff interviewed notable funk musicians from Dayton and their relatives and former teachers, as well as local disc jockeys and club and record label owners. These interviews are now available to students, faculty and staff on all IU campuses, as well as researchers off-campus upon request.

Another recent addition is the *Wade in the Water* radio program, produced by NPR in 1994 in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution, and conceived and hosted by Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon. The broadcast versions of the 25 programs, as well as several rough cuts of episodes, have been digitized for research purposes.

Additional collections with media content digitized by MDPI and uploaded to MCO include:

- Eddie Castleberry Collection, 1951-1999
- William Banfield Collection, 1983-2007
- Michael Lydon Collection, 1970-2002
- Jocko Henderson Collection, 1971-2003

For additional information, go to the "Explore Collections" tab on the AAAMC website or go directly to: [aaamc.indiana.edu/Collections/Online-Access](http://aaamc.indiana.edu/Collections/Online-Access) (follow the links to Archives Online, ICO, and MCO).



Hip hop scholar, Dr. Murray Forman (center), at the AAAMC with graduate assistants Jamaal Baptiste and Kennedy Johnson.

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