

Recorded, compiled, and written by Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FS 34010

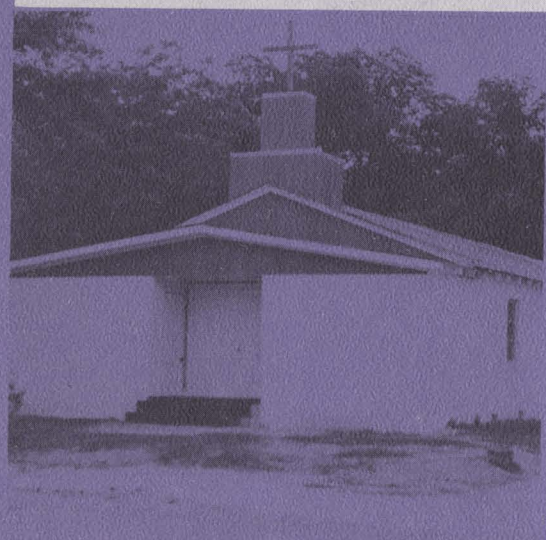
BLACK AMERICAN RELIGIOUS MUSIC FROM SOUTHEAST GEORGIA

Hymns, Spirituals, Gospel: Ensemble Music & Solo Music

MT. ZION, AME, WAYCROSS



BENNETT UNION, BAPTIST, JESUP



ST. JOHN HOLINESS, JESUP



SMITH GROVE BAPTIST, GARDI



J.D. Djedje

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SIDE ONE: Ensemble Music

1. Sweet Jesus (Time 3:55).
Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church Junior Choir
2. New Born Soul (Time 5:04).
Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church Junior Choir
3. The Lord Is Blessing Me Right Now (Time 2:50).
Bennett Union Baptist Church Choir No. 2
4. Jesus, I'm Thankful (Time 4:43).
Kinsey West and the West Singers
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SIDE TWO: Solo Music

1. Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child (Time 2:26). Ruth Mallard
1. Balm in Gilead (Time 1:16). Beverly Green
3. Steal Away to Jesus (Time 1:53). Kinsey West
4. Precious Lord, Take My Hand (Time 2:58). Kinsey West
5. Something Within (Time 2:15). Festus Moses
6. My Father Watches Over Me (Time 2:31). Harriett Seadrow
7. I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say (Time 2:06). Beverly Green
8. Come and Go with Me to My Father's House (Time 3:30).
Margo Dan Boone

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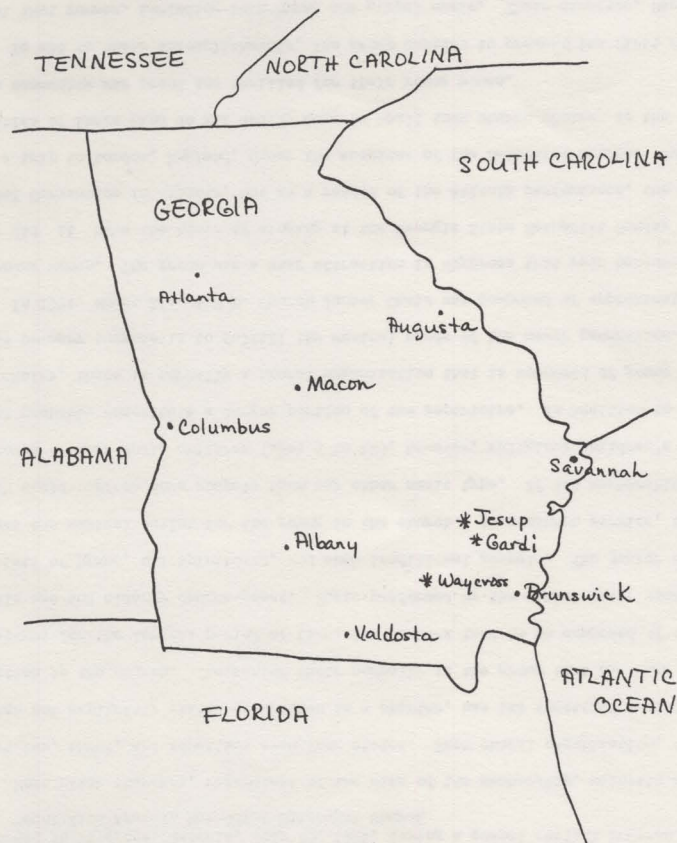
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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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Black American Religious Music



INTRODUCTION¹

Religious music constitutes one of the more important music types in black American culture. Since slavery, people of African origin have not only used religion as a means to cope with the degradation they suffered as a result of their forced entrance to the New World, but through religious music performances they have been able to physically and spiritually escape adverse living conditions that still exist today. Several genres of religious music have been created by blacks, including hymns, spirituals, and gospel songs. The impetus which gave rise to the creation of various styles of religious music has been a point of controversy in the music field. Many, especially white musicologists, suggest that all new creations were an exact imitation or replica of that used by whites;

they normally dismiss the argument that blacks were partly, if not solely, responsible for the creation of some styles. It is common knowledge that blacks probably would not have composed such music without influences from Protestantism. On the other hand, we cannot ignore that these displaced people were also in touch with religious ideas and beliefs from their homeland. Therefore, it is probably safe to say that practically all musical styles created by blacks show an integration of elements from both African and European cultures.

Several religious musical styles performed by blacks in three small towns in southeast Georgia--Gardi, Jesup, and Waycross--are included on this recording.² Only two of the items (side one, items 1 and 2) were taped within the context of a church service (gospel recital program); others were recorded during choir rehearsal or at the home of the performer/compiler, which has, in some instances, had adverse effects on the quality of the recording.

These examples are unique in that they have been obtained from a southern small town/rural setting, which differs greatly from religious musical performances in metropolitan areas. Normally, southerners are more conservative and do not readily accept change as quickly as their counterparts in larger cities. For example, the only instrumental accompaniment that one hears on this recording is the piano or organ. It is extremely rare that other instrumental types--guitar, drums, horns, etc.--would be used in the rural south except in the few Holiness and Sanctified churches in the areas. Another difference is the size of the groups. In urban settings where church memberships are quite large, more people are available to participate in choral groups--sometimes as many as 100. Having 40 people in a small town church group is an accomplishment. Finally, the music in rural churches is not as improvisatory in performance style as that used by urban dwellers. Although the ability to freely express music in one's own style is a prerequisite for being known as an established performer, there are limits to what the audience will accept.

In order to expose the listener to as many styles as possible, this record includes musical selections from several categories: hymns, spirituals, and gospels. Side one contains gospel music performed by several ensembles of various sizes and age groups. Solo music, both instrumentally unaccompanied and accompanied, constitutes the material on side two. The listener will hear hymns and spirituals as they are performed today and learn how these same songs have been arranged into a gospel style.

PRODUCER'S NOTE

Without the aid and cooperation of the people in Gardi, Jesup, and Waycross, Georgia, this work could not have been completed. Therefore, special thanks go

to Bernard Benson, Margo Dan Boone, Earlene Fuquay, Beverly Green, Ruth Mallard, Festus Moses, Harriett Seadrow (now deceased), Kinsey West and the West Singers, Bennett Union Baptist Church Choir No. 2, Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church Junior Choir, Saint John Holiness Church Junior Choir and others. A note of thanks also goes to Chuck Higgins for suggestions regarding the production of this record.

The music was recorded entirely in southeast Georgia, using a Tandberg 11-1 tape recorder with Electrovoice RE-15 microphone.

SIDE ONE

Item 1 (Time 3:55)

Sweet Jesus

Gospel. Arranged by James Cleveland

Singers: Mount Zion A.M.E. Church Junior Choir, Bernard Benson (leader and director)

Pianist: Bernard Benson

Recorded in Waycross, Georgia, July 18, 1971, during a gospel recital program at Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church

Most black churches, regardless of the size of its membership, maintain at least two, three, and sometimes even four choirs. Each choral organization, although not explicitly stated or written in a charter, has its specified musical function to the church. The senior choir normally is the group that has been in existence for the longest period of time; its members tend to be composed of the middle age and elderly church-goers. Music performed by the senior choir usually consists of hymns, old spirituals, and some traditional gospels. The junior choir serves the musical outlet for the young in the church. At a church service, the youth would perform more gospels than any other music type. If its membership is composed of more small children (ages 5 to 12), however, religious children's songs would probably constitute a larger portion of the repertoire. In addition to these two choirs, there is normally a choral organization that is composed of young adults whose primary purpose is to fulfill the musical needs of the newer generation.

In 1971, Mount Zion A.M.E. Church Junior Choir was composed of approximately 40 young women. The group was a star attraction in Waycross that year because not only did it have the honor of singing at the Georgia State Methodist Sunday School Convention in Atlanta, but as a result of the Atlanta performance, the members won a trip to London, England, under the auspices of the Methodist church. Opportunities of these kind do not easily come to small town church choirs, so the entire community was proud and thrilled for their young women.

To add to their accomplishments, the group decided to present its first recital that summer, including both hymns and gospel music. Their director, Bernard Benson, began playing piano "by ear" at the age of nine. By the time he was fourteen years old, he was already playing for church choirs. Although by profession he is a postman in Waycross, he also finds time to direct choirs. Since the mid-1970's, he also has become part-time minister for one of the Baptist churches in the Waycross area.

"Sweet Jesus" is one of several songs led by Bernard Benson during the program. The verse/chorus form has been arranged differently from other examples that are presented on this recording. After the piano introduction, the song begins with the leader singing two verses. Later the chorus part is introduced when both the leader and chorus sing in a call and response fashion. Noteworthy about the chorus is that the group repeats the same phrase throughout, while the leader freely improvises by adding new and different textual material. Another feature is the manner in which the chorus is extended, repeated two times but varied in length each time it is sung. During the first time, the group repeats the phrase, "Jesus, sweet Jesus" only twice before singing the final statement--"He's the only one who really cares for you." But the same phrase ("Jesus, sweet Jesus") is stated nine times during the second chorus repeat.

Mr. Benson, in an open throat voice, makes extensive use of slurs, slides, and vibrato. Also, changes in volume from loud to soft during the beginning of the verse and chorus sections add to the expressive quality that he uses in singing. A staccato-like piano technique gives emphasis to the triple meter that is used for this performance. This is probably why foot-tapping by the group and audience is so audible.

Active participation by the audience at black musical performances, regardless if they are religious or secular, is to be expected. Because this song was performed early in the program, the audience had not become fully stimulated and aroused; their light tapping of the feet is all that they do to show approval of the music. By the end of the program, as will be evident in the next example (side one, item 2), audience participation takes on a different character.

Item 2 (Time 5:04)

Gospel. Arranged by James Cleveland

Singers: Jackie Armstrong, Sharon Hill, Joyce Mobley (leader), and Shelinda Muchison

Pianist: Bernard Benson

Recorded in Waycross, Georgia, July 18, 1971, during a gospel recital program at Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church

"New Born Soul" was the final song performed on the gospel program at Mount Zion A.M.E. Church. The form of the composition is strophic and a lining-out technique is used. At the beginning of each verse, the leader states the line of the text before other members of the group sing it. Momentum is created in the singing of the text, because each verse is sung in sequence to the days of the week. For example, after the first verse, "I got a new born soul," is sung, subsequent verses are stated: "Somebody caught it on a Monday," "... on a Tuesday," etc. By the time the verse, "~~He~~ caught it on a Sunday," is performed, everyone in the group and audience feels that they have reached the climax or peak of the song. Therefore, it is sung very emphatically.

In addition to textual variation, a number of other improvisatory techniques are used. Vibrato, slurs, slides, and vocal interjections are commonplace. The

piano playing is quite complex and helps to stimulate rhythmic momentum. For example, when the group reaches the climactic phrase "We caught it on a Sunday," Mr. Benson abruptly stops playing after the "we" to give emphasis to this part. A moderately fast tempo in duple meter is used, and handclapping on beats two and four is introduced at the very beginning of the song. The volume of the music normally decreases at the beginning of each verse with the solo statement by the leader but gradually increases and becomes very loud at the end of each verse.

Audience participation--handclapping on beats two and four; sometimes applauding during the middle of each verse (especially at the point when the group sings "in my/their heart"); foot-tapping; and responding verbally--constitutes an important part of this performance, for its reaction also creates momentum and motivates the quartet to become even more stimulated.

Item 3 (Time 2:50)
The Lord Is Blessing Me Right Now
Gospel. Composed by Beatrice Seals; arranged by Ralph Good Pasteur
Singers: Bennett Union Baptist Church Choir No. 2, Leola Wilson (leader)
Pianist: Ruth Mallard
Recorded in Jesup, Georgia, September 21, 1971, during choir rehearsal at Bennett Union Baptist Church

Until recently, gospel music in many small town black communities such as Jesup, Georgia, was not regarded as "respectable." At Bennett Union Baptist Church, the senior choir rebelled against performing such songs and the adult who directed the junior choir would not allow the young to sing gospel music. Therefore, those who wanted to make this new music "respectable" and "acceptable" had to organize (Choir No. 2) and devote their entire time to the singing of gospel songs.

Although Bennett Union, the oldest black church in Wayne County, Georgia, was founded in 1861, Choir No. 2 has only been in existence since 1958.³ Their gospel singing still is not as improvisatory or free in performance style as one would find in some of the other churches in Jesup (for example, listen to music on side one, item 5). Nevertheless, members of the group believe that they have accomplished their objective. As a result of their singing gospel, other choral organizations at Bennett Union--senior, junior, and the newly formed W.F. Johnson choirs--have begun to perform this type of religious music.

At this choir rehearsal, only ten of the 28 members of the group were present, but the performance gives a fairly good representation of the gospel style sung by Choir No. 2. Very few ornaments are used by the women and men singers. Even the leader of the song sings in a rather nasal vocal quality with little vibrato, slurs, and slides. The rhythm is based on a triple meter and the tempo is moderately slow. A verse/chorus form is used. After the piano introduction, the group sings the chorus section. During the verse which follows, call and response between leader and group is heard. The performance ends with a repeat of the chorus by the entire choir. Change from a loud to soft volume occurs during the leader's performance

and at the very end of the composition by the pianist. Only the piano is performed in an improvisatory style with melodic phrases being played in upper, middle, and lower registers.

Item 4 (Time 4:43)
Jesus, I'm Thankful or I'm Thankful, Lord
Gospel. Composed by Kenneth Morris
Singers: Kinsey West and the West Singers (Sheila Frazier; Alfreda Jenkins--leader of the first verse; Denise Lawson; and Kinsey West--leader of second verse and vocal interjections)
Pianist: Kinsey West
Recorded in Gardi, Georgia, September 27, 1971, during choir rehearsal at Smith Grove Baptist Church

The four women who call themselves the West Singers are sisters and cousins of the West family. The entire family is extremely gifted in music and widely known throughout Wayne County, Georgia, for their singing talents. Most of their training in music, like most musicians in small communities, has been acquired through practical experience. After hearing performances of songs through the media (recordings, radio, television, etc.), they learn and rehearse the music at choir practice or in the home until they have achieved just the right sound quality. Once perfection has been attained, the song is then performed in public--either during church service or at a choir anniversary program. The reception given to the song by the audience determines if the group has been successful in their efforts to create a new rendition. If the song is liked, lots of "Amen's," "Yes Lord's," or "That's alright's" would be heard during and after the performance. Complete silence would be the response if the audience does not care for a song. Although "Jesus, I'm thankful" was not recorded in the context of a church service, it is almost certain that the song would be very well-received.

The form of the composition is strophic. Similar music--especially piano accompaniment--is used both for the chorus and verse parts. The call and response technique is also employed in that each chorus section is sung by the group in three-part harmony, while all verses are performed alone by one of the leaders. An open-throat vocal quality is performed by all of the singers and a moderately slow rhythm in triple meter is used.

A number of improvisatory devices--slurs, slides, and vibrato--are used in this arrangement by Kinsey West. The most prominent feature, however, is the extensive development of vocal interjections (the spontaneous adding of words and phrases to the written text). As John W. Work puts it in his discussion of spirituals, these interjections "are usually thrown in by the leader, but oftentimes by others, just as the spirit moves, but by whomever it is interjected there is no violence done to the rhythm, and the effect is electrical. Sometimes such an expression, thought extemporaneous and spontaneous, is so fitting and effective that it becomes a part of the song" (1915:39).

The manner in which these interjections are incorporated into the song is

fascinating, and they are the means by which the vocalist is able to develop the music. When the song is first introduced by the group, no extemporaneous singing is performed. But as the song progresses, more and more vocal interjections are added. For example, during the first chorus part, only a small number of vocal interjections are sung; notice the singing of "Everyday, everyday, of my life" early in the song by one of the leaders. Towards the end of the song, extemporaneous remarks become much longer and extended.

These vocal interjections are treated as "fill-in" material; that is, they are sung by the leader during a time when the group is silent. Therefore, a continuous calling and responding type of performance style is created in order to give more excitement to the composition. As vocal interjections become longer and extended towards the end of the performance, however, they overlap with the group's responses.

Item 5 (Time 3:00)
Looking for a Home
Gospel. Composed by Joe Washington; arranged by E. Kendrix of the James Cleveland and the Southern Community Choir
Singers: Saint John Holiness Church Junior Choir. Margo Dan Boone (leader and Earlene Fuquay (director)
Pianist: Margo Dan Boone
Recorded in Jesup, Georgia, July 14, 1971, during choir rehearsal at Saint John Holiness Church

Saint John Holiness Church maintains two choirs--one for adults and another for children. The music performed by both organizations consists of gospel and some spirituals. Their gospel performances are much more improvisatory in comparison to the music performed by the group at Bennett Union Baptist Church (see side one, item 3). Several reasons account for the differences in performance style. First, the worship service at St. John contains much more emotionalism, spiritualism, and evangelistic preaching. Because the music in many black churches is used as a stimulant to the service, people who render the gospels try to perform in a style that encourages strong emotional responses. The music, then, helps to initiate or accelerate outbursts of emotion and forms of possessions among individuals (DjeDje 1978:10). Second, gospel music has its roots in Holiness and Spiritualist churches. According to Ricks, a noted scholar on the subject of gospel music, "the gospel tradition was influenced by the older styles of Negro religious music, and here the split of Holiness groups from the orthodox Negro church was an important event, for it was among the Holiness groups that the free expression of religious and musical behavior common to the rural Southern Negro began to assert itself and undergo further development in an urban setting" (1960:131).

Only 15 young girls and boys, ranging from ages 8 to 16, were present for choir rehearsal on this day. Even though only half of the group was in attendance, the enthusiasm displayed by those present made up for the absence of voices.

The verse/chorus form of "Looking for a home" is very similar to other songs examined on this recording (see side one, items 1 and 2). After the piano intro-

duction, the chorus is sung three times before the verse is introduced. Following the verse, another segment of music, which will be referred to here as the "bridge," is performed. Then the whole routine is repeated again--chorus, verse, and bridge. Call and response between leader and group is a prominent feature in all these sections.

The piano playing style is very much in the gospel tradition. Fast tempo, extensive use of ornamentation, and free movement to all registers on the piano create a very complex sound.

It is obvious that children are performing because of their voice quality; in their enthusiasm to sing loudly and forcefully, some screaming is heard. Yet, they also incorporate embellishments that are integral to the gospel performance. The leader uses vibrato and sometimes sings in very high registers.

The rhythm is the most striking feature of this performance, played fast and in a duple meter. Handclapping by the group adds to the rhythmic emphasis. During the piano introduction, handclapping is performed on the second and fourth beats of the measure. When the "bridge" is introduced, however, the tempo becomes faster and the pattern is changed to the following:

Rhythm:	1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&	
Handclaps:			X		X		X		etc.

SIDE TWO

Item 1 (Time 2:26)
Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child
Spiritual
Singer: Ruth Mallard
Recorded in Jesup, Georgia, September 21, 1971, before choir rehearsal at Bennett Union Baptist Church

During slavery the spiritual served many purposes for the black individual. It was sometimes used to send secret messages and communication to fellow slaves, to celebrate joyous occasions such as the coming of freedom, or to hope for a better life. Other times the spiritual served as a means for the slave to make a personal statement about his feelings and conditions. "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child" is a very good example of the latter. Since men, women, and children were often sold separately from one slaveholder to another, a person who sang this song may have been distressed and desolate about being separated from his family and loved-ones. Or the singer may have had memories of his home across the Atlantic ocean; then the term "mother," in the spiritual would symbolize the African continent.

After receiving a bachelor of science degree in education with a minor in music, Ruth Mallard taught for a number of years in the public school systems of Wayne (Jesup) and Long (Ludowici) counties. Besides serving as director of numerous public school choruses, she has taught piano formally in the Jesup community

and been director of church choirs throughout southeast Georgia. At the time of this recording, she was still very active in the church even though she had retired from public school teaching.

In this vocal solo performance, Ruth Mallard demonstrates the calm and expressive quality that is used in the singing of some spirituals. No instrumental accompaniment has been included, which is probably the way it was performed during slavery. In a restrained vocal style, the use of slurs, slides and vibrato is kept to a minimum. The form of the spiritual is strophic with minor variations. In the second verse when Ms. Mallard sings "Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone" for the third time, she slightly changes the melody by singing the beginning of this phrase at a higher pitch level.

Several musical techniques are used throughout the performance for emphasis and variation. For example, the volume normally increases at the beginning of each line of the text and decreases at the end of the phrase. In the third verse, however, Ms. Mallard sings very softly at the beginning of the phrase and a very light vocal quality is used. The tempo is slow and the rhythm is performed in a rather free style.

Item 2 (Time 1:16)
Balm in Gilead
Spiritual
Singer: Beverly Green
Recorded in Jesup, Georgia, July 30, 1971, at the home of the compiler

Slaves often used scriptural passages from the Bible to create religious music. The late John W. Work, an eminent scholar on the subject of spirituals, feels that "the reason why the Negro songs [spirituals] are so full of scripture, quoted and implied, is that for centuries the Bible was the only book he was allowed to 'study,' and it consumed all his time and attention" (1915:37). Work also believes that a "scriptural reference may not always be used accurately, in fact, it may be and often is twisted and changed in strange manner, but it is never wrought into a form so shapeless as to be unrecognizable; moreover, it is generally shaped so as to carry a point which sticks" (1915:35).

The spiritual, "Balm in Gilead," is based on the scriptural passages Jeremiah 8:22, which reads:

Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?

Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

Several reasons probably account for the slaves' use of this particular scripture. First, the people referred to in the passage are the Jews. Blacks at that time often compared themselves to the people of Israel because they, like the Jews, felt they had suffered and been oppressed unjustly at the hands of their masters. Moreover, Jews were saved from much of their suffering because God intervened and aided them in their time of need. If such could happen to the Jews, it is

likely the slaves felt that God would do the same for them. Second, an analysis of the text shows that this passage suggests a way in which the slave could end his plight. The term "balm" refers to a medicinal ointment and "Gilead" is a mountainous region, rich in pastureland, east of Jordan where some Jews settled after Moses led them out of Egypt. Therefore, to slaves balm implied a tangible or intangible substance that would heal them from the hardships of slavery, while Gilead was the place they could hope to go (it may have meant death, a place in the north, or life in the United States once slavery had been abolished) to escape oppression. If classified, then, "Balm in Gilead," can be regarded as a song of hope and faith.

Although young in age (only 17 at the time of this recording), Beverly Green has had much experience in the performance of religious music. Most of her musical training was acquired through serving as church pianist for her mother, who is a Baptist minister.

The unaccompanied solo performance of "Balm in Gilead" by Ms. Green typifies the mood and character of the song that was probably felt by its original creators. No ornamentation or extensive use of vibrato is heard. Contrasting loud and soft passages are not used. After establishing a moderate tempo, the singer maintains a continuous duple rhythm until she reaches the very last phrase of the song where she slightly slows the tempo. A unique feature of this spiritual is its call and response form--a structure that is commonly used in many styles of both African and black American music. In this case, the chorus constitutes the response and the verse is the call.

Item 3 (Time 1:53)
Steal Away to Jesus
Spiritual
Singer Kinsey West
Recorded in Gardi, Georgia, September 27, 1971, during choir rehearsal at Smith Grove Baptist Church

Scholars now admit that many religious songs performed by blacks during slavery were not always created or used entirely for sacred reasons. As early as 1862, collectors of slave songs⁴ acknowledged that some of the music "contained the historical background of the Negro people . . .". To date, a number of leading figures, among them W.E.B. DuBois (1903), have written about their interpretations of slave songs. Some have said that the music reflects the social consciousness of the slave, that "black spirituals were the 'slave's descriptions and criticism of his environment'" (Cone 1972:14). Through the performance of spirituals, slaves had a vehicle which aided them in their quest for a better life.

Those that emphasize the historical significance of spirituals believe that this relates to the way music was used in African societies. Without a written history, Africans often relied on praise songs created by musicians to record historical events. "Therefore, when Africans were brought to America," according to

Cone, "they carried with them the art of storytelling through music. The black spirituals then are a reflection mainly of 'African background patterns' rather than white American Christianity" (Cone 1972:15).

John W. Work states that "Steal away to Jesus," which is believed to have been created in the early nineteenth century, "meant to the slave a secret meeting which the master had prohibited; and to the overseer and the rest of the world, a longing for the quiet communion with God" (1915:123). The song was not produced in one night; it is a product of development (Work 1915:77-78). Miles Fisher gives even more specifics, suggesting that the spiritual was composed by Nat Turner, a prominent slave-revolver of the early nineteenth century (1953:66-67).

At a very early age in life and without formal musical training, Kinsey West was able to play on the piano, in a very accomplished manner, practically any music that she heard. She is highly respected throughout Wayne and neighboring counties for her musical talents in composing, arranging, singing, and playing piano.

The unaccompanied solo performance of "Steal away" by Ms. West is sung with great emotion and feeling. The singer, in a slow rather free rhythm, uses some vibrato, slurs, and slides, but ornamentation is kept to a minimum in comparison to her performance of "Precious Lord" (side two, item 4). The form of "Steal away," although based on a call and response pattern, differs from the previous example, indicating that not one but several responsorial patterns are used by blacks. The song can be divided into three parts--lead (or verse), response and chorus.⁵ Because the chorus is the most important part, it is performed first followed by the lead and response, respectively.

Item 4 (Time 2:58)
Precious Lord, Take My Hand
Gospel. Composed by Thomas Dorsey
Singer: Kinsey West
Recorded in Gardi, Georgia, September 27, 1971, during choir rehearsal at Smith Grove Baptist Church

Thomas Dorsey, born 1899 in Georgia, earned the title, Father of Contemporary Gospel Music, as a result of his contributions to the early development of this religious style. As a young man, he was much more interested in secular musical forms--blues and jazz, performing with such people as Ma Rainey (mother of the blues) and Lionel Hampton (jazz musician). In 1932, however, he decided to commit himself entirely to the writing of church songs. "By 1970, Dorsey had written more than 400 songs (of which Precious Lord, Take My Hand was the most famous), had founded the National Convention of Gospel Singers, and had inspired the organization of hundreds of touring gospel singers, gospel ensembles, and gospel choirs" (Southern 1971:404).

Although unaccompanied by instruments, Kinsey West's rendition of "Precious Lord" is highly improvisatory, making use of numerous slurs, slides, and vibrato.

At the end of phrases, she usually holds notes beyond their prescribed note value and adds a hum (e.g., "Let me stand," "I am worn," or "Thru the storm"). In a very slow, free, and expressive style, Ms. West uses an open throat vocal quality. The volume of the music is varied. As the song is raised in pitch she simultaneously increases the volume and does just the opposite when a lower pitch level is used. The form of "Precious Lord" is strophic; the same music with minor variation is performed to each of the two verses.

Item 5 (Time 2:15)
Something Within
Gospel. Composed by Lucille E. Campbell
Singer: Festus Moses
Recorded in Jesup, Georgia, September 12, 1971, at the home of the compiler

One of the unique features of the gospel style is that performers are allowed and expected to freely express the music in whatever manner they would like. Individuals who cannot create their own rendition or version of songs do not have a high aesthetic value in many black communities.

Festus Moses, at Bennett Union Baptist Church in Jesup, Georgia, is often called upon to lead new songs, appear as a guest on special programs, or organize choirs for important events in the church, for he is one of those people who can spontaneously create new music.

Although unaccompanied by instruments, a person listening to this song is acutely aware of the rhythmic emphasis. Mr. Moses believes that gospel songs should be sung "in the swing," while spirituals should be performed in "a drag style." He achieves this "swing" rhythm by strongly attacking tones and using a continuous lively and moderate tempo. The use of slurs, slides, and lots of vibrato does not appeal to him; this is probably why these improvisatory devices are not used a great deal in this song. The written score of "Something Within" is divided into two parts: verse and refrain. Mr. Moses sings only one of the three verses and repeats the refrain three times. For variation, he normally decreases the volume of the music at the beginning of the refrain and gradually increases it until he reaches the end when he sings in a much louder voice.

Item 6 (Time 2:31)
My Father Watches Over Me
Gospel. Composed by Charles Gabriel
Singer: Harriett Seadrow
Recorded in Jesup, Georgia, June 18, 1971, at the home of the performer

Because gospel music is freely changed to suit an individual's personal taste and style, few performers do research to determine if a song has been written by a black or white composer. Singers normally like and choose songs not because they know the composer; rather, many have heard the composition performed by other artists and are impressed by their renditions. If asked about the composer, a singer might say, "the song is sung by (name of the performer); I like it; and I want to try my own rendition."

"My Father Watches Over Me" was written in 1910 by Charles Gabriel, a very successful white gospel composer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the time of the recording, however, Harriett Seadrow said that this particular arrangement is entirely her own. She acquired her musical training through practical experience, playing piano and directing church choirs throughout the Jesup area and neighboring communities for at least 40 years before her death in 1978.

Similar to the gospel song performed by Festus Moses (side two, item 5), "My Father Watches Over Me" is composed in two parts--verse and refrain. Ms. Seadrow performs the strophic form differently from that used by Mr. Moses. After singing one verse and the refrain, she then repeats the second verse and the refrain. Also, she does not extend the length of the performance by singing the refrain several times as was the case with "Something Within."

In a raspy and deep voice, Ms. Seadrow prefers not to use a lot of vibrato to improvise. Rather, she sustains the value of notes at the end of phrases by adding a number of slurs and slides (e.g., ". . . on the rolling sea;" "He cares for me"). When the phrase, "The' billows role," is repeated the second time, a higher pitch level than that indicated in the written score is sung. The use of breaks or pauses between the syllable of words and phrase units is another improvisatory device that is heard. For example, the performance of the word, "o-ver," and the phrase, "My heavenly father -- watches," demonstrates this particular technique. The rhythm of the gospel is sung moderately slow and free.

Item 7 (2:06)
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say
Hymn/Gospel. Composed by Horatius Bonar
Singer and pianist: Beverly Green
Recorded in Jesup, Georgia, July 30, 1971, at the home of the compiler

Material that is used for the arrangements of some gospel songs is taken from a number of sources, for example, hymns, spirituals, or other gospels. "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say" was originally composed by Horatius Bonar in 1846. Since that time a number of people have either set the text of this song to a different melody (Roberta Martin, c. 1941 and Kenneth Morris, c. 1942) or performed the hymn in a gospel style, such as the case with this performance.

Very reminiscent of a secular "pop" singer, Beverly Green creates her arrangement of Bonar's song. Her vocal quality is clear and some vibrato is used at the end of phrases on sustained notes--e.g., "I heard the voice, of Jesus say, come unto me, and rest." Because the text makes reference to a calm setting, she also performs the music in a soft and meditative manner. Even the piano accompaniment is simple, making use of repeated chords in the upper register and a moving bass in the lower. A contrasting loud section is performed during the middle of the song ("Take my yoke upon you . . ."), after which the singer returns to her previous calm singing style. The rhythm is duple and performed moderately slow.

Item 8 (Time 3:30)
Come and Go with Me to My Father's House
Spiritual/Gospel. As sung by Dorothy Love and the Harmonettes
Singer and organist: Margo Dan Boone
Recorded in Jesup, Georgia, July 2, 1971, at the home of the performer

"Come and Go with Me to My Father's House," originally created by blacks during slavery, can be classified both as a song of revolt or return to Africa song. Depending upon the interpretation, "father's house" could mean a home in Africa or a home in the north.

Margo Dan Boone began her formal musical training very early in life. By the age of fourteen (her age at the time of this recording), she was an accomplished vocalist, pianist, and organist. In addition to her duties as pianist for the junior choir in her church, she very capably held the position of church organist.

This performance shows the way in which a spiritual can be arranged into a gospel rather than the use of a hymn as was seen on side two, item 7. Most obvious is the inclusion of organ accompaniment. Ms. Boone's organ playing is not highly improvisatory, but she does slide from one chord to another rather than clearly attacking notes. Most of the music is played within one range; movement all over the organ to higher pitch levels is not done. If accompaniment was used at all during slavery, it was probably only foot-tapping and handclapping.

Vocal techniques used by Ms. Boone give a feeling of freedom, one of the more important characteristics of gospel music. Her vocal range is extremely flexible; she easily handles both high (notice her singing of "me" at the end of each verse) and low notes. Vibrato is prominent and slurs and slides are constantly used. Calling out vocal interjections in addition to singing the written text is a common technique employed by gospel singers. Notice her performance of "oh" in the third verse and "yeah" in the fourth verse.

The form of the song is strophic; the first, second, and fourth verses are sung to the same text, while the third differs. Usually, the beginning of each verse is sung softly but increases to a louder volume during the middle. Toward the end of each verse she normally returns to a softer voice. The rhythm is slow and based on a triple meter.

NOTES

1. This is a revised version of a recording (Black Religious Music from Southeast Georgia) that was published in 1979 by the Alabama Center for Higher Education.
2. The materials for this recording were collected during the summer of 1971 as part of the author's master's thesis project at the University of California, Los Angeles, which was completed in 1972 (see DjeDje 1978 for a published version of this work). Funding for the project was provided by a Ford Foundation Doctoral Fellowship, 1970-1975.
3. The group has been given the name "Choir No. 2" to distinguish it from the senior choir which is sometimes referred to as "Choir No. 1." At present Bennett Union has four choral organizations: Choir No. 1 (founded 1922), the Junior or Youth Choir (founded 1951), Choir No. 2 (founded 1958), and the W.F. Johnson Choir (founded 1979). The latter group is unique in that it is a combined choir, composed of members from the other three groups, and noted for its performance of contemporary gospel--another "first" for Bennett Union.
4. Lucy McKim, a white from Philadelphia, is known to be the first person to collect materials about black slave music. Her interests subsequently led to the publication of Slave Songs of the United States by William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison (all whites) in 1867, which is considered to be the first book of black American songs.
5. See Johnson and Johnson 1925:26-27 for a formal analysis of this spiritual.

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DISCOGRAPHY

- DjeDje, Jacqueline Cogdell, Black Religious Music from Southeast Georgia Birmingham: Collection and Evaluation of Materials about Black Americans Program of the Alabama Center for Higher Education, 1979



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