

Art Music by Caribbean Composers: Bahamas

**Christine Gangelhoff
Cathleen LeGrand**

The College of The Bahamas¹

INTRODUCTION

The Bahamas is an archipelago of hundreds of islands extending over several thousand square miles. Among the original settlers of the islands were the Eleutheran Adventurers, who settled in Eleuthera in 1648, and, a century later, British loyalists from the southern United States (Ingraham, 2007). The Bahamas continued as a British colony until it achieved independence in 1973. The cultural identity of the Bahamas owes much to its West African and British colonial heritages and to its physical proximity to the United States.

Music is included in many school curricula; several schools participate in **JUNIOR JUNKANOO**, held each year in December. Other institutions fostering music education include The Bahamas National Youth Choir, The Bahamas National Children's Choir, The Bahamas National Youth Orchestra, and The Bahamas Music Conservatory. The College of The Bahamas offers an Associate degree in music as well as a Bachelor of Education in Music. The E. Clement Bethel National Arts Festival, started in 1959 as the Bahamas

Music Festival ("First Bahamas Festival," 1959), takes place annually and is a competitive event featuring music, dance, drama, and arts and crafts. The Nassau Music Society promotes art music activities in New Providence by organizing concerts and by sponsoring scholarships for students of music. The Grand Bahama Performing Arts Society plays a similar role on Grand Bahama Island.

Marching bands have long been established in the Bahamas. The Royal Bahamas Police Force Band, first founded in 1893, became a fully-commissioned division in 1958 and the Royal Bahamas Defence Force Band made its first official appearance in 1986. The Bahamas National Symphony Orchestra, a community orchestra for amateurs, was founded in 1991, and presents several concerts annually.

Bahamian folk music displays elements from African, European, and North American influences. The main folk music traditions in the Bahamas can be categorized as either religious or secular. Religious music of the Bahamas includes rhyming spirituals, anthems, rushin' music at watch-night

¹Christine Gangelhoff, Assistant Professor, School of Communication and Creative Arts, Cathleen LeGrand, Public Services Librarian, Libraries and Instructional Media Services; The College of The Bahamas, P.O. Box N-4912, Nassau, Bahamas.

Cathleen LeGrand is now Librarian at Royal Thimphu College, Ngabiphu, Thimphu, Bhutan.

Acknowledgments: The authors would like to thank the following for their contributions and assistance with this chapter: Cleophas Adderley, Virginia Ballance, Edward Bethel, Nicolette Bethel, William Fielding, Franz Hepburn, Shanderia Mckenzie, Jerquel Rolle, and Valdez Russell.

The authors are grateful to The College of The Bahamas for the grant that made this research possible.

E-mail: cgangelhoff@cob.edu.bs

How to cite this article in APA 6th ed. style: Gangelhoff, C., & LeGrand, C. (2011). Art music by Caribbean composers: Bahamas. *International Journal of Bahamian Studies*, 17(1), 6-12. <https://doi.org/10.15362/ijbs.v17i1.150>

services, wake and setting-up songs. A proponent of Bahamian religious folk music is the late, internationally-acclaimed Joseph Spence (Charters, 2003). Rhyming spirituals are still performed locally by the BBC singers and Dicey Doe singers, among others. The secular music of the Bahamas includes ring-plays, fire dance, jump-in-dance, quadrille music (referred to locally as rake 'n' scrape music), goombay, and junkanoo music (C. Adderley, personal communication, June 9, 2011).

GOOMBAY MUSIC, which gets its name from a single-headed goatskin drum, refers to "the entire spectrum of traditional music in the Bahamas before 1968" (Rommen, 2009, p.182). Junkanoo, the most celebrated tradition in the Bahamas, is held on Boxing and New Year's Days. Incorporating music, dance and art, junkanoo comprises a major component of Bahamian cultural identity: "Although the music of junkanoo is reflective of a strong drumming tradition, the influence of other European instruments continues to be introduced into the music" (Justilien, 2004).

Traditionally, the instrumentation of **RAKE 'N' SCRAPE** bands included the carpenter's saw, the goombay drum, and the concertina; modern-day musicians often use the electric guitar and piano. "[R]ake 'n' scrape music is used to accompany the Bahamian Quadrille and the Heel and Toe Polka dances"

(Justilien, 2004). This combination of African and European elements can be seen in musical traditions throughout the Caribbean, including art music.

E. Clement Bethel, composer, pianist, ethnomusicologist, conductor, and first Director of Culture for the Bahamas, wrote the musical, *The Legend of Sammie Swain*, which premiered at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City (Ingraham, 2007). Cleophas R. E. Adderley Jr., founder and director of the Bahamas National Youth Choir, composed the first Bahamian opera, *Our Boys*, and the first Bahamian concert mass, *MISSA CARIBE*. His works, which include several choral pieces composed specifically for the Bahamas National Youth Choir, often incorporate elements of Bahamian folk music. As he explains, his music takes "the nuances of the Bahamas and the Caribbean"—a folk tune, folk rhythms, or folk materials—and uses "the classical vocabulary of music as a vehicle" to create an original work (C. Adderley, personal communication, 2011).

Adderley demonstrates this approach to composition in the overture to *OUR BOYS*. The theme for the overture was originally composed as an organ fugue, a complex contrapuntal form, in which Adderley incorporates syncopations drawn from Caribbean rhythms.

REFERENCES

- Charters, S. (2003). *The day is so long, the wages so small: Music on a summer island*. (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Marion Boyers.
- First Bahamas festival. (1959). *Music Educators Journal*, 49, 90-92.
doi:10.2307/3389244
- Justilien, C. (2004). *Bahamas entertainers*. Retrieved from <http://www.bahamasentertainers.com/index.html>
- Ingraham, V. (2007). The music of the Caribbean. In M. Kuss, (Ed.), *Music in Latin America and the Caribbean: An encyclopedia history, Vol. 2: Performing the Caribbean experience* (pp. 359-374). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Rommen, T. (2009). "Come back home": Regional travels, global encounters, and local nostalgias in Bahamian popular musics. *Latin American Music Review*, 30(2), 159-183.
doi:10.1353/lat.0.0043

COMPOSERS

Cleophas R. E. Adderley (1955-)
E. Clement Bethel (1938-1987)
Eric Cash
Audrey Dean-Wright (1949-)
Timothy Gibson (1903-1979)
Franz Hepburn (1965-)
Christian Justilien (1960-)
Charles L. Lofthouse
Khyle Quincy Parker (1972-)
Wallace D. L. Turner

COMPOSITIONS

Adderley

Big bunch a little bunch (for a capella chorus)
Cari-classics (1971-1978)
Missa brevis (1975)
Missa Caribe (1974; concert mass)
My child (new aria for Bethel's opera, *The legend of Sammie Swain*, contributed for the 1982 revival)
Our boys (1986; first opera written in the Bahamas)
Ripe tomata green peas (for a capella chorus)
Three Bahamian folk songs (for a capella chorus)
A wen down da road
Ol' lady
One a' twenty
Three carols for Christmas (for chorus & piano)
Three preludes (for piano)
Variations on a theme from E. Clement Bethel (1974-1976; for piano)

Bethel

African carol
Ballymena
The festival come already
Funeral march
Haitian carol
Independence song (with Patrick Rahming)
The legend of Sammie Swain (1971, revised 1982)
When the road seems rough
Rafia
Praise

Cash

Goombay Mass (1969)
The Lord's prayer (for voice and piano)
Peace (1976; for SATB and piano)

Dean-Wright

Calm (2008; for piano)
Coconuts falling (2004; for piano)
If Jesus was born in Nassau town
My inspiration (Nassau nights) (2008; for piano)
O Zion (2003; for voice & piano)
Rejoice this sabbath day (2003; for voice & piano)
Rêveries sur la mer (2004; for piano)
We shall see Jesus (2003; for voice & piano)

Gibson

Bahama babe
Beautiful Bahamaland
March on Bahamaland (national anthem of The Bahamas)
Nassau moon
Who dat
Yellow elder

Hepburn

- Alleluia I* (1984)
Alleluia IV (1990; for chorus)
Bahama moon (1990; for chorus)
Bajamar (1989)
The sun
The sand
The sea
Dolce (1989)
Exuma blue (2000; for voice & piano)
Five pertinent questions (2003; for voice & piano)
Where have you been?
Do you still love me?
Where do we go from here?
Why do I feel this way?
So, is this goodbye?
Four words (2003; for voice & piano)
No
Why
Whatever
Yes
Gloria (1987; mass for choir & soloists)
In praise (1998)
Introspection (2002; for voice & piano)
Time
Goodbye and me
Tell me
Just before dawn
The freedom of thought
Lamentation
The perfect place
From the corner of my mind
Thank you for being my friend
Who am I?
The Lord's prayer (1999; for chorus)
Vocaleeze (2001; for voice & piano)

Justilien

- The College of The Bahamas alma mater* (c. 1995)
Fresh (2009; original film score)
A midsummer night's dream (2009; original score for "Shakespeare in Paradise" production)
The tempest (2009; original score for "Shakespeare in Paradise" production)

Lofthouse

- Dear heart, I know* (1914)
The winds of dawn (1913)

Parker

- The bitch's waltz* (2011; for chamber ensemble)
Dance (2004; for piano)
Danza rus (2010)
Dominion: Symphonic poem (2001-2002; for orchestra)
Esther (2009; opera)
He must die (scene)
Et resurrexit (2001; for orchestra, chorus & solo baritone)
Eyes look into the well (2001)
Galadriel's dance (2001; for piano)
Gerda & the soldier (2010; opera)
Golgotha: Symphonic poem (2003; for orchestra with solo horn)
Gypsymphonia! (2008; piano trio)
Humoresque, in G minor (2002; for violin & orchestra)
Humoresque, in D minor (2002; for violin & orchestra)
In remembrance (2006; for chorus)
Almighty God
Credo
Gloria

- Invention #1* (2002; for piano)
- Lyriq inebria: Cycle* (2008; for soprano & piano)
Come then, O slumber
I held a blossom to my cheek
Whence?
- Of unrequited dreams: Cycle* (2011; for soprano & piano)
Perfume
Sunlight
Of unrequited dreams
Darkness
- Prelude to a grin* (for guitar)
- Prelude #2* (for guitar)
- Piano concerto, in D Flat (Meine freunde lied)* (2006-2007; for orchestra)
- Requiem for Jean-Gaelle* (2010; for chorus, piano, violincello & B-flat Clarinet)
- Ring play: Allegro* (2006; for string quartet)
- Rumpelstilskin: Concert overture* (2009; for orchestra)
- Sanctus* (2000; for tenor & baritone chorus)
- Sanctus* (1999; for chorus)
- Sonatine, in G minor* (2005; for violin)
- Song for solo violoncello* (2007)
- Stimme der liebe* (2005)
- Stomp* (2009; for violin)
- Suite, in D minor (A party in Narnia)* (2005; for violoncello)
- Sylvania: Cycle* (2007; for soprano & piano)
Sylvan surrender
Timeless
Moonlight
- Tanze: Dances for solo violin* (2011)
Betrunkentanz = Dance of inebriation
Sorgentanz = Dance of sorrow
Leidanz = Dance of suffering
Feuertanz = Fire dance
Ekstasetanz = Dance of ecstasy
Freudentanz = Dance of joy
- Thou art fair* (2006)
- Three choral songs* (2005)
Tristis est
De profundis clamavo
Asperges me
- Three pieces for chamber ensemble* (2010)
Capriccio diabolico
Schicksaltanz (Dance of destiny)
Scherzo minaccioso
- Tristesse* (2008; for piano)
- Tumble: Symphonic poem* (2008; for violin & orchestra)
- Two pieces for solo violin* (2011)
Le bohémian caracolant
Rue isolée
- Two songs for Lynn* (2007; for chorus)
Requiem
Lux aeterna
- Two songs for tenor & piano* (2006)
Der abendstern
An den mond
- Turner**
- Band concert, no. 2* (2010; for brass, woodwinds & strings)
- Breeze* (1998; for violin, viola & cello)
- Genesis* (2008; for narrator, baritone voice & orchestra)
- God of the universe* (2007; for chorus & piano)
- Trio for clarinet, piano and violoncello* (2004)

SCORES

Adderley

Adderley, C. R. E. (n.d.). *Big bunch a little bunch*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard.
Inventory #HL 08742757

Adderley, C. R. E. (n.d.). *Ripe tomatas green peas*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard.
Inventory #HL 08742758

Adderley, C. R. E. (1999). *Three Bahamian folk songs*. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard.
Inventory #HL 08741919

Dean-Wright

Audrey's popular Bahamian hits and more. (2004). Nassau, Bahamas: Solfege.
[Includes *If Jesus was born in Nassau town*]

Pursley-Kopitzke, E. (2003). *99 new songs of Sabbath, heaven, Jesus' second advent and other music by SDA composers & songwriters: A partial anthology of hymns, songs and choral music*. [Blountville, TN: Author.]

[Includes: *O Zion; Rejoice this Sabbath day; We shall see Jesus*]

Sacred songs of praise. (2004). Nassau, Bahamas: Solfege.

Gibson

March on Bahamaland. (1973). Retrieved from
<http://www.nationalanthems.info/bs.htm>

Lofthouse

Dear heart, I know. (1914). Nassau, Bahamas: Charles L. Lofthouse. Retrieved from
<http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.ihas.100007391/100007391.pdf>

The winds of dawn. (1913). New York, NY: F.B. Haviland. Retrieved from
<http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.ihas.100007391/100007391.pdf>

RECORDINGS

Adderley

Shaw, P. (2001). *Le grand tour: Paul Shaw plays Caribbean art music* [CD].

Track 5. *Variations on a theme by E. Clement Bethel*

Our boys: an opera in two acts [CD]. (1998). [Recorded by Bahamas National Youth Choir; Thomas Sleeper, conductor.] Nassau, Bahamas: Bahamas National Youth Choir. (BNYC981/2; 2 discs.; OCLC# 228111793)

Gibson

Complete national anthems of the world, vol. 1 [CD]. (2005). Hong Kong: Marco Polo - Naxos. (Marco Polo 8.225319; disc 1 of 4, 1:11:06)

Track 29. *March on Bahama land* (1:45)

Track 30. *March on Bahama land* (Olympic version; 1:21)

Justilien

Nairn, L. & Rolle, C. (Prod.). (2009). *Fresh* [Motion picture]. (42 min.)

SOUND FILES

Gibson

Bahamas: March on Bahamaland. Retrieved from
<http://www.nationalanthems.info/bs.htm>
[*March on Bahama land*]

Parker

Reverbnation: Khyle Quincy Parker music. Retrieved from
http://www.reverbnation.com/artist/artist_songs/795297
[*The bitch's waltz*]

BOOKS, ARTICLES AND THESES

Bethel, E. C. (1978). *Music in the Bahamas: Its roots, development and personality*. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of California. (OCLC# 320049954; also available in The College of The Bahamas Library: Special Collections B. Diss ML3565 B35 B47)

Turner, W. D. L. (2008). *Genesis for narrator/baritone voice and orchestra*. (Doctoral dissertation, Texas Tech University). Retrieved from <http://etd.lib.ttu.edu/theses/available/etd-03282008-204731/>

Turner, W. D. L. (2004). *Trio for clarinet, piano and violoncello: An original work*. (Master's thesis, Texas Tech University). Retrieved from <http://etd.lib.ttu.edu/theses/available/etd-07012008-31295019576635/unrestricted/31295019576635.pdf>