



THE ART OF  
THE NEGRO  
SPIRITUAL

**VOCAL RECITAL**

**RANDYE JONES  
SOPRANO**

**WILLIAM TINKER  
PIANO**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2008  
2:00 P.M.  
HERRICK CHAPEL  
GRINNELL COLLEGE  
GRINNELL, IOWA**

**The Art of the Negro Spiritual**

**Movin' into the 20th Century**

**Randye Jones, soprano  
William Tinker, piano**

**Sunday, April 6, 2008**

**2:00 p.m.**

**Herrick Chapel  
Grinnell College  
Grinnell, Iowa**

**Program**

*Five Creek Freedmen Spirituals* \*

Dry Bones

Sit Down Servant

Lord, I Just Can't Keep From Cryin'

You Can Tell the World

I'll Reach to Heaven

Margaret Bonds  
(1913-1972)

Is There Anybody Here That Loves My Jesus

Come Down Angels

I'm a Poor Li'l Orphan in This Worl'

Free at Last

Din' It Rain

Undine Smith Moore  
(1904-1989)

Moore

Julia Perry  
(1924-1979)

Perry

Thomas Kerr, Jr.  
(1915-1988)

**Intermission**

Dramatic Declamation (from *Lyric Suite*)

Jesus, Lay Your Head in the Window

This Little Light of Mine

Calvary

Ride Up in de Chariot

Robert L. Morris  
(b. 1941)

Hale Smith  
(b. 1925)

Smith  
Betty Jackson King  
(1928-1994)

Jackson King

Ain't That Good News (from <i>O Redeemed!</i> )	Uzee Brown, Jr. (b. 1942)
I Want Jesus to Walk with Me	Maria Thompson Corley (b. 1966)
Walk Together Children	Moses Hogan (1957-2003)
Over My Head, I Hear Music in the Air (from <i>Tryin' To Make Heaven My Home</i> )	Brown
Toccata (from <i>Cantata</i> )	John Carter (1932-1981?)

\* Please withhold applause until end of first session



## The Composers

Bonds completed work on *Five Creed-Freedmen Spirituals* in 1942 for the Town Hall debut of soprano Hortense Love. The two women had begun talking about creating the work while they were students at Northwestern. For the preface of the song cycle, Love stated:

In the Southwest of the United States lies a wildly beautiful and fabulous strip of land, once called the "Indian Territory" but now known as Oklahoma. Dwelling there near Muskogee is a group of people called, "Creek-Freedmen" or "Natives" who are a mixture of Creek Indian and Negro. The fusion of these two races has produced a culture that is highly intelligent and artistic. The five songs collected here are excellent examples of the musical moods of these people who are deeply religious. The difference between these spirituals and others lies in the fact that the Negro's exuberance is tempered by the Indian's seriousness... From early childhood I have heard my grandmother, a "Native," sing these songs in both Creek Indian and English.

**Undine Smith Moore** (b. Jarrett, Virginia, 25 August 1904; d. Petersburg, Virginia, 6 February 1989). Moore's career as an educator included a 45-year tenure at Virginia State College. She shared her interest in the music of Black America through workshops and lectures across the United States. She composed choral works—receiving a Pulitzer Award nomination for her oratorio, *Scenes from the Life of a Martyr*—chamber and orchestral music, and

solo works for the voice and for various solo instruments. "Is There Anybody Here That Loves My Jesus" was composed in 1981, and "Come Down Angels" was composed for Karen Savage in 1978.

**Julia Perry** (b. 25 March 1924, Lexington, Kentucky; d. 24 April 1979, Akron, Ohio) Perry attended Westminster Choir College, where she studied voice, piano, drama, and conducting, and received her bachelor's and master's degrees. She gained international acclaim for her *Stabat Mater* for contralto and string orchestra. Her compositions included over 50 works for a variety of solo instruments, large and small ensembles, as well as solo vocal and choral works. "I'm a Poor Li'l Orphan in This Worl'" and "Free at Last," both composed in 1950, are the only spiritual settings by Perry currently known to be extant.

**Thomas Kerr, Jr.** (b. Baltimore, Maryland, 3 January 1915; d. Washington, DC, 26 August 1988) Kerr attended the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester, New York, where he received the Bachelor of Music degree. He joined the faculty at Howard University, Washington, DC, in 1943 and served for 35 years as a piano and composition instructor and organist. He also toured extensively as a concert pianist. Kerr composed primarily for the organ; however, he also wrote piano, choral, and solo vocal works, including "Din't It Rain."

**Robert Leigh Morris** (b. Chicago, Illinois, 22 April 1941) Morris received his bachelor's degree from DePaul University in Chicago, with graduate studies at Indiana University, Bloomington, and The University of Iowa, Iowa City. He served as choral director at Hampton University, Virginia, Winston-Salem State University, Jackson State University and Macalester College. He has also composed numerous works for mixed chorus. His *Lyric Suite: A Collection of Spirituals in Gospel Style*, was written in 1970 and published in 2000.

**Hale Smith** (b. Cleveland, Ohio, 29 June 1925) Smith's professional career included serving as an editor and music choral consultant for various music publishing houses and teaching at Long Island University and the University of Connecticut, Storrs. He has composed numerous orchestral and chamber works, as well as several choral and solo vocal pieces. His settings of "Jesus, Lay Your Head in the Window" and "This Little Light of Mine" were written in 1986 and published by his Halsco publishing company.

**Betty Lou Jackson King** (b. 17 February 1928, Chicago, Illinois; d. Wildwood, New Jersey, 1 June 1994) After completing her education in music composition, she developed a career as an educator, church musician, lecturer, choral director, composer, and music publisher. She composed "Calvary" in 1954 and dedicated the setting to bass-baritone William Warfield. This setting and "Ride Up in de Chariot" were published in 1983 in the compilation *God Is a God*.

**Uzee Brown, Jr.** (b. 14 November, 1942, Cowpens, South Carolina) studied at Morehouse College, received the MM degree in composition from Bowling Green State University and completed his doctoral studies in performance at the University of Michigan. Brown developed a career as an operatic and concert vocalist, researcher and educator, serving as chair of the Music Department at Morehouse. He was also president of the National Association of Negro Musicians.

"Aint A That Good News" is part of Brown's first eight-spirituals collection, *O Redeemed!*, which was published in 1994. *Tryin' To Make Heaven My Home*, published in 2002, is the second collection of spirituals Brown has composed for solo voice and piano. He credited his students at Morehouse as his inspiration for the compilation of eight spirituals. Included in his Performance Notes for the collection, Brown states that: "Over My Head, I Hear Music in the Air" is a beautiful contemplation on the presence of God as realized through the strains of heavenly music, singing and praying. These elements constitute the reassurance that *God is*. It suggests that the affirmation of His existence is perceived in and around us, not only through celestial phenomena but through the mystery of nature and events of everyday life.

**Maria Thompson Corley** (b. Jamaica, 1966) Corley's undergraduate work was completed at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, and she received both master's and doctorate degrees in piano performance from the Juilliard School. She is an author, composer and arranger of music for both solo voice and chorus, as well as an educator. Her first CD, a collaboration with tenor Darryl Taylor, was released internationally on the Naxos label in the summer of 2002.

Corley composed this setting of "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me" for Randy Jones, who gave its premiere in October 2003. The composer states: "The vocal solo at the beginning of the piece depicts a feeling of isolation, and says that although in life we feel like we must "go it alone" because no one can walk our path for us. The

singer is answered by the piano, which states that we don't have to walk alone--Jesus can walk with us. Having been given that idea, the singer picks up on it, going on to describe in which circumstances in particular she wants Jesus to walk with her. This spiritual always seems to me one of desperation, rather than quiet assurance, as if the speaker isn't sure Jesus will be there, but hopes so. The piano comments throughout with fragments of other spirituals about journeying and seeking the presence of God--"Guide my Feet, Lord" (while I run this race, for I don't want to run this race in vain) and more of "Jesus Walked this Lonesome Valley" (emphasizing that Jesus also has experienced what we do, and ultimately will be there so we don't have to walk alone)."

**Moses George Hogan** (b. 13 March 1957, New Orleans, Louisiana; d. 11 February 2003, New Orleans, Louisiana) Hogan graduated from the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Known first as a concert pianist, Hogan began organizing choral groups and composing for chorus as well as for solo voice. He was editor of the collection, *Oxford Book of Spirituals*. His solo vocal setting of "Walk Together Children" was recorded by countertenor Derek Lee Ragin.

**John Carter** was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1932. It is assumed that he is no longer living; however the reported year, 1981, is uncertain. He studied at Florida A&M University. Carter served as composer-in-residence with the National Symphony Orchestra (Washington, DC) in 1968 and was an instructor at Federal City College, Washington, in the 1970's. As a pianist, Carter toured extensively, accompanying performers such as tenor William Brown.

Carter's *Cantata* was published in 1964. The vocal suite was premiered by soprano Leontyne Price at Constitution Hall in Washington, DC. The composer talked about his work in an interview with famed musicologist Dominique-René de Lerma:

*Cantata* is based on a few well-known spirituals. I was always curious that Black composers rarely concerned themselves with this music. They've been arranged, but Black composers have not cared for their folk music as have Chopin or Bartók, for example... The last movement is a toccata, "Ride on, King Jesus..." As for the melodies, a lot of spirituals are pentatonic, and twelve minutes of five-note melodies might not be too interesting so I've not hesitated to alter the melodies.

## The Performers



**Randye Jones** received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education from Bennett College, Greensboro, North Carolina, where she was named to “Who’s Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities.” She completed her Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance from Florida State University, Tallahassee. Jones has gained international recognition for her research of African American vocalists and composers through her Web site, Afrocentric Voices in “Classical” Music. She conducts research and regularly presents lectures and recitals on the Negro spiritual. Her research project, *The Art of the Negro Spiritual*, has been profiled in publications such as *Billboard*. She has been a consultant for The Kennedy Center Honors and The Washington Chorus. She currently works on the Grinnell College Libraries staff.



**William Tinker** is a native of St Louis. He has received critical acclaim for his artistry as a piano, organist and harpsichordist in Europe and the United States. He holds degrees from The Juilliard School, The New England Conservatory of Music, Indiana University, and the Amsterdamisch Conservatorium. He has performed more than two thousand recitals and radio broadcasts. Tinker has performed the complete organ works of J. S. Bach five times including a series of 260 weekly broadcast recitals at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church-LCMS, Cleveland, Ohio, for National Public Radio, and for Radio Nederlands. Dr. Tinker is a Sinsinawa Dominican Associate and recently retired as Minister of Word and Music from St. Peter Lutheran Church, Dubuque. He resides at Mayflower Home, Grinnell.

## The Art of the Negro Spiritual

The Art of the Negro Spiritual is a research project that is looking into the rich history of the Negro Spiritual as written for solo vocal performance. We are researching the development of spirituals from the folk music of slaves of the United States to the art songs set for performance on the concert stage.

The goal of this project is to gather into one source information for the singer, vocal teacher, accompanist and musicologist. The anticipated results of this research will be presented as a book with accompanying compact disc recording of selected spirituals.

To learn more about The Art of the Negro Spiritual research project, or to engage Ms. Jones for an ANS recital or lecture, please visit [www.artofthenegrospiritual.com](http://www.artofthenegrospiritual.com) or call 641/821-0188.

Randye has been invited to do a live interview on Iowa Public Radio (KUNI). The program is expected to include portions of today’s spirituals recital and excerpts from recordings by others such as Marian Anderson, Paul Robeson, Leontyne Price, etc. The program, *The Exchange*, is scheduled to run on Wednesday, April 16, from 10-11 a.m. CDT. It can be heard at [www.kuniradio.org/kunilive.htm](http://www.kuniradio.org/kunilive.htm).

Randye released **Come Down Angels**, a compact disc of Negro spirituals recorded with pianist Frank Conlon during recitals in 2002. The recording is available for purchase at Grinnell’s Pioneer Bookstore or online at [www.ahhjayrecords.com](http://www.ahhjayrecords.com).

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*Untitled cover graphic by Eric Marlow, Washington, DC, 2003, commissioned by Randye Jones.*