**Mapping Washington Conservatory Alumni in Black American Musical Life**

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The Washington Conservatory of Music was the first conservatory founded by and for Black musicians. Between 1903 and 1960, the conservatory strengthened musical communities across the country, but it is largely forgotten today. That may be because of its role in producing what scholar Doris McGinty has called the "anonymous infrastructure" of Black musical communities. We set out to name the people who built those infrastructures.

Through digital maps and deep dives into the careers of its first thirty graduates [link to lower on page where we explore alumni], we explore the impact of the Washington Conservatory in its own time, and in ours. Click on the topics below to learn more about the conservatory, its alumni, and our research process.

## The Conservatory: A History

Founded in 1903 by Harriet Gibbs Marshall, the Washington Conservatory of Music was the first private institution of higher education created by and for Black musicians. Thousands of students received lessons and hundreds received degrees while studying at its multiple locations in the Washington, DC, metro area between 1903 and 1960, when it closed. To its students, faculty, administrators, and many others around the country, the Washington Conservatory was a beacon of progress and achievement, steeped in the politics of Reconstruction-era racial uplift even as it wrestled with challenges in an era of deepening segregation and discrimination.

Figure 1. Harriet Gibbs Marshall. Courtesy of Maud Cuney-Hare. Negro Musicians and Their Music. New York: Da Capo Press, 1974.

The Washington Conservatory of Music offered a comprehensive music education. When it opened in 1903, its catalog included seven courses of study: String ensemble, music history, musical biography, harmony, public school performance, class piano, and applied instruction on organ, piano, voice, and strings. At the time, this was a broader selection of classes offered than Howard University, only blocks away and with its own respected music

program.[1] In later years, the conservatory added piano tuning, organ building, and piano tuning courses.[2] Originally operating out of True Reformers Hall within a year of its opening the school moved to 902 T St NW,[3] where it remained until it closed. With this move also came a new department, the School of Expression, where students could study elocution and oratory skills.[4]

Some of the Washington Conservatory's notable faculty members include Clarence Cameron White, who taught violin from 1903 to 1907 and who graduated from Oberlin College alongside Harriet Gibbs Marshall.[5] He served as the head of the strings department and later became the president of the National Association of Negro Musicians. Emma Azalia Hackley, a renowned vocalist, also taught at the conservatory from 1903 to 1904.[6]

Like other music programs at HBCUs that are better known today, including those at Fisk University, Hampton Institute, and Tuskegee Institute, the Washington Conservatory trained its students in the Western European art music tradition while also fostering performance and preservation of Afro-diasporic classical music. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was a frequent name on Washington Conservatory programs, and many students performed instrumental and vocal arrangements of spirituals alongside canonic repertory.[7]

Unlike competitor programs at HBCUs, however, the Washington Conservatory boasted an all-Black roster of teachers and administrators. This distinction mattered quite a bit: as Jarvis Givens and others have shown, the presence of white administrators and teachers often constrained Black education. Conversely, the pedagogical and historical expertise of Black administrators and teachers often meant a higher bar for educational attainment and a truer representation of Black contributions to American culture and history.[8] Today, predominantly white music programs such as Oberlin, the New England Conservatory, Curtis, and Juilliard celebrate their respective histories of inclusion because they graduated a handful of exceptional Black classical musicians over many, many decades. But the Washington Conservatory - which has faded from the public consciousness - graduated hundreds of Black


Figure 2. Emma Azalia Hackley. *The Broad Ax*, Chicago, IL, November 12, 1910.

Figure 3. Clarence Cameron White. *The Colorado Statesman*, Denver, CO, April 5, 1924.

[1] Doris McGinty, "The Washington Conservatory of Music and School of Expression," *The Black Perspective in Music* 7 no. 1 (1979): 62
[2] Schmalenberger
[3] Doris McGinty, "The Washington Conservatory of Music and School of Expression," *The Black Perspective in Music* 7 no. 1 (1979): 61
[4] Schmalenberger, 49
[5] Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 272.
[6] Schmalenberger, 47
[7] Howard University Moorland Spingarn Research Center, Washington Conservatory of Music Papers, Box 112-56, Folders 4, 12, and 17; and Schmalenberger 224- 263
[8] See Jarvis Givens, *Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021.

classical musicians, motivated not by a politics of inclusion or tokenism, but by the firm conviction in the utter normalcy of Black classical musicianship.

The people who attended the Washington Conservatory of Music and School of Expression came from around the country, and went on to pursue a variety of rich careers in and outside of music. Many became educators and performers around the country. Henry Lee Grant graduated from the conservatory's Artists Course in 1910 with degrees in piano and music theory.[9] He became a teacher at Dunbar High School,[10] and president and founder of the National Association of Negro Musicians,[11] and composition teacher of Duke Ellington.[12] In 1911, Wilhelmina B. Patterson also graduated with degrees in piano and music theory from the Artists Course. She went on to become a faculty member at multiple HBCUs, including Prairieview A & M and Hampton University, where she served as a director of music. After leaving Hampton, she moved back to Washington, DC and directed the choir at Shiloh Baptist Church. She also served as music director at Burville Recreation Center. After graduating from the Teachers Course in 1912, Grace G. Brown moved to Greensboro, North Carolina, where she taught first grade at Jacksonville and David Jones schools, all the while teaching private piano lessons in her home.[13]

Our work is founded on the scholarship done by Dr. Doris McGinty, who performed groundbreaking research on the conservatory and Harriet Gibbs Marshall. Dr. McGinty was a musicologist and professor at Howard University from 1947 to 1991. Her articles and chapters on Black musical life in Washington, DC, opened up a new field of research at a time when many white musicologists remained skeptical of the value of studying Black music history. Dr. McGinty became a mentor for another scholar whose work informs our own: Dr. Sarah Schmalenberger, a musicologist and professor at the University of St. Thomas, wrote her dissertation and a series of articles on Harriet Gibbs Marshall and the Washington Conservatory. She was also generous enough to meet with us and share some of her unpublished research. We are deeply grateful to Dr. McGinty, whom we wish we had met, and to Dr. Schmalenberger, who helped this project soar.

Our project traces the lives and impacts of Washington Conservatory graduates from the classes of 1910 through 1914. Because this project was limited to a ten-week time frame, we limited ourselves to graduates of the first five classes. These were crucial years for the conservatory, as this was when the school was becoming established and set the tone for decades to come. Additionally, because these are the earliest classes, we can better assess the effects these graduates have had on their communities over time. The stories of the Washington Conservatory of Music's classes of 1910 through 1914 offers a new perspective of Black American musical life. This work is necessarily incomplete, and could be continued, in part, by resuming tracing the lives of graduates from 1915 and beyond.

**Harriet Gibbs Marshall: Musician, Founder, Frustrated Visionary**

The story of the Washington Conservatory of Music is inextricable from that of its founder, Harriet Gibbs Marshall. The first Black woman to receive a music degree from Oberlin and the scion of the wealthy,

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[9] First Commencement Program, June 3, 1910. Washington Conservatory of Music Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Box 112-52, Folder 21.
[10] Dunbar High School 1925 Yearbook, Courtesy of Sumner School Museum and Archives, Washington, DC.
[11] "Artists and NANM First Draft (June 1996)," Doris McGinty Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Box 45-16, Folder 38, pg. 46.
[12] Mark Tucker, "The Early Years of Edward Kennedy 'Duke' Ellington, 1899-1927," PhD Diss, University of Michigan, 1986, 133.
[13] "The Obituary" in *A Service of Witness To The Resurrection Celebrating the Life Of "Princess" Grace Brown* program, Greensboro, NC, August 26, 1993, 2. Accessed courtesy of Phylicia Fauntleroy Bowman.

influential Gibbs family, Marshall led the conservatory from its founding in 1903 through her death in 1941.[14] She served as the institution's president, chief fundraiser, biggest donor, and publicist. As evidence of her status as a visionary, she conceived of the conservatory - already a massive undertaking - as just one piece of a larger project to establish a National Negro Music Center that would be a clearinghouse for research on, performance of, and education in Black music. Despite her best efforts, Marshall never raised enough money to launch the center in the way she had envisioned. But as our research has shown, Marshall's energy, advocacy, and strategic vision bore fruit as graduates of the Washington Conservatory spread across the country, carrying the spirit of her project into communities far from Oberlin and Washington, DC.

Marshall was a part of an extremely influential and wealthy family that holds their roots in the South, specifically Kentucky.[15] Her parents, Maria Alexander Gibbs and Mifflin Wistar Gibbs, encouraged both their children, Ida and Harriet, to attend college and get out of the South before marrying.[16] Education was extremely important to the family as a whole. So much so that Maria's family (Harriet's grandparents) moved to Oberlin, Ohio in 1852 so that she and her four sisters could all be enrolled into a northern institution.[17] That encouragement didn't stop with Maria's parents, but rather extended through to her children and in turn, her grandchildren. Harriet, one of those grandchildren, garnered a music degree from Oberlin Conservatory, the first Black woman to do so, and studied in Europe as well.[18] (Clarence Cameron White, who taught at the Washington Conservatory from 1903-1907, mentioned Gibbs Marshall's European performances in his article "The Negro in Musical Europe.")[19] While her siblings may have dabbled in music, Harriet was the only one to dedicate her life to it. She spent time in Kentucky, landing a teaching position at Eckstein-Norton University, a Baptist school, which helped develop the skills she'd use to open the Washington Conservatory of Music.[20]

Marshall dealt with a lot of challenges as she worked tirelessly to keep her Conservatory in business. Finances, for example, were an issue that took up a lot of her time. According to a 1913 school expenditures report printed in *The Washington Bee,* Marshall had $308.16 deficit between expenditures and revenue.[21] Another challenge, of course, was the racial climate Marshall and her students were living in. In leading this Conservatory, Marshall carried a burden that was not just relegated to financials and advertisement. She also had to be conscious of how she was presenting her race. Racial uplift was a major ideology of the time, championed by W.E.B. Dubois,[22] and education was one of the key ways he was pushing to achieve this. Marshall was working within this model, so had to vigilantly balance white Classical music with Black Classical music. Concert Spirituals were a complicated portion of this. To white audiences, they were growing in popularity (though their reception was much more mixed in Black audiences).[23] This was in part thanks to the Fisk Jubilee Singers and other groups like them. Marshall took this to heart, putting some Concert Spirituals in the repertoires her students performed along with music written or composed by Black musicians. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, for

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[14] Sarah Schmalenberger, *The Washington Conservatory of Music and African-American Musical Experience, 1903-1941,* 1.
[15] Sarah Schmalenberger, 15.
[16] Phylicia Fauntleroy Bowman, "Phylicia Fauntleroy Bowman: Oral History Interview," by Dr. Louis Epstein et al., *Musical Geography Project,* July 6, 2022, 3.
[17] Schmalenberger, 15-16.
[18] Schmalenberger, 24.
[19] Clarence Cameron White, "The Negro in Musical Europe," *New York Age*, December 24, 1908, 13. See also Kira Thurman, *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021).
[20] Schmalenberger, 25.
[21] "Washington Conservatory of Music–Work of a Great and Growing Institution", *The Washington Bee* (Washington, DC, June 14, 1913),
[22] Schmalenberger, 7.
[23] Schmalenberger, 118-119.

example, was a highly played composer in performances and is featured many times in program.[24] However, the majority of the music that was played was composed by white men.

Harriet Gibbs Marshall ran the Washington Conservatory of Music for almost 40 years until her death in 1941. However, she took a brief intermission from her leadership there in the 1920s when she traveled with her husband, Napoleon Bonaparte Marshall, to Haiti.[25] She lived there for six years, and settled into a new leadership role when she established a girls' vocational school. Marshall had returned to her Conservatory by 1930.[26] In some ways, Marshall's original vision for the school was lost when she was succeeded by Josephine Muse after her death. One of Marshall's key goals was to make the school a 'Black Oberlin,'[27] but she was never able to reach that goal as outside factors like the great depression, two World Wars, and the general pragmatism of racism greatly affected the school. There was also a major shift in what songs were performed. For most of Marshall's years, she included Black pieces, including spirituals and concert works composed by Black composers.[28] What with her visions of creating a National Negro Music Center,[29] this push for Black music makes sense. Josephine Muse, however, did not share this same vision. Muse shifted the repertoire of her students drastically, having them perform almost solely white Western Classical music.[30] As Sarah Schmalenberger writes, "It would appear that Marshall's hopes and ambition to cultivate a black musical aesthetic died with her."[31]

Marshall had big dreams, and was a very ambitious woman. For example, she didn't just make history as the first Black woman to graduate from Oberlin Conservatory in music–she was also the second Black American to join the Bah`a'i faith, and held many meetings for the members of the religion in the Conservatory.[32] When she left the school to go to Haiti, she didn't just take a long vacation. Instead, she learned a lot about Haitian culture there, and wrote a book about Haiti when she returned to the United States.[33] Really, she learned a lot about Haitian tourist culture, and not about anything that was realistic to the people, but she still did enough research and committed to publishing *The Story of Haiti*.[34] Marshall advocated for the Haitian cause.[35] Her ambition never faded, as evidenced by her continued attempts to fundraise for the National Negro Music Center up to her death in 1941.

Harriet Gibbs Marshall was a musician, director, fundraiser, donor, and publicist - but the real measure of her success can be found in the countless students whose lives she touched. Those students have long constituted the "anonymous infrastructure" that Howard University musicologist Doris McGinty posited as a crucial part of Black musical communities in this country.[36] Our project furthers Marshall's legacy by giving names to the musical networks she fostered all across the country–and across time.

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[24] Schmalenberger, 108.
[25] Schmalenberger, 175-176.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Personal conversation with Sarah Schmalenberger, June 20, 2022, Mendota Heights, MN.
[28] Schmalenberger, Appendix 3, 223-242.
[29] Schmalenberger, 159.
[30] Schmalenberger, Appendix 3, 223-242.
[31] Schmalenberger, 198.
[32] Schmalenberger, 67.
[33] See Harriet Gibbs Marshall, *The Story of Haiti*, (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1930).
[34] Personal conversation with Sarah Schmalenberger, June 20, 2022, Mendota Heights, MN.
[35] See Harriet Gibbs Marshall correspondence in Washington Conservatory of Music Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center Howard University.
[36] Conversation with McGinty quoted in Sarah Schmalenberger, "The Washington Conservatory of Music and African-American Musical Experience, 1903–1941," PhD. Diss, University of Minnesota, 2004, 215.

**A Black Conservatory in a Segregated Nation**

The thirty musicians who graduated from the Washington Conservatory of Music between 1910 and 1914 lived during a particularly turbulent time in American history. Born after the end of Reconstruction, they participated in the rapid growth of the Black middle and upper class.[37] At the same time, the communities they lived in suffered white supremacist backlash in the form of racist laws and court decisions that established what became known as "Jim Crow" segregation. 1915 saw the release of *Birth of a Nation*, a wildly popular film that celebrated the Ku Klux Klan and arguably marked the high point of that group; 1915 was also the year that many scholars have identified as the start of the Great Migration, which saw millions of Black Americans flee the violence and discrimination of the South for opportunity in the North, which had its own form of Jim Crow segregation.[38] Maps help tell the story: while Black Americans living in the South were far more likely to face violence, including lynchings, in the North they encountered racial covenants and redlining practices, which limited the accumulation of generational wealth in ways that continue to affect Black communities today.

Musically, too, the early twentieth century saw uneven gains for Black Americans, particularly in the realm of classical music. A few groups and figures - the Fisk Jubilee Singers, Sisierietta Jones, Roland Hayes, Marian Anderson, Paul Robeson - earned international stardom. Many more Black musicians performed widely in the United States and in Europe without becoming household names.[39] At the same time, numerous barriers remained, particularly in the South and on some of the nation's most illustrious stages: Marian Anderson's 1939 performance at the Lincoln Memorial came after the Daughters of the American Revolution denied her the opportunity to perform at Constitution Hall, and it was only in 1955 that Anderson integrated the stage of the Metropolitan Opera - in the blackface-adjacent role of the witch Ulrica in Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*.[40] While some historically white conservatories accepted Black students - Sisierietta Jones, Mary Cardwell Dawson, and Florence Price studied at the New England Conservatory; Marian Anderson at Curtis; R. Nathaniel Dett, Will Marion Cook, and William Grant Still at Oberlin - these were exceptions that proved the rule.[41] Most schools, concert halls, ensembles, management agencies, and other music institutions remained segregated and deliberately excluded Black musicians.

It was in this context that Harriet Gibbs Marshall founded the Washington Conservatory. Given her family background and her connections with W.E.B. DuBois and other Black intellectuals, it is hardly surprising that the Washington Conservatory preached the gospel of racial uplift.[42] Around the turn of the century, many Black elites believed that cultivating Black excellence would force white Americans to acknowledge the social and, eventually, legal equality of Black Americans. Along these lines, DuBois developed the idea of the "Talented

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[37] See Elizabeth Dowling Taylor, *The Original Black Elite: Daniel Murray and the Story of a Forgotten Era* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017); Willard Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1991); Jacqueline Moore, *Leading the Race: The Transformation of the Black Elite in the Nation's Capital, 1880-1920* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999).

[38] Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*,

[39] Kira Thurman, *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021). You can find maps of tours and performance venues for some of these musicians at https://musicalgeography.org/project/the-life-and-legacy-of-h-t-burleigh-1866-1949/.

[40] Carol Oja, "Marian Anderson and the Desegregation of the American Concert Stage," paper delivered at St. Olaf College, April 2018. An earlier version of the talk is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHB98VcB7So.

[41] To learn more where the Black musical elite received their educations in the early twentieth century, see Maud Cuney Hare, *Negro Musicians and their Music* (Washington, DC: Associated Publishers, 1936).

[42] On racial uplift, see Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); and Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1978).

Tenth," a Black upper class that would improve the lives of those less fortunate through achievement and recognition.[43] In her fundraising efforts, Gibbs Marshall referred to the institution she had founded as "the first conservatory of music of the race," which likely carried a double meaning: it was the chronological first, but it was also intended to be the best.[44]

While racial uplift was a priority for many Black musical initiatives in the early twentieth-century,[45] it would be reductive to suggest that it was the only or even the main priority. Education scholar Jarvis Givens has argued that we might understand turn-of-the-century Black education in terms of "fugitive pedagogy," in which Black teachers (mostly women) evaded and subverted the erasure of Black histories and accomplishments from US American curricula. Black educators, Givens writes, "understood their teaching and learning to be perpetually taking place under persecution, even as they created learning experiences of joy and empowerment."[46] That from its beginnings the Washington Conservatory served an ideological purpose - to preserve and promote Black music and musicians - is already clear from the preponderance of Black composers on the programs of Washington Conservatory concerts and from the fact that all teachers at the conservatory were Black (which was not the case at many HBCU music programs in the early twentieth century). When Harriet Gibbs Marshall sought to create the National Negro Music Center, which had a goal of collecting and preserving published music by Black composers from around the world - the institution further embraced what Givens calls "the transgressive nature of [Black] education."[47]

Another priority, one emphasized by Dr. Phylicia Bowman in the oral history she provided of the Gibbs family (of which she is a descendant), represented a different kind of transgression. In her telling, the Black musicians who attended and taught at the Washington Conservatory - like Black professionals more broadly - pursued music at high levels because music was where they found their purpose. Like any institution of higher learning, the Washington Conservatory was a place for normal people pursuing gratifying careers that leveraged their talents and that addressed some need in the world. In that same Mary Church Terrell invocation, the rationale for the conservatory's establishment is that "the colored people of the United States possess a remarkable talent for music," and "this talent should be developed in every way and to the highest degree."[48] In other words, Black musicians deserve and need training, so they shall be trained.

Whatever reason Washington Conservatory graduates chose to pursue music, they could not avoid the oppressive politics imposed by white supremacy at every level of government. The conservatory sent graduates

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[43] The term "talented tenth" emerged among white Northern Liberals in the mid-1890s who were intent on creating institutions of higher education in the south to educate Black Americans. It was popularized by W.E.B. DuBois in an essay, "The Talented Tenth," published at the same time as the Washington Conservatory's founding. See Booker T. Washington, et al., *The Negro Problem: a series of articles by representative American Negroes of today* (New York: James Pott and Company, 1903). The essay is available online at https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/the-talented-tenth/.

[44] Harriet Gibbs Marshall, campaign letter for the National Negro Music Center, Washington Conservatory of Music Collection, Howard University Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.

[45] See especially Kristen Meyers Turner, "Class, Race, and Uplift in the Opera House: Theodore Drury and His Company Cross the Color Line," *Journal of Musicological Research* 34 (2015): 320-351; and on Harriet Gibbs Marshall's reliance on rhetorics of uplift during her directorship of the Washington Conservatory, see Sarah Schmalenberger, "Shaping Uplift Through Music," *Black Music Research Journal* 28, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 57-83.

[46] Jarvis Givens, *Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2021), 8.

[47] Ibid., 9. Along similar lines, Sarah Schmalenberger has argued that Gibbs Marshall's "work as an institution builder was a form of resistance, generated from within a cultural milieu that had long been the exclusive domain of Anglo-European white male practitioners." Schmalenberger, "Shaping Uplift Through Music," 58.

[48] Mary Church Terrell, "The Washington Conservatory of Music for Colored People and Its Teachers," *Voice of the Negro* (November 1904): 525-530, 525.

to teach at places like Dunbar High School in Washington, DC and numerous HBCUs, all of which received fewer resources and less support from the state than did historically white institutions. Despite being a prosperous cultural mecca, the Shaw neighborhood in DC (the Washington Conservatory's home) fell victim to redlining toward the end of Marshall's tenure as the school's director. The Federal Housing Authority graded the historically Black neighborhood under the category "F - rapidly declining," causing home values to plummet and leading to later decisions to engage in urban renewal projects that displaced thousands of Black families. Howard Theatre - the site of WCM's second commencement ceremony in 1911 - was eventually allowed to fall into disuse and disrepair. And individual students suffered from racist violence: In 1917, while serving as Director of Music at Lincoln High School, Daisy Westbrook's home in East St. Louis, IL was looted and burned by white rioters intent on destroying a prosperous Black community. According to a letter she wrote to a friend, Westbrook was lucky to escape with her life.[49] Scholars believe approximately 100 Black residents lost their lives during the race riot.[50]

Segregationist and white supremacist policies operated as significant brakes on the momentum of the Washington Conservatory during its half-century existence. But by better understanding how the conservatory and its students flourished despite the obstacles they faced, we stand to develop a much more complete picture of the ways Black classical musicians contributed and responded to the musical, political, and social fabric of twentieth-century American life.

**Alumni in the Schools: Teachers**

Teaching was a natural occupation choice for many of these graduates as segregation prevented other career opportunities from being available. Education was seen as a respectable profession that was in accord with racial uplift ideology.[51] Social refinement and education also shaped the Black elite as a social class.[52] Many Black women became teachers around the turn of the 20th century, and music teachers specifically had significant impacts on their communities.[53] Such societal influences help explain the fact that twenty-six of the thirty graduates at the center of this project, an overwhelming majority, went on to teach at some point in their career. They taught in almost every kind of educational institution, from primary schools through higher education. The majority influenced Black musical life by becoming music teachers; a smaller number of graduates taught outside of music, but undoubtedly used their musical training to strengthen the fabric of Black communities across the country. Each of these teachers' stories are featured in this map showing where Washington Conservatory graduates taught.

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[49] Daisy Westbrook, Letter to Louise Madella. July 19, 1917, in *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1972), 328-30, reprinted in *Letters of the Century America 1900-1999*, edited by Lisa Grunwald Alder and Stephen J. Alder (Dial Press, 1999),116-118.

[50] See https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/east-st-louis-race-riot-left-dozens-dead-devastating-community-on-the-rise-180963885/.

[51] Sarah Schmalenberger, "Shaping Uplift Through Music," *Black Music Research Journal* 28, no. 2 (2008): 59, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25433806.

[52] Kristen M. Turner, "Class, Race, and Uplift in the Opera House: Theodore Drury and His Company Cross the Color Line," *Journal of Musicological Research* 34 (2015): 338, https://doi.org/10.1080/01411896.2015.1082380.

[53] Doris Evans McGinty, "'As Large as She Can Make It': The Role of Black Women Activists in Music, 1880-1945*," in Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists since 1860*, ed. Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1997), 218. For statistics on gender demographics among Black teachers in 1900 and 1910, see Jarvis Givens, *Fugitive Pedagogy*, 83.

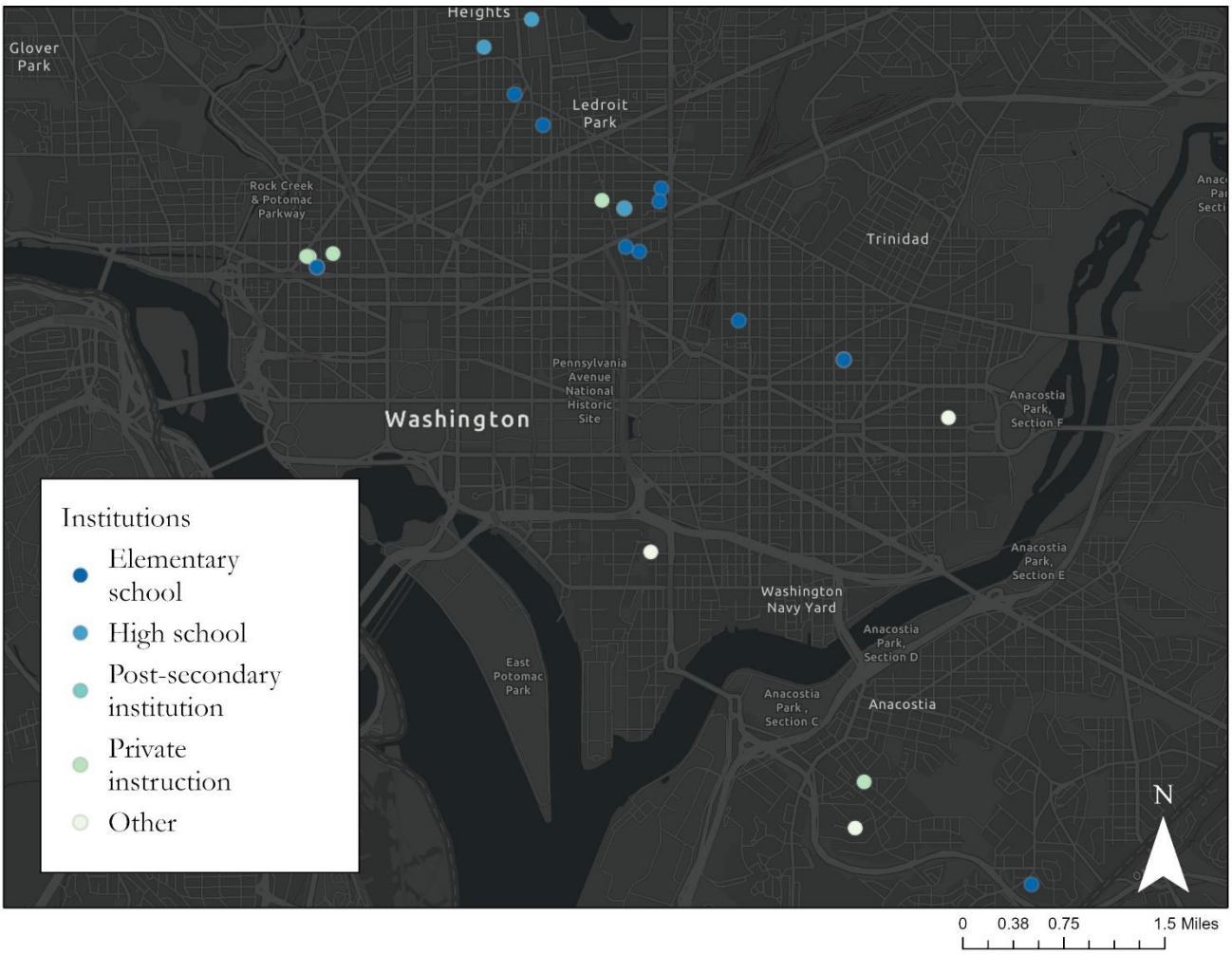


Figure 4. Institutions in Washington, DC where Washington Conservatory Alumni Taught.

The map aims to make visible what Doris McGinty has called "the anonymous infrastructures" of teachers that came from the Washington Conservatory.[54] Twenty-one of the twenty-six teachers can be seen on the map; we could not determine the institutions at which the other five taught, although their occupations were described as "teacher" in Census and city directory records. Each point is color-coded based on the type of institution at which they taught. Note that all but one elementary school teacher that graduated from WCM taught in Washington, DC, while all but one teacher at post-secondary institutions taught in the South, the other being in St. Louis. Within DC, about half of the teachers taught elementary school; the other half taught at high schools, community centers, or in private studios.

Fifteen of the 1910-14 Washington Conservatory graduates taught in public schools, with about half teaching elementary school and half teaching high school. Elsie A. Wiggins was one such graduate, teaching from 1917-1946 at seven different DC public elementary schools.[55] At the time of her retirement, she was characterized as "a conscientious, dependable teacher with high ideals… Mrs. Wiggins has won many friends by her cheerful

[54] Conversation with McGinty quoted in Sarah Schmalenberger, "The Washington Conservatory of Music and African-American Musical Experience, 1903–1941," PhD. Diss, University of Minnesota, 2004, 215.
[55] District of Columbia Board of Education, "Minutes of the Eleventh (Stated) Meeting of the Board of Education, February 1, 1950," in *Minutes of the Board of Education of the District of Columbia, Feb. 1, 1950 to April 5, 1950*, vol. 68 (Washington, DC, 1950), 32–33.

and willing cooperation in the school and community."[56] Wiggins' career at seven different schools and the testament to her community involvement exemplify the impact that Washington Conservatory graduates had on young people in myriad local communities through teaching.

Henry L. Grant spent his career at only one school, but like Wiggins his impact on generations of students was enormous. Grant was a music teacher at Dunbar High School in Washington, DC from 1918-1952. Early in his career he taught a young Duke Ellington.[57] He founded the Dunbar Orchestra in 1919, expanding it into the All School Orchestra in the 1928-1929 school year. During their first year as the All School Orchestra, they more than tripled public performances compared to the previous year as the Dunbar Orchestra.[58] The Dunbar High School 1936 Yearbook asserts that "the training and experience gained by frequent appearances before the public has inspired many talented students to continue their study in this field."[59] Grant created musical opportunities for students across Washington, DC as he fostered a musical environment that grew in number of performers and community audience members.

Complementing the work of Wiggins and Grant in public schools, other Washington Conservatory graduates went on to teach at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Wilhelmina B. Patterson was a music teacher at Prairie View State Normal Institute (now Prairie View A&M University) from 1914-16 and Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) from 1916-1934. While at Hampton, Patterson was a popular and well-liked teacher. In a letter to Washington Conservatory founder Harriet Gibbs Marshall (1868-1940), Hampton President James E. Gregg wrote that Patterson "is modest and engaging in her personality, knows how to do her work thoroughly well and has the faculty of getting on happily with other people."[60] This account demonstrates the impact of Patterson's teaching on Hampton as an institution as well as the students she taught. Patterson is just one of several Washington Conservatory graduates who influenced Black musical life through post-secondary institutions.

In addition to the voluminous evidence of the impact of Washington Conservatory graduates in formal educational institutions, there is also tantalizing - albeit sparser - proof that the education received at the conservatory was passed down through countless private music lessons. A family memoir published in 1995 recounts in detail memories of piano lessons with Mamie L. Hope, a 1914 Washington Conservatory graduate. Hope was "a well-known black piano teacher and piano accompanist" and at the end of each lesson "she flashed a wide, toothy, gold-filled smile of praise and encouragement."[61] This characterization, coupled with students' detailed memory of these lessons six decades later, attests to Hope's influence on her community through her private studio. The biographies of Hope and each of the other Washington Conservatory graduates who became teachers allow historians to begin pulling back the curtain on the anonymous infrastructure of Black women and men who influenced musical communities.

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[56] Ibid.
[57] Mark Tucker, "The Early Years of Edward Kennedy 'Duke' Ellington, 1899-1927," PhD Diss, University of Michigan, 1986, 133.
[58] Dunbar High School 1932 Yearbook, pg. 60, Courtesy of Sumner School Museum and Archives, Washington, DC.
[59] Dunbar High School 1936 Yearbook, pg. 77, Courtesy of Sumner School Museum and Archives, Washington, DC.
[60] James E. Gregg to Harriet Gibbs Marshall, February 28, 1921, Howard University Moorland Spingarn Research Center, Washington Conservatory of Music Papers, Box 112-5, Folder 142, Courtesy of Sarah Schmalenberger.
[61] Shirlee Taylor Haizlip, *The Sweeter the Juice : A Family Memoir in Black and White* (New York, NY: Touchston, 1995), 148.

**Alumni in the Concert Hall: Performers and Composers**

The most famous Black classical musicians of the early twentieth century were all performers and composers: Harry T. Burleigh, Marian Anderson, Paul Robeson, Roland Hayes, William Grant Still, William Dawson, Florence Price, Margaret Bonds. The majority of Black classical musicians, however, worked as teachers, and the Washington Conservatory was representative in producing far more music teachers than performers or composers. Still, several concert musicians and composers graduated from the conservatory between 1910 and 1914, and while they never achieved the fame of the figures cited above, there is no question that they made important contributions to American musical life in the early twentieth century both in DC and nationally.

The thirty Washington Conservatory graduates we've studied performed mostly in community settings, at schools, churches, theaters, and homes. While segregation certainly limited the scope of the performances from these graduates, the black-owned venues they frequented—like the Howard Theatre—began to flourish in the 1910s, gaining better reputations and being viewed as symbols of Black pride by some—but not all—African Americans (read more about the theater here).[62] According to musicologist Douglas Shadle, relevant racial factors of the era likely limited class mobility for all but the most esteemed performers.[63] A standard musical career path for middle-class Black women often consisted of matriculating at a normal school, learning just enough to teach the next generation, and becoming a teacher; technical study and public performance opportunities were rare.[64] Yet even where career options were confined—as Dr. Phylicia Bowman and Dr. Tammy Kernodle both acknowledged—African American women in particular managed to preserve cultural practices, ensuring that traditions (musical and non-musical) were sustained, especially in schools, churches, and community centers.[65]

Roughly 63% of the performances by 1910-1914 Washington Conservatory graduates that we located in newspapers occurred within DC, including many performances at the conservatory itself. Out of the known pieces performed at the conservatory in the 1910s, approximately 28% of known composers (link to composers spreadsheet?) were Black, while 72% were white—a much higher proportion than in the population at large.[66] In the same decade, 95% of known pieces performed (where the composer's race was known) were by male

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[62] Jacqueline Moore, *Leading the Race: The Transformation of the Black Elite in the Nation's Capital, 1880-1920* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 58-59. The Howard Theatre's first iteration—established by white entrepreneurs in 1909—was boycotted by Blacks and closed. The second Howard Theatre, owned by the same white entrepreneurs, opened in 1910 as an "optional Jim Crow theatre" and consisted of the white owners "using a black manager as a front." The owners assumed that African Americans in the vicinity of Howard were "not as comfortably situated" and wouldn't resist their second offering; yet it still became "the first to claim black management." Some saw this setup as "succumbing to Jim Crow," and "many members of the elite preferred to go to downtown theaters…perceiving them as more prestigious" and not wanting "to mix with the working classes." Still, by 1913, the theater "was widely praised by Washington's leading black citizens."

[63] Conversation with Dr. Douglas Shadle via Zoom from Northfield MN, July 15, 2022.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Conversations with Dr. Tammy Kernodle via Zoom from Northfield MN, June 27, 2022; and Dr. Phylicia Bowman in Washington, DC, July 6, 200. See also Bernice Johnson Reagon, "African Diaspora Women: The Making of Cultural Workers," *Feminist Studies* 12, no. 1 (1986): 77–90. https://doi.org/10.2307/3177984.

[66] Sarah Schmalenberger, *The Washington Conservatory of Music and African-American Musical Experience, 1903-1941,* 110, 224-242. Although Marshall campaigned intensely to promote Black concert music from 1910-22, "no renowned [Black] composer had yet written any piano concertos or sonatas, not even Coleridge Taylor," which could partially explain the juxtaposition between the majority of white composers performed at the conservatory in this timeframe and Marshall's mission in founding it.

composers, while pieces by female composers were performed only 5% of the time.[67] The four most frequently performed composers during Harriet Gibbs Marshall's tenure at the conservatory (1903-41) were Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Harry T. Burleigh, Frederick Chopin, and Ludwig Van Beethoven.[68]

After graduating, Washington Conservatory alumni participated actively in DC musical life. Consider "The Exile," a theater production performed in DC in June 1915 that was written for 1910 alum Nathaniel Guy, in which Washington Conservatory dance faculty member Edna Gray and alumna Jewel Jennifer performed. In April 1926, Henry L. Grant provided the music for a pageant at Armstrong Technical High School, conducting the "Dunbar High School Chorus and Orchestra and the Cleveland Chorus and Folk Singers."[69] Another exciting performance was at a packed concert with 3,000 attendees at Richmond, Virginia's First Baptist Church, "Wilhelmina B. Patterson, soprano," performed, singing "Johnson's 'The Awakening," along with Hampton Institute Singers and two Black colleagues at the institution, who included renowned composer-pianist R. Nathaniel Dett "who played his own composition, 'Incarnation.'[70] Click here for a non-exhaustive list of more than 150 performances by Washington Conservatory alumni we uncovered as part of our research.

While performances at theaters, churches and schools comprise the most common performance venues both nationally and in Washington, DC, more alumni performed at radio stations outside of the city proper (could show graphs from spreadsheets). Jewel J. Phillips, Daisy O. Westbrook, and Wilhelmina B. Patterson all performed on the radio at some point, with Phillips entertaining over the airwaves most frequently.

Phillips—who appeared on WMAL radio in DC, WJSV radio in Virginia, WEVD radio in New York City as a soloist, with "the Gondoliers," and may have also performed on Broadway—accompanied Nathaniel L. Guy's brother Barrington Guy on several radio gigs.[71] Notably, as listed in the national edition of the *Chicago Defender* on October 10, 1931, she opened for Duke Ellington when he "played several selections" at a wedding reception in Washington, DC.[72] Another graduate who overlapped at a performance with a famous musician of the era was J. Cleveland Lemons. In 1921 in Columbus, Ohio, Lemons played the pipe organ for a gig with Clarence Cameron White, "the distinguished violinist, composer" who was also a violin instructor and administrator at the Washington Conservatory in its early years.[73] He also participated in a "festival of music and art" at Central State University in Xenia, Ohio, in 1946, which the Fisk jubilee singers also notably performed at.[74]

Out of the 30 Washington Conservatory graduates we researched, only two—Arthur R. Grant (link to blog post) and Jewel J. Phillips—are known to have gone on to have composed and published their compositions. For example, Arthur R. Grant wrote several songs for musicals, and at least three tunes for the Broadway show

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[67] Ibid. Sadly, 5% is still higher than the percentage of works by female composers performed by most symphony orchestras today.
[68] Ibid.
[69] *Evening Star*, Washington, DC, April 30, 1926, pg. 22.
[70] *Dallas Express*, Dallas, TX, January 28, 1922, pg. 3.
[71] For Phillips, see *Evening Star*, Washington, DC, February 6, 1931, pg. 34; *Evening Star*, Washington, DC, October 31, 1930, pg. 57; *New York Times*, New York, NY, January 3, 1934, pg. 26; *Afro-American*, Baltimore, MD, October 10, 1931, pg. 5. For Barrington Guy, see *Chicago Defender*, Chicago, IL, August 19, 1933, pg. A6; Ibid, August 19, 1933, pg. A6; *New York Times*, New York, NY, January 12, 1934, pg. 34.
[72] *Chicago Defender*, Chicago, IL, October 17, 1931, pg. 19.
[73] The American Musician and Sportsman Magazine, United States: American Music Publishing, 1921, 28. https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_American_Musician_and_Sportsman_Maga/GIkyAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1; Washington Conservatory of Music Faculty Listings, Washington, DC, 1903-04, 1904-05, Accessed courtesy of Sarah Schmalenberger, Originally from The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center - Howard University.
[74] *Journal Herald*, Dayton, OH, May 4, 1946, pg. 9.

"The Logic of Larry" in 1919, including *Pals First (Will be Pals to the Last)* (orchestra parts for which are still available) and *Dear Mother of Mine*, both of which are available as sheet music.[75] The songs are all in typical Tin Pan Alley verse-chorus form and treat topics such as friendship, motherly devotion, and romantic relationships. One song, "Dum-Deedle-Dee-Um Dumb Dora," (upload, just link to it like that other article) mocks the inelegant comportment and dialect of a romantic interest in a way that suggests the legacy of blackface minstrelsy.[76] Grant produced a number of additional compositions ranging from 1917-24.[77]

We are grateful to Cait Miller, research librarian at the Library of Congress, for sharing two unpublished pieces by Jewel Jennifer Phillips. Phillips pursued a career on Broadway as a performer and, apparently, a songwriter. One manuscript, *It's Not Too Late*, is written for piano and voice and dated 1928.[78] With dense rhymes reminiscent of Cole Porter and extended harmonies that point to jazz and the blues more than traditional Tin Pan Alley, "It's Not Too Late" is an invitation to a lover who has left the singer for another: "It's not too late, dear/To come to me/Don't hesitate dear/It had to be/You found your new love/Was not a true love/It seems that you love/Need sympathy."[79] Another unpublished manuscript, titled *Can't Help Ravin' 'Bout My Sex Appeal,* includes the attribution "Words and Lyric by Jay Jennifer," an obvious pseudonym for Jewel Jennifer Phillips.[80] (The composer may have adopted a masculine-sounding pen name to circumvent sexism in the sheet music industry). Written as a vocal score without accompaniment, the harmonic progression in the chorus is easily extrapolated from the melody as Amin7, D6, Gmajor7, Eminor9, Amin7, D, G6, although the bridge harmony remains somewhat enigmatic.[81]

Despite this small sample size of compositions, it's important to consider that both Grant and Jennifer were also performers and teachers at various points throughout their lives. While most Washington Conservatory graduates were music teachers for whom we found few performances outside of their immediate communities, Jennifer and Grant's range—both geographically and in terms of their career paths—demonstrates that the musical training of WCM graduates did not necessarily confine them to a singular path. Through the paper trails left by their lives and careers, and by sometimes connecting them to more well-known performers, we can see—and hear—the outlines of their journeys through twentieth-century American musical communities.

**Alumni Activists**

In addition to their work as performers and teachers, many early graduates of the Washington Conservatory of Music became activists working with local and national organizations working, most often at the intersection of music and civil rights. Elsie Wiggins was active in the NAACP; Henry Grant cofounded the National Association of Negro Musicians. This comes as no surprise given that the Washington Conservatory of Music explicitly encouraged race-focused activism. From the outset, Harriet Gibbs Marshall envisioned the Washington Conservatory as an institution that would cultivate "the musical talent of the colored american" and

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[75] Arthur R. Grant, *Pals First (Will be Pals to the Last)* (Worcester, Mass.: Arthur R. Grant Music Co., 1919); Arthur R. Grant, *Dear Mother of Mine* (Worcester, Mass.: Arthur R. Grant Music Co., 1919.
[76] Arthur R. Grant, *Dum-Deedle-Dee-Um Dumb Dora* (New York: The Metro Music Co., 1924).
[77] Arthur R. Grant, *Bobbsy* (New York: The Metro Music Co., 1923). Bobbsy is an example of another tune by Grant, in addition to *It's a Good Little World After All* from "The Logic of Larry," which we only located the first page from in the Library of Congress. We speculate there are more Arthur R. Grant pieces in existence than we were able to locate in two months.
[78] Jewel Jennifer, *It's Not Too Late* (Washington, DC: Jewel Jennifer Phillips, 1928), accessed July 18 2022, Library of Congress Performing Arts Reading Room.
[79] Ibid, 1-2, mm. 20-35.
[80] Jay Jennifer, *Can't Help Ravin' 'Bout My Sex Appeal* (Washington, DC: Jewel Jennifer Phillips, 1928), accessed July 18 2022, Library of Congress Performing Arts Reading Room.
[81] Ibid, mm. 17-24.

"preserve and develop negro melodies."[82] As such, the Washington Conservatory became a nexus of Black musical activism in the early twentieth century.

The Washington Conservatory was integrally connected to the organization, development, and founding of the National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM).[83] . Not only did 1910 Washington Conservatory graduate, Henry Lee Grant, cofound NANM in 1919 and served as the organization's first president from 1919-21. Many of the initial meetings for NANM took place at the Washington Conservatory and Gregoria Fraser Goins, who served as the secretary for the Washington Conservatory of Music, also served as the first secretary of NANM.

NANM was conceived as a fellowship network for Black classical musicians. As Doris McGinty points out in her unpublished manuscript on "Artists and NANM," NANM was built upon pre-existing musical infrastructures created by Marshall, Emma Azalia Hackley, and others, "in a way NANM became an intensification of a process that had started many years before in 1919."[84] NANM was thus one manifestation of a broader phenomenon that Imani Perry has called "Black associationalism," a trend that saw the proliferation of organizations across every area of civic and professional life.[85] Such groups offered networking, political organizing, and business opportunities; they also conferred social status on participants, thus contributing to broader aspirations to racial uplift.[86]


Meeting of NANM founders. Temporary Organization of Negro Musicians. Dunbar High School. Washington. D.C. 1919. Courtesy of

Figure 5. Group portrait taken at Inaugural Meeting of NANM at Dunbar High School May 1919. Grant is seventh from the left in the first row. Doris Evans McGinty, eds, A Documentary History of the National Association of Negro Musicians, (Chicago: Center for Black Music Research Columbia College, 2004),186.

Grant was not the only Washington Conservatory alumni involved in NANM. Other graduates including J. Cleveland Lemons and Daisy Westbrook served as regional chapter heads and conferences organizers in the early decades of NANM. Columbus-based piano teacher, J. Cleveland Lemons served as the president of the Columbus Branch of NANM from 1920 through the 1950s.[87] Daisy O. Westbrook, served as the 1927 NANM convention secretary when the convention was held in St. Louis, MO. During the 1927 NANM convention, the *Chicago Defender* reported that Westbrook participated in a performance of "Vorspiele by Wagner-Singer and Tannhauser Overture for piano (16 hands)."[88] Fellow Washington Conservatory graduate, Pearl C. Flipper (later Taylor), also participated in this

[82] Washington Conservatory of Music, School History, Not Dated. Washington Conservatory of Music Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Box 112-53, Folder 9.
[83] The definitive secondary source on the National Association of Negro Musicians is Doris Evans McGinty, ed., *A Documentary History of the National Association of Negro Musicians*, (Chicago: Center for Black Music Research Columbia College, 2004).
[84] "Artists and NANM First Draft (June 1996)," Doris McGinty Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Box 45-16, Folder 38, pg. 52.
[85] Imani Perry, May We Forever Stand: A History of the Black National Anthem (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 6.
[86] Jarvis Givens, *Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021, 54.
[87] "Minutes of the Second Annual Meeting of the National Association of Negro Musicians July 1920," MC988a, Box 1, Folder 1, Item 9, Florence Beatrice Smith Price Papers Adendum, University of Arkansas Fayetteville Special Collections, https://digitalcollections.uark.edu/digital/collection/p17212coll3/id/32.
[88] *Chicago Defender*, Chicago, IL, September 10, 1927, pg. 7.

performance.[89] And Wilhelmina B. Patterson, later served on the "The Hampton Institute Entertainment Committee for the Association of Negro Musicians Convention" in 1931.[90]

Aside from producing graduates who devoted their time and resources to national activist organizations, the Washington Conservatory was itself engaged in activism: it sought to foster Black music history and culture though the formation of a National Negro Music Center. Harriet Gibbs Marshall, began efforts to form a National Negro Music Center as early as 1910.[91] By 1931, Marshall was circulating pamphlets that argued, "There is great need of the systematic recording of all facts concerning the history and development of negro music for the American Negro is making musical history."[92] Marshall's grand vision for a National Negro Music Center encompassed a sheet music library, research department, public performances, and conservatory courses in Black music history.[93] To that end, Marshall undertook numerous financial drives trying to secure a $100,000 endowment for the National Negro Music Center in the 1920s and 30s. The correspondence files of the Washington Conservatory of Music Papers at Howard University are full of letters from Marshall soliciting financial support for her National Negro Music Center. While much of Marshall's vision was successful, ultimately Marshall failed to procure her desired $100,000 endowment, and the idea of a National Negro Music Center was not pursued further following Marshall's death in 1941.[94]

In retrospect, the Washington Conservatory of Music was a nexus of musical activism. As the first American music conservatory run by Black faculty and designed for Black students, the Washington Conservatory advanced a vision of classical music that centered Black composers and African-American musical history. Washington Conservatory graduates embodied this vision through their organizing work with NANM and in their own communities.

**Alumna Spotlight: Grace G. Brown**

Grace Evangeline Gibbs was born on October 4, 1892, in Tallahassee, Florida.[95] She was the daughter of Alice Menard and Thomas Van Rensalier Gibbs.[96] According to her niece, Phylicia Fauntleroy Bowman, Thomas

[89] Ibid.
[90] *New Journal and Guide*, Norfolk, VA, August 29, 1931, pg. 5.
[91] The 1910-11 Washington Conservatory of Music School Catalogue listed a goal of the school as "The Preservation of Negro Melodies," Washington Conservatory of Music Papers, Box 112-54, Folder 35, Scrapbook 3, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.
[92] Washington Conservatory of Music Papers, Box 112-3, Folder 117, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.
[93] Ibid.
[94] More research would be needed to determine whether Marshall's vision inspired similar efforts by later scholars, notably Eileen Southern and Samuel Floyd, Jr., to create Black music research centers like the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the New York Public Library and the Center for Black Music Research in Chicago.
[95] "The Obituary" in *A Service of Witness To The Resurrection Celebrating the Life Of "Princess" Grace Brown* program, Greensboro, NC, August 26, 1993, 2. Accessed courtesy of Phylicia Fauntleroy Bowman.
[96] Ibid.

Figure 6. Grace Gibbs Brown, Courtesy of Phylicia Fauntleroy Bowman.

Van Rensalier Gibbs co-founded Florida A&M University, and her mother taught there.[97] Grace Gibbs' maternal grandfather, John Willis Menard, was the first Black man elected to the United States Congress, specifically the House of Representatives (though opposition to his election from his opponent prevented him from being seated).[98] Gibbs' prominent family connections manifested even further, although this occurred due to a tragedy in her formative years. When her parents died a week apart when she was 6 years old, her cousin Harriet Gibbs Marshall—founder of the Washington Conservatory of Music—adopted her, while her five other siblings went to live with other family members[99]. As she was raised by Gibbs Marshall, a prominent music educator, she studied piano privately with her mother (as evidenced by a 1902 performance of Gurlitt's "Sunshiny Morning" reported in DC's *Colored American*) and later with Mrs. Gabrielle Lewis Pelham (at least in 1904).[100] Grace went on to attend the Washington Conservatory; while a student there, she performed in a play, sang in the institution's chorus, and continued to hone her piano skills. She graduated from the conservatory's teacher's course in 1912 and performed along with Ruth Grimshaw and other graduates at their commencement.

Gibbs performed around DC between 1913-14 and joined the faculty of the Washington Conservatory in 1917, listed as a "popular music teacher for children" in the September 15, 1917 issue of the *Washington Bee.*[101] In June 1918, she married Chase K. Brown, a store keeper from North Carolina, and eventually moved to Greensboro, NC, where she resided the rest of her adult life.[102] In Greensboro, Gibbs Brown taught first grade at David D Jones Elementary School, then at Jacksonville High School. She retired from her four decade public school teaching career in 1958.[103] Along the way, Gibbs Brown received a college degree in education from North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro, in 1939.[104] Additionally, she taught private piano lessons in her home for 75 years—remarkable not only because of her evident longevity (she reached her 100th birthday in 1992), but also when considering the extensive network of students whose lives she touched through the

[97] Phylicia Fauntleroy Bowman, "Phylicia Fauntleroy Bowman: Oral History Interview," by Dr. Louis Epstein et al., *Musical Geography Project*, July 6, 2022.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid; "The Obituary" in *A Service of Witness To The Resurrection Celebrating the Life Of "Princess" Grace Brown* program, 2.
[100] *Colored American*, Washington, DC, July 26, 1902, pg. 12; *Washington Times*, Washington, DC, May 8, 1904, pg. 7.
[101] *Washington Bee*, Washington, DC, September 15, 1917, pg. 5.
[102] "The Obituary" in *A Service of Witness To The Resurrection Celebrating the Life Of "Princess" Grace Brown* program, 2.
[103] Ibid; *Future Outlook*, Greensboro, NC, September 1, 1945, pg. 4.
[104] "The Obituary" in *A Service of Witness To The Resurrection Celebrating the Life Of "Princess" Grace Brown* program, 2.

seven decades of operating her studio.[105] Gibbs Brown's many students showcased their skills through annual piano recitals in the sanctuary of St. James Presbyterian church.[106]

Figure 7. "The Obituary" in A Service of Witness To The Resurrection Celebrating the Life Of "Princess" Grace Brown program, Greensboro, NC, August 26, 1993, 1. Courtesy of Phylicia Fauntleroy Bowman.

According to her obituary, Grace G. Brown "was president and member of the Altar Guild for 25 years, a member of the Lucy Laney and Grace Brown Circles, United Presbyterian Women Society and Adult Sunday School Class at her church. She was also a charter member of the Ever-Achieving Retired Teachers Club, and the Warnersville Senior Citizens Club."[107] Such community involvement provides a glimpse into an active life beyond teaching. Furthermore, considering how she gained knowledge and experience from her adopted mother, Harriet Gibbs Marshall, and her storied family who encouraged her to "go out and do something beneficial in the world to keep the links in the chain," Gibbs Brown was able to leverage her conservatory training into an active musical career and a significant impact on her community.[108]

**Alumna Spotlight: Wilhelmina B. Patterson**

Wilhelmina B. Patterson (1888-1962) was a highly regarded music educator, vocalist, and pianist in early twentieth century Washington, DC, and beyond. As a faculty member at multiple Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) including Prairie View A&M and Hampton University, Patterson influenced countless young musicians. Parsing Patterson's biography through digitized newspapers, census records, and archival sources, it is clear that the Washington Conservatory of Music played a major role in shaping early twentieth century Black music educators.

Patterson was born in Calvert, Texas on June 23, 1888.[109] By 1900, the Patterson family was living in Washington, DC at 1214 Linden St, NE.[110] Patterson, who was known as Bessie to her friends and family, graduated from the Washington Conservatory of Music in the Artists Course for Piano and Theory in 1911.[111] When Harriet Gibbs Marshall (1868-1940) founded the Washington Conservatory of Music and School of Expression in 1903, one of her goals for the school was "the thorough training of gifted negroes who will use negro music in education institutions, especially in the southern states."[112] Patterson fulfilled this objective by first directing the music department at Prairie View State Normal Institute (now Prairie View A&M) from 1911-16, and then teaching at the Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) from 1916-34. At Hampton, Patterson directed the Girl's Glee Club and also taught music at Phenix High School, a training school for Hampton students studying education located on the Hampton Campus.

Letters and newspaper accounts indicate Patterson was a well-liked and popular faculty member at Hampton during the 1920s. In 1921, Hampton President James E. Gregg wrote to Washington Conservatory Founder Harriet Gibs Marshall, "With regard to Miss Patterson I am happy to say that her services here have given

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[105] Ibid.
[106] "The Obituary" in *A Service of Witness To The Resurrection Celebrating the Life Of "Princess" Grace Brown* program, 2.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] "Wilhelmina Bessie Patterson," Student Cards, Digital scan courtesy of Oberlin College Archives.
[110] Year: 1900; Census Place: Washington, Washington, District of Columbia; Roll: 163; Page: 16; Enumeration District: 0113; FHL microfilm: 1240163
[111] *Evening Star*, Washington, DC, June 17, 1911, pg. 12.
[112] Howard University Moorland Spingarn Research Center, Washington Conservatory of Music Papers, Box 112-3, Folder 117.

pleasure and satisfaction to everyone. She is modest and engaging in her personality, knows how to do her work through really well and has the faculty of getting on happily with other people. We are very glad that we have her at Hampton."[113] Under Patterson's direction, the Hampton Girl's Glee Club performed frequently. In an attempt to solicit performance opportunities for the Glee Club, Patterson wrote to Harriet Gibbs Marshall in 1931: "They are about forty in number and could give a very interesting recital, of accompanied and unaccompanied numbers, including negro spirituals by Burleigh and Dett, Indian songs, French songs, English and art songs. They have beautiful white uniforms of simple design, are very expressive in their interpretations and make a splendid appearance on the stage."[114] The fact that the Glee Club's varied repertoire included both "negro spirituals" and "Indian songs" reflects on Hampton's tradition of publishing spiritual and indigenous song arrangements in the early twentieth century.[115] By early 1934, however, Patterson was forced to resign from her position at Hampton due to administrative reorganization.[116]

After leaving Hampton, Patterson moved back to Washington, DC, where she directed the choir at Shiloh Baptist Church and served as the music director of the Burville Recreation Center Orchestra. In the 1940s, Patterson was profiled in Violet Key Smith's newspaper column about "Interesting D.C. Women."[117] Smith characterized Patterson as "a pleasant-faced retiring sort of person who laughs a lot."[118] In an interview with Smith, Patterson said "I don't believe there is any greater joy in life than in training children and seeing their talents develop as much as possible."[119]

Photos in the Dale-Patterson Family Collection at the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum demonstrate Patterson enjoyed a rich musical life in DC. In one photo captioned "Victory Sing at the Burville School with Orchestra Accompanying", Patterson stands next to a piano with a children's orchestra and choir. In another photo captioned, "Miss Patterson's Ensemble Asbury Methodist Church," Patterson plays piano on stage with a small orchestra of children. In her interview with Violet Key Smith, Patterson stated: "The thing I am most interested in right now…is setting up a music center at the home in Anacostia my brother, Fred, has given me. I want to make it a place where my musical friends, young and old, may gather in an ideal environment."[120] While no evidence exists that Patterson created her desired music center, Patterson's multifaceted role as a music educator meant she influenced countless young musicians.

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[113] James E. Gregg to Harriet Gibbs Marshall, February 28, 1921, Howard University Moorland Spingarn Research Center, Washington Conservatory of Music Papers, Box 112-5, Folder 142, Courtesy of Sarah Schmalenberger.

[114] Bessie Patterson to Harriet Gibbs Marshall, April 1, 1931. Howard University Moorland Spingarn Research Center, Washington Conservatory of Music Papers, Box 112-5, Folder 142, Courtesy of Sarah Schmalenberger.

[115] See Robert Nathaniel Dett, *Religious Folk Songs of the Negro,* (Hampton University Press, 1927). Natalie Curtis Burlin, *The Indians' Book An Offering by the American Indians of Indian Lore, Musical and Narrative, to Form a Record of the Songs and Legends of Their Race* (Harper, 1907).

[116] See "Ousted Music Teacher Forced to Quit Hampton Inst. Campus. President Howe Demands She Leave Jan. 29. Action Believed to Be Aftermath of Recent Protest. School Head is Away. Informant Says Negro Will Now Get Position," *New Journal and Guide,* Norfolk, VA, February 3, 1934, pg. 1.

[117] "Interesting D.C. Women by Violet Key Smith," Undated newspaper clipping, Dale Patterson Family Papers, Anacostia Community Museum, M06-074, Box 4, Folder 4.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid. Patterson's brother, Frederick Douglass Patterson (1901-88) served as the third president of the Tuskegee Institute from 1935-53 and founded the United Negro College Fund in 1944. The home Patterson refers to is likely 1395 Morris Rd, SE, Washington, DC which Patterson purchased on 7/29/1956 for $4,334.57. The full property deed is in the Dale Patterson Family Papers, Anacostia Community Museum, M06-074, Box 4, Folder 3.


Figure 8. "Mme. Lillian Evanti Recital Shiloh Baptist Church." Circa 1943. Courtesy of Dale Patterson Family Collection, Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum, Box 8, Folder 34.

In Washington, DC, Patterson also maintained a longtime friendship with famed operatic soprano Lillian Evanti (1890-1967). Ephemera in the Dale Patterson Family Collection demonstrates Evanti sent Patterson postcards, and Patterson organized concerts for Evanti at Shiloh Baptist Church.

By the time of her death in 1962, Patterson was a well-loved musical figure in Washington, DC. As a tribute to Patterson's influence as a musician and educator, the Shiloh Baptist Church formed the Wilhelmina B. Choir in 1970 in Patterson's honor.[121] Wilhelmina B. Patterson's musical career reveals Black female music educators shaped their communities through performance, leadership, and education.

**Alumnus Spotlight: Henry Lee Grant**

One early standout graduate from the Washington Conservatory was Henry Lee Grant (1886-1954). Grant's career as a teacher at Dunbar High School, role as president and founder of the National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM), and work as a composition teacher to Duke Ellington established Grant as a major musical influence in early twentieth-century Washington, DC.

Grant was among the eleven inaugural graduates of the Washington Conservatory, completing the Artists Course with degrees in piano and theory in 1910.[122] After graduation, Grant taught piano and harmony at the Washington Conservatory from 1910-13, where he initially received a salary of $40.00 per month.[123]

During Grant's time on the faculty at the Washington Conservatory, Grant also directed two Washington, DC based musical ensembles: Will Marion Cook's Afro-American Folk Song Singers, and the L'Allegro Glee Club. The Afro-American Folk Song Singers were a Washington, DC based choral ensemble started by composer, violinist, and conductor Will Marion Cook. Grant assumed directorship of the organization around 1919, when Cook led the Southern Syncopated Orchestra on its groundbreaking tour of Europe. Grant established the L'Allegro Glee Club in 1909 and the group performed frequently in Washington, DC. Both ensembles gave Grant a platform to exercise musical leadership and present programs focused on music by Black composers.

In 1917, Grant accepted a position teaching music at Dunbar High School. Grant remained at Dunbar for thirty-five years until his retirement in 1952. In 1919, Grant founded the Dunbar High School Orchestra, a multifaceted ensemble that promoted social activism through public performance. The history of the Dunbar High School Orchestra was memorialized in the 1936 Dunbar High School yearbook: "The high school orchestra idea began its career in Dunbar High School in 1919 as an extracurricular activity under the direction of Mr. Henry L. Grant. Because of its services rendered to the school, it soon became an indispensable part of the musical department for which much credit was given."[124] The Dunbar High School Orchestra also participated in multiple public performances meant to showcase Black musical talent and musical history. In

[121] *Washington Post*, Washington, DC, June 28, 1970, pg. F6.
[122] First Commencement Program, June 3, 1910. Washington Conservatory of Music Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Box 112-52, Folder 21.
[123] "School Proceedings Contracts A-M," Washington Conservatory of Music Papers, Box 112-11, Folder 229, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.
[124] Dunbar High School 1936 Yearbook, pg. 77, Courtesy of Sumner School Museum and Archives, Washington, DC.

Figure 9. The 1936 Dunbar High School Orchestra. Courtesy of Sumner School Museum and Archives, Washington, DC.

July 1923, "a large chorus of students led by Henry L Grant" presented "a pageant adapted from Booker T. Washington's Up From Slavery" at the Hampton Institute.[125] While, in 1926, the Dunbar High School orchestra performed "a program of Negro music at the Philadelphia Sesquicentenial on Monday, August 23."[126]

By the 1920s, Grant was a well-liked and sought-after music teacher in Washington, DC. In the 1925 Dunbar High School yearbook under the heading "Familiar Sayings of Some of the Faculty" Grant was characterized with the pedagogical epithet: "Hum if you don't know the words."[127] At the time of his retirement on September 30, 1952, the DC Board of Education listed Grant as a teacher under salary class 3A making $4,653 per year, which is over $52,000 in 2022.[128]

Outside of his work at Dunbar High School, Grant also gave private composition lessons to a teenage Duke Ellington. In his dissertation on Ellington, Mark Tucker recounts that Ellington studied with Grant about twice per week. Tucker argues, "Grant was a new kind of teacher for Ellington. He was not only a versatile musician who composed, conducted, and concertized as a pianist, but also an active promoter of Negro music."[129] The musicologist Doris McGinty recounted interviews with Grant's daughter June Hackney, writing: "It was a source of amusement to her that Grant was able to point out wrong notes and even incorrect fingerings on the part of the young pianist even in instances when he could hear the piano but was actually out of the room."[130] McGinty further characterizes Grant as a musician who was interested in both classical and popular music, stating: "Grant and Ellington became fast friends, and in 1952, according to Grant's daughter June, Ellington, wishing to repay the educator who had just retired, took Grant along on a tour to St. Louis and points west."[131]

As a musician and activist, Grant also played a pivotal role in founding the National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM). Grant served as the first president of NANM from 1919-21 and edited NANM's journal *The Negro Musician.* (Connecting his teaching career with his activism, Dunbar High School sponsored the first meeting of the National Association of Negro Musicians.[132]) While officially organized in the spring of 1919, efforts to found a national organization of Black classical musicians began as early as 1906. Grant's large musical network in Washington, DC, and beyond provided the connections and fostered the leadership skills to

[125] *Broad Axe*, Chicago, IL, July 14, 1923, pg. 3.
[126] *New York Age*, New York, NY, August 21, 1926, pg. 5.
[127] Dunbar High School 1925 Yearbook, Courtesy of Sumner School Museum and Archives, Washington, DC.
[128] Washington, DC Board of Education Minutes, October 15, 1952, pg. C-1, Courtesy of Sumner School Museum and Archives, Washington, DC.
[129] Mark Tucker, "The Early Years of Edward Kennedy 'Duke' Ellington, 1899-1927," PhD Diss, University of Michigan, 1986, 133.
[130] "Artists and NANM First Draft (June 1996)," Doris McGinty Papers, Box 45-16, Folder 38, pg. 46, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Dunbar High School Music Festival Program, May 1919, Gregoria Fraser Goins Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Box 36-7, Folder 88.

successfully found NANM. At the first annual conference in 1920, *The Washington Herald* reported, "Henry L. Grant spoke of the community's part and said that negro musicians should take an interest in the development of community music, for it made for character and ideals."[133] Of NANM's mission and goals, musicologist Doris McGinty wrote, "It was their intention that NANM would be, above all, a touchstone for hundreds engaged on various levels and in various categories of activity associated with music, and, it was their hope that with assistance from NANM and the stimulation of increasing opportunities for education, world class artists would emerge from the ranks."[134]

As a music educator and organizer, Henry L. Grant played a major role in early twentieth century Black musical networks in Washington, DC. At Dunbar High School, Grant influenced countless young musicians. As president and founder of NANM, Grant led the first professional network of Black musicians. While today, Grant is overshadowed by his more famous NANM co-founders, Nora Douglas Holt and Clarence Cameron White, Grant arguably did more to advance twentieth century Black musical education and organizing.

**About the Project**

This project stemmed from an interest in musical life at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) during the first decades of their existence. In the planning stages of the project, we discovered that the Washington Conservatory is little known compared to the music programs at other historically Black institutions. At the same time, the conservatory was unique among those other institutions, given that it was founded and operated entirely by Black faculty and administrators. Doris McGinty and Sarah Schmalenberger had already done foundational research on the mission of the Washington Conservatory and on its founder, Harriet Gibbs Marshall.[135] To build on their work, we chose to trace the lives and career paths of a select group of thirty Washington Conservatory graduates, limiting our scope to members of the first five graduating classes of the conservatory (1910-1914). Our goal was to humanize the institution's history and make visible what Doris McGinty has described as the "anonymous infrastructure" of graduates who influenced Black musical communities across the country.[136]

Our methodology centered on reconstructing the biographies of these thirty graduates - most of whom have never received scholarly attention - and transforming what we learned into a series of interactive digital maps that would help us test our hypothesis: that the Washington Conservatory of Music produced countless musicians who went on to strengthen musical communities and the broader social fabric of Black community life throughout the United States. To reconstruct their biographies, we consulted digital newspaper databases, digital genealogy records such as birth certificates, address documentation such as Census records and city directories, and other archival records. You can peruse the information we gathered and directly access the sources we used by accessing the spreadsheets we used to collect and organize our research findings.
After having collected hundreds of pieces of primary source evidence about the lives and contributions of these thirty graduates, we explored ways of representing trends in their stories using interactive digital maps. We chose what maps to make by considering what would reveal the most about Washington Conservatory graduates and the communities in which they lived. Utilizing sources containing biographical information, we created spreadsheets which we uploaded into ArcGIS, displaying the information by classifications such as occupation type or performance location type. These maps reveal that Washington Conservatory graduates from

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[133] *Washington Herald*, Washington, DC, August 15, 1920, pg. 25.
[134] "Artists and NANM First Draft (June 1996)," Doris McGinty Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Box 45-16, Folder 38, pg. 46.
[135] See Doris McGinty, "The Washington Conservatory of Music and School of Expression," *The Black Perspective in Music* 7 no. 1 (1979): 59-74; and Sarah Schmalenberger, "The Washington Conservatory of Music and African-American Musical Experience, 1903–1941," PhD. Diss, University of Minnesota, 2004.
[136] Conversation with Doris McGinty, cited in Sarah Schmalenberger, "The Washington Conservatory of Music and African-American Musical Experience, 1903–1941," PhD. Diss, University of Minnesota, 2004, 215.

1910-1914 often remained in Washington, DC, taught throughout the country, and were steadily active in Washington DC public music performances.
In addition to relying heavily on these sources, we also conducted oral histories with Phylicia Bowman about Grace Gibbs Brown, and with Mickey Terry about the history of Howard University's music department. Throughout the summer, we spoke with scholars whose work inspired our own, and who we knew were best positioned to give us early feedback on our research. We are especially grateful to Karen Bryan, Lucy Caplan, Sandra Graham, Tammy Kernodle, Carol Oja, Sarah Schmalenberger, Doug Shadle, and Kristen Turner for graciously entering into conversation with us via Zoom and for offering their time and edifying thoughts on our work. Special thanks goes to Tammy Kernodle for offering an informal oral history of her music education experience, which helped us better appreciate the significant connections between Washington Conservatory graduates and subsequent generations of teachers, performers, and scholars.

Such insights were prefigured in the scholarship upon which our work relies, in particular that of Doris McGinty and Sarah Schmalenberger, who wrote specifically about the Washington Conservatory. We also read scholarship by each of the scholars with whom we spoke via Zoom, as well as scholarship by Jarvis Givens and Eileen Southern. To see all of the sources we consulted, visit our Zotero bibliography.

With support from St. Olaf's Collaborative Undergraduate Research and Inquiry program, we were privileged to be able to augment our digital primary source research and secondary scholarship review by conducting archival research in Washington, DC. Most of our archival research took place at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University, which holds the Washington Conservatory of Music collection. We also consulted materials at the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum Archives, the Sumner School and Museum Archives, the Library of Congress, and DC Public Library Archives. In each of these locations, we combed through correspondence, financial records, advertisements, and news clippings. Oberlin College Archives, Prairie View A&M University, Cornell University, and the University of Arkansas Fayetteville Special Collections also provided additional archival material via digital scans and, in one case, a virtual microfilm consultation.

Throughout this project, the 2022 Musical Geography team has worked collaboratively in archival research, digital mapping, and writing prose. Each of the five students specialized in particular skills, though each student contributed to each aspect of the project. Researching thirty graduates in ten weeks was only possible through collaborative scholarship. This model of research allowed us to tell more complete, more human stories of these graduates and the musical communities they influenced.

If you are interested in making your own digital maps, please see our "How To" page where a downloadable "Musical Geography Research and Style Guide" is available. If you have additional questions about our project, please contact Dr. Louis Epstein at epstein@stolaf.edu.

**Who We Are**

The Musical Geography Project is a collaborative, digital humanities, musicological research initiative initiated by Dr. Louis Epstein at St. Olaf College in 2015. Dr. Epstein and University of Denver undergraduate Maeve Nagel-Frazel collaboratively co-developed the 2022 Musical Geography project focused on the Washington Conservatory between January 2022 – May 2022. Intensive research on this project was undertaken during a ten-week period in summer 2022 by four St. Olaf undergraduate students, Jack Slavik, Ariana Raduege, Davis Moore, and Lizzie Gray, along with Maeve and Dr. Epstein. Maeve made an initial archival research trip to Washington, DC in June 2022, while Jack, Ariana, and Maeve conducted additional archival research in Washington, DC, in July 2022.

Among the six members of the 2022 Musical Geography team, three team members self-identify as female, three team members self-identify as male, and all team members self-identify as white. We recognize the potential limitations of our positionality and the ways those limitations might affect the insights offered through this project, as well as the people impacted by it. As a result, we have taken certain steps to mitigate this project's potential to do unintentional harm and to strengthen the project's commitment to an intersectional, reparative approach to music history.

We have made a concerted effort to contact living descendants of Washington Conservatory graduates and ask for their consent to do this work. Due to time limitations, we have only made contact with one living descendant, but we will continue trying to make contact with other descendants. While much of our work strives to circumvent archival silences, we also recognize that the archive is not the be-all-end-all of knowledge. Our oral history with Phylicia Bowman taught us that archival collections are never comprehensive; the living legacy of generational memory remains a crucial source for historians.

We acknowledge intersectional forces of race, gender, and class create a power imbalance between us and Washington Conservatory graduates unconsciously allowing us to "speak for" said graduates. As a result, we have attempted to center individual voices and not filter graduate narratives through the prism of our own privilege. In our work as historians, we seek to represent graduates as multifaceted individuals with agency over their own lives and not rely on racialized or gendered tropes.

As white-identifying scholars working on African-American history, we acknowledge our own privilege influences our analysis of acts of racial violence and discrimination enacted on Washington Conservatory Graduates. Throughout this project, we have worked to center the scholarship and voices of Black-identifying scholars and historical figures whose expertise and experience can best convey the significance and impact of the Washington Conservatory.

**Team Bios:**

Ariana Raduege

Ariana Raduege (she/her) is a rising senior at St. Olaf College majoring in biology, music, and environmental studies. She is excited by the work of humanities research and the personal connections to the work that can be formed. She is interested in exploring the less celebrated histories and getting a more genuine depiction of Black music in the early twentieth century by those who lived it.

Davis Moore

He/him

Davis Moore (he/him) is a rising senior at St. Olaf College majoring in History and Music with an Environmental Studies concentration. With wide-ranging academic interests and an interdisciplinary assortment of majors, he's enjoyed the opportunity to engage related topics through researching this summer, which has encompassed everything from delving into music scores, scouring through census records, and exploring graduates' geographical movement. Davis looks forward to carrying the valuable lessons gleaned from his time in the *Musical Geography Project* into the 2022 academic year and beyond.

Jack Slavik

Jack Slavik (he/him) is a rising senior at St. Olaf College majoring in Vocal Music Education. As a musician and future educator, Jack is passionate about amplifying historical narratives made invisible by structural barriers to equality. He is interested in musical practices in "ordinary" communities of non-professional musicians. This summer, Jack focused on visualizing the musical networks of Washington Conservatory graduates with special emphasis on where graduates taught and lived in Washington, DC.

Lizzie Gray

Lizzie Gray (she/her) is a rising sophomore who is majoring in History and French. When she's not swing dancing, she loves diving into the lives of people from the past. That's exactly what she got to do in this project, learning about the impacts the graduates of the Washington Conservatory had in their communities, no matter how small. Lizzie loves this type of detective work, and sometimes gets lost down the rabbit holes of genealogical research. She's enjoyed being able to develop her archival research skills over the course of this summer in preparation for her post-graduation plans to work in archives and libraries.

Louis Epstein

Louis Epstein is Associate Professor of Music at St. Olaf College. His research ranges from early twentieth-century French music to digital mapping to the science of teaching and learning. His book, The Creative Labor of Music Patronage in Interwar France (The Boydell Press, 2022), reveals how collaborations between a variety of patrons and composers informed the distinctive sounds of French classical music between the world wars. Louis currently serves as Co-Director of St. Olaf's Center for Innovation in the Liberal Arts and as Chair of the American Musicological Society's Pedagogy Study Group. With his wife, Maggie, he co-chairs his family (two kids and a dog) and in his spare time he performs and records family music as one half of Louis and Dan and the Invisible Band.

Maeve Nagel-Frazel

Maeve Nagel-Frazel (she/her) is a rising senior at the University of Denver where she will graduate with a B.A. in Music (violin) with a minor in History in November 2022. Maeve's research interests center around nineteenth and twentieth century American musical culture, and she is passionate about using digital mapping tools to redefine music history. Maeve is the author of The Musical Geography Research and Style Guide, and has presented her work at numerous musicological conferences including at the Society for American Music where her research won the Mark Tucker Award for outstanding student paper in March 2022.

**Challenges and Next Steps**

Our project is necessarily incomplete. As much as we have tried to reconstruct comprehensive and intricate biographies of Washington Conservatory graduates, some biographical information about graduates remains elusive. Digitized newspapers and genealogical records are a fantastic resource for twenty-first century historians, but they cannot answer every historical question. Archival records are also frustratingly incomplete. In all but one case, Washington Conservatory graduates do not have personal archival collections.[137] For that reason, locating personal ephemera that can speak to Washington Conservatory graduates' own thoughts and motivations has proven difficult.

While our project attests to the viability of utilizing digital sources to circumvent existing archival silences, some archival silences are insurmountable. The scope and quality of digitized African-American newspapers pales compared to white counterparts. Poor-quality microfilm scanning means some digitized Black newspapers are unreadable or unrecognizable by Optical Character Recognition, which makes search more difficult and requires a great deal more time spent skimming than is required when doing research in white newspapers.[138]

[137] Wilhelmina B. Patterson is the only graduate with an existing collection of personal archival material. Patterson's papers are part of the Dale-Patterson Collection at the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum. Notably, the scope of personal ephemera relating to Patterson is significantly smaller than the scope of materials relating to her more famous brother, Frederick Douglass Patterson (1901-88). Without famous family members, it seems unlikely that Patterson's personal papers would have been saved at all.

[138] See: Black Press Research Collective, http://blackpressresearchcollective.org/.

As a ten-week summer research project, the depth of our inquiry was sometimes stifled by time limitations. While we were able to connect with one living descendant of a Washington Conservatory graduate (Thank you Phylicia Bowman!), project time limitations meant we were unable to connect with other living descendants of Washington Conservatory graduates. Future iterations of this project could track down living descendants of more Washington Conservatory Graduates and conduct a series of oral history interviews. In addition, since the Washington Conservatory remained in existence until 1960, future scholars could seek out living graduates of the Washington Conservatory in order to create a more comprehensive oral history of the Washington Conservatory.

Musical performance that celebrated the work of Black composers and advocated for Afro-American musical history through performance was part and parcel of Marshall's educational vision. During her tenure as director, Marshall organized several musical performances that celebrated Afro-American musical history including "Three Periods of Negro Music" (1921), "The Last Concerto: A Drama Based on the Life, Love, and Work of Samuel Coleridge Taylor" (1936), and "A Masque Musical" (1937).[139] Future scholarship could seek out scores for these works and embark on interdisciplinary, reconstructive musical performance. Further archival research is also needed to reconstruct the sheet music library Marshall collected for the National Negro Music Center.

The Washington Conservatory of Music was never the only institution open to Black musicians. While our project focuses on the Washington Conservatory, additional research is needed on graduates of other Black musical institutions. Future projects could map musical graduates of HBCUs such as Fisk University, Hampton University, or Tuskegee Institute. While significant scholarship exists on nineteenth-century Fisk University graduates, comparatively little scholarship exists on twentieth-century musical graduates of Fisk University.[140] Extensive work exists on Hampton University's educational and musical legacy, but no scholarship exists tracking specific musical graduates of Hampton University.[141] Additionally, more research is needed on smaller, twentieth-century, Black musical educational institutions such as Emma Azalia Hackley's Vocal Normal Institute in Chicago, the Mary Cardwell-Dawson Music School in Pittsburgh, and Margaret Bond's Allied Arts Academy in Chicago. While Harriet Gibbs Marshall was in many ways exceptional, we hope future research will reveal Marshall was a part of a much larger network of female Black musical educators who transformed the lives of countless students in the twentieth century. We also expect that future research will reveal links between the institution-building work of Gibbs Marshall and her contemporaries and the development of latter-day institutions promoting Black music research and performance, including journals, academic departments, and centers created by figures such as Eileen Southern and Samuel Floyd, Jr.

Graduates of the Washington Conservatory are not the only figures associated with the Washington Conservatory worthy of scholarship. More research is needed into Washington Conservatory faculty members such as Harry A. Williams (voice), Felix Weir (violin), Leonard Jeter (cello), and Abby L. Williams (voice) –

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[139] Washington Conservatory faculty member Shirley Graham also wrote an opera entitled "Tom Tom" which was premiered by the Cleveland Opera Company in 1932. See Schmalenberger, pg. 205.

[140] See Sandra Graham, *Spirituals and the Birth of a Black Entertainment Industry*, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2018); Sandra Graham, "The Fisk Jubilee Singers and the Concert Spiritual: The Beginnings of an American Tradition," PhD Diss, New York University, 2001; and Toni Passmore Anderson, "The Fisk Jubilee Singers: Performing Ambassadors for the Survival of an American Treasure, 1871-78," PhD Diss., Georgia State University, 1997. An exceptional study of Fisk University students after the nineteenth century is Marti Newland, "Sounding "Black": An Ethnography of Racialized Vocality at Fisk University" (Columbia University: Ph.D. Dissertation, 2017).

[141] See Lawrence Schenbeck, "Representing America, Instructing Europe: The Hampton Choir Tours Europe." *Black Music Research Journal* 25, no. ½ (2005): 3–42. Lori Rae Shipley, "A History of the Music Department at Hampton Institute /University, 1868–1972." PhD Diss., Boston University, 2009. Lori Rae Shipley, "Music Education at Hampton Institute, 1868–1913" *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education,* April 2011 XXXII:2.

many of whom were accomplished concert musicians in their own right. Additional research is also needed on Washington Conservatory-adjacent musical organizations such as the Bethel Literary and Historical Association and Mu-So-Lit Club, that served as equally important touch-points within a broader, Washington, DC-based musical network. Our research shows that Black churches played a disproportionate role in advancing Black classical musicianship in the early twentieth century; work in Black church archives will likely reveal a thriving, multifaceted culture of classical music performance, education, and activism. We hope future scholarship will prove that our work on the Washington Conservatory is only one part of a vast and intricate infrastructure of Black musicians in early twentieth-century US American life.

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