



Volume 6, Issue 3

TEMPO PRESTISSIMO



Robinson-Oturu Guides NANM Through the Life and Career of Clarence Cameron White

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

Today's Events

8:00 a.m.—12:00 noon
Voting (West Room)

8:00 a.m.
Branch Presidents' Breakfast
(President's Suite)

9:00 a.m.
Spirituals in Contemporary Settings
Rudolph Cleare (Plaza)

10:30 a.m.
Americolor Opera Alliance
Dr. Sharon Willis (Plaza)

12:05—12:45 p.m.
Concert at Noon
Norfolk State Univ. Spartan Choral
Dr. Carl Haywood, Conductor
(St. Paul's Episcopal Church)

1:15 p.m.
Life Member Guild Luncheon
Julian Pouncy, Estate Planning
(Tennessee River Room)

SmartMusic Presentation
Shane Porter
(Convention Center Rotunda)

2:30
Living in Two Worlds
Dr. Pamela Burns
(East-West Rooms)

3:30
Youth Concert (Plaza)

5:00 p.m.
Convention Chorus (Plaza)

6:30 p.m.
Reception for Honorees
(Convention Center Rotunda)

7:00
Annual Awards Banquet
Chattanooga Convention Center (Ball Room I)

**"Advocacy and
Partnerships:
Walk Together Children"**

Mission Statement

NANM promotes, preserves, and supports all genres of music created or performed by African Americans.

Tempo Prestissimo

Editor: Marilyn Thompson

In the keynote presentation on Tuesday morning, Dr. Gail Robinson-Oturu offered a moving, revealing exposé on the life and accomplishments of violinist-composer-conductor Clarence Cameron White (1880-1960). A founding member of NANM, Mr. White was born in Clarksville, Tennessee, and spent time in Chattanooga during his childhood. Dr. Robinson-Oturu's presentation title was "Clarence Cameron White: From Clarksville to Carnegie Hall."

According to Dr. Robinson-Oturu, Clarence Cameron White pursued music for all of the right reasons. He was "modest and very deep." Throughout his career, he lived in many cultural centers, including Oberlin, Bos-

ton, Washington, DC, New York, Chicago, and New Haven, Connecticut. As an educator, he held teaching positions at Hampton Institute and at West Virginia State College.

Dr. Robinson-Oturu's interest in Mr. White's career was influenced by an encounter with Mrs. Ann Ladd, now 103 years old, a resident of DeLand, Florida. Mrs. Ladd and her husband attended the world premiere in Indiana of Mr. White's opera, *Ouanga*, in 1949. They were longtime friends.

During the presentation, Dr. Robinson-Oturu telephoned Mrs. Ladd at her home in Florida. The centenarian revealed that Mr. White traveled to Paris, where he wrote the opera. "It was very beautiful," she noted. Mrs. Ladd mentioned that

Mr. White asked the famed musical theater team of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II to critique the work. They indicated that they loved the show, but wanted to change it, making it a musical. The composer "had the courage to say no," proclaimed Mrs. Ladd. *Ouanga* won the David Bispham Prize in 1932.

Mr. White's compositions were performed by such artists as contralto Marian Anderson, cellist Kermit Moore, soprano Camilla Williams, violinist Jascha Heifetz, soprano Adele Addison, and violinist Albert Spalding. Famed violinist Fritz Kreisler recorded *Bandana Sketches*, a movement of which Dr. Oturu-Robinson shared via recording. She also played recordings of "Capriccio" for violin and piano, and a recording of "Clouds," also for violin and piano. This piece was dedicated to Mrs. Ladd and composed while he was in Paris working on *Ouanga*.

(See "Clarence" on Page 2)

Second "Concert at Noon" Features Music of Robert Lee Owens

The second "Concert at Noon" featured compositions by octogenarian composer Robert Lee Owens, who is this year's international honoree.

With the exception of the program opener, Idomeño Quartet, Op. 93, the composer collaborated with performers at the piano. Quartet members included Robert Burks, oboe, Sheri Peck, violin, Larry Flanagan, viola, and Spencer Brewer,

cello, all from the Chattanooga Symphony.

Janet Hale, flutist, played Dialog 2—Lied op. 91b from *Drei Dialogue for Flute and Piano*. This movement was very lyrical, reminiscent of many of Mr. Owens' songs.

Louise Toppin, soprano, performed the song cycle for soprano, *Heart on the Wall*. This was followed by Ms. Peck, who played the II Slow Tango movement from *Violin Sonata*, Op. 78.

Cellist Spencer Brewer played Gesang II, Op. 95. He was followed by baritone Donnie Ray Albert, who sang the first eight songs in the cycle, *Borderline*.

Mr. Owens demonstrated his skills as a sensitive collaborative musician. He provided solid, consistent support throughout the program.

**Don't forget
to vote today!**

Leon Bates Facilitates Piano Master Class on Tuesday

On Tuesday morning, Maestro Leon Bates worked extensively with Aaron Matthews, a piano student from Morehouse College. Mr. Matthews, who was preparing for the afternoon's Collegiate Young Artists concert, offered Florence B. Price's "Fantasie nègre," which utilizes the spiritual, "Sinner, Please Don't Let This Harvest Pass."

Mr. Bates described the piece as a "bombastic, emotional piece. This is not a concert hall, with its low ceiling. It is difficult for sound to get out. This puts the onus on you to find a way get the sound out."

Throughout the working session, Mr. Bates encouraged the student to take the time and practice slowly in order to

develop precision. When Mr. Matthews encountered a difficult passage, Maestro Bates asked: "How do you practice this? Show me. Do it slowly and gradually increase speed. We want to hear every note." He reminded the student that "a lot of music recalls the human voice. Play as if you are singing." The student was also encouraged to use his imagination more freely. When a theme recurs several times, one should work to find different ways of playing so that it remains fresh.

When asked how he deals with nerves, Mr. Bates replied that he focuses so intently on the music so that nothing else distracts him.

The National Association of Negro Musicians, Inc.

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He practices over and over in his mind.

At the end of the class the Maestro played a lively interpretation of "I've Got Music," satisfying the audience's desire to hear him perform.

Duke Ellington Sacred Music Concert Draws Multitude from Chattanooga Community

First-Centenary United Methodist Church was the setting last night for a concert of sacred music by Duke Ellington. Three prominent Chattanooga choral organizations were featured—the Chattanooga Choral Society for the Preservation of African American Song, Roland M. Carter, director; the First-Centenary Chancel Choir, Janice McNair, director; and the Scenic City Chorale, Bill Long, director. The music was drawn from Ellington's three *Sacred Concerts*, composed between 1965 and 1974. Mrs. McNair was the evening's conductor.

Featured soloist was Devonne Gardner, soprano, of Philadelphia, who performed this music with Duke Ellington during the last eight years of his life. She later performed with Mercer Ellington, Duke's son. Ms. Gardner holds the record for more performances of the *Sacred Concerts* than any other soprano.

The combined choral forces, with jazz combo, produced an inspired presentation that captured varying moods, ranging from contemplative to jubilant. Ms. Gardner added the perfect complement to the night's

offering. Of special note was President Carter's piano rendition of "Meditation."

The Chattanooga community turned out in record numbers. The church was filled to capacity, and extra chairs were placed in the aisles and outside the sanctuary in the vestibule. This program was performed by the same personnel in March of 2006. Even then, the church was nearly filled to capacity. Community citizens who missed that concert were insistent on being present at this one.

It was also quite apparent that President Carter is very much loved and respected in his hometown.

Collegiate Young Artists Perform Varied Concert on Tuesday Afternoon

The Collegiate Young Artists' concert on Tuesday afternoon featured talented emerging performers from our nation's campuses. Participants included Marcus Hill, baritone, of Morehouse College; Nathaniel Eure, tenor, of East Carolina University; Jermaine Smith, baritone, of Shenandoah Conservatory, assisted by his wife, cellist Ini Insangedighi; Aaron Matthews, pianist, of Morehouse College; Branden

Hood, baritone, of the University of Michigan; Lenora Green, soprano, of the University of Michigan; and Adrienne Walker, soprano, of Spelman College.

Each participant received a certificate in recognition of the occasion. The concert was coordinated by Mrs. Laura English Robinson. Dr. Daniel Washington is the NANM Collegiate Director.

Clarence Cameron White Exposed

(Continued from Page 1)

At the end of the presentation, Dr. Robinson-Oturu sang "Do Not Weep" from

Five Songs. She was accompanied by pianist Brandon Boyd, a student at Tennessee State University.

The National Association of Negro Musicians, Inc.

Post Office Box 43053
11551 South Laflin Street
Chicago, IL 60643

Phone: 773-568-3818
Fax: 773-785-5388

www.nanm.org

From the editor

If you have information that you would like to include in the following day's issue of *Tempo Prestissimo*, please submit it to the editor no later than 6:00 p.m. on the preceding day.