

# Art Music by Caribbean Composers

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The present volume of *The International Journal of Bahamian Studies* is the beginning of a long-needed project aimed at compiling and organizing the work of Caribbean composers. The goal of project directors and editors Christine Gangelhoff and Cathleen LeGrand is “to identify and list all available information on the art-music tradition of the region” (p. 1). The issue titled *Art Music by Caribbean Composers* is slated to be the first of a number of volumes dealing with the multiplicity of nations and cultures in this diverse area.

The projected catalogue aims to account for every music score and recorded audio and video of art music, even in larger areas like Cuba, Puerto Rico and, eventually, mainland nations bordering the Caribbean such as Belize, Guyana and Suriname. Given the complex nature of the region, this is no simple task.

Participants in this project are aware that when dealing with the Caribbean, we navigate in turbulent and, at times, treacherous waters. Centuries of conquest, European settlement,

labor abduction and migration of various sorts created a fluid picture of what the Caribbean and its music is all about today (not to mention what it would come to be in the future). For instance, one may not be able to conceive of a catalogue that omits the contributions of New Orleans composers like Louis Moreau Gottschalk, a forerunner of ragtime and jazz whose music drew significantly on various sources in the region.

In any case, any project of this magnitude must establish limits somewhere. With time and resources, it is possible to reassess the work and attempt more comprehensive ventures. For this reason, Dr. Gangelhoff and Ms. LeGrand have rightly and realistically started by selecting a few specific areas (the Bahamas, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica and the U.S. Virgin Islands) with a fairly manageable catalogue of scores and available recordings.

Music students like me will greatly appreciate the full collaboration of local entities and external sources in helping to track the ongoing and expansive musical production of the region.

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