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The Life and Solo Vocal Works of Margaret Allison Bonds (1913-1972)

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THE LIFE AND SOLO VOCAL WORKS OF
MARGARET ALLISON BONDS (1913-1972)

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Alethea N. Kilgore defended this treatise on September 20, 2013.
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This treatise is dedicated to the music and memory of Margaret Allison Bonds.
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ABSTRACT

This treatise examines the life and solo vocal works of composer Margaret Allison Bonds (1913-1972). It includes a biographical outline of Bonds’s family background, education, and students. Her accomplishments as a concert pianist, composer, and music educator in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles are also described. The second half offers an overview of Bonds’s solo vocal compositions. There is one chapter devoted to each of the three styles of song that she composed in her career: African-American spirituals, jazz/popular songs, and art songs. In addition, the treatise explores Bonds’s relationship with the poets of the Harlem Renaissance, and her forays into the musical theatre genre.

Musical excerpts and descriptions of many of Bonds’s published and unpublished solo vocal works are included. This document will be of benefit to singers, pianists, coaches, and musicologists interested in finding new repertoire with a distinctly American sound, as well as those who are seeking songs composed by American female composers, African-American composers, or art songs that include musical elements drawn from the spiritual or jazz.

Over half of Bonds’s solo vocal works incorporated the poetry of Langston Hughes. The chapter entitled “The Art Songs: Poets of the Harlem Renaissance” is dedicated to the art song settings of Langston Hughes’s poems and also includes one art song setting of a Countee Cullen poem. The chapter entitled “The Art Songs” features settings of texts by Robert Frost, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Margaret Bonds, Marjorie May, Janice Lovoos, and Edmund Penney.

Appendix A of this document includes a list of Bonds’s solo vocal works. It includes publication information, the names of the poets, and dates of composition. Appendix B includes seven digital photographs, including images of Margaret Bonds, Langston Hughes, William Levi Dawson, Florence Beatrice Price, Leonard Harper, Charlotte Holloman, McHenry Boatwright, and Maya Angelou.

Many of Margaret Bonds’s songs were never published and are located in archival libraries and remain unknown. One purpose of this document is to expose these lesser known pieces to a larger audience, hopefully giving them a deserved place as a significant contribution to the American art song repertoire.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This treatise examines the life and solo vocal works of composer Margaret Allison Bonds (1913-1972). It includes a biographical outline of Bonds’s family background, education, and students. Her accomplishments as a concert pianist, composer, and music educator in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles are also described. The second half offers an overview of Bonds’s solo vocal compositions. There is one chapter devoted to each of the three styles of song that she composed in her career: African-American spirituals, jazz/popular songs, and art songs. In addition, the treatise explores Bonds’s relationship with the poets of the Harlem Renaissance, and her forays into the musical theatre genre.

Musical excerpts and descriptions of many of Bonds’s published and unpublished solo vocal works are included. This document will be of benefit to singers, pianists, coaches, and musicologists interested in finding new vocal repertoire with a distinctly American sound, as well as those who are seeking songs composed by American female composers, African-American composers, or art songs that include musical elements drawn from the spiritual or jazz.

The primary objective of this research is to outline the unique elements of Bonds’s solo vocal style, a quintessentially American collage of elements drawn from African-American musical styles, European art song, popular music, and jazz. A clear outline of her style is offered in Chapter 3.

Margaret Allison Bonds

“A race, no less than a nation, is prosperous in proportion to the intelligence of its women.”

Dr. Monroe Alpheus Majors, 1893

This quote was included in Dr. Monroe Alpheus Majors’s biographical book on successful African-American women of the 19th century: Noted Negro Women: Their Triumphs and Activities. It is certain that Dr. Majors would have been proud of the accomplishments his

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1 Monroe A. Majors, title page to Noted Negro Women: Their Triumphs and Activities (1892; repr., United States: Kessinger Publishing Legacy Reprints, 2009), 1.
daughter Margaret Allison Bonds (1913-1972) would achieve thirty years later for “a race, no less than a nation.”

Margaret Allison Bonds, a concert pianist and music educator, composed between 1932 and 1972. She not only composed in the large forms of the early twentieth century (symphony, ballet, and oratorio), but also gained success as a composer of solo piano and vocal works. Her solo vocal repertoire consists of approximately one hundred compositions composed in a variety of styles: art songs, spirituals, musical theatre songs, and jazz songs. There are two attributes that all of her solo vocal compositions share: the incorporation of American poetry and the musical characteristics found in one of the few types of indigenous American music: jazz. She connected elements drawn from African-American folk-songs, ragtime, and the blues. It is no wonder that the poetry of her lifelong friend, Langston Hughes (1902-1967), one of the pre-eminent writers of the Harlem Renaissance and the father of “jazz poetry,” inspired over half of her solo vocal compositions. Bonds not only composed incidental music for several of his theatrical works, but also used his poetry in her art songs, popular songs, and oratorios.

Bonds’s song repertoire also includes the poetry of Arna Bontemps (1902-1973), Countee Cullen (1903-1946), and W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963), as well as poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950), Robert Frost (1874-1963), Roger Chaney (N.d.), Marjorie May (N.d.), Malone Dickerson (N.d), and one poem written by Bonds, herself.

Bonds, a professional composer since age nineteen, began her career as a concert pianist at age twenty. She also worked as a rehearsal and audition pianist at the Apollo Theater and The American Theatre Wing. Her success not only inspired a generation of African-American female concert pianists, but also broke through the confines of racial prejudice when she became the first African-American woman to perform as a featured soloist with such orchestras as Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Women’s Symphony, the WNYC Orchestra, and the Scranton Philharmonic Orchestra.

Margaret Bonds’s work as a music educator also proved to be important. Her contributions left a lasting musical legacy in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. In each of these metropolitan areas, Bonds directed her own private music studios, where she taught piano and composition. She also volunteered to educate children in impoverished neighborhoods and

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2 Jazz poetry is often comprised of themes or subjects relating to jazz and often emulates rhythms or improvised styles sometimes associated with this genre of music.
implemented sight singing classes in community churches. Two of Bonds’s students, Gerald Cook (1921-2006) and Ned Rorem (b. 1923), achieved international recognition: Cook as a jazz pianist and composer and Rorem as a prolific composer of art music.
CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The Chicago Years: The Pre-College Years (1913-1929)

Margaret Allison Bonds was born as Margaret Jeanette Allison Majors in Chicago on March 3, 1913, to Estella C. Bonds Majors (1882-1957) and Dr. Monroe Alpheus Majors (1864-1960).

Margaret Bonds’s mother, Estella, the daughter of Edward W. and Margaret A. Bonds, was born in 1882 in New York. Shortly before 1900, the Bonds family moved to Chicago and resided at 6652 Wabash Avenue, a home that would subsequently be owned by Estella and become the childhood home of Margaret. Margaret Bonds’s mother received her education at the Chicago Musical College and was a charter member of the National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM). She was an accomplished organist, pianist, and music educator who was on the faculty of the Coleridge-Taylor School of Music and spent over two decades working as the organist and choral director of the Berean Baptist Church, the only church in Chicago where African-Americans could participate as paid musicians in the 1920s.³

Bonds’s father, Dr. Monroe Alpheus Majors, was born in Waco, Texas, on October 12, 1864, to Andrew Jackson and Jane Barringer Majors. Majors studied literature for one year at Central Tennessee College in Nashville. In 1883 he entered Meharry Medical College in Nashville and graduated with a Doctor of Medicine degree as the salutatorian of his class in February of 1886. Dr. Majors worked in Texas, California, Illinois, and Indiana as a physician, civil rights activist, and writer. He became the first African-American doctor to practice medicine west of the Rocky Mountains and also lectured on medical topics at the Los Angeles Medical College.⁴ In 1893, shortly after the publication of his book Noted Negro Women: Their Triumphs and Activities, Majors visited Chicago for five months to observe medical practices at Provident Hospital with its founder Dr. Daniel Hale Williams. During this time, Majors met Frederick Douglass (1818-1895). This was a pivotal moment in Majors's life. According to W. Montague Cobb, Dr. Majors, Charles S. Morris (N.d.), and Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)

⁴ Monroe A. Majors, 1.
were affectionately nicknamed the “three musketeers” by Frederick Douglass.\(^5\) Cobb also stated, “Together they arranged many affairs of interest in the possibilities and achievements of Negroes.”\(^6\)

In 1894 Majors helped to build and operate a hospital for African-Americans at Paul Quinn College, in Waco, Texas.\(^7\) Majors was also responsible for adding the term “paralysis diabetes” to medical literature.

At the request of Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) in 1908, Dr. Majors accepted a three-year term as editor of the *Chicago Conservator*.\(^8\) It was at this time that his first marriage, to Miss Georgia A. Green of Texas, ended in divorce. Majors met Estella Bonds one year later and they were married in the later part of 1909. The couple lived with Estella’s mother in the home on Wabash Avenue and in 1913 Margaret was born.

In 1915 Monroe and Estella Majors separated, and by 1917, the year Majors’s poem “Ode to Frederick Douglass” was published, the couple’s marriage ended in a “very bitter divorce.”\(^9\) It was at this time that Estella renamed her daughter Margaret Allison Bonds. She was four years old. Margaret Bonds lived with her mother and grandmother in Chicago until 1939. Despite the divorce she was able to maintain a close relationship with her father. Majors’s book *First Steps and Nursery Rhymes* (the first book of nursery rhymes for African-American children) was published in 1920 in Chicago by McElray and Clark. Majors dedicated this book to his seven-year old daughter, Margaret Bonds. Majors, “widely known as big daddy”\(^10\) according to his family members, also encouraged his daughter’s musical and political activities. In 1928 Margaret Bonds and her father collaborated on a campaign song entitled “We’re All for Hoover Today.”\(^11\) In 1957 her parents remarried in California for “a hot minute,” as Bonds’s daughter

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\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^10\) Constance Porter Uzelac, 422.
Djane Richardson (1946-2011) recalled.\textsuperscript{12} The reconciliation lasted only three months. Estella Bonds returned to Chicago at the age of 75, at which point Dr. Majors was 93 years old.\textsuperscript{13}

**Early Education**

From childhood, Bonds received formal musical training in piano and composition. Bonds’s first three piano instructors were Estella Bonds, Martha B. Anderson, and Tom Theodore Taylor. Estella Bonds began teaching her daughter when Margaret Bonds was three years old. Bonds stated in 1971, “I began to study when I was five. What did I know what I was going to do?”\textsuperscript{14} At five years of age, Martha B. Anderson, a Chicago pianist and a member of the board of directors for the Chicago chapter of the NANM became Bonds's second piano instructor.\textsuperscript{15} Margaret was able to study with Anderson due to a scholarship awarded by the Coleridge-Taylor School of Music.\textsuperscript{16} In the same year, Margaret composed her first composition—a solo piano piece entitled “Marquette Street Blues.”\textsuperscript{17} Ruby Clark, a family friend and musician, stated once in an interview with Mildred Denby Green, “the piece was not written down, but she played it proudly for us.”\textsuperscript{18} Bonds was encouraged by her mother to continue playing piano, while her grandmother, for whom she was named, encouraged her to compose. At age eight and nine Bonds won scholarships in piano for two consecutive years from Chicago Musical College beginning in 1921.\textsuperscript{19} Bonds received another scholarship in 1922 from The Coleridge-Taylor School of Music to begin instruction with her third piano teacher, Tom Theodore Taylor, with whom she studied until 1929.\textsuperscript{20} Bonds was sixteen years old.

Bonds’s mother continued to play a vital role in her musical education. In 1967 Bonds wrote an article entitled “A Reminiscence,” which was published in the book *International* \begin{footnotesize}  
\end{footnotesize}

\begin{footnotesize} 
\textsuperscript{12} Djane Richardson, interview by Helen Walker-Hill.  
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{15} Willis Charles Patterson, “A History of the National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM) the First Quarter Century: 1919-1943” (Ph.D. diss.,Wayne State University, 1993), 95.  
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{19} Biography found on Margaret Bonds's concert pianist booking advertisement, “Season 1935-1936: Now Booking.”  
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. 
\end{footnotesize}
Library of Negro Life and History edited by Lindsay Patterson. In this article, Bonds stated “from my mother, a church organist, Estella C. Bonds, I had actual physical contact with all the living composers of African descent.”

At her home, Estella Bonds often received guests who were composers, pianists, instrumentalists, artists, and writers. “The Bonds household, completely unbiased racially, entertained humanitarians of all racial and religious groups, and the family of limited financial affluence gave Margaret—child prodigy—every opportunity for the study of music with the most eminent.”

Abbie Mitchell (1884-1960), Will Marion Cook (1869-1944), Lilian Evanti (1890-1967), Langston Hughes, William Levi Dawson (1899-1990), and Florence Beatrice Price (1888-1953) were among the most eminent guests who frequented the Bonds home. Margaret was uniquely influenced by each of these individuals, many of whom became Bonds's music instructors.

**Abbie Mitchell and Will Marion Cook**

Abreia “Abbie” Mitchell and Will Marion Cook strongly influenced Bonds’s style and development as a composer of song. Mitchell was the daughter of an African-American mother and a Jewish-German father from New York and was the wife of Will Marion Cook. Mitchell was a soprano who had a successful career as an opera singer and recitalist and sang the role of Clara in the premiere of George Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* in 1935. Mitchell introduced Bonds to Franz Schubert’s “Erlkönig” and the art songs of Claude Debussy, Gabriel Fauré, and Harry T. Burleigh. Through Mitchell, Bonds experienced her first encounter with Burleigh’s setting of Walt Whitman’s poem “Ethiopia Saluting the Colors” and the song cycle *Saracen Songs*, with poetry by Fred G. Bowles. Bonds later stated, “With Abbie Mitchell, then, I had close analysis of the works of all the composers.”

Will Marion Cook, a composer and violinist who studied with Antonín Dvořák, was the first African-American to write and produce a successful Broadway musical with an entirely African-American cast. This 1903 production was called *In Dahomey*. Cook not only taught Bonds how to approach writing vocal music, but also inspired her style of writing.

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When composer Will Marion Cook had an opportunity to present a Negro choir on NBC, I was sent to extract all of his choral parts, which, incidentally he changed daily. Even now, when I write something for a choir and it’s jazz and bluesy and spiritual and Tchaikovsky all rolled up into one, I laugh to myself ‘That is Will Marion Cook.’”

In the 1940s Bonds was heralded along with Will Marion Cook as one of the best arrangers of African-American spirituals. In 1947 John Lovell, Jr. stated, “Margaret Bonds along with Will Marion Cook and Harry T. Burleigh were among arrangers of spirituals that widened the public appreciation of this style of song.”

In 1926, at thirteen years of age, Bonds began formal music lessons with two additional composers: William Levi Dawson and Florence Beatrice Price, both of whom aided in the development of Bonds’s compositional style.

William Levi Dawson

William L. Dawson was a trombonist, choral director, composer, and music educator who made contributions to the American song repertoire with his solo and choral arrangements of African-American spirituals. He held a pre-college degree from Tuskegee Institute and a Bachelor of Music degree from Horner Institute of Fine Arts in Kansas City, Missouri. From 1922 to 1926 he taught at Lincoln High School in Kansas City, Kansas, and shortly thereafter moved to Chicago to study composition at the Chicago Musical College with Felix Borowski, an advocate of modern music who also instructed composer John Alden Carpenter (1876-1951). Dawson subsequently studied at the American Conservatory of Music, where he completed a Master of Music degree in 1927.

While in Chicago, Dawson served as the first trombonist of the Chicago Civic Orchestra from 1927 to 1930. He attended the Berean Baptist Church, where he became acquainted with Estella and the young Margaret Bonds. Bonds studied composition with Dawson until 1929.

Dawson returned to Tuskegee, Alabama, in 1931 and founded the music department of the Tuskegee Institute, where he formed and conducted the internationally known Tuskegee Institute Choir. Dawson was the director of the music department at Tuskegee Institute until

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24 Ibid.
1956, and before his death in 1990, was heralded as one of the most popular choral arrangers of African-American spirituals in the United States.

**Florence Beatrice Price**

Florence B. Price taught Bonds piano and composition. She was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1888 to James and Florence Smith. Her father was a dentist, inventor, and painter, and her mother was a soprano and concert pianist. The Smith family moved to Chicago shortly after Price was born, but returned to Little Rock just as Florence was entering high school. Florence’s mother was her first piano teacher and greatly influenced her career and education. While preparing Florence’s application to the New England Conservatory, in order to escape racial prejudice, Price’s mother stated that Florence was from Mexico. Florence entered the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston in 1902 at age fourteen. Price studied composition with George W. Chadwick (1854-1931), Frederick S. Converse (1871-1940), and Benjamin Cutter (1857-1910).

George W. Chadwick was the director of the New England Conservatory from 1897 to 1931 and was largely responsible for the school’s early success. Chadwick, along with Amy Beach, Arthur Foote, Edward MacDowell, John Knowles Paine, and Horatio Parker was also a part of the group of American composers called the *Boston Six*, who contributed the first significant body of concert music to the United States. Frederick S. Converse also studied composition with Chadwick. Converse became the first American composer to have an opera performed at the Metropolitan Opera House, *The Pipe of Desire*, which premiered in 1910. After five years of study at the New England Conservatory of Music, Florence Price graduated in 1907 with a teaching certificate and an artist diploma in organ.

After Price completed her education, she returned to Arkansas and began working as a music educator. In 1912 she married attorney Thomas J. Price. They had three children, one of whom died in childhood. Price achieved success as a music educator in the South, having taught at four colleges by 1926, but she and her family moved to Chicago in the same year to escape racial conflict in Arkansas. For a time, Price and her two daughters boarded with the Bonds

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family. While living there, Price taught Margaret Bonds piano and composition. Margaret Bonds recalled their time together,

Florence and I would sit in that kitchen, and I was trying to help her with her extractions of orchestration parts. . . . When Florence had something that she had to do, every black musician in Chicago who could write was either scratching mistakes, or copying, or extracting, or doing something to get Florence’s work done.²⁸

By observing and participating in this process, Bonds was able to study the scores of Price’s symphonic works, piano pieces, and song literature, such as Price’s 1926 song setting of Langston Hughes’s “Song to the Dark Virgin.” Legendary contralto Marian Anderson (1897-1993), the first African-American to sing at the Metropolitan Opera, once performed Price’s “Song to the Dark Virgin.” Anderson’s performance was heralded by Eugene Stinson in the *Chicago Daily News* as “one of the greatest immediate successes ever won by an American song.”²⁹ Building upon what Abbie Mitchell, Will Marion Cook, William L. Dawson, and many others had already taught her, Bonds continued to study with Price until 1929, but their collaborative efforts on musical projects continued well into the next decade.

**The Chicago Years: Northwestern University (1929-1934)**

Bonds had been a charter member of the junior division of the NANM since age twelve. In 1929, while she was still attending Parker High School in Chicago, she was awarded a scholarship from NANM that allowed her to begin her collegiate studies at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.

Bonds attended Northwestern from 1929 to 1934. She studied composition with Arnie Oldburg (1874-1962) and Carl Beecher (1883-1968), and piano with Emily Boettcher Bogue (1907-1992), with whom Bonds remained lifelong friends. Despite social injustice, Bonds achieved an unprecedented amount of success while attending Northwestern. This was at a time when only thirty percent of the population attending college was female, and “blacks were separated from whites by law and by private action in transportation, public accommodations, ²⁸

²⁸ Margaret Bonds, interview by James V. Hatch.
recreational facilities, prisons, armed forces, and schools in both Northern and Southern states.”

Due to laws of segregation, Bonds was not permitted to swim in the university swimming pools, and although dormitories are listed in the 1929 annual bulletin, there were no living accommodations for African-American students on campus. In an interview with Helen Walker-Hill, Bonds’s daughter Djane Richardson recalled this situation: “My Mother was segregated from swimming, sports, and certain restaurants;” however, “she felt that her talent was God given and that she had a choice about it.” Therefore, Bonds decided to pursue a career in music and complete her education at Northwestern University. She took an hour-long train ride to and from the university every day. She used the time to study and compose music, and it was during these years that Bonds had one of her early encounters with the poetry of Langston Hughes.

I was in this prejudiced university this terribly prejudiced place. . . . I was looking in the basement of the Evanston Public Library where they had the poetry. I came in contact with this wonderful poem, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” and I’m sure it helped my feelings of security. Because in that poem he [Langston Hughes] tells how great the black man is. And if I had any misgivings, which I would have to have here you are in a setup where the restaurants won’t serve you and you’re going to college, you’re sacrificing, trying to get through school and I know that poem helped save me.

Bonds's faith was also a great source of strength during these years. Her daughter Djane Richardson exclaimed, “My mother was an extremely spiritual person; she believed that God controlled everything.” These Christian principles most likely came from her mother, Estella Bonds, whom Margaret described to be:

A true woman of God, she lived the Sermon on the Mount. Her loaves and fish fed a multitude of pianists, singers, violinists, and composers, and those who were not in need of material food came for spiritual food. Under her wings many a musician trusted [sic], and she was my link to the Lord. Many a time when I would compete in a contest I’d say “Oh, God, please let me win. I know I’m not much good, but my mother is so good; please good God, let me win for her.” And generally I won.

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31 Djane Richardson, interview by Helen Walker-Hill.
32 Margaret Bonds, interview by James V. Hatch.
33 Djane Richardson, interview by Helen Walker-Hill.
34 Margaret Bonds, “A Reminiscence,” 192.
Bonds believed that these prayers were effective. These prayers along with an impressive amount of talent allowed Bonds and Florence Price to win the Rodman Wanamaker Prize Competition in 1932. Florence Price won first prize for her composition *Symphony in E Minor*, and received a $500 award, while Margaret Bonds won first prize in the song category for her art song “Sea Ghost,” for which she received a $250 award, the cost of tuition at Northwestern for one semester. Price’s *Symphony in E Minor* incorporated many of the musical elements drawn from African-American folk songs, a musical trait also indicative of Bonds’s musical style.

Due to the success achieved in the Rodman Wanamaker Competition, Bonds and Price were invited to participate in the artist series of the Century of Progress Exposition at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1933. On June 15, 1933, Price’s symphony was performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, making her the first African-American woman to have a symphonic work performed by a major orchestra. On the same program, Bonds performed John Alden Carpenter’s *Concertino* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Stock, a landmark performance for Bonds’s career as a solo pianist.

Emily Boettcher Bogue, who had also performed this piece with the Evanston Symphony Orchestra, wrote the following statement about Carpenter’s *Concertino*.

> It’s a stunning modern concerto and if Mr. Daseli thinks the Evanston Symphony will be capable of playing, I’ll probably play it on one of their concerts next year–It is written in regular concerto form 3 movements etc. but with difficult jazz rhythms, it’s technically hard to play.

Bonds’s performance of Carpenter’s *Concertino* gained the attention of every major and minor newspaper in Chicago. Here are four excerpts from the articles:

> Applause too, crowned the efforts of Miss Bonds who was literally covered with flowers and might have counted at least six recalls to the platform.  
*American*, June 16, 1933

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35 Ibid., 192.
36 “Course Fees,” *Northwestern University Annual Bulletin School of Music Announcement of Courses for the College Year 1933-1934*, Volume XXXIII, June 13, 1933, No. 42, p. 54, Northwestern University Archives, Evanston, IL.
37 David Scott Farrah, 78.
Miss Margaret Bonds, talented pianist and a graduate of Northwestern School of Music reached the heights expected of her in her rendition of the “Concertino” by John Alden Carpenter.

*Chicago Defender*, June 17, 1933

Miss Bonds who played the solo part in Mr. Carpenter’s Concertino is a talented Negro pianist. She has a brilliant, well developed technique, with a tone tending toward modern brittleness rather than old fashioned suavity, and she played with much composure and good sense of the lines of construction of the work.

*Chicago Tribune*, June 16, 1933

Miss Bonds vivid style and able technique together with a rhythmic instinct which may be racial or musicianly [*sic*] and doubtless is both, made Mr. Carpenter’s graceful work glow with a fire more experienced pianists well might envy. I am not certain that her treatment of the piece did not intensify the feeling that grew in me as the work progressed—that this score some 15 years of age, a fairly ‘grown-up’ stage for an art work these days, has enduring qualities of beauty not numerous in the much touted efforts of some of our best and most recent jazz experts.

*Chicago Herald Examiner*, June 16, 1933

Bonds was the first African-American piano soloist to perform with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. She was twenty years old when she achieved this distinction. The program for this performance can be seen in Appendix B.

**Katherine Dunham and William Grant Still**

The Century of Progress Series paved the way for another opportunity for Price and Bonds. In 1933 African-American dancer and choreographer Katherine Dunham (1909-2006) founded the dance studio called the Negro Dance Art Studio located at 3638 South Parkway in Chicago. “Margaret Bonds and Florence Price worked as pianists and composers for this school.” While working with Dunham, Bonds was exposed to modern dance, ballet, and the music of African-American composer William Grant Still (1895-1978).

Still, a composer of operas, symphonies, songs, ballets, and piano music, was the first African-American composer to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra in the United

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41 Edward Moore, “Negro in Music Given Place in Concert of Century of Progress Series,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 16, 1933, Ibid.


States. In 1931 the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra performed Still’s celebrated Afro-
American Symphony. Still was also the first African-American to conduct a leading orchestra in
the South and to have an opera performed by a major opera company. Still’s opera Troubled
Island was based on Langston Hughes’s play of the same name. The play was first performed in
Cleveland, Ohio, in 1936. Still’s opera was premiered by the New York City Opera on March 31,
1949. Langston Hughes and Still’s wife, Verna Arvey, served as librettists for the opera.

During the first year of the Negro Dance Art Studio, Bonds served as the rehearsal pianist
for a production of William Grant Still’s ballet La Guiablesse. Katherine Dunham was one of the
principal soloists for this performance, produced by dancer and choreographer Ruth Page (1899-
1991). The performance took place in the Auditorium Theatre on June 16, 1933, as a part of the
Century of Progress Series. The music for this ballet was played by the Chicago Symphony
Orchestra. Bonds’s desire to study with Still was never realized, but her work as a rehearsal
pianist for La Guiablesse allowed her to become familiar with his compositional style, which
was highly influenced by African-American folk music. This production may have also inspired
Bonds to compose The Migration, a ballet written for choreographer, dancer, and Tony Award
winner Talley Beatty (1918-1995) and performed on March 7, 1964.44

Margaret Bonds and Ned Rorem

Bonds received additional recognition in 1933 by winning a Julius Rosenwald Fellowship
with an outstanding piano performance, which allowed her to complete her Master of Music
degree at Northwestern. It is unknown at this time what piece Bonds performed for this
competition. Rufus Rorem, the Assistant Dean of the University of Chicago Graduate School of
Business (renamed Booth School of Business in 2008) was on the panel of judges for the Julius
Rosenwald Fellowship.45 Rorem, impressed with Bonds’s playing, asked her to teach his ten-
year-old son, Ned. Bonds accepted this position and became one of Ned Rorem’s first piano and
composition instructors. Ned Rorem gave an account of his lessons in his diary Knowing When
to Stop:

44 Helen Walker-Hill, From Spirituals to Symphonies, 181.
45 Karen Kruse Thomas, Deluxe Jim Crow: Civil Rights and American Health Policy 1935-1954 (Athens,
The last name at twenty-one was already a middle-western “personality,” having played John Alden Carpenter’s Concertino with the Chicago Symphony under the composer’s direction, and being herself a composer. . . It was Margaret Bonds—Miss Bonds who was to be my next piano teacher. Every Saturday morning I boarded the streetcar for her house in the ghetto of South Wabash. At our first lesson she played me some ear-openers: The White Peacock by Griffes and Carpenter’s An American Tango. Had I ever heard American music before, beyond “To a Wild Rose,” which Mother used to thump out? Fired by my enthusiasm, she assigned these pieces on the spot, with no talk of scale-and-trill practice. . . . Margaret, ten years older than I, played with the authority of a professional, an authority I’d never heard in a living room, an authority stemming from the fact that she too was a composer and thus approached all music from the inside, an authority that was contagious. . . . She also showed me how to notate my ramblings—“Just look at how other composers put it down—hoisting the ephemeral into the concrete: once his piece is on paper a composer is responsible for it, for it can now be reinterpreted by others, elating or shaming its maker.”

Ned Rorem was so inspired by these lessons and the repertoire that Bonds assigned him that he compiled a complete catalogue of John Alden Carpenter’s compositions and memorized the entire score of Carpenter’s ballet Skyscrapers. “It was then that Margaret, from my dictation at the piano, notated The Glass Cloud, influenced by her other star pupil, Gerald Cook, a year or two older than I, and taught me from that to notate.” Rorem made recordings of his own compositions in 1936 and sent them to Carpenter. Rorem stated in a letter written to Howard Pollack, author of Skyscraper Lullaby, that Carpenter responded, “with avuncular advice. . . which I treasured.” Ned Rorem has not only become one of America’s most prolific composers of song, with over 400 published songs to his credit, but has also succeeded as a composer of symphonic works, operas, and other genres. Bonds and Ned Rorem remained friends until her death.

Bonds continued her teaching activities and graduated from Northwestern University with a Master of Music degree on May 23, 1934. Bonds’s composition teacher, Carl Beecher, the Dean of Northwestern University School of Music from 1931 to 1934 stated,

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46 Ned Rorem, Knowing When to Stop (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 64.
48 Ned Rorem, Knowing When to Stop, 81.
I recommend most heartily a young woman who has just completed the Master of Music degree at the School of Music of Northwestern University. I have no hesitation in saying that she is the most talented Negro person who has been in this school during forty years. Her attainments are nothing short of unusual, and she has a decided gift as a composer.\textsuperscript{50}

An additional item of interest is that, for the Annual Commencement Concert, Bonds played Mozart’s \textit{Sonata in D Major} for two pianos with her colleague Jean Williams.\textsuperscript{51}

The Chicago Years: Post Northwestern University (1934-1939)

Figure 2.1: Photograph of Margaret Bonds found on the cover of her concert pianist booking advertisement, “Season 1935-1936: Now Booking.”\textsuperscript{52}

After graduating from Northwestern University, Bonds continued to achieve success as a concert pianist, composer, and music educator. Bonds’s solo piano performance of Florence Price’s \textit{Concertino in D Minor} on October 12, 1934 (with the Chicago Women’s Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ebba Sundstrom), made her the first African-American woman to be featured as a soloist with this orchestra. In the same year, Bonds collaborated with Robert Dunmore on two theatrical productions. The first was \textit{Winter Night’s Dream}, a children’s


operetta that was premiered at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. This was Bond's only operatic work. For the second production, Bonds served as the composer for a musical theatrical production, entitled *Romey and Julie* (an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*), co-written by Robert Dunmore, Ruth Chorpenning, and James Norris. *Romey and Julie* was sponsored by the W.P.A. and ran for five weeks at the Federal Negro Theatre in Chicago in April of 1936.  

Later that year another event took place that significantly impacted Margaret Bonds’s life and music.

I actually met him... after I came out of the university. The first time I saw Langston was at Tony’s house in Chicago, Tony Hill, the ceramicist. Finally he came to my house. My family rolled out the red carpet. We were like brother and sister, like blood relatives.

Prior to this event, Bonds had composed only one art song setting of a Hughes poem, entitled “Poème d’automne.” After meeting Hughes, Bonds composed five songs that included his poems by the end of 1936. One of these became her most popular art song to date, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers.” This was followed by “Joy,” “Love’s Runnin’ Riot,” “Park Bench,” and “Winter Moon.”

**The Allied Arts Academy**

In 1937 Bonds founded and directed The Allied Arts Academy, a school for ballet, art, and music located at 6407 South Parkway in Chicago. Eleven years before the premiere of William Grant Still’s opera *Troubled Island*, Bonds composed incidental music for a production of Langston Hughes’s play of the same name, which was performed as a benefit for the school in 1938. While at the academy, Bonds served as a piano and composition instructor. She also composed, edited, and compiled *Twelve Easy Lessons and Exercises for the Piano*, an

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53 The W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration) was a project started by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in order to create jobs during the Great Depression. This program created jobs for artists and musicians who were otherwise unemployed.

54 Helen Walker-Hill, *From Spirituals to Symphonies*, 149.
instrumental method book that was published in Chicago by Bowles Music House Publishing Company in 1939.\footnote{This publishing house was owned by Lilian Bowles of Chicago and was one of the oldest music publishing companies in America, specializing in gospel music.}

At the academy Bonds instructed two students of note: Gerald Cook and Anna Louise de Ramus (N.d.). Ramus continued her musical training at Northwestern, and then in France with pianist Robert Casadesus (1899-1972). Cook studied composition with Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979) and became a successful jazz and concert pianist who played with vocal artists Lena Horne, Ethel Waters, Carmen McRae, and Johnny Hartman. The Allied Arts Academy closed in 1939, due to financial pressures caused by the Great Depression.

The New York Years: 1939-1967

In 1939 Bonds “went to New York with $37 in her pocket to begin her career as a composer.”\footnote{Christina Demaitre, “Heritage Motivates Composing Career,” \textit{Washington Post}, August 14, 1964, Margaret Allison Bonds Folder, Alumni Biographical Files, Series 51/14, Box 82, Northwestern University Archives, Evanston, IL.} She began working as a composer and rehearsal pianist at the Apollo Theater under the direction of choreographer and theatrical producer Leonard Harper (1898-1943). Bonds also worked as an editor for the Clarence Williams Publishing Company and achieved success as a composer of popular songs.

In the winter of 1939 Hughes returned to New York after having collaborated with Bonds on a musical review for the Diamond Jubilee Celebration in Chicago, entitled \textit{Tropics After Dark}, for which Bonds composed nine songs. It was during this time that Hughes introduced Bonds to Lawrence Richardson (1911-1990), a New York Supreme Court Probation Officer who had been his classmate at Lincoln University. Bonds and Richardson immediately began a courtship that led to their marriage in the summer of 1940.\footnote{Helen Walker-Hill, \textit{From Spirituals to Symphonies}, 142.} Shortly after the couple married, they moved to 240 East 106\textsuperscript{th} Street. Langston Hughes described the Richardsons' home in an article entitled “My Nights: Misses the Movies” for the \textit{Chicago Defender} on May 5, 1945: “I might end up way down past where Harlem runs into Central Park at Margaret Bonds’
place where some mighty swell piano is played, and whose husband, Larry Richardson, is a fellow-Lincolnite, too.” Bonds and Richardson lived at this location for sixteen years.

The Juilliard School

In 1942 Bonds received a Roy Harris Fellowship which allowed her to begin composition lessons with Roy Harris (1898-1979) at the Juilliard School. In the same year, Bonds also began piano lessons with Djane Herz (N.d.). Leroy Ellsworth Harris, the donor for this fellowship, was born in a log cabin in Lincoln County, Oklahoma and studied composition with Arthur Farwell (1872-1952) in Los Angeles and Nadia Boulanger in Paris. Farwell and Boulanger also inspired Margaret Bonds. Margaret once attempted to study with Nadia Boulanger, but only had one lesson. Boulanger proclaimed that Bonds “had something but she didn’t quite know what to do with it.” When Bonds spoke about her experience with Boulanger, she described her own work as she had that of Will Marion Cook: “jazz and bluesy, and spiritual and Tchaikovsky all rolled up in one.” Bonds stated, “No wonder Boulanger didn’t quite understand what my music is all about.”

Bonds’s connection to Farwell came through her lessons with Florence Price and exposure to the music of William Grant Still. Both Still and Price had studied with George Chadwick, who was Arthur Farwell’s composition instructor. Similar to Bonds, Arthur Farwell made contributions to the development of the modern American art song by amalgamating the indigenous music of the United States with traditional European art music. Farwell incorporated Native-American melodies, African-American spirituals, and cowboy songs into his vocal compositions. The texts of these songs, however, were solely comprised of American literature. In 1901 he established the Wa-Wan Press, which increased the distribution of this music. He was also the founder of the American Musical Society, an organization that published a periodical about American music and promoted American composers through concerts held in twenty locations in the United States. As a vocal composer, Farwell is best known for his thirty-nine art song settings of Emily Dickinson poems.

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60 Ibid.
Like Farwell, Roy Harris chose to compose song settings that included American literature, and his poets of choice were Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) and Walt Whitman (1819-1892), poets who inspired the writing of Langston Hughes. Harris, who also incorporated American folk-songs into his symphonic works, influenced a generation of American symphonic composers with his music that possessed a rhythmic style that became an important component of his compositional technique. Harris’s music contained frequent appearances of complex meters, alterations of bar lengths, irregular groupings of rhythms with unexpected accents and polytonal harmonies. Harris believed that “Americans have different rhythmic impulses than Europeans, they lean toward modality to avoid the clichés of major and minor, and avoid cadential definition because of an aversion to anything final.”

In the same year that Bonds began composition lessons with Harris she compiled and arranged her first song cycle, entitled *Five Creek-Freedman Spirituals*, commissioned by soprano Hortense Love. This song cycle was premiered at Love's Town Hall debut in 1942 with Paul Ulanowski at the piano. *Five Creek-Freedman Spirituals* was published by Mutual Music Society Inc. in 1946.

While studying with Roy Harris, Bonds continued taking piano lessons with Herz. After three years of study, Bonds began performing in a piano duo with her former student Gerald Cook. Cook and Bonds toured from 1945 to 1948 in various cities in the United States, including New York, Cleveland, and Philadelphia.

**Djane Richardson**

While Bonds was working as a concert pianist and composer, she and Lawrence welcomed their first and only child, Djane Richardson, on October 23, 1946. Djane was named after Margaret’s piano teacher, Djane Herz. During this time, Bonds stated that she was “as busy as sixteen people; mother, laundress, pianist, wife, composer, etc. etc.;” however, her life as a composer and music educator did not come to a halt. While maintaining her responsibilities as a wife and mother, Bonds began another tour in 1947 as a solo pianist for a concert series that took place at various historically black colleges and universities in the South. In an article

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63 Margaret Bonds to Langston Hughes, 10, September 1947, Yale Collection of American Literature, Yale Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library.
published on July 12, 1947, the Associated Negro Press reported in *The Oklahoma City Dispatch* that she was working on a score to an upcoming Broadway musical, as well as preparing for her performance at Kimball Hall in Chicago in September. The photograph in Example 2.2 was included with this article.\(^{64}\)

![Figure 2.2: Photograph of Margaret Bonds, *The Oklahoma City Dispatch*, July 12, 1947.\(^{65}\)](image)

Bonds’s success as a concert pianist continued well into the next decade. In 1950 she became the first African-American soloist to play with the Scranton Philharmonic Orchestra and in 1952 she made her Carnegie Hall and Town Hall debuts. Bonds continued her solo concert itinerary in 1953, traveling to St. Louis, Cleveland, Toledo, and Chicago.\(^{66}\) In 1956 she completed her second song cycle, *Songs of the Seasons*, with texts by Langston Hughes.

On February 6, 1957, Margaret’s mother died in New York. Estella Bonds had been living with Margaret in New York, and it was after Estella’s death that the Richardson family relocated to East 123rd Street, where Bonds lived until 1967. Margaret later dedicated her choral

\(^{64}\) *The Oklahoma City Dispatch*, July 12, 1947, Margaret Bonds Folder, Alumni Biographical Files.

\(^{65}\) Ibid.

\(^{66}\) Helen Walker-Hill, *From Spirituals to Symphonies*, 151.
arrangement of “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand” to the memory of her mother, Estella Bonds.

Bonds’s father, Dr. Monroe Alpheus Majors, died on December 10, 1960, in Los Angeles, where he had been living since 1933. The next day, on December 11, 1960, Bonds dedicated the premiere of her Christmas cantata, Ballad of the Brown King, with text by Langston Hughes to her father. This premiere was performed by the New York City College Orchestra and Church of the Master Choir, a performance that was conducted by Margaret Bonds and broadcast by NBC. Bonds completed this score in 1960 and dedicated it to Martin Luther King, Jr. in the same year. This cantata consists of nine movements for solo voice, chorus, and orchestra and was published by Sam Fox in 1961.

**Robert Starer**

Austrian-born composer Robert Starer (1924-2001) became a United States citizen in 1957. He served on the faculty of Juilliard from 1949 to 1974. In 1958 Bonds began studying orchestration and composition with Starer, who was her last composition instructor. Bonds studied with him for two semesters at Juilliard’s Extension Division. During this period she completed her third song cycle, Three Dream Portraits, with texts by Langston Hughes. She also composed two song settings of Robert Frost poems, and three song settings of Edna St. Vincent Millay poems.

**Charlotte Holloman**

Charlotte Holloman (b. 1923), a friend and colleague of Bonds and Hughes, is a soprano who had a successful career as an opera singer in Europe and the United States. She also achieved success on and off Broadway. Holloman remembered Bonds to be a “kind lady of great depth,” and although Bonds was a serious musician and composer, she “could also be amusing.” In the late 1950s and early 1960s Holloman traveled with Bonds, giving recitals with Bonds at the piano. Holloman was also a contributing factor in the output of Bonds’s art songs. In 1960 Holloman commissioned Bonds to compose a setting of a Robert Frost poem entitled

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68 Charlotte Holloman, telephone interview by author, December 24, 2011, Tallahassee, FL.
“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” which Holloman sang for her Town Hall recital. Charlotte Holloman is currently retired from Howard University in Washington D. C., where she served as a full-time lecturer, music instructor, and the Coordinator of Voice Performance Programs and Studies from 1995 to 2013.

In the 1960s, Bonds felt that it was important to be an active voice in the Civil Rights Movement and for her music to reflect the political and social activities that were taking place in the United States. Her father had just died and his influence was palpable. Much of the music Bonds composed during this time period reflects this conviction. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., along with 3200 civil rights activists, marched from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery from March 16 to March 21, 1965, in a successful protest that resulted in President Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965. This event, called the “March on Montgomery,” inspired Bonds to compose a symphonic work, entitled *Montgomery Variations*, later that year. Bonds wove variations of the melody found in the African-American spiritual “I Want Jesus to Walk with Me” throughout this symphonic work that consists of four sections: “Prayer Meeting,” “March,” “One Sunday in the South,” and “Dawn in Dixie.”

Bonds dedicated *Montgomery Variations* to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Bonds, an avid supporter of arts education, worked to improve music programs in communities throughout New York. The *New York Chief* announced in 1962, “Margaret Bonds. . . has been appointed chairman of the music committee to help Manhattan Borough President Edward R. Dudley in his plans to establish a Cultural Community Center in the Harlem area.”

She also helped to establish the Harlem Jazz-mobile and implemented sight singing programs for children and adults at Mount Calvary Baptist Church, where Bonds served as the Minister of Music.

Bonds worked as a director and music educator at the American Theatre Wing. During this time, she collaborated with many other important African-American artists on various concert projects and commissions. These artists included Maya Angelou (b. 1928), who later received a Pulitzer Prize for her collection of poems *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Diiie* in 1971. Angelou was also awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President...

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70 “Cultural Center Aide,” *New York Chief*, August 3, 1962, Margaret Allison Bonds Folder, Alumni Biographical Files.
Barack Obama in 2011. Bonds continued to collaborate with Charlotte Holloman, and also worked with baritone McHenry Boatwright (1928-1994). Boatwright is noted for singing the role of Crown in a 1963 recording of highlights from Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* with Leontyne Price (b. 1923) as Bess and William Warfield (1920-2002) as Porgy. A photo of a committee planning an unknown concert with Margaret Bonds, Maya Angelou, Charlotte Holloman, and McHenry Boatwright can be seen in Appendix B.  

Bonds remained an active member of the following organizations: The New York Singing Teachers Association which included other composer members such as Ned Rorem and Celius Dougherty, and the Eastern Region of the NANM, for which she “served as the chair of African-American music in 1960.”

Bonds’s musical career continued to gain success over the next five years. In 1963 she was on the Honor Roll of the Fifty Outstanding Negro Women in the United States, and in 1964 she received the Woman of the Century Award, as well as three awards from the leading United States performing rights association, The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, more commonly referred to as ASCAP. Bonds received an Alumni Medal from Northwestern University on January 29, 1967, and an honor from Mayor Richard J. Daley of Chicago, who declared January 31, 1967, “Margaret Bonds Day.” The program from the Founder’s Day Convocation where Bonds was awarded the Alumni Medal from Northwestern University reads:

> Truly a master musician, Margaret Bonds has given full measure of her special talent to the world. A “goodwill ambassador” extraordinary, she has been invited coast to coast in America and to foreign lands, including Russia and Africa, to hear her compositions performed by student choirs. She is a brilliant pianist, having an extensive background of concertizing with leading orchestras. Many of her works have been recorded by noted artists. The outstanding achievements of Margaret Bonds are a source of great pride to her Alma Mater.

A newspaper clipping of this event can be seen in Figure 2.3.

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72 Charlotte Holloman, interview by author.
73 Helen Walker-Hill, *From Spirituals to Symphonies*, 143.
The same year, however, brought about a tragic loss in Bonds’s life. On May 22, 1967, her longtime friend and literary muse, Langston Hughes or “Uncle Langston,” as Bonds’s daughter so affectionately called him, died in New York from problems that occurred following a surgical procedure. It is certain that Bonds visited Langston in the hospital just days before his death, as her friend and colleague Charlotte Holloman remembers driving her to the New York Polyclinic Hospital.

Shortly after Hughes's death, Bonds attended an NANM convention in Los Angeles in 1967. Her friend, artist, and poet Janice Lovoos (1903-1991), and Lovoos’s son, Edmund Penney (1926-2008), who had been working as an actor and producer in Hollywood, encouraged Bonds

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75 *Pittsburgh Courier*, March 11, 1967, Margaret Allison Bonds Folder, Alumni Biographical Files.
76 Helen Walker-Hill, *From Spirituals to Symphonies*, 152.
77 Charlotte Holloman, interview by author.
to move to Los Angeles to compose music for the film industry. Bonds immediately moved to Los Angeles in August of that year and, due to the demands of Lawrence Richardson’s position as a Supreme Court Probation Officer, Djane and Lawrence Richardson remained in New York.

The Los Angeles Years: 1967-1972

Within a short period of time, Bonds began working as the Director of the Inner City Repertory Theatre founded by James Vernon Hatch (b. 1928). She taught piano, music theory, and directed musicals such as Harvey Schmidt's *The Fantasticks*, Kurt Weill's *Street Scene*, and Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, and began composing two methods books, “one embodying theory for pianists–another concerning the playing of scales.”

My days have been certainly filled with good things. After rehearsals for “St. Scene” finished I started teaching piano at Inner City Cultural Center Institute. I am there Tues., Wed., Thurs., Fri., from four p.m. until sometimes 7:30 p.m. Then I have dinner in a Polynesian [sic] Restaurant. . .then off to the theatre for “St. Scene.”

Margaret Bonds, 1971

Bonds was particularly impressed with one of her piano students at the Inner City Repertory Theatre, Gary Osby. In 1971, Bonds wrote to her former piano instructor from Northwestern, Emily Boettcher Bogue who was living in San Francisco. “My Gary Osby is preparing the Schumann A minor Concerto.” He is just twenty-one and certainly has the potential of a virtuoso.” Osby later served as the accompanist for the Albert McNeil’s Jubilee Singers during one of their European tours.

Bonds’s desire to produce movie music with Janice Lovoos and Edmund Penney was never realized. They collaborated on her last song cycle, *Pot Pourri*. Lovoos and Penney wrote the poetry for this cycle of six songs composed by Bonds in 1968.

Bonds was honored again on January 23, 1971, by the Golden Gate Branch of the NANM. This organization produced a concert entitled “Evening with Margaret Bonds,” in San

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78 Margaret Bonds to Emily Boettcher Bogue, 15 August 1971, Folder 10/7, Subject Correspondence: Margaret Bonds, Series 19/3/6, Box 10, Emily Boettcher Bogue (1907-1992) Papers 1907-1996.
79 Margaret Bonds to Emily Boettcher Bogue, 2 May 1971.
80 Margaret Bonds to Emily Boettcher Bogue, 17 December 1972 [sic].
81 Margaret Bonds to Emily Boettcher Bogue, 14 November 1971.
Francisco, with Margaret Bonds and Emily Boettcher Bogue in attendance. An advertisement of this event can be seen in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Newspaper clipping with a photograph of Margaret Bonds, advertising “Evening with Margaret Bonds,” an honorary concert given by the Golden Gate Branch of National Association of Negro Musicians on January 23, 1971.  

Shortly thereafter, Bonds was commissioned to compose two major projects. The first commission was from Leontyne Price for her second album of spirituals with the Rust College Choir. The second was from conductor Nicklaus Wyss of the The Little Symphony in San Francisco. For Wyss’s commission, Bonds composed the symphonic tone poem Scripture Reading. In May of 1971 Bonds wrote to Bogue, “How good of you to interest leaders of the San Francisco Symphony in my work.” In September of the same year Bonds wrote, “An interim between the summer and fall quarters at the Institute enabled me to give full concentration to the score of “Scripture Reading” – A melody embodying four biblical characters, Ezekiel, King David, Peter, and Joshua.” Scripture Reading was performed on October 22nd and 29th of 1971.

The pressures of daily life, composing, and performing had taken a toll on Bonds. Although she confessed to Bogue in May of 1971 that she had “stopped drinking completely,”

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83 Margaret Bonds to Emily Boettcher Bogue, 2 May 1971.
84 Margaret Bonds to Emily Boettcher Bogue, 27 September 1971.
she also stated in the same letter that she drank often.\textsuperscript{85} Bonds wrote that one of her close friends stated, “I fly with the Bible in one hand and a glass of bourbon in the other.”\textsuperscript{86} This struggle with alcohol may have been one of the factors that contributed to her sudden death in 1972. On April 25, 1972, Bonds died of a heart attack at age 59. Her student, Gary Osby, was the last to see her and was also the person who found her two days later in her Los Angeles apartment.

One week before Bonds's death, she met Zubin Mehta, then director and conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra.\textsuperscript{87} Mehta was considering a performance of Bonds’s oratorio, \textit{Credo}, a work that included text extracted from portions of W.E.B. Du Bois’s \textit{Darkwater}.\textsuperscript{88} The Los Angeles Philharmonic had planned a tribute concert to Malcolm X, but due to the political upheaval this event was stirring, the concert program was changed, at which point Mehta added Bonds’s \textit{Credo}.\textsuperscript{89} Mehta's decision, however, was not finalized until two days after Bonds's death. Therefore, on May 21, 1972, barely four weeks after Bonds's death, Zubin Mehta conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic in what became a memorial concert for Margaret Bonds. This performance included Bonds's \textit{Credo} and the Albert McNeil Singers performed several of Bonds’s African-American spiritual arrangements.\textsuperscript{90} Bonds never knew that her work had been booked by Mehta.

Additional memorial services were held for Bonds in the three cities in which she had lived: New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

\textsuperscript{85} Margaret Bonds to Emily Boettcher Bogue, 2 May 1971.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{87} Albert McNeil, interview by Helen Walker-Hill, December 29, 1989, Los Angeles, cassette tape 16, Helen Walker-Hill Papers, Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, Chicago. Albert McNeil was the Founder and Director of the Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers and is currently a Professor Emeritus at the University of California at Davis, where many of Bonds’s works were performed.
\textsuperscript{88} Bonds composed her last oratorio, \textit{Credo} from 1965 to 1967. The premiere took place in Washington, D.C., in March of 1967. Bonds later dedicated this work to the memory of Langston Hughes and Abbie Mitchell.
\textsuperscript{89} Albert McNeil, interview by Helen Walker-Hill.
\textsuperscript{90} Helen Walker-Hill, \textit{From Spirituals to Symphonies}, 155.
CHAPTER 3

THE ELEMENTS OF BONDS’ SOLO VOCAL STYLE AND THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN SPIRITUAL ARRANGEMENTS

Musical Style

Throughout the course of history, composers have looked to the poetry and indigenous folk music of their heritage for musical inspiration. Margaret Bonds’s unique borrowing from a wide variety of truly American styles provides ample proof that she was no exception.

“Miss Bonds, whose original works range from spirituals and jazz to symphonies and musical shows, says her Negro heritage has been the main motivation in her more than thirty years as a professional musician.”

Bonds relied on the musical elements drawn from African-American folk song as well as the work of African-American poets to provide a foundational structure for her compositions. Indeed, the most distinctive aspect of Bonds’s musical style is her incorporation of musical elements drawn from African-American genres. These characteristics include modal melodies, pentatonic scales, polyrhythms between the vocal line and piano accompaniment, syncopations, and pitches drawn from blues inflections. Following in the footsteps of Harry T. Burleigh and Florence Price, Bonds successfully assimilated African-American musical idioms with compositional techniques derived from the classical idiom. This amalgam of African-American and European musical traditions made her repertoire distinct within American song literature. She also played a significant role in aiding in the development of the concert setting of the African-American spiritual.

Like many song composers, Bonds’s songs are characterized by a robust connection between text and music. Bonds held a general preference for syllabic text settings and localized text painting and her melodies adopt beautiful lyricism from time to time. In Bonds’s art songs, the vocal line and piano accompaniment move independently of one another, whereas, in the

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91 Christina Demaitre, “Heritage Motivates Composing Career.”
musical theatre and jazz songs the top line of the piano accompaniment always doubles the melody of the vocal line. This follows the typical practice of the time.

The piano also plays an important role in Bonds’s solo vocal works. Nearly every song includes a piano introduction that introduces musical motives or thematic material. The introductions seem to establish an important poetic idea or mood found in the song, permitting the piano to play a role in the dramatic action. The harmonies in her accompaniments are at times inspired by jazz and impressionist composition. Quartal chords and extended tertian harmonies such as seventh, ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords appear frequently, especially in her art songs. She often shifted between major and minor keys or major-modal, and/or pentatonic passages in an effort to reflect the text.

The African-American Spiritual as a Primary Influence

In the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Douglass described the African-American spiritual:

They told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains.\(^92\)

Over the years, American music has become an amalgamation of many different styles gleaned from the various ethnicities that have made up the population of the United States since its founding. The following historical outline of African-American folk songs in the United States is provided for further understanding of Bonds’s spiritual arrangements and overall solo vocal works, which display frequent demonstrations of the musical elements found in this style of song.\(^93\)

Historical Background

The earliest form of African-American folk music is termed the “Negro folk song.” Since the enslaved peoples of the United States were rarely permitted to use indigenous African

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\(^92\) Frederick Douglass, The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas (New York: Dover, 1995), 8.
\(^93\) Christina Demaitre, “Heritage Motivates Composing Career.”
instruments, they sang songs in an improvised fashion that mimicked the rhythmic patterns associated with African drumming and incorporated melodies that were often based on a modal structure. These songs were passed down by oral tradition. The first written accounts of the African-American folk songs came about in 1840. The earliest publications of Negro folk songs appeared in *Slave Songs of the United States* by Allen, Ware, and Garrison (1867) and *Jubilee Songs as Sung by the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University* by Theodore F. Steward (1872).

The most common form of the Negro folk song is the spiritual. Spirituals could also be identified as code songs, or ring shouts, while several other styles of the Negro folk songs occurred: field hollers, blues songs, social songs, and work songs. John W. Work, III (1901-1967) was a musicologist, composer, singer, scholar, conductor, and teacher. He was the son of musicologist, singer, and teacher John W. Work, Jr. (1873-1925) who is credited as the first African-American collector of Negro folk songs. In 1940, while teaching music Fisk University, John W. Work, III wrote and compiled one of the first books on African-American folk songs entitled, *American Negro Songs: 230 Folk Songs and Spirituals, Religious and Secular*. This scholarly work not only included over 200 Negro folk songs, but also provided an outline and historical background discussing the various forms. Work stated, “From the standpoint of form, melodic variety, and emotional expressiveness, the spiritual is the most highly developed of the Negro folk songs.” Work also stated, “There were employed notes foreign to the conventional major and minor scales with such frequency as to justify their being regarded as distinct. The most common of these are the ‘flatted third’ (the feature note of the blues) and the ‘flatted seventh.’” When looking at one of the earliest accounts of an African-American spiritual extracted from *Slave Songs of the United States* from 1867, entitled “O’er the Crossing,” one of these “foreign” notes can be seen. Along with the syncopated rhythms found in this excerpt, a flatted seventh occurs on the third beat of measure one as shown in Example 3.1.

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97 John W. Work, III also conducted the Fisk Jubilee Singers from 1947-57 and served as the chairman of the music department from 1951 to 1957.
98 John W. Work, III, 18.
Ex. 3.1: Anonymous, “O’er the Crossing” m. 1.99

When looking at the melodic component of the spiritual, the following quote by Work should also be considered. “Of much interest are the scales of the Negro employed in the spirituals. They unconsciously avoided the fourth and seventh major scale steps in many songs, thereby using the pentatonic scale.”100 These “gapped scales” that Work, III referred to, are not only pentatonic, but also modal.101 When considering the pentatonic scale, various forms exist. The major pentatonic scale, however, is the most common form and can be found in the spiritual arrangements written by Bonds. Like all pentatonic scales, the major pentatonic scale is comprised of five notes with varying intervals found between the scale degrees. In the major pentatonic scale the whole-steps are located between scale degrees $\hat{1} - \hat{2}, \hat{2} - \hat{3},$ and $\hat{4} - \hat{5}$ and a minor-third between scale degrees $\hat{3} - \hat{4}.$ The melody of the popular spiritual “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” incorporates the major pentatonic scale F–G–A–C–D as shown in the top line of the excerpt extracted from W.E.B. Du Bois’s *The Souls of Black Folk* (see Example 3.2).

Ex. 3.2: Anonymous, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” mm. 1–3.102

The African-American spiritual can be divided into three different forms: the call and response chant; the slow, sustained long-phrase melody; and the syncopated, segmented melody.103 These forms are also found in Bonds’s arrangements of African-American spirituals and will be used for describing the songs presented in the following section.

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100 John W. Work, III, 26.
103 Ibid., 19.
The musical characteristics found in the African-American spiritual played an important role in the development of American music. The musical elements found in these songs in many ways molded various aspects of American popular and art music of the 20th century. Jazz was derived from this style of song, and the highly esteemed concert setting of the African-American spiritual has become a staple component in American recital repertoire. The African-American spiritual was first made popular by the Fisk Jubilee Singers. From 1871 to 1878, this world-renowned choir from Fisk University in Nashville, directed by George White (1838-1895) with the assistance of Ella Shepherd (1851-1914), performed the first concert settings of African-American spirituals in the Northern region of the United States and in Europe. Shepherd, having heard these spirituals being sung by her mother as a young child, worked with White to arrange the first choral concert settings of the African-American spiritual. Together they transformed this style of folk song into a highly sought after form of art music, giving it international acclaim.

The popularization of this style of song also caused a shift in the sound of American art and popular music. By 1903 In Dahomey, “the first full-length musical written and performed by blacks to be presented at a major Broadway house, premiered on February 18, 1903. 104 This production had fifty-three performances. 105 In Dahomey was composed and produced by Will Marion Cook, one of Bonds’s early composition instructors, with the legendary African-American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar as the librettist. By 1916 Harry T. Burleigh (1866-1949), Hall Johnson (1888-1970), John Rosamond Johnson (1873-1954), and a variety of other composers were arranging choral and solo settings of the African-American spiritual which became an accepted form of concert song repertoire. In 1935, George Gershwin’s opera imbued with African-American musical idioms, Porgy and Bess, premiered. The opera premiered at a time when jazz began to dominate the popular music industry with recording artists such as Duke Ellington. Although some criticism surrounded Gershwin's opera until the triumphant 1976 Houston Grand Opera production, it has since become one of the foremost American operas to date. 106 This maturing of American music is largely due to the work of composers such as

Margaret Bonds, who labored assiduously to preserve and promote African-American music in the United States and abroad.

**The African-American Spiritual Arrangements of Margaret Bonds**

During Bonds’s lifetime, her spiritual arrangements, often as complex as her art songs, were her most celebrated song compositions. Bonds’s sophisticated arrangements of African-American spirituals often include word-painting and complex piano accompaniments that present stirring illustrations of the text. Noteworthy American opera singers Adele Addison (b. 1925), Betty Allen (1930-2009), Marian Anderson, Kathleen Battle (b. 1948), Joyce Bryant (N.d.), Hortense Love (N.d.), Charlotte Holloman, Jessye Norman (b. 1945) Leontyne Price, Paul Robeson (1898-1976), and Florence Quivar (b. 1944) all performed or recorded Bonds’s spirituals. Chicago Civic Opera star Lawrence Davidson (N.d), who had also sung many of Bonds’s arrangements declared,

Margaret Bonds’s spirituals have a quality and stamp that cannot be compared with those pseudo purveyors of the Negro folk song. A genuine understanding of her people coupled with intrepid musicianship combine to make the singer and listener share a memorable experience. From the singer’s viewpoint, these songs have everything needed for successful concert numbers—interesting material unusually presented.\(^{107}\)

Of all the singers who performed Bonds’s spiritual arrangements, Leontyne Price commissioned Bonds more than any other. Bonds’s compositions were presented to wider audiences through sound recordings produced by RCA Records and performances of these songs that took place in some of the greatest concert halls in America, including Carnegie Hall.

Another commission of critical importance came from Bonds’s Northwestern colleague and friend, Hortense Love. This commission yielded the aforementioned song cycle *Five Creek-Freedman Spirituals*. By the end of Bonds’s compositional career, she had arranged approximately twenty-four African-American spirituals for solo voice and piano, thirteen of which were also orchestrated. There are eight songs discussed in this chapter, seven of which were either recorded or commissioned by Leontyne Price, and one spiritual arrangement that was

commissioned by Hortense Love. Two of these arrangements recorded by Price were orchestrated.

The Commissions of Leontyne Price

I know of no poetry or music which expresses the humility, the devout sincerity to our Omnipotent as the American Negro spiritual does. These are beautiful songs which poured originally from the souls of people seeking for a better place, exclaiming their childlike belief in His wisdom and understanding as well as portraying the patience of a people of great faith. The spiritual is a great American heritage, as truly American as apple pie or Boston baked beans. Spirituals are a musical expression of a great people who are great Americans. 108

He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand. “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand” and “Sit Down Servant” were the first two spiritual arrangements commissioned by Leontyne Price. Bonds arranged these spirituals for voice and orchestra for Price’s first recording of African-American spirituals, entitled Swing Low Sweet Chariot: 14 Spirituals, recorded on RCA records in 1962. 109 Bonds arranged her first version of “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand” for contralto Marian Anderson in 1935. 110 The orchestrated version from 1962 is available for rent from Theodore Presser Company. In 1963 the piano-vocal score of “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand” was published by Beekman Music and is now available in a song anthology edited by Vivian Taylor entitled Art Songs and Spirituals by African-American Women Composers. This anthology is published by Hildegard Publishing Company.

“He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand” is a modified strophic setting of four verses. This spiritual provides an example of the short, syncopated, segmented melody. This classification was established by John W. Work, III due to the brief, incomplete phrases imbued with syncopations, that are found in this type of spiritual. The song begins in D major with a four-bar piano prelude that introduces the melody in the top voice of the right hand of the piano. This melody serves as the thematic music of this song (see Example 3.3). The vocal line enters with the same melody and is comprised of a predominantly syllabic setting of the text (see Example 3.3). There is one syncopated rhythm that Bonds wove throughout this song. This

110 Margaret Bonds, interview by James V. Hatch.
rhythmic pattern, comprised of an eighth-note followed by a quarter-note, can be seen in measure six of Example 3.3 and again in measure twenty-four of Example 3.4 over the words “in His.”

Ex. 3.3: “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand,” mm. 1–6.

At the beginning of the third verse, the piano plays a role in the dramatic action of the poem. In measure twenty-four Bonds placed a rhythmic device comprised of two sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note in the top line of the piano accompaniment, on beats two and four. This is the only phrase in the song in which this rhythmic pattern appears. Bonds used this to signify the chirping of the birds and the buzzing wings of the bees, as seen in measure twenty-four in Example 3.4.
Ex. 3.4: “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand,” mm. 24–25.

For the last ten measures of the song, Bonds changed the tempo marking to *poco allargando* and placed the melody one octave higher than the original statement, as seen in measures thirty-one and thirty-three in Example 3.5. This variation of the melody evokes an awe-inspiring finale, giving the listener an ethereal sense of satisfaction.

Ex. 3.5: “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand,” mm. 31–33. © Beekman Music Inc., 1963.

The range of this song is C₄ to A₅. It can be performed by a soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, or baritone due to the relatively low tessitura. Sopranos and tenors may choose to sing a portamento from A₅ to D₆ in the penultimate measure on the word “whole.”

**Sit Down Servant.** “Sit Down Servant” was first arranged for solo voice and piano as a part of the song cycle *Five Creek-Freedman Spirituals*, commissioned by Hortense Love in 1942
for her Town Hall debut. Twenty years later the orchestrated version was arranged for Leontyne Price. The idea for this composition was conceived several years prior to their debut, while Love and Bonds were still classmates at Northwestern.\textsuperscript{111} The \textit{Five Creek-Freedman Spirituals} are comprised of a group of arranged folk song melodies that were derived from two groups of American people, the African-Americans and Creek-Native-Americans. The following quote by Hortense Love can be found on the piano-vocal score of \textit{Five Creek-Freedman Spirituals} published in 1946 by Mutual Publishing Company.

In the Southwest of the United States lies a wildly beautiful and fabulous strip of land, once called the “Indian Territory” but now known as Oklahoma. Dwelling there near Muskogee is a group of people called “Creek-Freedman” or “Natives” who are a mixture of Creek Indian and Negro. The fusion of these two races has produced a culture that is highly intelligent and artistic.

The five songs collected here are excellent examples of the musical moods of these people who were deeply religious. The difference between these spirituals and others, lies in the fact that the Negroses’ exuberance is tempered by the Indians’ seriousness. Musically, this is accomplished through subtle shifts in intervals, a more marked syncopated rhythmic pattern, however an always restrained tempo.

From early childhood, I have heard my grandmother, a “Native,” sing these spirituals in both Creek Indian and English. So, for my New York Town Hall debut, I asked Miss Margaret Bonds to make arrangements of them. They were immediately acclaimed as the first modern arrangements of spirituals. But, to me they are more: they are the embodiment, in notes, of the beautiful background that Nature gave to the originators of these songs—an authentic portrayal of the souls of the Creek-Freedman!\textsuperscript{112}

The songs found in \textit{Five Creek-Freedman Spirituals} are “Dry Bones,” “Sit Down Servant,” “Lord I Just Can’t Keep from Cryin,’” “You Can Tell the World,” and “I’ll Reach to Heaven.” The orchestrated version of “Sit Down Servant” was published in 1962 by Mercury Music and is an exact representation of the 1946 piano-vocal score, except for a few embellishments that occur in the B section. The musical excerpts presented in the following discussion of this song are extracted from the piano-vocal score.

\textsuperscript{111} Alice Dillon, 85.
“Sit Down Servant” is an example of the call-and-response chant form of the spiritual, which John W. Work, III identifies as the most common form of the spiritual.¹¹³ The call and response occurs between the two characters presented in this song—The Lord and His servant—which challenges the vocalist to play two roles.

Bonds began this song with an *Andantino con moto* tempo marking, and as early as the four-bar piano prelude, the piano takes part in the dramatic action. Not only does this prelude establish the mood of the piece, it introduces a musical motive that Bonds wove throughout the A section, comprised of an A-minor-seventh chord that can be seen in measures three and four in Example 3.6. This motive most likely represents the “trumpets of rams' horns” played by the levitical priests in the Bible to signify the presence of the Lord.¹¹⁴ Bonds’s choice of instrumentation found in the orchestrated version of this spiritual supports this idea, as the A-minor-seventh chord is played by the brass section.


The form of this song is ABABA with the A section in the key of A minor and the B section predominantly in G minor. There are several extended tertian harmonies, primarily seventh chords, in the piano accompaniment, and the melody of the vocal line is comprised of the Aeolian scale, some of which can be seen in Example 3.7. The setting of the text is predominantly syllabic and the piano accompaniment and vocal line move independently of one another.

¹¹³ John W. Work, III, 19.
Ex. 3.7: “Sit Down Servant” from *Five Creek-Freedman Spirituals*, mm. 5–6.
© Mutual Music Society Inc., 1946

The Lord: The servant:

![Musical notation](image1)

In measure eleven, Bonds employs text-painting in the vocal line by repeating the E₅ for two and half beats to demonstrate the servant’s heightened emotion as seen in Example 3.8. Here, the piano accompaniment shifts away from A minor, as seen in measure eleven in Example 3.8, to indicate a change in the dramatic action.

The music modulates again in the B section. This modulation to G minor occurs by way of a sustained E-flat-ninth chord that enters on beat two in the top line of the piano as seen in measure twelve in Example 3.8.

Ex. 3.8: “Sit Down Servant” from *Five Creek-Freedman Spirituals*, mm. 10–13.
© Mutual Music Society Inc., 1946

![Musical notation](image2)
In measure twenty-one the music found in the top line of the piano accompaniment represents the movement of the “wings” and the plucking of the “harp” (see Example 3.9). In measure twenty-two, the descending chromatic scale found in the top voice of the treble of the piano, serves to represent the singing of the chorus of angels (see Example 3.9).


Bonds placed another A-chord in the last two measures of the song. This resounding A-major-sixth chord is also played by the brass section in the orchestrated version and leaves the listener with a feeling of hope and resolution (found in measures forty-one and forty-two in Example 3.10).

Due to the narrow range and medium tessitura, “Sit Down Servant” is suitable for most voice types.

**I Wish I Knew How it Would Feel to Be Free.** Leontyne Price, along with the Rust College Choir, recorded the album *I Wish I Knew How it Would Feel to Be Free* in 1971 for RCA Records.\(^{115}\) According to Price’s brother, George Price, Bonds was paid for four arrangements but only three remained on the recording: “I Wish I Knew How it Would Feel to Be Free,” “Sinner Please Don’t Let this Harvest Pass,” and “Standin’ in the Need of Prayer.”\(^{116}\) The title of the fourth spiritual is unknown.

Descriptions of “I Wish I Knew How it Would Feel to Be Free” and “Sinner Please Don’t Let This Harvest Pass” are included in this chapter. “Standin’ in the Need of Prayer” was arranged for a cappella chorus.

“I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free” is an example of a slow, sustained, long-phrase melody and contains four verses in modified strophic form. The pitches found in “I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free” make up the major pentatonic scale F–G–A–C–D. Bonds composed the first statement of the melody for the soloist accompanied by four-part homophonic harmonies sung by the chorus. The vocal line of this spiritual can be sung a cappella. On occasion there is a contrapuntal line sung by a bass soloist that generates moments of polyphonic texture. Bonds wrote an interlude comprised of a descending scale for the chorus at the end of the second statement of the melody where the chorus sings three repetitions of the text, “How I wish I could,” in a chant-like manner, which serves to modulate up one half-step for the fourth and final verse. Here, the dynamics shift from *mezzo forte* to *pianissimo*, providing a haunting musical quality for the conclusion of this composition. The soloist sings one refrain of the title text for the final three measures, ending on a sustained F\(^5\).

Due to the narrow range C\(^4\)–F\(^\#5\) and medium tessitura of this piece, it can easily be sung by all voice types. “I Wish I Knew How it Would Feel to Be Free” remains unpublished.

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\(^{115}\) Alice Elizabeth Dillon, “The Orchestral Arrangements of Spirituals by Margaret Bonds: An Historical and Analytical Study” (DMA diss., University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1998), 37.

\(^{116}\) Hugh Lee Lyon, 165.
**Sinner, Please Don’t Let This Harvest Pass.** In 1929 Florence Price composed a solo piano piece entitled *Fantasie Nègre* while Bonds was sixteen and still under her tutelage. This composition was based on the melody of “Sinner Please Don’t Let This Harvest Pass” and was dedicated to Bonds by way of an inscription that read, “To my talented little friend, Margaret A. Bonds.” Based on Bonds's study of Price's scores it is likely that Bonds was influenced by Florence Price’s earlier piano setting.

The first obvious connection between the two compositions is the shared key signature. Like Price’s *Fantasie Nègre*, Bonds arranged “Sinner Please Don’t Let This Harvest Pass” in E minor. The melody is comprised of the pitches found in the minor pentatonic scale E–G–A–B–D. This type of pentatonic scale contains a minor third between scale degrees 1–2 and 4–5 and whole-steps between the other scale degrees. The piano immediately participates in the dramatic action. The four slurred staccato E’s that appear in the first two beats of measure one serve as a recurring rhythmic pattern that emulates the passing of time by mimicking the sound of a ticking clock, as seen in Example 3.11.

Ex. 3.11: “Sinner Please Don’t Let This Harvest Pass,” m. 1.
Unpublished manuscript located at The Juilliard School, Peter Jay Sharp Special Collections.

This rhythmic pattern appears again in the right hand of the piano accompaniment of measure twelve, as seen in Example 3.12, as a part of a musical passage where Bonds used a raised seventh scale degree to stress the importance of the text and emphasize the urgency of the message. The raised seventh (D♯) appears in the vocal line and the top line of the piano accompaniment in measure thirteen in Example 3.12. This is the only passage where the vocal line deviates from the pentatonic scale.
Bonds created a heightened sense of urgency in the B section. Here, the music becomes increasingly more dramatic as the vocal line moves up one octave and is sung with a *fortissimo* dynamic marking (see Example 3.13).

The range of this piece is $E_4$ to $E_5$, and the tessitura lies between $E_4$ and $D_5$, making it suitable for all voice types. “Sinner Please Don’t Let This Harvest Pass” remains unpublished and is located in The Lila Acheson Wallace Manuscripts and Archives Library at The Juilliard School.

**Hold the Wind.** Although “Hold the Wind” was never recorded, Bonds composed it for Leontyne Price in 1964. This spiritual is an example of a syncopated, segmented melody, and is set in common time in the key of A major. The form is AAABB with each section consisting of
eight measures. The vocal line includes syncopated and dotted rhythms and text that is predominantly syllabic (see Examples 3.14 and 3.15). “Hold the Wind” begins with a two-bar piano introduction marked *moderato*. The piano accompaniment plays a role in the dramatic action by way of the sweeping arpeggiated chords found in the two-bar piano prelude. These chords depict the movement of the wind and introduce the thematic material for the A section (see Example 3.14).

Ex. 3.14: “Hold the Wind,” mm. 1–3.
Unpublished manuscript located at The Juilliard School, Peter Jay Sharp Special Collections. *Moderato*

The piano accompaniment indicates a shift in the dramatic mood found in the B section. Here, it reflects the new idea of assurance and safety in Jesus. It begins with four steady quarter-notes representing a calmer state of being, a stark contrast to the frantic mood illustrated by the rhythms found in the A section (see Example 3.15). Bonds also reflected this change of mood by placing a dynamic marking of *forte* and musical marking of *risoluto* (resolute) at the beginning of the B section (see Example 3.15).

Throughout this piece Bonds used text-painting on every repetition of the word “blow” by connecting it to a descending three-note passage comprised of a short melisma that consists of two eighth-notes slurred to a quarter-note. This can be seen in measure twelve in Example 3.15.
Ex. 3.15 “Hold the Wind,” mm. 9–12.

The range of this song is A₄ to F₅. A relatively high tessitura makes it appropriate for high voices. “Hold the Wind” remains unpublished and is also located in The Lila Acheson Wallace Manuscripts and Archives Library at The Juilliard School.

In addition to “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand,” between 1959 and 1967 there were several other spiritual arrangements written by Bonds that were published by Mercury Publishing Company. These publications include the following songs: “Didn’t it Rain,” “Ezek’el Saw the Wheel,” “Go Tell it on the Mountain,” “Sing Aho,” “Hold On,” “I Got a Home in That Rock,” “Joshua Fit da Battle of Jericho,” and “This Little Light of Mine.”

**This Little Light of Mine.** Bonds composed her arrangement of “This Little Light of Mine” for Leontyne Price in 1962. Unfortunately, the recording of this spiritual was not made until after Bonds’s death. “This Little Light of Mine” was recorded by Leontyne Price with David Garvey at the piano at Carnegie Hall in 1991. This record is entitled *Return to Carnegie Hall* and is available through RCA Records. Leontyne Price once confessed that “This Little Light of Mine” was her favorite spiritual.¹¹⁷

“This Little Light of Mine” is a modified strophic setting of three verses in the key of G major. Each section is made up of sixteen bars with a four-bar piano prelude and a two-bar piano interlude that begins in measure thirty-three (see Example 3.16). This spiritual is an example of the short, syncopated, segmented melody due to the short repetitive phrases and syncopated rhythms found in the vocal line. These syncopated rhythms often consist of an eighth-note

followed by a quarter-note or dotted quarter-note, one example of this can be seen in Example 3.17.

Again, Bonds used a predominantly syllabic setting of the text. The four-bar piano prelude introduces the thematic material and sets the mood of the piece. This thematic material evokes a serene, pleasant mood by way of a simple melody, comprised of a major pentatonic scale found in the top voice of the piano (not shown). Bonds wove these pitches throughout the song, traces of which can be seen in the piano interlude (see Example 3.16). This melody, played in the fifth octave, may also represent the twinkling of the light.

A clever two-bar piano interlude occurs in measures thirty-three and thirty-four before the beginning of the last verse. The pitches of the pentatonic scale return as this interlude begins with a pentatonic chord followed by a series of inverted triads that move upward in parallel motion. In the next measure, excluding the F♯, pitches from the pentatonic scale can be heard (see Example 3.16). Bonds marked this interlude with an unusual musical marking ethereal-diffused. Bonds used another creative musical marking in measure thirty-five of the piano, tinkling as a music box, which may represent childlike faith.

Example 3.16: “This Little Light of Mine,” mm. 33–36.
Manuscript located at The Juilliard School, Peter Jay Sharp Special Collections.

The finale not only shows Bonds’s sensitivity toward the text, but her ability to write for the voice. Leontyne Price, who had a keen ability to sing softly in the upper register, inspired this effective finale. The voice ascends from D5 to B5, which is sustained on a ppp dynamic for two measures with an a volante (flying or soaring) musical marking as seen in Ex. 3.17.
Ex. 3.17: “This Little Light of Mine,” mm. 46–48.

“This Little Light of Mine” works especially well for high voices, as the range is $G_4$ to $B_5$ and the tessitura is between $G_4$ and $D_5$.

An additional spiritual arrangement, the publication of which is in progress at the publishing company Videmus, is entitled “Little David Play on Your Harp.” This Bonds arrangement was first performed by tenor Lawrence Watson for his Town Hall debut on March 25, 1956. A recent recording of the work was made by soprano Dr. Louise Toppin with pianist John O’Brien for Albany Records.

Bonds's spiritual arrangements not only comprise a quarter of all of her solo vocal works, they also encompass the highest number of published works (nearly seventy-percent of all of Bonds's arrangements of African-American spirituals were published in her lifetime) when compared to other genres of her vocal repertoire.

Bonds's compositions not only brought critical acclaim to the concert setting of the African-American spiritual, but amplified the global impact American art song had on 20th century art music. Bonds achieved this by arranging spirituals that included complex piano accompaniments, interesting harmonies, beautifully set melodies, and sophisticated embellishments of the text. Her arrangement of “He's Got the Whole World in His Hand” is one of only a handful of arrangements of this spiritual to date and is certainly the most internationally recognized version of this song. “He's Got the Whole World in His Hand” has become one of the most recorded of all of Bonds's songs. It was recorded by popular, “R & B,” jazz, and “folk” singer Nina Simone (1933-2003), Metropolitan Opera legends Kathleen Battle and Florence Quivar, and a second time by Leontyne Price, with David Garvey at the piano, about whom
Bonds stated, “[He] has been playing my music so magnificently for years.”\textsuperscript{118} The second recording was Price’s Carnegie Hall debut that took place on February 28, 1965, and is also on RCA Records. Bonds’s arrangement of “You Can Tell the World,” from \textit{Five Creek-Freedman Spirituals}, was recorded by another legendary Metropolitan Opera star, Jessye Norman. This Deutsche Grammophon record, entitled \textit{Spirituals in Concert}, is conducted by James Levine and also highlights Kathleen Battle, who can be heard singing “He's Got the Whole World in His Hand.” These recordings of Bonds's spiritual arrangements, as well as numerous performances sung by opera singers worldwide, exposed important American folk music of eminent historical significance to international audiences, elevating this form of song to the standard of art music.

\textsuperscript{118} Margraret Bonds, inscription found on the manuscript of “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand,” Margaret Bonds, The Juilliard School, Peter Jay Sharp Special Collections.
CHAPTER 4

THE JAZZ AND MUSICAL THEATRE SONGS

The Jazz Songs

Jazz, influenced by African-American spirituals and the blues, not only became an important component of Bonds’s solo vocal repertoire, but also influenced her musical theatre songs and art songs. It is also no surprise that Bonds was a gifted composer of song in both genres. Many of Bonds’s musical theatre and jazz songs provided a steady source of income. These compositions also brought her national recognition as a composer of popular song.

On June 12, 1936, Margaret Bonds expressed in a letter to Langston Hughes, “I am never satisfied with my harmonies of popular songs. However, Mr. Ellington is such a clever musician that he will most likely put his own harmony to the melody if he plays it himself.” 119 Despite Bonds’s opinion of herself, the success she achieved as a composer of popular song proved that she was a master of harmony in her own right. “Love’s Runnin’ Riot,” the song mentioned in Bonds’s letter to Hughes, was being considered by Duke Ellington for a possible recording or performance, while another popular song composed by Bonds, entitled “Love Ain’t What It Ought to Be,” had already been performed in 1935 by big-band leader Cab Calloway (1907-1994) at the Cotton Club, one of the leading nightclubs in Harlem during the 1930s. 120 Shortly thereafter, Bonds revealed in another letter to Hughes that big-band leader Jimmy Lunceford (1902-1947) “was supposed to make a recording of another number of mine!” 121 While Bonds was still living in Chicago, her popular songs were already being sought after by some of the biggest names in the jazz industry.

In 1939 Bonds moved to New York and worked as an editor for the Clarence Williams Publishing Company. 122 While there, Bonds became more familiar with jazz by extracting scores for composers who could not write music. 123 This experience had a great impact on Bonds’s compositional style and is the reason why soprano Charlotte Holloman considered

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119 Margaret Bonds to Langston Hughes, 18 February 1937, Yale Collection of American Literature.  
120 Helen Walker-Hill, From Spirituals to Symphonies, 176.  
121 Margaret Bonds to Langston Hughes, 18 February 1937.  
122 Clarence Williams (1898-1967) was a significant jazz pianist, vocalist, composer, theatrical producer, and music publisher who began recording with Vocalion records in 1933.  
123 Charlotte Holloman, interview by author.
Bonds to be “so innovative in including jazz styles in the classical idioms.” It was through the Clarence Williams Publishing Company that Bonds also gained access to Tin Pan Alley, which offered her even greater success as a composer of popular song. Bonds recalled those first years in New York in an interview published by the Washington Post in 1964: “Everybody would look at me and say ‘look at that poor dopey kid: she wants to be a composer.’ Well I did it. I made my living on Tin Pan Alley.” By 1941 the Glenn Miller Orchestra, Charlie Spivak Orchestra, and the Woody Hermann Orchestra, as well as other successful small-ensemble jazz groups of the 1930s and 40s, had performed or recorded popular songs composed by Margaret Bonds.

**Andy Razaf**

Not long after Bonds began working for the Clarence Williams Publishing Company, she collaborated with Andy Razaf (1895-1973), an established lyricist in the popular music industry. Razaf wrote the lyrics for the popular song “Honeysuckle Rose” as well as the words to the theme song from the legendary American musical *Ain’t Misbehavin’*, both composed by Thomas “Fats” Waller, the latter in collaboration with Harry Brooks. Bonds’s work with Razaf resulted in a handful of popular song compositions, including “Empty Interlude,” “Radio Ballroom,” and “Peachtree Street,” which became one of the earliest recordings of a popular song composed by her.

**Peachtree Street.** “Peachtree Street” is a song about Peachtree Street in Atlanta, Georgia, and can be heard in a scene of the 1939 Academy Award-winning film *Gone with the Wind*. Written in collaboration with lyricists Andy Razaf and Joe Davis (1896-1978), “Peachtree Street” embodies much of the blues style that is characteristic of Bonds’s popular song compositions.

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124 Ibid.
126 Christina Demaire, “Heritage Motivates Composing Career.”
127 Djane Richardson, interview by Helen Walker-Hill.
The first interesting feature found in “Peachtree Street” is the call-and-response that occurs between the solo vocal line and the right hand of the piano accompaniment, as seen in Example 4.1.

Ex. 4.1: “Peachtree Street,” mm.10–11.128

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call (Solo Vocal-Line)</th>
<th>Response (Instrumental)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just re-mem - ber Peach Tree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hazell, Porter, and Ullman explain the blues in the book entitled *Jazz: From Its Origins to the Present*. “There is another form jazz-musicians use regularly: It’s a 12-bar form invented by African-Americans . . . called the blues. Unlike AABA songs, in which songwriters invent their own chord progressions, blues have a fairly standardized sequence of chords. One 12-bar sequence, in which there is a chord for each measure.”129

Bonds set “Peachtree Street” in an ABBCB form and although she did not use the standard 12-bar form, choosing a 16-bar form instead, she followed the same method of harmonization, with one tonic or sub-dominant chord for each measure of the A section, as seen in the bass line of Example 4.2.

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128 “Peachtree Street,” Margaret Bonds Sheet Music Collection, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.
The C section, a 16-bar piano interlude, is written in a style called the stride. Made popular by Harlem pianists such as Fats Waller and the “father of stride” James P. Johnson, “stride piano was a style of piano playing named for its left-hand figures, with a characteristic “oom-pah” sound, made by striking a single note low in the bass on the first and third beats of a measure, and filling in with a chord in midrange on beats two and four.”

This style “differs from ragtime in the swing feeling and the right-hand improvisation.”

Measures forty-four and forty-five of the piano interlude show Bonds’s representation of stride, as seen in Example 4.3.

“Peachtree Street,” published in 1939 by Georgia Music, was recorded on Victor Records by Delta Rhythm Band on December 15, 1939, in New York with Bob Zurke on piano, featuring cornet player Sterling Bose as the vocalist.

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130 Ed Hazell, Lewis Porter, and Michael Ullman, 464.
131 Ibid.
Harold Dickinson

Spring Will Be So Sad. Another lyricist with whom Bonds collaborated was Harold Dickinson (N.d.). In 1940 Bonds and Dickinson wrote the World War II protest song “Spring Will Be So Sad.” This song was recorded February 20, 1941, on RCA Bluebird Records by the Glenn Miller Orchestra, featuring vocalists Ray Eberle and The Modernaires.

Bonds divided the E-flat major song into two parts, an A section, comprised of a twelve-bar verse, and a B section, made up of a thirty-two-bar chorus with a first and second ending. The melody of the vocal line is one of the most attractive qualities of this song. It is set over a rich harmonic structure with a piano accompaniment which includes seventh, ninth, diminished, and augmented chords. Bonds used the flatted seventh of the E-diminished chord found in measure six in Example 4.4 to magnify the mood of the word “haunts.”

Ex. 4.4: “Spring Will Be So Sad,” mm. 5–6.132


In the chorus section, Bonds placed a dotted rhythm on the first beat of every other measure; the first example of this can be seen in measure fourteen (Example 4.5). Bonds may have demonstrated the melancholy mood of this tune by marking the beginning of the chorus section “Slowly (with feeling),” also seen in Example 4.5. “Spring Will Be So Sad” was

132 “Spring Will Be So Sad.” Margaret Bonds Sheet Music Collection, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.
published in 1941 by Mutual Publishing Company.\(^{133}\) Djane Richardson said in 1990 that she was still receiving royalty checks from the recording of this song.\(^{134}\) The 1941 recording of Bonds’s “Spring Will Be So Sad” can be found on the CD entitled *The Complete Glenn Miller and His Orchestra (1938-1942)* on Bluebird Records.

Two popular artists that Bonds composed for were jazz pianist, singer, and songwriter Nina Simone and jazz singer, songwriter, and actress Peggy Lee (1920-2002). Bonds composed “A Little Sugar I Had Last Night” in 1961 for Nina Simone.\(^{135}\) Simone most likely performed this tune, but the title is not found in the discography of Nina Simone’s records, so it is unknown whether or not a recording was actually made.

On April 22, 1968, Peggy Lee performed a song entitled “Don’t Speak,” composed by Margaret Bonds with lyrics by Janice Lovoos, for a live recording produced by Capitol Records at the Copacabana Club in New York. This record, entitled *Two Shows Nightly*, has become a collector’s item, but Peggy Lee was not satisfied with the quality of this recording. She re-recorded the album at Capitol Studios, but “Don’t Speak” was cut from both albums, and, unfortunately, the live masters of both recordings of this song were lost.\(^{136}\)

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\(^{133}\) Christina Demaitre, “Heritage Motivates Composing Career.”

\(^{134}\) Djane Richardson, interview by Helen Walker-Hill.


The Musical Theatre Songs

Introduction

Margaret Bonds, former Chicago girl who now resides in New York, is busy working on the score and script of a musical for a Broadway show which will set something of a precedent in better race relations when it is produced.

Oklahoma City Dispatch, July 12, 1947

Even in Bonds’s musical theatre songs, musical elements drawn from jazz can be found. Bonds incorporated pitches drawn from blues inflections, syncopations, polyrhythms between the voice and piano, seventh, ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords, modal melodies; and similar to the jazz songs, the piano always doubles the voice.

Robert Dunsmore and Malone Dickerson

As early as 1934, Margaret Bonds was composing musical theatre songs and incidental music for dramatic works in Chicago. She ventured into the world of opera by writing a children’s opera entitled Winter Night’s Dream. This was the only opera composed by Margaret Bonds. One chorus section from this opera, entitled “Children’s Sleep,” was published in New York by Carl Fischer in 1942.

The second project, produced in 1936, was entitled Romey and Julie. Bonds collaborated with Robert Dunsmore on this project as well as on the opera.

Romey and Julie (1936)

Project number three sets out with this production to give to the World an insight into the wealth of material that the Negro possesses in the way of culture. The folklore of the Negro is rich in emotional elements. One finds irony, satire, poignancy, wit, song, dance, and all other elements of merit needed in good drama. . . Sponsored by the W.P.A. this unit has an acting Company of 63 people many of whom have given years to the theatre. . . We hope in the future to be a contributing factor in all that the Negro shall give to the stage in realism, color, music, and dance.

Henry B. Sweet, 1936

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137 As reported by the Associated Negro Press, “Noted Composer-Pianist Works on B’Way Show Prior to Tour,” Oklahoma City Dispatch, July 12, 1947.
Romey and Julie, a romantic comedy by Robert Dunmore, Ruth Chorpenning, and James Norris with musical settings by Margaret Allison Bonds, was performed several times in April of 1936, at The Federal Negro Theatre at 5538 Indiana Avenue in Chicago.

This dramatic work is a three-act play that takes place in Harlem and is a love story about Romey and Julie, which is loosely based on Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet.

Bonds composed all of the musical settings for this play in collaboration with lyricist Malone Dickerson. These works include one chorus number, incidental music, and thirteen solo songs. A complete list of these songs can be found in Appendix A.

Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps

Tropics After Dark (1940)

Hughes, already living in New York, was contracted in 1940 by his colleague Arna Bontemps to write the lyrics for two theatrical productions, Tropics after Dark and Jubilee: A Cavalcade of the Negro Theatre, for the Chicago American Negro Exposition, celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of Emancipation that took place from July 4 to Labor Day of that year. Arna Bontemps, another important writer and longtime friend of Hughes, served as the cultural director for the exposition and collaborated with Hughes in writing the lyrics while Margaret Bonds and Zilner Randolph took on the task of composing the music for the first production, Tropics After Dark. Unfortunately, due to financial problems, only three songs from this musical were performed at the Diamond Jubilee of Emancipation. Two were composed by Randolph, and the third was Bonds’s “Pretty Flower of the Tropics.” These songs were performed as a part of a musical review that took place in a beer hall on July 12, 1940. Hughes explained the situation to Bonds,

I have only three songs left in the show, two of Randolph’s and your PRETTY FLOWER…The Expo is (confidentially) in a very bad way financially, so I guess we’re lucky to get what little we did get out of the show. Doubt if we’ll get another penny, except what we might be able to do with the book and music on our own.

138 Ibid.
139 Arnold Rampersad, Volume I, 386.
141 Ibid., 159.
Although only one of Bonds’s songs was performed at the Diamond Jubilee Celebration, Arna Bontemps’s commission yielded ten songs. Leslie Catherine Sanders stated that these songs “move indiscriminately between popular song and the shadows of the blues.” Bonds composed “Market Day in Martinique,” “Pretty Flower of the Tropics,” “Chocolate Carmencita,” “When the Sun Goes Down in Rhumba Land,” “Cowboy of South Parkway,” “Sweet Nothings in Spanish,” “Voodoo Man,” “The Way We Danced in Hot Harlem,” “I’ll Make You Savvy,” and “Lonely Little Maiden by the Sea” for this event. Two of the songs from *Tropics After Dark* will be discussed in this chapter.

**Lonely Little Maiden by the Sea.** Bonds stated that she composed “Lonely Little Maiden by the Sea” while waiting for a rehearsal to begin at the Apollo Theater. This song is the second song in the series of nine songs found in *Tropics After Dark*. Bonds composed a simple, yet charming melody in the key of C major with one modulation to the key of A major that occurs in measures eight through twelve. The tempo is marked *Wistfully*, and the form is ABB. Here, Bonds depicted the rocking waves by positioning a steady quarter note rhythm in the bass line of the piano accompaniment as seen in measures twelve and fourteen of Example 4.6.

Ex. 4.6: “Lonely Little Maiden by the Sea,” from *Tropics After Dark*, mm. 11–14. Unpublished manuscript located at The Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, Chicago.

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142 Ibid., 159.
143 Helen Walker-Hill, *From Spirituals to Symphonies*, 150.
144 “Lonely Little Maiden by the Sea,” Margaret Bonds Scores and Sheet Music, Box 19, Series 7, No. 82, Helen Walker-Hill Papers, Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, Chicago.
The vocal line ends on a G₅, sustained for nine beats over a descending chromatic scale found in the bass line of the piano accompaniment, which may have served to depict the sad emotions of the lonely little maiden by the sea, as seen in measures thirty-two through thirty-four of Example 4.7.

Ex. 4.7: “The Lonely Little Maiden by the Sea,” from *Tropics After Dark*, mm. 32–34.

Pretty Flower of the Tropics. “Pretty Flower of the Tropics” is the fourth song in the series of nine songs composed for *Tropics After Dark*. As stated in the above quote by Langston Hughes, it was the only song composed by Bonds that was performed at the Diamond Jubilee Celebration in Chicago in 1940. This song is comprised of forty-seven measures and is in ABB form. Bonds placed “Pretty Flower of the Tropics” in E-flat major and began the song with a musical marking, *In the style of the Beguine*.¹⁴⁵ The Beguine is a popular dance from the West Indies, the rhythm of which is illustrated in the bass line of measure thirty-five (see Example 4.8). This rhythm was also popularized by Cole Porter in his 1935 song, “Begin the Beguine.” The vocal line consists of long phrases with wide leaps and a memorable melody. Here Bonds incorporated text painting by way of the minor sixth leap up to D₅ on the word “sunrise,” as seen in measure thirty-five in Example 4.8.

Ex. 4.8: “Pretty Flower of the Tropics,” from *Tropics After Dark*, mm. 34–37.  
Unpublished manuscript located at The Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, Chicago.

The range of “Pretty Flower of the Tropics” is E₄ to F₅.

**Be a Little Savage with Me.** “Be a Little Savage with Me,” which was composed in 1949, may have been part of a no-longer extant theatrical work. Bonds began this song in common time with a tempo marking of *Bounce*. The key signature shifts between F major and B-flat major. The chorus section includes spoken text, as shown below, with chromatic inflections in the bass of the piano accompaniment in measures thirty-four and thirty-five in Example 4.9.

Ex. 4.9: “Be a Little Savage with Me,” mm. 32–35.  
Unpublished manuscript located at The Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, Chicago.

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146 Ibid.
147 “Be a Little Savage with Me,” Margaret Bonds Scores and Sheet Music, Series 7, Box 19, No. 97, Helen Walker-Hill Papers, Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, Chicago.
Roger Chaney

Lyricist Roger Chaney, whose dates are unknown, collaborated with Bonds on several settings of popular and theatrical songs from 1941 to 1958. In 1956 Bonds and Chaney collaborated on one art song entitled “Rainbow Gold.” Even the musical theatre songs Bonds composed with Chaney, including “Mist over Manhattan” and “Let’s Make a Dream Come True,” are composed in the classical tradition with complex piano accompaniments, lyric phrases, and sophisticated settings of the text. Bonds and Chaney also collaborated with Andy Razaf on one setting of a popular song entitled “Empty Interlude.” Like most of Bonds’s popular songs, “Empty Interlude” is written in the style of the blues.

Midtown Affair (1958)

Midtown Affair was written and produced in collaboration with lyricist Roger Chaney in February of 1958. Four of Bonds’s songs were included in this production: “You Give Me a Lift,” “Mist over Manhattan,” “I Love the Lie I’m Living,” and “My Kind of Man.”

My Kind of Man. “My Kind of Man,” the manuscript of which is housed at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, was first sung by jazz and blues singer Alberta Hunter (1895-1984) in 1953 at the Bon Soir, a club in New York. Five years later, Bonds included it as part of the musical Midtown Affair.

Mist over Manhattan. “Mist over Manhattan,” sung by a character who is reminiscing about the kisses of a lost love, takes place on a dewy Manhattan day. The vocal line is comprised of lilting lyrical phrases and is always doubled by the piano.

Bonds began “Mist over Manhattan” with a four-measure piano prelude that contains a two-against-three rhythmic pattern as seen in Example 4.10. This polyrhythmic motif serves as the thematic music of “Mist over Manhattan.”

The form of “Mist over Manhattan” is AABA with the A section starting on a “misty” A-half-diminished-seventh chord, allowing the piano to play a role in the dramatic action as seen in measure five of Example 4.10.

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148 Helen Walker-Hill, From Spirituals to Symphonies, 176.
149 Ibid.
Ex. 4.10: “Mist over Manhattan,” from *Midtown Affair*, mm. 1–5.\(^{150}\)
Unpublished manuscript located in the Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division of The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

The B section further explores the A-sonority from the opening, this time evoking a modally inflected A-natural minor. There is a brief excursion to G major that leads back to the “misty” A-half-diminished-seventh chord of the opening to begin the reprise of the A section in measure thirty, which ultimately, via circle-of-fifths motion (A-diminished-seventh chord, D-flat-ninth chord, G-seventh, and A-minor triad), yields to a F-major-seventh chord to highlight the “kiss” at the end of the song (see Example 4.11).

Ex. 4.11: “Mist over Manhattan,” from *Midtown Affair*, mm. 32–35 and 38–39.

\(^{150}\)“Mist over Manhattan,” Margaret Bonds Sheet Music Collection, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.
As in every style of song Bonds composed, she incorporated word painting. The first example in “Mist over Manhattan,” occurs in measure eighteen and nineteen, to highlight the words “Skyline a strange Silhouette” (see Example 4.12). Bonds used the same music in Example 4.13 at “light glowing high in the air,” where Bonds suspended the words on the pitch D₅. “Mist over Manhattan” has a range of C⁴ to F₅.

Ex. 4.12: “Mist over Manhattan,” from Midtown Affair, mm. 10–11.

Ex. 4.13: “Mist over Manhattan,” from Midtown Affair, mm. 18–19.

Let’s Make a Dream Come True. Although no date of composition is available for “Let’s Make a Dream Come True,” the musical style is similar to “Mist over Manhattan” and may have also been a part of the musical Midtown Affair. The song is an invitation to a love affair and begins with a four-bar piano prelude. This song contains medium-length arpeggiated phrases as seen in measures nine and ten in Example 4.14.
The form is AABA with each section consisting of eight measures. The A section is in E-flat major and presents all of the wonderful things that the lovers could do, while the B section incorporates a D minor melody and contains the lover's plea for happiness. The key and harmonic progression found in the B section complement the text as the music travels up a tritone to A-natural, allowing the piano to participate in the dramatic action. This happens via circle-of-fifths motion (A-thirteenth chord, D-ninth chord, A-thirteenth chord, D-ninth chord, G-minor-ninth chord, C-added-sixth chord, G-seventh chord, C-ninth chord, G-augmented chord, C-ninth chord) that finally returns to an F-seventh chord in measure twenty-nine, at the reprise of the A section making the D-minor inspired melody found in the vocal line of the B section “truly a fantasy.” The first measure of the B section can be seen in measure twenty-one in Example 4.15. The A section continues to move through the circle of fifths ending on an E-flat-major chord at “Let’s Make a Dream Come True.” This return to the tonic leaves the listener with a feeling of hope and resolution.

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151 “Let's Make a Dream Come True,” Margaret Bonds Sheet Music Collection, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.
Ex. 4.15: “Let’s Make a Dream Come True,” mm. 20–21.

The range for “Let’s Make a Dream Come True” is C₄ to F₅, making it appropriate for most voice types. The doubling of the piano and voice parts make this especially simple for intermediate students. The poetry is also accessible to early college-aged students.

Bonds’s success in the field of musical theatre and jazz provided her with a steady source of income and yielded several well-written songs that make up a unique part of her solo vocal repertoire. These songs not only reveal her ability to compose in a variety of vocal genres, but allow researchers to understand how Bonds became “so innovative in including jazz styles in the classical idioms.” Bonds’s ability to incorporate classical idioms in her jazz and musical theatre songs is also evident. Instead of writing typical chordal accompaniments, Bonds chose to write sophisticated settings of the text and accompaniments. These musical qualities create an interconnection between every genre in which Bonds composed. Although several of Bonds’s jazz and musical theatre songs remain unpublished, Bonds achieved a great amount of success in both genres of music. She not only broke through the confines of racial segregation by composing at least two popular songs that were recorded by big-bands that consisted of predominantly Caucasian members (The Glenn Miller Orchestra, The Woody Hermann Orchestra, and The Charlie Spivak Orchestra), but also composed the popular song “Peachtree Street,” that was included in the 1939 Academy Award winning film Gone With the Wind, one of the first Hollywood films to achieve international success. Through these accomplishments, Bonds attained exceptionally outstanding achievements for an African-American female composer during the 1940s.

152 Charlotte Holloman, interview by author.
CHAPTER 5
THE ART SONGS

Introduction

“It was through [Abbie] Mitchell that I learned the importance of the marriage between words and music which is demanded if one is to have a song of any consequence.”

Margaret Bonds, 1967

Bonds’s art songs can be separated into three periods: early (1932-1938), middle (1939-1959), and late (1960-1968). Although the majority of Bonds's solo vocal works incorporate African-American musical idioms, there are specific traits that distinguish each period. The early songs (1932-1938) are highly influenced by musical elements drawn from African-American folk songs and the blues. They are mostly in minor keys and often contain modal melodies. The middle songs (1939-1959) display more advanced piano accompaniments and contain vocal lines more suitable for advanced singers. There are several distinct musical characteristics that define the post-1960 songs. A much greater emphasis on chromaticism and non-resolving dissonance is found in these later songs. Shifting and irregular meters create tension and moments of surprise, while providing important word or syllabic emphasis. Whole tone and octatonic scales embellish the text or indicate a change of mood or poetic idea.

Margaret Bonds

Bound

Bonds composed one art song that utilizes her own poetry. This song, entitled “Bound,” was composed in 1939 for her husband, Lawrence Richardson. “Bound” begins in cut time with a two-bar piano prelude and is in ABAB form. The vocal line consists of long, lilting phrases with a narrow range of E₄ to D₅. Bonds composed a syllabic setting of the text, and unlike most of her art songs, the piano almost always doubles the voice. In 1971 Bonds confessed that she

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did not like melodies, which may account for the consistent rhythmic motives found in nearly all of her songs. “Bound” is a fine example of her ability to compose them.\textsuperscript{154}

Bonds established a seductive mood for this song by placing driving, agitated rhythms coupled with jazzy harmonic inflections in the two-bar piano introduction (see Example 5.1). While the key signature indicates C major, the primary pitches of the A section make up the jazz scale sometimes labeled the Spanish scale or the dominant phrygian scale. The pitches of this scale are C–D$^\flat$–E–F–G–A$^\flat$–B$^\flat$–C.\textsuperscript{155} This modally-inspired harmonic structure brings a minor sonic quality to the A section, while the B section is in B-flat major. This shifting from a minor sound world to major further enhances the passionate setting of Bonds’s love poem “Bound.”

\begin{center}
\textbf{Ex. 5.1: “Bound” mm. 1–3.}
Unpublished manuscript located in the Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division of The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.
Unpublished manuscript obtained from Dr. Louis Toppin.
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{BOUND}
\end{center}
\begin{center}
to my Larry
\end{center}
\begin{center}
Margaret Bonds
\end{center}

Polyrhythms occur between the bass and treble clef of the piano due to the three-against-two rhythms found in measure eight of Example 5.2. This rhythmic motive recurs throughout the song creating a rocking motion that may represent the rocking waves of the boat that the love

\textsuperscript{154} Margaret Bonds to Emily Boettcher Bogue, 27, September 1971.
slave is riding, as the last phrase of the song states, “I’m a prisoner, your slave enraptured, is happy to be captured, and Bound.”

Ex. 5.2: “Bound” mm. 8–11.

Bonds used text painting to present every repetition of the word “Bound” by setting it to two tied-rhythms similar to the whole-note tied to a dotted half-note as seen in measures ten through eleven of Example 5.2. This indicates that the character is tied or bound to his or her loved one. The low tessitura and narrow range of “Bound” make it ideal for mezzo-sopranos and baritones.

**Robert Frost**

Frost’s poetry often incorporated themes of rural New England, a place where he struggled to find identity as a child.\(^{156}\) Bonds set two of Frost’s poems to music, “The Pasture” and “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.”

**The Pasture**

Robert Frost’s poem “The Pasture” was written in 1914 as the first in the collection entitled *North of Boston*. Bonds composed her song setting of Frost’s “Pasture” in 1958. The poem is about a young boy going out into the pasture to perform his daily chores. It is an innocent setting full of pastoral themes that Bonds reflected through musical motives, note values, word painting, and dotted rhythms.

“Pasture” is set in a simple-triple meter (3/4) in the key of C major. It begins with a *Moderato* tempo marking and is set in a modified strophic form. The four-bar piano prelude presents one of two musical motives found in “Pasture.” The first motive, seen in the top line of measures three and four of Example 5.3 is comprised of a short melodic sequence that consists of descending thirds and illustrates the movement of the water in the spring. This motive returns in the vocal line of measures thirteen through fourteen as seen in Example 5.4.

Ex. 5.3: “The Pasture,” mm. 1–4.  
Unpublished manuscript obtained from Dr. Louise Toppin.

Ex. 5.4: “The Pasture,” mm. 13–16.

The second musical motive is found in the vocal line in Example 5.5. It is made up of sweeping phrases (comprised mostly of dotted rhythms) that function as the recurring melodic idea of the song. Here, the vocal line comprises the pitches of the Egyptian or suspended pentatonic scale D–E–G–A–C (see Example 5.5). This type of pentatonic scale is made up of two whole-steps that occur between 1–2  and 3–4  and two minor-thirds that occur between 2–3 and 4–5. Bonds also used this motive to create imitation that occurs between the vocal line
and top voice of the piano accompaniment as seen in measures five through eight in Example 5.5.

Ex. 5.5: “The Pasture,” mm. 5–8.

At least two examples of text painting can be found in “Pasture.” The first example illustrates the skipping or carefree nature of the young child, an action that is represented by the dotted rhythms in measures five through eight in Example 5.5. The second example occurs on beat one of measure thirty-three where the sixteenth-note beamed to a dotted eighth-note demonstrates the tottering of the young calf (see Example 5.6).

Ex. 5.6: “The Pasture,” mm. 32–34.
Bonds’s song setting only deviates once from the original presentation of Frost’s poem. In measure forty, Bonds repeats the last line to create a climactic ending in which the vocal line is sustained on a C₆ or an optional G₅ for four measures with a jazzy C-chord with an added sixth and ninth in the bass of the piano accompaniment (see Example 5.7). The first performance of “Pasture,” sung by soprano Marjorie McClung (N.d), took place on August 8, 1959, at Stanford University. This song is ideal for a tenor or soprano, due to the high tessitura. The range of “Pasture” is D₄ to C₆.

Ex. 5.7: “The Pasture,” mm. 42–47.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening


Here, Bonds combines the musical elements drawn from African-American folk songs with some of the compositional traits indicative of her post-1960 art songs. Bonds used more chromaticism, non-resolving dissonances, and whole tone scales to widen the harmonic palette of musical expression.

Bonds set this poem in a simple-duple meter in the key of E-flat major with a moderato tempo marking. Instead of the traditional four-bar piano prelude found in the majority of Bonds’s art songs, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” begins with an eight-bar piano prelude.

157 Helen Walker-Hill, From Spirituals to Symphonies, 176.
This prelude is comprised of a series of repetitive eighth-notes in the bass and contains two rhythmic patterns found in the top line of the piano. Bonds wove these two patterns (four beamed sixteenth-notes and one eighth-note beamed to two sixteenth-notes) throughout the song, both of which can be seen in the top line of the piano of measures nine through twelve in Example 5.8.

Two measures prior to the vocal entrance, Bonds used longer rhythmic durations (dotted quarter-notes and quarter-notes) to illustrate the speed of the horse and rider. These note values indicate that the rider has stopped for a moment to look at the woods. The shorter rhythms return in measure nine at the entrance of the vocal line and serve to illustrate two ideas, the movement of the horses’ hooves as they trot through the forest and the thoughts of the rider as she passes through the woods (see Example 5.8). The word order in Bonds's original manuscript is different from the words found in the poem (see Example 5.8). Frost's poem begins “Whose woods these are I think I know.”

Ex. 5.8: “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” mm. 6–12. Unpublished manuscript obtained from Dr. Louise Toppin.

Chromaticism is heard in the first beat of the top line of the piano in measures nine through eleven (Example 5.8). Bonds also used a whole tone scale in the vocal line to depict the chill of the winter and the frozen lake (see Example 5.9). This whole tone scale comprises the following pitches: $F^\#$–$A^b$–$B^b$–$C$–$D$–$E$–$F^\#$. 
In the treble of the piano of measures fifty-nine and sixty, Bonds incorporated an element commonly found in African-American folk songs, the major pentatonic scale. The hollow sonority of this gapped scale generates a mysterious atmosphere and is found immediately after the words “The woods are lovely, dark and deep,” (see measures fifty-nine and sixty in Example 5.10). The pitches are played an octave up and make up the following major pentatonic scale E♭ – F – G – B♭ – C.

Bonds used dissonance to create a moment of suspension in the last four measures of “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.” The vocal line is sustained on B♭₄ for four measures.
while the piano plays several repetitions of B♭ at “sleep.” The piano finally resolves to a B-flat chord in the last measure.

Another important performance of “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” and “Pasture” was presented by mezzo-soprano Elvira Green (N.d.),¹⁵⁸ for the “Programme of Songs by Member Composers” at Turtle Bay Music School. This performance was sponsored by The New York Singing Teachers’ Association on October 18, 1966. Both Margaret Bonds and Ned Rorem were members of this organization. Songs by Richard Hundley, John Sacco, and Celius Dougherty were also performed at this recital.

Marjorie May

Footprints on My Heart

The date of composition is unknown. “Footprints on My Heart” is the only Bonds song that includes the lyrics of Marjorie May (N.d.). No information could be found on this poet at the time of publication. This song is in C major set in an AABBA form. The meter is common time and there is no piano prelude. The vocal line is comprised of a beautiful melody that contains long, sustained, lyric phrases set to a chordal piano accompaniment. The top line of the piano accompaniment doubles the voice, and although it appears less frequently, the triplet rhythmic motif found in “Bound” is also included in “Footprints on My Heart.” The most challenging phrase to sing occurs in the last four bars of the song, in which the vocal line ascends from B♭⁴ to a G⁵, which is sustained for sixteen beats. The range of “Footprints on My Heart” is C⁴ to G⁵ and is most suitable for sopranos and tenors.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950) was born in Rockland, Maine. She attended Vassar College with the support of a patron who admired her work, and subsequently, moved to Greenwich Village in 1917. Millay worked as an actress, playwright, satirist, and freelance

¹⁵⁸ Elvira Green sang with the Metropolitan Opera and is currently an Artist-in-Residence at North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina.
writer. *Vanity Fair* hired her to work in Paris for two years, beginning in 1921, as a correspondent for their publication. She married in 1923 and continued to establish herself as one of the foremost American modern poets.

In 1964 Bonds stated that music had “to be human…and people have to like it: it has to move them spiritually and intellectually. I don’t think the atonal and serial music has much to do with human emotion—it’s so contrived.” Although Bonds aimed to avoid atonal and serial idioms, her song settings of Millay's poems (two of which were composed one year after the previous quote) certainly show mastery of 20th century harmony. Bonds's Millay song settings display a greater level of musical complexity and include shifting and irregular meters, chromaticism, and non-resolving dissonances. In many ways, these musical qualities parallel the musical traits found in Starer’s music, which was characterized by “chromaticism, modality, and driving rhythms.” These similarities make it evident that Bonds’s lessons with Starer had a marked influence on the compositional style found in the post-1960 art songs. In fact, Bonds made reference to these lessons in a letter written to Emily Boettcher Bogue as late as 1971.

Bonds set three Edna St. Vincent Millay poems between 1961 and 1965. “Hyacinth” was composed in 1961 for soprano Joyce Bryant. “Feast” and “Sonnet: What Lips My Lips Have Kissed” were composed in 1965. The manuscript to “Hyacinth” has not yet been located.

**Feast**

Bonds set “Feast” in a simple triple meter (3/4) in a through composed form. Although the key signature includes five flats, alluding to the key of D-flat major, the emphasized pitches of the melody comprise the octatonic scale, D♭–D–E–F–G–A♭–B♭–B, or the pitch classes, {1–2–4–5–7–8–t–e}. The octatonic scale (a symmetrical scale that contains a pattern of alternating whole steps and half-steps) can also be formed by combining any two different diminished-seventh chords, thus creating a broad harmonic palette full of diminished sonorities, a sound that...

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159 Christina Demaitre, “Heritage Motivates Composing Career.”
characterizes “Feast.” This scale is also frequently found in jazz music, but it is termed the diminished scale.

The thematic material found in “Feast” emerges in the first four measures of the piano prelude. It contains agitated, driving rhythms and chromatic inflections as seen in the top voice of the piano in Example 5.11. Bonds used these musical qualities to evoke the licentious and wanton mood of the character found in the poem.

Ex. 5.11: “Feast,” mm.1–4.
Unpublished manuscript obtained from Dr. Louise Toppin.

A musical style characteristic of Bonds's post-1960 art songs was the sudden shifting of meters. The piece is set in 3/4 with occasional shifts to 4/4 to accommodate the rhythm of the text. At bar eleven the first change to 4/4 appears (see Example 5.12). At bar twelve, Bonds shifted the meter back to 3/4 to illuminate the word “wonderful.” Never before had Bonds incorporated this musical element into her art songs. The Edna St. Vincent Millay songs are the only art songs in which this compositional technique appears.

As in many of Bonds's songs, the piano is an important component of the dramatic action. Here, Bonds used blocked quartal chords found in measures eleven and twelve to build tension and suspense until the piano releases into arpeggiated chords in measure thirteen. This change not only indicates a shift in poetic inflection, but enhances the characters' mood and augments her delight in discovering the most wonderful wine called “thirst” (see Example 5.12). Bonds further illustrated the character's mood by placing a modal melody in the vocal line that comprises the pitches of the E-aeolian scale E–(F♯)–G–A–B–C–D–E (see Example 5.12).
A variation of the thematic music from measures two and three of the prelude (see Example 5.11) returns in the last four bars of “Feast” and can be seen in the middle voice of accompaniment of measure thirty-three (see Example 5.13). Bonds concluded this song with a non-resolving dissonance of a minor-second that she accomplished by suspending the last pitch in the melody of the vocal line ($E_5$) over a D-flat-major chord in the piano to embellish the word “hunger” and leave the listener with an unsettled feeling (see measure thirty-four of Example 5.13).

Due to the extended tonal language and wide range, $E_\frac{1}{4}$ to $B_5$, “Feast” is suitable for advanced singers. The medium tessitura makes it possible for high and medium voices to sing, however, the singer must be able to sustain a $B_5$ on a fortissimo dynamic marking.
Sonnet: What Lips My Lips Have Kissed

“What Lips My Lips Have Kissed, and Where, and Why” (Sonnet XLII) was written by Millay in 1923. It appeared in her poetry collection entitled *The Harp Weaver and Other Poems*. The musical characteristics found in this song include shifting time-signatures, irregular time-signatures, chromaticism, non-resolving dissonance, and moments of tonal ambiguity, although the song is predominantly in D major. The two-bar piano prelude presents a recurring rhythmic motif that Bonds intertwined throughout the song. Bonds used the tied rhythms to create a hypnotic sensation that illustrates the restless memories of the character found in Millay's poem (see Example 5.14). This motif appears again in measures twenty and twenty-one. This time, Bonds replaced the recurring eighth-notes found in the left-hand of the piano with triplets, thereby creating polyrhythms to heighten the unsettled mood of the poem and increase the dramatic intensity before the finale that occurs ten measures later. These measures cannot be shown in this discussion due to limitations in copyright laws.

Unpublished manuscript located at The Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, Chicago.

“Sonnet: What Lips My Lips Have Kissed” includes four meters: 4/4, 2/4, 3/4 and 5/4. In measures sixteen and seventeen at “again will turn to me at midnight with a cry,” Bonds shifted the meter from 4/4 to 5/4 (see Example 5.15) to maintain the syllabic setting of the text, create

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tension, and increase dramatic intensity. She also used this irregular meter to lead up to the climax found in measure eighteen, where the meter returns to 4/4 and the voice sustains a G♯₅ for two measures (see 5.15). This is the only appearance of an irregular meter found in an art song composed by Bonds.


The meters shift again starting in measure twenty-nine, to embellish the text and to indicate another change of mood (see Example 5.16). Here, Bonds evokes the octatonic collection that includes G♯ and A (although A♯ falls outside). She also used a major seventh in measures twenty-nine and thirty at “I cannot say” and a tritone in measures thirty and thirty-one at “what loves” to augment the dramatic intensity (see Example 5.16). Chromaticism is also used throughout this song to create moments of tonal ambiguity and to illustrate the restless mood of the poem (see Example 5.16). Bonds also used dissonance between the voice and piano to create the same effect as seen in beat one of measures thirty and thirty-one in Example 5.16.

As in many of Bonds's art songs, the vocal line contains a syllabic setting of the text and examples of text-painting. Both of these qualities can be seen in Example 5.16. An example of text painting occurs in measure thirty-two on the words “and gone” which are sung on the pitches D♯₄ and E♯₄, the lowest notes in the phrase (see Example 5.16).
“Sonnet: What Lips My Lips Have Kissed” is appropriate for an advanced light or full-lyric soprano with some coloratura capabilities and requires a skillful pianist. The vocal range is D₄ to B₅. The first performance of “Feast” and “What Lips My Lips Have Kissed” took place on February 7, 1965, at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D. C. This performance was sung by soprano Muriel Beck (N.d.).
Janice Lovoos and Edmund Penney

Pot Pourri

Painter, author, and designer Janice Lovoos received formal training at the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles. Lovoos was the author of several books, including Frederic Whitaker: An Illustrated Biography of One of America’s Foremost Watercolorists published in 1972 and a biographical book on Millard Sheets, entitled Millard Sheets: One Man Renaissance, published in 1987 in collaboration with her son, actor, movie director, and producer Edmund Penney. Lovoos was once married to the heir of the J. C. Penney empire, painter Frederic Penney (1900-1988). Shortly after Frederic Penney and Lovoos divorced, Janice and her son Edmund boarded with Margaret Bonds in New York.

While attending a National Association for Negro Musicians convention in Los Angeles in 1967, Bonds was encouraged by Janice Lovoos, who had been living in California for some time, to move there. One year later, in collaboration with Lovoos and Edmund Penney, Bonds composed a series of art songs, her last known song cycle, entitled Pot Pourri. The cycle consists of six songs: “Will There Be Enough,” “Go Back to Leanna,” “Touch the Hem of His Garment,” “Bright Star,” “No Man Has Seen His Face,” and “Animal Rock’n Roll.”

No Man Has Seen His Face. “No Man Has Seen His Face” begins with a four-bar piano prelude and is imbued with jazz harmonies that set the stirring mood of the text. These harmonies consist of seventh, ninth, and thirteenth chords as seen in Example 5.17. Bonds placed an interesting rhythmic “call and response” between the right and left hands of the piano accompaniment. This occurs in measures one through three of Example 5.17. Although the key is G major, Bonds begins this song with a C-sharp-half-diminished-seventh chord returning to G major in measure four by way of a dominant-thirteenth chord (see measure four of Example 5.17). Bonds set “No Man Has Seen His Face” in common time in a modified strophic form.

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164 Djane Richardson, interview by Helen Walker-Hill.
The vocal line that begins in measure five consists of a melody that is predominantly diatonic and contains long, lyrical phrases with a syllabic setting of the text. When compared to Bonds’s other solo vocal works, there are fewer examples of text-painting, although some do occur. Two additional musical characteristics that Bonds often incorporated in the piano accompaniments of her art songs are present: contrapuntal embellishments of static harmonies and wide leaps in the bass. In the example below, the contrapuntal embellishments consist of arpeggiated chords found in measures twelve and thirteen in Example 5.18. The wide leaps in the bass can be seen in measure thirteen (see Example 5.18).
Ex. 5.18. “No Man Has Seen His Face,” from Pot Pourri, mm. 11–13.

The range of “No Man Has Seen His Face” is D₄ to G₅, making it suitable for tenor or soprano voice. Bonds arranged a choral setting of this song in 1970; both versions are unpublished. The complete song cycle is housed in the Library of Congress.

Bonds's art song settings of poems by Frost, Millay, Bonds, May, Lovoos, and Penney brought a wider spectrum of literary and musical diversity to her body of art song repertoire. These songs also aided in the overall development of her solo vocal literature and helped define her compositional style. This particular group of art songs revealed Bonds's mission to develop African-American music by displaying her ability to successfully assimilate African-American musical idioms with compositional techniques derived from 20th century classical music.

Bonds's use of the octatonic and whole tone scales, irregular and shifting meters, and non-resolving dissonances brought character and definition to these art songs that are without a doubt an amalgam of African-American and European musical traditions. The literary content of these songs not only includes the poetry of some of the most significant poets of the twentieth century, but illustrate the poetry of Margaret Bonds herself. Here, it not only becomes evident that Bonds was a creative poet and composer, she was also very resourceful, as she became one of the first composers to write art song settings of the previously discussed poems by Robert Frost and Edna St. Vincent Millay. Bonds was followed by other great song composers such as Leonard Bernstein, who composed a song setting of Millay's “Sonnet: What Lips My Lips Have Kissed” in 1977. Nadia Boulanger, Ned Rorem, and John Duke also composed settings of Frost's “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.” It is unfortunate however, that Bonds's settings of these songs remain unpublished.
CHAPTER 6

THE ART SONGS: POETS OF THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

Introduction

The literature and music of the Harlem Renaissance (1917-1935) and Chicago Renaissance (1935-1950) were both spawned by Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism “posits the belief that black people all over the world share an origin and heritage, that the welfare of black people everywhere is inexorably linked, and that the cultured products of blacks everywhere should express their particular fundamental beliefs.”

By 1920 many African-American artists, writers, and musicians were gaining success in Harlem. Newspapers such as the Crisis were publishing new literature written by young poets such as Gwendolyn B. Bennett (1902-1981), Langston Hughes (1902-1967), Jean Toomer (1894-1967), and Countee Cullen (1903-1946). The New Negro, edited by Alaine Locke (1885-1954) and published in 1925, was the first collection of African-American literature that reproduced replicas of paintings, drawn from the leading “examples of the Harlem Renaissance.” Locke's publication has often been referred to as the classic literary work that defined the movement. The New Negro also included poems by Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes.

The art songs that incorporate the literature of the Harlem Renaissance often contain musical elements drawn from African-American genres. These characteristics include modal melodies, pentatonic scales, polyrhythms between the vocal line and piano accompaniment, syncopations, and pitches drawn from blues inflections. The piano continues to play an important role in establishing the poetic ideas or moods found in these songs and the phrases are predominantly syllabic. Bonds often implemented jazz harmonies and incorporated shifts between major and minor keys or major-modal, and/or pentatonic passages in order to embellish the text. The poems discussed in this chapter are those based on the texts of Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen.

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Langston Hughes

Hughes Biography

Langston Hughes, a poet, novelist, playwright, and columnist, was born in Joplin, Missouri, in 1902. Hughes was born to James Nathaniel Langston, a businessman, who lived in Toluca, Mexico and Carrie Mercer Hughes, a school teacher. His great uncle, John Mercer Langston, was the first United States congressman of African-American heritage.

American author, educator, and composer Elie Siegmeister (1909-1991) once stated that Langston Hughes was the “most musical poet of the twentieth century.” Not only has Hughes’s poems been set by nearly sixty composers, producing over 200 songs, but the mere titles of his poems arouse musical interest. His poems include, “The Weary Blues,” “Song for a Banjo Dance,” “Nocturne for the Drums,” “Spirituals,” “Harlem Night Song,” “The New Cabaret Girl,” and “Minstrel Man,” which was set by Margaret Bonds in 1955.

Growing up in Lincoln, Illinois, Hughes often heard the blues, as well as hymns and spirituals sung at the Warren Street Baptist Church which he attended regularly with his grandmother, Mary Reed Langston, who raised Hughes until he was twelve. Mary Langston would read the Bible and poems by Walt Whitman (1819-1892), Carl Sandburg (1878-1967), W.E.B. Du Bois, and Paul Laurence Dunbar at night before putting Hughes to bed. Hughes stated that some of his earliest memories of written words were from the Bible and W.E.B. Du Bois.

Hughes was greatly influenced by Du Bois’s The Souls of Black Folk (a significant work of African-American literature and history) and in later years, he would call Carl Sandburg his “guiding star.” According to Arnold Rampersad, both Carl Sandburg and Walt Whitman had a strong influence on Langston Hughes and “freed Hughes of literary modernism.” In fact, on Hughes’s first trip to Africa in 1923, he threw every book he had in his possession, including his

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169 Ibid., 29.
170 Ibid., 29.
171 Ibid., 72.
textbooks from Columbia University, into the Atlantic Ocean, save one, Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*.\textsuperscript{172}

After Hughes’s grandmother died, he moved to Cleveland, Ohio, to live with his mother, Carrie, and her second husband, Homer Clark. Here Hughes became accustomed to the more hypnotic and driving rhythms found in the music he heard at the churches he attended with his mother.

To further strengthen the credence that Hughes was the “most musical poet of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century,” it is important to understand the level of exposure he had to world music at a young age. By age twenty, he was exposed to new music during the two visits he made to Toluca, Mexico, between 1919 and 1920 to see his father. Shortly thereafter, he became familiar with the music of Fletcher Henderson and Duke Ellington at Harlem night clubs while living in New York and studying at Columbia University. After leaving Columbia, Hughes traveled to Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, and South Africa in the early part of 1923, and according to his autobiography, he remembers hearing African drumming that sounded throughout the night.\textsuperscript{173} By 1924 Hughes was living in Paris and attended opera productions such as Saint-Saëns’s *Samson et Dalila* and Massenet’s *Manon* at the Opéra Comique. He also worked at the night club *Le Grand Duc* in Montmartre. Hughes described this experience: “Late, any morning, the *Grand Duc* was almost like a Harlem night club.”\textsuperscript{174} Arnold Rampersad wrote about Hughes in *The Life of Langston Hughes, Volume I; 1902-1941, I, Too, Sing America*, “arriving at work at eleven in the evening, Hughes helped Bruce the cook, but kept an ear cocked to the music of the jazz band and the singing of the star attraction of the club, the regal Florence Embry Jones.”\textsuperscript{175} Hughes listened to the combination of rhythms, the sound of each instrument, and how the words fit into the structure of each song. This experience inspired him to write “Song for Billie Holiday,” “Jazz Band in a Parisian Cabaret,” “Louis' Trumpet,” “Hughes' Blues,” “Bird in Orbit,” and “Jazzonia,” just a few of the poems that made Hughes the father of “jazz poetry.”

\textsuperscript{172} Arnold Rampersad, Volume I, 29.
\textsuperscript{173} Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea* (New York, Alfred Knopf, 1940), 179.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 220.
\textsuperscript{175} Arnold Rampersad, Volume I, 85.
It is as though the musical qualities found in the words of Langston Hughes’s poems are an inescapable element. His exposure to a wide variety of music and his propensity for writing about this topic attracted the attention of many great song composers. William Grant Still, Florence Price, Hall Johnson, John Alden Carpenter, Kurt Weill, Jean Berger, Harry T. Burleigh, Elie Siegmeister, and Margaret Bonds were all drawn to Hughes’s writings for their musical compositions. Ned Rorem also set one of Hughes’s poems to music; this song is entitled “Comment on War.”

This document will trace Bonds’s settings of a select group of Hughes’s poems in chronological order and include a discussion of the musical content of each art song presented in this chapter.

The Langston Hughes Art Songs

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

“That was my Thanatopsis–I’ve done more complicated things but I don’t think I’ve ever surpassed it.”

Margaret Bonds, 1967

Langston Hughes wrote the poem “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” at age 18 while on a train to Toluca, Mexico, in the spring of 1920. Hughes had just graduated with honors from Central High School in Cleveland, Ohio, and expected to receive his father’s support to attend college in New York, where the African-American population was flourishing. While riding alone, Hughes composed one of his most famous poems before he reached the border of Mexico.

This visit turned into a year-long stay, and his father, fearing that his son would not make enough money as a writer, agreed to fund Hughes’s college education if he majored in engineering at Columbia University in New York. Before returning to New York in July of 1921, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” was published in the literary journal *Crisis*. James Hughes was still not convinced of his son’s career as a writer, and according to Rampersad, author of Hughes’s biography, *The Life of Langston Hughes*, “Jim [James Nathaniel] Hughes asked only two questions after the work was published, ‘How long did it take you to write that?’ and ‘Did

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176 Christina Demaitre, “Heritage Motivates Composing Career.” Thanatopsis refers to a poem by the same name by William Bryant wherein he expressed himself at a level for which he achieved national literary recognition.
they pay you anything?” The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” was so impactful that Howard Swanson (1909-1978) and Margaret Allison Bonds both were inspired to set it music. On January 15, 1950, contralto Marian Anderson performed Swanson’s “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” at Carnegie Hall.

Margaret Bonds’s art song “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” is one of her earliest song settings of a Langston Hughes poem. It was composed in 1936, shortly after Bonds met Langston Hughes at the home of ceramicist Tony Hill in Chicago. Bonds originally wrote this song for Marian Anderson, whose career had been strongly supported by Estella Bonds; Miss Anderson was not comfortable with the “jazzy augmented chords” and later chose to perform the Swanson setting.

Bonds’s “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” is set in common time and begins with a moderato con moto tempo marking. “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” is heavily imbued with jazz and blues inflections, modal melodies, polyrhythms, pentatonic scales, and syncopations. The form is ABACA and the key sequence is as follows: the A sections are in the key of D minor with brief modulations to the Dorian mode, the B section is in the key of D major, and the C section is in the key of F major. The piano participates in the drama found in this poem. “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” begins with a six-bar prelude that establishes the mood of the song by way of a two-bar motive found in measures one and two in Example 6.1. The motive that Bonds interlaced throughout the song depicts the rocking of the boats as they travel upon the waters of the Nile, Euphrates, and Mississippi rivers that Hughes illustrated in this poem. Bonds not only marked this section muddy bass (coupled with a pedal marking) to indicate the tone color with which the piano accompaniment should be played, but used syncopated, duple, and triplet driving rhythms to create a hypnotic atmosphere for the retelling of the African man's journeys.

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177 Arnold Rampersad, Volume I, 48.
179 Mildred Denby Green, 53.
The vocal line enters on beat four of measure six (see Example 6.2). Two measures prior to the vocal entrance the key shifts to a Dorian mode, which accounts for the frequent appearances of B-natural found in the piano in measure seven of Example 6.2. The setting of the text is predominantly syllabic and the vocal line of the A section is primarily comprised of a minor pentatonic scale D–F–G–A–C, (see Example 6.2), save the appearance of one B-flat that occurs in measure twenty. This pentatonic melody coupled with the Dorian modal sonority found in the piano accompaniment provides the listener with strong inflections of blues.
As in all of Bonds’s solo vocal works, examples of localized text-painting occur. One example can be seen in measure thirty of the B section, where Bonds used a flatted sixth or “blue note” drawn from the African-American spirituals as discussed in chapter three, in the vocal line and piano accompaniment to embellish the word “sleep,” as seen in Example 6.3.


In the C section, the piano continues to participate in the dramatic action. The staccato notes in the piano accompaniment coupled with the musical marking *picked bass* beginning in measure fifty-one illustrates the sound of the banjos playing on the Mississippi riverboats at “I heard the singing,” (see Example 6.4). The staccato notes found in the right and left hand of the piano continue for eleven measures.

“The Negro Speaks of Rivers” is ideal for baritone and mezzo-soprano voices, but can easily be sung by all voice types that have a full lower register. This song was published in 1944 by Handy Brothers Music Company in *Unsung Americans Sung*, a song anthology of music written by African-American composers and edited by W. C. Handy (1873-1958) the “father of the blues.” Bonds later composed an orchestrated version for soprano Betty Allen in 1964. “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” is currently available in Vivian Taylor’s *Art Songs and Spirituals by African-American Women Composers* published by Hildegard.

**Songs of the Seasons**

Bonds compiled her second song cycle, *Songs of the Seasons*, for a commission arranged by tenor Lawrence Watson in 1955. This cycle included “Poème d’automne” and “Winter Moon,” composed in 1934 and 1936 respectively, along with “Young Love in Spring” and “Summer Storm,” composed in 1955. The premiere of this cycle was performed by Watson on March 25, 1956, at Town Hall.

Since the first known art songs composed by Margaret Bonds (“Sea Ghost” and “Sleep Song” composed in 1932, and the first version of “To a Brown Girl, Dead” composed in 1933) have not been located, “Poème d’automne” is the earliest known extant art song. The premiere of “Poème d’automne” took place over twenty years prior to the premiere of *Songs of the Seasons*, on April 15, 1934, at the Abraham Lincoln Centre in Chicago. This performance was sung by baritone John Greene (1901-1963), accompanied by Mary Catherine Collins (N.d). Margaret Bonds also performed on this concert as a solo pianist playing Robert Schumann’s (1810-1856) *Papillons* and Maurice Ravel’s (1875-1937) *Jeux d’Eaux*.180

Bonds assigned a different key signature to each song. “Young Love in Spring” and “Summer Storm” are in major keys, while “Poème d’automne” and “Winter Moon” are in minor keys. The keys found in each song of this cycle serve to symbolize the poetic ideals associated with these seasons.

*Poème d’automne.* “Poème d’automne,” composed by Bonds at age twenty-one, demonstrates her gift for composing art songs at a very young age. Already, Bonds had a keen understanding of compositional style and showed excellent skill in writing counterpoint. “Poème

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“Poème d’automne” includes many of the elements drawn from African-American folk songs. These characteristics include modal melodies, polyrhythms between the vocal line and piano accompaniment, syncopations, and pitches drawn from blues inflections which often include flatted thirds and fifths. “Poème d’automne” is set in common time, in the key of C minor with a brief modulation to G major that occurs between measures eighteen and twenty-two. The form is through-composed. This song begins with a short piano prelude that not only sets the sultry mood of this song, but presents the thematic material found throughout the accompaniment. This thematic material can be seen in measure one of Example 6.5. It is comprised of a C-minor-ninth chord set to a syncopated, polyrhythmic motive that Bonds wove throughout the song.

The vocal line is comprised of medium-length, arpeggiated phrases with a predominantly syllabic setting of the text. The first five measures of the vocal line are based on the blues scale C–E♭–F–G♭–G–B♭–C. Bonds used these blue notes (flatted thirds, flatted fifths, and flatted sevenths) in the vocal line, as well as diminished fourths found in the top line of the piano in measures four and five (D–G♭) to create a warm, dark tone color that illustrates the colors of the autumn leaves (see Example 6.5). The minor-ninth chords (C–E♭–G♭–B♭–D) found in the first three measures of the piano also aid in establishing this minor sonority.

Examples of text-painting can be immediately heard. Bonds used a descending melodic passage to illustrate the word “heavy” and the blue note G♭, to emphasize the word “color” as seen in the vocal line of measure four in Example 6.5.

Ex. 6.5: “Poème d’automne,” from Songs of the Seasons, mm. 1–5. Unpublished manuscript obtained from Dr. Louise Toppin.
Bonds ended “Poème d’automne” with a C-minor-ninth chord. The ninth of the chord D₅, is sustained in the vocal line for five measures. The range for “Poème d’automne” is C₄ to A₅, making it suitable for medium voices.

**Winter Moon.** “Winter Moon” is the shortest song in the cycle and is comprised of only fourteen measures. Bonds set this song in common time, in a through-composed form, in the key of F minor. The two-bar introduction participates in setting the mood of the song and presents a recurring musical motive. This motive is comprised of an ostinato, coupled with two recurring half-notes that illustrate the shimmering moonlight. An exact repetition of this motive can be seen in measures twelve and thirteen in Example 6.6. The vocal line consists of long, sustained phrases and a predominantly stepwise melody that illustrates the thin and slim curved crook of the moon. The last phrase of “Winter Moon” consists of eight repetitions of the tonic pitch that appear in the vocal line (see Example 6.6) giving the impression that the moon is suspended in the air. Here, Bonds also placed open-fifths in the top voice of the bass of the piano to create a chilling atmosphere and haunting mood for the end of this song (see Example 6.6). The range for “Winter Moon” is F₄ to E♭₅ and is suitable for most voice types.

Ex. 6.6: “Winter Moon,” from *Songs of the Seasons*, mm. 11–14. Unpublished manuscript obtained from Dr. Louise Toppin.

**Young Love in Spring.** “Young Love in Spring” is in modified strophic form in the key of G major, with a harmonic structure that consists primarily of quartal chords coupled with triplet rhythms and some chromatic inflections in the piano accompaniment. Throughout this song, Bonds showed her mastery in demonstrating poetic ideas. Bonds shifted from the minor keys found in “Winter Moon” and “Poème d’automne” to a major key to achieve a bright and
cheerful sonority. She also placed the melody and chords found in the treble of the piano accompaniment in the fifth and sixth octave to create a brilliant tone color that reflects the mood of “Young Love in Spring.” The thematic music found in the six-bar piano introduction also reflects the ideals of this season. Bonds used long, lilting phrases comprised of triplets and polyrhythmic textures as seen in measures one through five in Example 6.7 to arouse the awakening of spring.

The vocal line enters in measure six with long, sweeping phrases that often encompass a wide range (see Example 6.7).

Ex. 6.7: “Young Love in Spring,” from Songs of the Seasons, mm. 1–9. Unpublished manuscript obtained from Dr. Louise Toppin.
An example of text illustration occurs in measure ten at “the last little snowflakes drift down,” where Bonds set the word “down” to a rhythmic figure that descends by a minor-third as seen in Example 6.7. A second example can be seen in measure twenty-eight where Bonds used a similar rhythmic figure to set the word “upward,” which ascends by a minor sixth, as seen in Example 6.8. Many other examples of intentional treatment of text are found throughout the score.

Ex. 6.8: “Young Love in Spring,” from Songs of the Seasons, m. 28.

The range of “Young Love in Spring” is D₄ to B₅ and the tessitura is consistently high. This song is ideal for high voices.

Summer Storm. “Summer Storm,” the last song in the cycle, is 109 measures long. It is the longest song in the cycle and is by far Bonds’s longest song composition. The form is AA’BCDA". The first four bars are comprised of an introduction that immediately establishes the stirring atmosphere of the summer storm. Bonds used chromaticism and agitated rhythms to emulate the sound of thunder (see Example 6.9). Although the key signature alludes to C major, the pitches found in the piano accompaniment comprise the blues scale C–D♯–F–F♯–G–A♯–C (see Example 6.9). Bonds used a flatted 3, 5, and 7 to create a bluesy sonority that evokes the humid atmosphere and sultry mood of the season. The vocal line, comprised of a predominantly syllabic setting of the text, enters in measure five. The pitches found in the melody of the first eight bars of the vocal line make up the blues major pentatonic scale G–A–C–D–E (see Example 6.9). This scale is a five-note scale comprised of three whole steps and one minor third that occurs between 3. Here, Bonds set the text to jazzy, syncopated rhythms that also imitate the sound of the thunder (see Example 6.9).
The second statement of the A section (not shown) begins in measure twenty-one with a two-bar piano interlude that is an exact repetition of the first two bars of the song. Slight variations occur in the melody and rhythms of the last nine measures of this section leading up to the transition into the B section that begins in measure thirty-nine (not shown). The piano continues to emulate the storm with recurring eighth-notes (see Example 6.10) while the vocal line shifts from the long sustained phrases of the A section to short, hurried declamatory phrases found throughout the B, C, and D sections of “Summer Storm.” These short declamatory phrases can be seen in Example 6.10 and Example 6.13. Similar to the second statement of the A section, the B section also begins with a two-bar piano interlude that leads up to the key signature change in measure forty-one (see Example 6.10).
Ex. 6.10: “Summer Storm,” from *Songs of the Seasons*, mm. 41–42.

The music returns to the original tonality based on the blues scale in measure forty-five where it remains until the beginning of the C section (minus a short four-bar excursion to A-flat major that begins in measure forty-nine). The C section, beginning in measure fifty-five, returns to the key signature of D-flat major and begins with a two-bar piano interlude that is an exact repetition of the piano music found in measures forty-one and forty-two in Example 6.10. Again, the music returns to the modally inflected C major (blues scale) before the beginning of the D section that begins in measure seventy-three, where one last modulation occurs. This time the music moves to the key signature of E-flat major where it remains until measure eighty-three, just three bars before the final reprise of the A section. In measure eighty-six the thematic material from the prelude reappears (see Example 6.11). Here, the music returns to the blues major pentatonic scale for the final twenty-four bars of the song.

Ex. 6.11: “Summer Storm,” from *Songs of the Seasons*, mm. 86–90.

Bonds ended this piece on a C₆ in the voice part sustained over four bars, and provided an option for the singer to sing a G₅, as seen in measures 105 through 109 of Example 6.12. The range of
this song is E₄ to C₆, making it most suitable for high voices. Mezzo-sopranos and baritones capable of handling a high tessitura may be able to sing this song due to the optional ending.


In “Summer Storm,” Bonds incorporated several examples of text painting. Three examples are shown; the first occurs in measure forty-two in Example 6.10 on the word “lightning.” The second appears in measure fifty in Example 6.13 at “confetti drifting down.” Here, Bonds also used a descending chromatic scale in the middle voice of the piano to imitate the blossoms falling from the trees which Hughes described as “confetti drifting down” (see measures forty-nine and fifty in Example 6.13). The third example appears in measure sixty-nine and seventy in Example 6.14 at “the soft sweet rain came down.” Bonds used a descending rhythmic figure to embellish the word “sweet” and a descending melody to illustrate the falling rain.

Ex. 6.13: “Summer Storm,” from Songs of the Seasons, mm. 48–50.
Three Dream Portraits

This cycle of three songs incorporates poetry taken from Langston Hughes’s book of children’s poetry entitled The Dream Keeper and Other Poems, published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1932. The publication also included illustrations by Helen Sewell. The poems of this book were a source of inspiration for Bonds and for many of her art songs, including the previously discussed song “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” “Joy,” “April Rain Song,” “African Dance,” and one of the songs found in the song cycle Songs of the Seasons: “Winter Moon.” When compiling the book, Hughes said to Sewell, “I hope that they [the illustrations] can be beautiful people that Negro children can look at and not be ashamed to feel that they represent themselves.” Bonds once stated something very similar. She noted that through her work and music she wanted to “show that the Negro is not… ugly or stupid.” The poems found in Three Dream Portraits are “Minstrel Man,” “Dream Variation,” and “I, Too.”

Minstrel Man. “Minstrel Man,” the first song in the cycle, was composed in 1955. The song is in modified strophic form and contains many of the musical elements drawn from African-American folk songs. The elements found in this song include the pentatonic scale, polyrhythms between the right and left hand of the piano, syncopations, and pitches drawn from blues inflections. The eight-bar piano prelude includes syncopations and polyrhythms. It also contains a melodic motive that sets the poignant mood of the poem and establishes the key as B-flat minor. The vocal line enters in measure eight. Here, Bonds used a raised sixth to begin the

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181 Arnold Rampersad, Volume I, 48.
182 Christina Demaitre, “Heritage Motivates Composing Career.”
minstrel man’s melody with the pitches that comprise the major pentatonic scale $B^\flat–C–D–F–G$. This modal sonority alludes to the sound of a spiritual or blues song sung by the minstrel man (see Example 6.15).

Ex. 6.15: “Minstrel Man,” from *Three Dream Portraits*, mm. 6–13.

The range of “Minstrel Man” is $F_4$ to $G^\flat_5$ and is suitable for medium or low voices.

**Dream Variation.** “Dream Variation,” the second song in the cycle, is also in modified strophic form. Bonds continued to incorporate elements drawn from the African-American folk song by including polyrhythms, syncopations, pitches drawn from the blues (flatted thirds, fifths, and sevenths), and pentatonic scales in her song. “Dream Variation” is in the key of C-sharp major and is one of her few art songs that incorporate a compound meter. The meter found in “Dream Variation” is a quadruple-compound meter (12/8) and is used to create a rocking motion that is reminiscent of a barcarolle. The three-bar piano prelude introduces a rhythmic motive found throughout the song that also enhances the words of the poem (see Example 6.16). The vocal line contains a syllabic setting of the text and long, lilting, arpeggiated phrases with pitches
that often span a wide range. This phrase shape also illuminates the peaceful atmosphere of the poem. Similar to “Minstrel Man,” the opening melody of the vocal line begins with a pentatonic scale. This time however, Bonds used a blues major pentatonic scale $E–F^♯–A–B–C^♯$.


The piano plays an active role in the dramatic action of the song in measure eighteen where Bonds placed two slurred eighth-notes that sweep upward by an interval of a major-sixth under the words “Dance” and “Whirl” as seen in Example 6.17. These rhythms, joined with the dotted rhythms found in the vocal line, create a dancelike polyrhythm between the voice and piano. Due to the range, $B_4$ to $E^♯$, “Dream Variation” is suitable for low or medium voices.

**I, Too.** The poem “I, Too” was written by Langston Hughes in 1923 after a month of working several odd jobs in Genoa, Italy, in order to afford a passage back to the United States. “In dismay, he watched as one white sailor after another found passage out while he was left behind.” Hence, Hughes penned the words, “I, too, sing America, I am the darker brother.”

“I, Too” is a through-composed setting of this poem in the key of D minor. The accompaniment is comprised of triadic chordal textures and several examples of blue notes (flatted thirds and fifths) occur. Here, Bonds also used chromaticism to enhance the melody. The five-bar piano prelude contains a two-bar musical motive that Bonds wove throughout the song. The second statement of this motive can be seen in the treble of the piano in measure seven and the bass of the piano in measure eight in Example 6.18. Here, Bonds splits the two-bar motive to create a “call and response” between the right and left hands of the piano. The vocal line enters in measure six with a melody that is comprised primarily of the pitches found in the minor pentatonic scale D–F–G–A–C, placed over a variation of the musical motive found in the piano accompaniment (see measures six through nine included in Example 6.18).


In addition to the pentatonic scale, Bonds incorporated other musical elements drawn from African-American folk song. A “blue note,” in this case a flatted fifth, can be found in the accompaniment of measure nine at “I am the darker brother,” as seen in Example 6.18. This flatted fifth appears again in measure thirty-two at “they’ll see how beautiful I am,” where Bonds employed a descending chromatic scale along with other chromatically altered pitches in the bass.

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183 Arnold Rampersad, *Volume I*, 94.
of the piano accompaniment. The two-bar motive returns in the bass of the piano under the last two measures of the vocal line. Here, the last note of the melody is sustained for six beats on the seventh scale degree at “ashamed,” leaving the listener with an unresolved feeling. “I, Too” ends with a four-bar piano postlude that finishes on a D-minor triad.

*Three Dream Portraits,* published in 1959 by Ricordi, was first performed by Lawrence Watson in May of the same year at an NANM convention in Ohio. *Three Dream Portraits* can be found in *Art Songs and Spirituals by African-American Women Composers,* edited by Vivian Taylor, a publication of Hildegard, and in the *Anthology of Art Songs by Black American Composers* compiled by Willis C. Patterson, a publication of the Hal-Leonard Corporation.

**Countee Cullen**

**Cullen Biography**

It is speculated that Countee Cullen, abandoned by his mother at birth, was born in Louisville on May 30, 1903. He was raised by a woman who was thought to be his maternal grandmother until the age of nine, at which point Cullen was taken in by Reverend and Mrs. Frederick A. Cullen of the Salem Methodist Episcopal Church in Harlem. Sometimes referred to as the Poet Laureate of the Harlem Renaissance, Countee Cullen received a bachelor’s degree from New York University and a Master of English and French from Harvard in 1926, when he was 23 years of age. In 1928 Cullen received a Guggenheim Fellowship, which allowed him to study in France for one year. In 1925, the same year Cullen entered Harvard, “To a Brown Girl, Dead” was published along with seven other Countee Cullen poems, as a part of Alain Locke’s anthology *The New Negro.*

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To a Brown Girl, Dead

Bonds composed two versions of “To a Brown Girl, Dead.” The first was composed in 1933; the location of this manuscript is unknown. An article concerning this song entitled “Breakfast and Dinner Parties Given for Harlem Writer” appeared in the Chicago Defender in the same year. This article stated that Bonds’s “To a Brown Girl, Dead” was performed as a musical contribution for a banquet honoring Countee Cullen in Chicago. The second version was revised in 1956 for a commission arranged by contralto Etta Moten (1901-2004). It was the 1956 version that was published by R.D. Row and first performed by tenor John Miles (N.d.).

Now this music I set when I was very young—in my teens. I had a whole lot of movement in it. When we’re very young we overdo. Then in later years I decided to use it as an experiment in economy. I pared down to write as little as I could write.

Bonds’s “economized” revision of “To a Brown Girl, Dead” is an excellent example of her craftsmanship and genuine ability to reflect poetic ideas. “To a Brown Girl, Dead,” a funeral poem about a young girl clothed in white with “white roses on her breast,” has many references to the color white, a color that often symbolizes purity and innocence. Here, the color white may have also represented issues of racial discrimination and segregation in the United States during Cullen’s lifetime. “To a Brown Girl, Dead” is set in common time and remains in a steady Andante throughout the entire song. The piano accompaniment is comprised of a triadic chordal structure, featuring consistent half-note movement that contains rocking tonic and supertonic triads used to illustrate the funeral march of the dead girl as seen in Example 6.19.

The melody of the vocal line begins in measure four and contains the same half-note rhythmic structure that is found in the piano accompaniment (see Example 6.19). The dynamics of this song remain relatively soft, as the only forte marking occurs at the climax of the song, highlighting the text, “she’d be so proud she’d dance and sing.”

185 “Breakfast and Dinner Parties Given for Harlem Writer,” Chicago Defender, January 14, 1933, Series 4, Box 5, Helen Walker-Hill Papers, Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, Chicago.
186 Margaret Bonds as quoted by Christina Demaitre.
Ex. 6.19: “To a Brown Girl, Dead,” mm. 1–8.
Manuscript located at Center for Black Music Research at
Columbia College Chicago, Chicago.

The manuscript, located at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College
Chicago, is the 1956 version of “To a Brown Girl, Dead.” This particular manuscript was
inscribed by Bonds to Theodore Stone and was dated January 23, 1965. Bonds wrote
affectionately that Stone “always interprets my songs so beautifully.” Theodore Stone was a
baritone and president of the Chicago Music Association in 1967. “To a Brown Girl, Dead” is
published in two keys: A minor and F minor. This song can be found in John Glenn Paton and

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188 Margaret Bonds, inscription on the manuscript “To a Brown Girl, Dead,” Margaret Bonds Scores and Sheet Music, Box 19, Series 7, No. 89, Helen Walker-Hill Papers, Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago, Chicago.
Throughout Bonds's career, she strived to develop American music by incorporating African-American musical idioms in every genre she composed. Bonds felt that this was her purpose as a composer, and the art songs that contain the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance writers strongly demonstrate this conviction. These songs not only display Bonds’s high level of compositional skill, but incorporate poems significant to the history and literature of the United States. As discussed in this chapter, many of Bond’s song settings of Langston Hughes poems were included in his book of poems *The Dream Keeper*, one of the first books of poems that included illustrations of African-American children. Countee Cullen’s poem “To a Brown Girl, Dead” was also one of the first poems written by a poet of the Harlem Renaissance to be published in Locke’s *The New Negro*, another significant work of American literature. The African-American themes found in many of the poems that Bonds set to music, joined with her inherent ability to compose in African-American idioms, validate Bonds’s art songs as a unique part of the American art song repertoire.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

“I think, if anything, if I deserve any credit at all, it’s that I have stuck to my own ethnic material and worked to develop it.”

Margaret Bonds, 1970

In an interview conducted by Helen Walker-Hill in 1990, Djane Richardson was asked how she would like her mother’s music to be remembered. Richardson replied, “I think that her music will stand on its own.” Even with only a portion of her solo vocal works published, many Bonds champions have emerged in the last twenty years to bring her music to the forefront. This music makes a significant contribution to American art song repertoire representing female composers, African-American composers, and twentieth-century composers. The unique sound and rhythmic textures that characterize Bonds’s solo vocal works have not only inspired singers, but have also caught the interest of music educators, musicologists, pianists, and composers alike. Bonds combined the musical elements drawn from African-American folk song as well as the work of African-American poets, including the "jazz poetry" of Langston Hughes and other poets from the Harlem Renaissance.

Bonds’s musical style was also influenced by her exposure to jazz, musical theatre, and popular music. Bonds did not use any of these styles exclusively; she was highly skilled at all three. A combination of style characteristics that make Bonds’s music recognizable include modal melodies, frequent appearances of the pentatonic scale, syncopation, extended tertian harmonies, and localized text-painting.

Bonds’s prodigious ability as a concert pianist also affected her solo vocal works. Her jazz/popular songs, musical theatre songs, art songs, and African-American spiritual arrangements often feature sophisticated piano accompaniments. The piano frequently participates in the dramatic action of the poem. The keys and modulations found in each song often serve the same function. These musical traits account for the brilliant settings of noteworthy poems by Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Robert Frost. Although Bonds did not utilize atonal and serial techniques, octatonic scales, whole-tone

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189 Margaret Bonds, interview by James V. Hatch.
190 Djane Richardson, interview by Helen Walker-Hill.
scales, emphasis on chromatism, and non-resolving dissonance is found in the post-1960 art songs. These musical characteristics not only widened the harmonic palette found in her art songs, but revealed her ability to compose in a variety of vocal genres, giving her further credibility as a composer.

Bonds’s significance as a music educator is also clear. Her work in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles helped to nurture and magnify the development of music education in African-American communities between 1937 and 1972. Her efforts as a music educator also afforded her the privilege of teaching and developing the piano skills of Anne de Ramus, Gerald Cook, and Gary Osby, all of whom achieved successful careers as pianists. Bonds, was also successful in teaching one of the greatest living American composers of art song, Ned Rorem. Joan Peyser revealed in an interview published in the New York Times on Sunday, May 3, 1987, that Ned Rorem “also looks back with gratitude on Margaret Bonds, his teacher.”

As a composer whose unpublished works are only now being discovered and performed, Bonds is both a part of the past and the future of American music. Due to the efforts of musicologists and singers like Helen Walker-Hill, Mildred Denby Green, and Dr. Darryl Taylor these songs are becoming more accessible and performed more frequently. Additional Bonds champions such as Dr. Louise Toppin, who is currently working with Videmus to publish several of Bonds's previously unpublished art songs, will assure the place of this repertoire in the standard concert and teaching literature. Bonds's distinct style will add a fresh option of repertoire to the teacher and student, hopefully invoking the ears of audiences worldwide. In the words of Lawrence Davidson, “Here’s to the future of American music.”

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# APPENDIX A

## SOLO VOCAL WORKS LISTED

The African-American Spirituals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Poet/Lyricist</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Date*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trampin’</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td></td>
<td>1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Five Creek-Freedman Spirituals</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mutual Music**</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Bones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit Down Servant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord, I Just Can’t Keep from Cryin’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Can Tell the World</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll Reach to Heaven</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swing Low, Sweet Chariot</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td></td>
<td>1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezek’el Saw the Wheel</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td></td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Got a Home in That Rock</td>
<td>Beekman</td>
<td></td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing Aho</td>
<td>Chappell</td>
<td></td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go Tell it on the Mountain</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td></td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold On</td>
<td>Beekman</td>
<td></td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Little Light of Mine</td>
<td>Beekman</td>
<td></td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He’s Got the Whole World in His Hand</td>
<td>Beekman</td>
<td></td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hildegard</td>
<td></td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinner, Please Don’t Let This Harvest Pass</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td></td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold the Wind</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td></td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Shall Pass Through This World</td>
<td>Bourne</td>
<td></td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Fit da Battle of Jericho</td>
<td>Beekman</td>
<td></td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run Sinner Run</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td></td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t it Rain</td>
<td>Beekman</td>
<td></td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Time I Feel the Spirit</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td></td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Wish I Knew How it Would Feel to Be Free</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td></td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little David, Play on Your Harp</td>
<td>Videmus</td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>King Jesus Will Be Mine</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td></td>
<td>N.d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dates indicate the year of composition for unpublished songs. For the published songs, the date of composition and publication are given if available.

**All Mutual Music, Beekman, Chappell, and Mercury publications are currently out of print.
### The Jazz Songs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Poet/Lyricist</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Down South in Dixie</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1933</td>
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<tr>
<td>Love Ain’t What it Ought to Be</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m Going to Reno “Fox Trot Song”</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>N.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love’s Runnin’ Riot</td>
<td>Hughes</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Coast Blues</td>
<td>Dickerson</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Blues</td>
<td>Dickerson</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>N.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peachtree Street</td>
<td>Razaf and Davis</td>
<td>Georgia Music***</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Razaf and Davis</td>
<td>Georgia Music</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Will Be So Sad</td>
<td>Dickinson</td>
<td>Chappell*</td>
<td>1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Ballroom</td>
<td>Chaney</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>N.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Sheep in a Pasture</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Clarence Williams</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Kind of Man</td>
<td>Chaney</td>
<td>Roger Chaney</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That Little Sugar I Had Last Night</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Speak</td>
<td>Lovoos</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1968</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

***All Georgia and Chappell publications are out of print.

### The Musical Theatre Songs

*Romey and Julie*  
Malone Dickerson  
Unpublished  
1936

- Where Are You Tonight? (chorus)
- When Ole Love Come Down (Police)
- Foolish Things That People Fight About (Police)
- Let’s Do a Number (Sadie Green)
- Meet My Baby with Bells On (Julie)
- Bus De’ Biscuit (Dance Number)
- Lady by the Moon I Vow (Romey)
- In the Black of a Harlem Night Gonna Meet My Baby (Julie)
- Sin Weary (Lady of the Street)
- Parting (Romey and Julie)
- Spanking the Box (Zinky)
- I Been Careless with My Love (Miss Gray)
- Hell Dance (Dance Number)

- Fantasy in Purple  
Unknown  
Unpublished  
1937
- The New York Blues  
Dickerson  
Unpublished  
1938
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Poet/Lyricist</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tropics After Dark</strong>****</td>
<td>Bontemps and Hughes</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1940</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chocolate Carmencita</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lonely Little Maiden by the Sea</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Market Day in Martinique</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretty Flower of the Tropics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweet Nothings in Spanish</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll Make You Savvy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Way We Dance in Hot Harlem</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Way We Dance in Hot Chicago</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When the Sun Goes Down in Rhumba Land</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Midtown Affair</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My Kind of Man</td>
<td>Chaney</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1958</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mist over Manhattan</td>
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<tr>
<td>You Give Me a Lift</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Love the Lie I’m Living</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Let’s Make a Dream Come True</td>
<td>Chaney</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>N.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Good Man</td>
<td>Hughes</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>N.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowboy from South Parkway</td>
<td>Hughes</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>N.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voo Doo Man</td>
<td>Hughes</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>N.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Art Songs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sea Ghost</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep Song</td>
<td>Joyce Kilmer</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1932</td>
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<tr>
<td>To a Brown Girl, Dead, 1st ed.</td>
<td>Countee Cullen</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1933</td>
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<td>Bound</td>
<td>Margaret Bonds</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1939</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Negro Speaks of Rivers</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>Handy Bros Music</td>
<td>c. 1936</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p. 1944</td>
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<td>Joy</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1936</td>
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<td>Park Bench</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1936</td>
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<td>Night Time</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1936</td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing with Fire</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent Love</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Poet/Lyricist</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Songs of the Seasons</strong></td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>Videmus</td>
<td>In progress</td>
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<td><em>Poème d’automne</em></td>
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<td>Winter Moon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1934</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Love in Spring</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c. 1936</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Storm</td>
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<td>c. 1955</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rainbow Gold</td>
<td>Roger Chaney</td>
<td>Chappell*****</td>
<td>1956</td>
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<td>To a Brown Girl, Dead, 2nd ed./Countee Cullen</td>
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<td>R. D. Row Music Co.</td>
<td>1956</td>
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<td>Carl Fisher/McGraw Hill</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<td><strong>Three Dream Portraits</strong></td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>G. Ricordi &amp; Co.</td>
<td>1959</td>
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<td>Minstrel Man</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dream Variation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I, Too</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pasture</td>
<td>Robert Frost</td>
<td>Videmus</td>
<td>c. 1958/p. in progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>You’re Pretty Special</td>
<td>Dorothy Sachs</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopping by Woods</td>
<td>Robert Frost</td>
<td>Videmus</td>
<td>c.1960/p. in progress</td>
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<td>Hyacinth</td>
<td>E. St. V. Millay</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1961</td>
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<td>Sonnet: What Lips My Lips</td>
<td>E. St. V. Millay</td>
<td>Videmus</td>
<td>c. 1965/p. in progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feast</td>
<td>E. St. V. Millay</td>
<td>Videmus</td>
<td>c. 1965/p. in progress</td>
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<td>Diary of a Divorcee</td>
<td>Lovoos and Penney</td>
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<td>1968</td>
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<td><strong>Pot Pourri</strong></td>
<td>Lovoos and Penney</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will There Be Enough</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go Back to Leanna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Touch the Hem of His Garment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bright Star</td>
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<td>No Man Has Seen His Face</td>
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<td>Animal Rock n’ Roll</td>
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<tr>
<td>April Rain Song</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toy Harper (composer of melody)</td>
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****All Chappell publications are out of print.
APPENDIX B
PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure B.1: Program from A Century of Progress, Chicago World’s Fair, June 15, 1933.\(^\text{192}\)

Figure B.2: Photograph of pianist and composer Margaret Bonds sitting at piano, circa 1940s. (Abresch, J.)¹⁹³

¹⁹³ Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. J. Abresch was the photographer.
Figure B.3: Langston Hughes, seated at left, signing copy of “New Negro Poets U.S.A.” which Hughes edited, 1964. Also depicted, standing left to right, are poets James A. Emanuel, Jay Wright and Samuel W. Allen, composer Margaret Bonds, and unid. (Blake, Bob)\textsuperscript{194}

\textsuperscript{194} Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. Bob Blake was the photographer.
Figure B.4: Photograph of composer and choral conductor William L. Dawson. (Gushiniere)¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. Gushiniere was the photographer.
Figure B.5: Photograph of composer Florence Beatrice Price, circa 1930s.\textsuperscript{196}

Figure B.6: Dance troupe that includes Mae Fortune (far right), Bessie Buchanan (1st row, 3rd from right), Tosh Hammed (1st row, 1st from right) and Leonard Harper (center), circa 1920s. (Butler, Otis C.)

Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. Otis C. Butler was the photographer.
Figure B.7: Author and playwright Langston Hughes, seated at the left, actress Helen Menken, seated second from left, pianist and composer Margaret Bonds, seated at right, and two unidentified men, attending unidentified theatrical event. (Clemons, Curt)  

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Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. Curt Clemons was the photographer.
Figure B.8: Committee Planning a Concert Program in New York: Seated from left, Margaret Bonds, Unknown Woman, and Charlotte Holloman. Standing from left; McHenry Boatwright, Dr. Theodore Stent, and Maya Angelou, circa. 1960s.199

APPENDIX C

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5031203  Blake, Bob. Langston Hughes, seated at left, signing copy of “New Negro Poets U.S.A,” which Hughes edited, 1964. Also depicted, standing left to right, are poets James A. Emanuel, Jay Wright and Samuel W. Allen, composer Margaret Bonds, and undl


Format: TIFF file. Cost: $49.50
Credit Line: Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

5031202  Butler, Otis C. Dance troupe that includes Mae Fortune (far right), Bessie Buchanan (1st row, 3rd from right), Tosh Hadmmed (1st row, 1st from right) and Leonard Harper (center), circa 1920s.

Gelatin silver print.

Format: TIFF file. Cost: $49.50
Credit Line: Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations


1931. Gelatin silver print.

Format: TIFF file. Cost: $49.50
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Alethea Kilgore

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Reproductions Supplied:

5027562 Clemons, Curt. Author and playwright Langston Hughes, seated at left, actress Helen Menken, seated second from left, pianist and composer Margaret Bonds, seated at right, and two unidentified men, attending unidentified theatrical event, circa 1
   Gelatin silver print.
   Format: TIFF file.
   Credit Line: Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations
   Cost: $49.50

5026562 Abresch, J. Portrait of pianist and composer Margaret Bonds sitting at piano, circa 1940s.
   Gelatin silver print.
   Format: TIFF file.
   Credit Line: Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations
   Cost: $49.50

5026392 Pianist and composer Margaret Bonds (at left), with baritone McHenry Boatwright (second from left) and actress Maya Angelou (standing at right) and others at an unidentified gathering, circa 1960s.
   Gelatin silver print.
   Format: TIFF file.
   Credit Line: Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations
   Cost: $49.50
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5026326 Portrait of composer Florence B. Price. ca. 1930s. Gelatin silver print.

Format: TIFF file. Cost: $49.50

Credit Line: Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

NOT AN INVOICE, DO NOT PAY
Dear Ms. Kilgore,

Please allow this letter to serve as permission for you to use quotes and images from the Northwestern University Archives (specifically the Emily Boettcher Bogue Papers and the Margaret Allison Bonds Biographical File) in your doctoral treatise, "The Life and Solo Vocal Works of Margaret Allison Bonds (1913-1972)."

Permission is granted for your use of the following images:

Figure 2.1: Program from A Century of Progress, Chicago World's Fair, June 15, 1933

Figure 2.2: Photograph of Margaret Bonds found on the cover of her concert pianist booking advertisement "Season 1935-1936: Now Booking."

Figure 2.3: Photograph of Margaret Bonds, The Oklahoma City Dispatch, July 12, 1947

Figure 2.4: Newspaper clipping from Pittsburgh Courier dated March 11, 1967 with a photograph of Margaret Bonds receiving the Northwestern University Alumni Medal from President J. Roscoe Miller

Figure 2.5: Newspaper clipping with a photograph of Margaret Bonds, advertising Evening With Margaret Bonds an honorary concert given by the Golden Gate Branch of National Association of Negro Musicians on January 23, 1971

Please let me know if you need further clarification about our permissions and use policies (which you received from us earlier).

Wishing you best of luck as your complete your treatise,

Sincerely,

Janet C. Olson
Assistant University Archivist
Northwestern University Library
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Dissertations


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Journals, Newspapers, and Magazines


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**Musical Scores**

Bonds, Margaret Allison, Scores. Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

———. Peter Jay Sharp Special Collections. Lila Acheson Wallace Library and Archives at The Juilliard School.


**Online Resources**


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

ALETHEA N. KILGORE

Mezzo-Soprano Alethea N. Kilgore has worked as an Assistant Professor of Vocal Studies at Florida A & M University since 2005. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance from the University of Cincinnati, College Conservatory of Music and a Master of Music and Doctor of Music degree in vocal performance from The Florida State University College of Music. She is a member of National Association of Teachers of Singing and Florida Music Educators Association. Kilgore served as a lecturer and performer in the centennial celebration: A Symposium of Celebration: Margaret Allison Bonds (1913-1972) and the Women of Chicago. This conference was held on March 2-3, 2013 on the campuses of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina Central University, an event sponsored by Videmus.

Kilgore has performed as a solo artist with Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, Opera Theatre of Lucca, Florida State Opera, and CCM Opera. The press has described Kilgore's voice as appealing, excellent, and as having a distinctive personality. Kilgore has sung leading and supporting roles in Carmen, Così fan tutte, Don Giovanni, Le nozze di Figaro, Eugene Onegin, Orphée aux Enfer, and Tales of Hoffmann. She currently performs as a faculty artist at Florida A & M University in Tallassee, Florida. Kilgore's goal is to continue serving others as an educator, performer, and researcher in the field of music.