



2017 African American Music & History and Multi-Cultural Milestones

Compiled by: **Dr. Hanson L. Caldwell**; Professor of Music & Humanities Emeritus
California State University Dominguez Hills | Email: ikoroed@gmail.com

Websites: African Diaspora Sacred Music: www.adsmm.org | Jester Hairston Production Project: www.jesterhairston.org

Plan Ahead! Program designers are encouraged to develop a plan that incorporates African American cultural history bicentennial, centennial and 50th Anniversary celebrations/information. Do not miss the opportunity to remember and celebrate our elders! Remember - The arts hurt -- The arts urge voyages - Life is short -- The arts are forever!

225 years ago, in 1792.

- Bugler/Band Leader/composer **FRANCIS B. "FRANK" JOHNSON** was born, (Jun 16), and became the first African American composer to have his compositions published as sheet music.

175 years ago, in 1842

- Minstrel (comedian/dancer) **WILLIAM "BILLY" KERSANDS** was born. He became one of the highest-paid entertainers of the 1870s and 1880s.
- Composer/conductor **CHARLES RICHARD LAMBERT** was active with the New Orleans Philharmonic Society Orchestra (the first non-theatrical orchestra in New Orleans).
- The first black convent, the **Convent of the Holy Family**, was established in New Orleans a Catholic order founded by Henriette DeLille, Juliette Gaudin & Josephine Charles as the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They provided a home for orphans and education for the enslaved (when teaching slaves was illegal).

150 years ago, in 1867

- Concert singer **E. AZALIA (Emma Azalia Smith) HACKLEY** was born.
- Singer/guitarist/harmonica player **JOHNNY "Daddy Stovepipe" WATSON** was born. (Apr 12)
- Entrepreneur **MADAM C. J. WALKER** (born Sarah Breedlove) was born. (Dec 23)
- The first collection of Negro spirituals was published, **SLAVE SONGS OF THE UNITED STATES** (collected by William Allen, Charles Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison).
- Singers **ANNA MADAH** and **EMMA LOUISE HYERS** made their concert debut in Sacramento, California.
- Visual artist **Mary Edmonia Lewis** created the dramatic sculpture **FOREVER FREE**, an artistic response to the Emancipation Proclamation.
- **HOWARD UNIVERSITY** is established (Mar 2) in Washington, D.C.
- **AGUSTA INSTITUTE** is founded in Georgia (later to become **MOREHOUSE COLLEGE**).

- **TALLADEGA COLLEGE** is founded in Alabama.
- **BIDDLE UNIVERSITY** is founded (later to become **JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY**).
- The Reconstruction Era begins in the South with the passage of the **FIRST RECONSTRUCTION ACT**.
- Actor **IRA ALDRIDGE** died.

125 years ago, in 1892

- Soprano **SISSIERETTA JOYNER JONES** ("The Black Patti") performed for President Benjamin Harrison at the White House.
- Singer/art-song composer **HARRY T. BURLEIGH** began his studies at the National Conservatory of Music where he worked with the director of the Conservatory, Czech composer **ANTONIN DVORAK**.
- **CAKEWALK** competitions are held across the country.
- **THE AFRO-AMERICAN newspaper** is founded by Rev. William M. Alexander in Baltimore, Maryland.

100 years ago, in 1917

- Jazz trumpeter/composer/bandleader **JOHN BIRKS DIZZY GILLESPIE** was born (Oct 21).
- Singer **ELLA FITZGERALD** was born. (Apr 25)
- Singer/actress **LENA HORNE** was born. (Jun 30)
- Blues artist **JOHN LEE HOOKER** was born. (Aug 22)
- Jazz pianist/composer **THELONIOUS SPHERE MONK** was born. (Oct 10)
- Jazz pianist/composer **TADLEY (Tad) EWING DAMERON** was born. (Feb 21)
- Classical composer **ULYSSES SIMPSON KAY** was born. (Jan 17)
- Jazz/Jump blues singer/alto saxophonist **EDDIE (CLEANHEAD) VINSON** was born. (Dec 18)
- Panamanian classical composer **ROQUE CORDERO** was born (Aug 16)
- Blues/jazz violinist (**PAPA**) **JOHNNY CREACH** was born. (May 28)
- Pulitzer prize winning Poet **GWENDOLYN BROOKS** (Poet Laureate of Illinois) was born. (Jun 7)
- Narrative painter **JACOB LAWRENCE** was born. (Sep 7)
- Visual artist, sculptor and co-founder of the Watts Towers Art Center **NOAH PURIFOY** was born. (Aug 17)
- Tenor **ROLAND HAYES** toured with the Hayes Trio, and made a debut performance at Symphony Hall in Boston, Massachusetts.
- Music critic **NORA HOLT** became the classical music critic for the Chicago Defender.
- **James Weldon Johnson** published **FIFTY YEARS AND**



OTHER POEMS, inaugurating the Harlem Renaissance.

- **Oscar Micheaux** produced his first silent film, **THE HOMESTEADER**, starring **Evelyn Preer**.
- **LUCY DIGGS SLOWE**, one of the founders of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, became the first African American woman athletic champion, winning the women's singles title at the first national American Tennis Association championships in Baltimore, Maryland.
- **Race riots** broke out in Houston, Texas and East St. Louis, Missouri.
- Ragtime composer **SCOTT JOPLIN** died (Apr 1).

75 years ago, in 1942

- Gospel singer/composer/pianist **ANDRAE EDWARD CROUCH** (Jul 1, 1942 - Jan 8, 2015), and his twin sister, singer **SANDRA CROUCH** (Jul 1) were born.
- Jazz trumpeter **DONALD AYLER** was born. (Oct 5)
- Jazz drummer/pianist/composer **JACK DEJOHNETTE** was born. (Aug 9)
- Guitarist/acid rock artist **JOHNNY (JIMI) HENDRIX** was born. (Nov 27)
- R&B singer/songwriter **ARETHA FRANKLIN** was born. (Mar 25)
- R&B singer **CARLA THOMAS** was born. (Dec 21)
- R&B singer/composer **ISAAC HAYES** was born. (Aug 20)
- R&B singer/composer **CURTIS MAYFIELD** was born. (Jun 3)
- Saxophonist **CHARLIE PARKER** joined the Earl Hines Orchestra. He joined a number of other musicians who were experimenting with the new BOP sound.
- Pop idol **BILLY ECKSTINE** began to build a singing career with his recording of *Skylark*.
- **Duke Ellington** and **Juan Tizol** composed **PERDIDO**, an early example of Afro-Cuban jazz.
- Singer **SARAH VAUGHAN** won the Apollo Theatre amateur night contest, and launched her career.
- Singer **DINAH WASHINGTON** toured with the Lionel Hampton Orchestra.
- **Capitol Records** was established in Hollywood by Glenn Wallichs, Johnny Mercer and Buddy DeSylva. The company was the first to establish the practice of giving records to disc jockeys. **NAT KING COLE** signed a contract with the company, and his many hits help build the company.
- The **Delta Rhythm Boys** began performing in Las Vegas.
- **The Mills Brothers** record **PAPER DOLL**, a song that became a major hit in 1943. It sold more than six million copies. They also recorded **LAZY RIVER** in this year. Over the span of their career they have at least seventy-one hit singles.
- Billboard Magazine created a ratings chart for African American music, known as **The Harlem Hit Parade**.
- **HOWARD SWANSON** composed the art song **THE NEGRO SPEAKS OF RIVERS**, using a text by Langston Hughes. It was performed in recital by contralto Marian Anderson, who often included the works of

African American composers in her many recitals.

- **WILLIAM GRANT STILL** composed the two-act opera, **A SOUTHERN INTERLUDE**.
- The U. S. Department of the Interior dedicated a **mural** to commemorate **Marian Anderson's 1939 Lincoln Memorial Concert**.
- **John H. Johnson** published his first magazine, **NEGRO DIGEST**.
- **CHARITY ADAMS (EARLEY)** became the first African American woman commissioned officer in the **Women's Army Auxiliary Corps** (evolving into **WACS**), and the commanding officer of the first battalion of African American women to serve overseas during World War II.
- **MARGURITE THOMAS** becomes the first African American woman to earn a Ph.D. in geology (from Catholic University).
- At least **six African Americans** were lynched.
- Jazz Bassist (Duke Ellington Band) **JAMES (JIMMY) BLANTON** died.
- Jazz guitarist **CHARLES "CHARLIE" CHRISTIAN** died.
- Composer **FREDERICK J. WORK** died.

50 years ago, in 1967

- **James Cleveland** organized the **GOSPEL MUSIC WORKSHOP OF AMERICA** to train and introduce people to the Gospel Music tradition.
- R&B singer **ARETHA FRANKLIN** recorded the **Otis Redding** hit **RESPECT** and **I NEVER LOVED A MAN** - her first hits for Atlantic records, and made her first European tour.
- **GLADYS KNIGHT AND THE PIPS** recorded the hit **I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE**.
- **Smokey Robinson and the Miracles** recorded the hits **THE LOVE I SAW IN YOU WAS JUST A MIRAGE, MORE LOVE, AND I SECOND THAT EMOTION**.
- Fortune Magazine reported that **Motown Records** was grossing thirty million dollars annually.
- **The Supremes** became **Diana Ross & The Supremes**, and **Florence Ballard** left the group.
- The psychedelic rock/soul group **Sly and the Family Stone** was formed in the San Francisco Bay area.
- **Dionne Warwick** attained special popularity with the Bachrach/David songs **Walk On By**, and **What the World Needs Now**.
- **The Four Tops** released the soul hit **Bernadette**.
- R&B singer **ISAAC HAYES** made his debut with the album **Presenting Isaac Hayes**.
- Blues singer **Etta James** recorded the classic **I'd Rather Go Blind**.
- Soul singers **Sam and Dave** had a hit with **SOUL MAN**.
- **THE ROBERTA MARTIN SINGERS** performed gospel music at the **Spoletto Festival of Two Worlds** in Italy.
- Opera Singer **SHIRLEY VERRETT** made her debut at London's Covent Garden.
- **Louis Armstrong** released **WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD**, a song that became a #1 hit in Great Britain.
- **Ray Charles** recorded the blues theme song for the



film **IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT**.

- Country singer **CHARLEY PRIDE** became the second African American performer to be a headliner Nashville's Grand Ole Opry. In 1993, after 36 No. 1 hits, 25 million albums sold, and after winning the 1971 CMA Entertainer and Male Vocalist of the Year awards, he accepted the invitation to join The Grand Ole Opry.
- The first **University of Idaho Jazz Festival** is held in 1967. In 1984 **Lionel Hampton, King of the Vibes**, joined the Festival's performing lineup. In 1985, the festival became the **Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival**, the first jazz festival to carry the name of an African American jazz artist. In 1987, the University's school of music became the **Lionel Hampton School of Music**.
- **Martin Luther King, Jr.** announced his opposition to the Vietnam War.
- **STOKELY CARMICHAEL** became leader of **SNCC**, and developed the "**BLACK POWER**" slogan.
- **Riots erupted** in more than 30 cities, including Newark, New Jersey, Detroit, New York City, Cleveland, Washington, D.C., Chicago and Atlanta.
- President Lyndon Baines Johnson appointed the **Kerner Commission** to study the cause of the riots.
- Opera singer **LILLIAN EVANTI** died.
- Jazz composer/arranger **BILLY STRAYHORN** died.
- Classical pianist **PHILIPPA DUKE SCHUYLER** died.
- Pop singer **JOHN MILLS, SR.** died.
- Soul singer **OTIS REDDING** died in a private airplane crash. Three days prior to his death he recorded **SITTIN' ON THE DOCK OF THE BAY**.
- Jazz artist **JOHN COLTRANE** died.
- Composer/educator/conductor **JOHN WESLEY WORK III** died.
- Blues singer **IDA COX** died.
- Painter/sculptor **SARGENT CLAUDE JOHNSON** died. (1888 – 1967)
- Author/poet/librettist **LANGSTON HUGHES** died.

Multicultural Celebrations

500 years ago, in 1517

- **THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION** began (1517 – 1648). This 16th century event was initiated by **Martin Luther, John Calvin, Huldrych Zwingli** and other early Protestant Reformers. It evolves into a religious, political, intellectual and cultural upheaval that splintered the Catholic church of Europe.

300 years ago, in 1717

- **George Friderick Handel's WATER MUSIC** is performed on the Thames River in London. (1717)

275 years ago, in 1742

- **George Frideric Handel's MESSIAH** is first performed in Dublin, Ireland. (1742)

225 years ago, in 1792

- **LA MARSEILLAISE** (the French national anthem) was composed by **Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle**.

175 years ago, in 1842

- **THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY** was founded, becoming the oldest symphony orchestra in the U.S.

150 years ago, in 1867

- inventor **WILBUR WRIGHT** was born. (1867 - 1912)

125 years ago, in 1892

- the **ELLIS ISLAND** immigration station opened in New York.

100 years ago, in 1917

- **JOHN F. KENNEDY** was born. (1917 – 1963)
- **Woodrow Wilson**, 28th president of the United States and the son of a Presbyterian minister, makes a speech to Congress, "**The World Must Be Made Safe for Democracy**," marking the entry of America into World War I. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve.
- **Vladimir Ilyich Lenin**, Marxist revolutionary and leader of the Bolshevik Party in Russia, publishes the **Power to the Soviets** speech, weeks before the Party seized power in the October Revolution. He wanted power to be taken into the hands of the working people (the proletariat) and the peasants rather than being held by the bourgeoisie. Lenin went on to become the first Soviet head of state (1917 - 1924).
- Musician/actor/producer **DESI ARNAZ** was born. (1917 - 1986)
- Actor **RAYMOND BURR** was born. (May 21, 1917 – 1993)
- Singer **DEAN MARTIN** was born. (1917 – 1995)
- **Harry Culver** becomes the founder of **CULVER CITY** (celebration - 2016 - 2017).

75 years ago, in 1942

- **Aaron Copland** composed two settings of **LINCOLN PORTRAIT**, for narrator & orchestra; and for narrator & concert band (1942). In the same year, he composed the ballet **RODEO; FANFARE FOR THE COMMON MAN** (for brass & percussion); and the ballet **APPALACHIAN SPRING**.
- English theoretical physicist and author **STEPHEN HAWKING** was born (Jan 8)
- **Franklin D. Roosevelt** was elected to this **fourth term** as president of the United States.
- The film, **CASABLANCA**, was released.

50 years ago, in 1967

- the **first human heart** was **transplanted** in South Africa, by surgeon **Christiaan Barnard**.
- **The Beatles** recorded and released **Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band**.

25 years ago, in 1992

- the Church of England voted to **ordain women**.