

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Art Music by Caribbean Composers: U.S. Virgin Islands

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INTRODUCTION

Like so many other of the Caribbean islands discovered by Columbus, the U.S. Virgin Islands were settled by Spain. However, the Virgin Islands changed hands frequently and they were officially acquired by Denmark in the 17th century. The islands remained a Danish colony until purchased by the United States in 1917 ("Caribbean Islands," 2008). While the U.S. Virgin Islands consist of over 50 islands, its three major landforms are St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas.

Virgin Island music is syncretic, reflecting both African and European heritage. While older traditions including cariso and bamboula are virtually extinct, *quelbe* is popular throughout the islands, with bands such as Stanley and The Ten Sleepless Nights performing frequently. "In 2003, the 25th Legislature of the Virgin Islands passed Bill No. 25-0056, which designates [QUELBE](#) as the

official music of the Virgin Islands and requires that it be taught in the public schools" (Stanley, 2010).

Many music teachers receive their training at the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), which offers a Bachelor degree in Music Education. UVI is also home to the Reichold Center for the Arts, one of the premier performance venues in the Caribbean, where performances of local and international artists are featured in an eclectic concert season.

The foremost composer native to the U.S. Virgin Islands is Alton A. Adams, Sr. Adams was the first black bandmaster of the United States Navy. "Adams's best-known compositions, *Virgin Islands March* (1919), *The Governor's Own* (1921), and *Spirit of the U.S.N.* (1924), were composed in the idiom of Adams's inspiration, Sousa, and were performed throughout the United States and

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Europe by leading ensembles ...” (Adams, 2008, p. 8). His *VIRGIN ISLANDS MARCH* is considered the islands' official anthem. Although he employed the traditional form of the march in these works, he incorporated rhythms of quelbe, for example, in the trio section of the *Virgin Islands March*. In Adams's *WARBLING IN THE MOONLIGHT*, a work for piccolo with band accompaniment, he draws on the binary structure typically found in quelbe music.

Wilbur "Bill" La Motta is another major composer from the USVI. He wrote a variety

of vocal and instrumental works, often based on local traditional melodies. La Motta came from a musical family; his brother, Raymond, is also a composer. Like his brother, Raymond La Motta wrote compositions influenced by local culture and tradition. One such tradition is the *DANZA*, a dance form of Puerto Rican origin that has become a cultural standard in the U.S. Virgin Islands owing to the large number of Puerto Ricans living there and to the close ties between the two islands (R. La Motta, personal communication, May 2011).

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COMPOSERS

Alton Augustus Adams, Sr. (1889-1987)
Hugo Bornn (1902-1966)
Yvette Fleming Brandy
Cyril Creque (1899-1959)
Charles Henry Emanuel (1891-1979)
Raymond La Motta (1926-)²
Wilbur "Bill" La Motta (1919-1980)
Alfred Nemours (1876-1943)
Judith C. Peterson Rabsatt (1952-)
Gylchris Sprauve
Louis V. Trotman (1945-)
Lois Trotman-Simmonds (1946-)
Luis A. Wheatley (1916-)

COMPOSITIONS

Adams

Caribbean echoes (Valse tropicale)
Childhood merriment (waltz)
Doux rêve d'amour (1912; waltz)
Virgin Islands march (1917)
The Governor's own (1921; march)
Sincerity (waltz)
The spirit of the United States Navy (march)
Sweet Virgin Islands
Until
Warbling in the moonlight (for band with piccolo)

Bornn

Blossom (for chorus)
Day dream (for piano)
Moon revel (for piano)

² According to Raymond La Motta, "La Motta" is the preferred spelling (personal communication, May 2011)

Brandy

Virgin Islands Christmas (c.2005; for chorus)³

Creque

Centennial song
From mark of the yoke (1948)
The upward way (1959)
The virgins

Emanuel

Debonaire (march)

La Motta, R.

En mis Islas Virgenas (c.1984)
He blessed me simply (c.2011; for chorus & piano)

La Motta, W.

Alma mater by the sea (alma mater for the University of the Virgin Islands)
Bolero for Don Pablo (aka *Don Pablo's Bolero*)
Calypso escapades (for piano)
Caribbean capriccioso (for piano)
La compassionata (for piano)
Dancing bougainvillaeas (for piano)
Dawn from a window in paradise
Fortitude (for piano)
Have you thanked the Lord (1973; for chorus & piano)
The King's Point victory (marching song for U.S. Merchant Marine Academy)
The last bamboula
The melancholy seagull (for piano)
Moon rocturne (for piano)

³ Commissioned by the Caribbean Chorale; premiered as part of a Caribbean Chorale concert held in late 2005 at Christchurch Methodist in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Nirvana's lullaby (for piano)
Prayer for the Virgin Islands (1973; for chorus & piano)
St. John impressions (for piano)
Spirit of the Virgin Islands
The ultimate tranquility (for piano)
Valse dilettante (for piano)
Winds on a psychic sea

Nemours

Soiree de Berlin (waltz for piano)
Air de ballet (for piano)
Comtesse et Marquis
Tendre aveu, op. 8 (violin solo)

Peterson Rabsatt

Lord, make me an instrument (2007; for male voices & piano)⁴

Trotman

O, merciful Father (1993)⁵
Except the Lord build the house (2000)⁶
My dwelling place (2007)⁷

⁴ Commissioned for the New Herrnhut Moravian Men's Chorale in Celebration of the 270th Anniversary of the Oldest Moravian Church in the New World in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. Adapted from the "Prayer for Peace" of St. Francis of Assisi

⁵ Hymn written for the choir at the Church of St. Alban the Martyr (Episcopal) in Queens, NY.

⁶ Commissioned for the New Herrnhut Moravian Men's Chorale, based on Psalm 127.

⁷ Commissioned for the New Herrnhut Moravian Senior Choir in Celebration of the 270th Anniversary of the Oldest Moravian Church in the New World in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands, based on Psalm 90.

Trotman-Simmonds

Come one, come all (1994)⁸
Create in me a clean heart, O God (1997; for mixed voices)
Love never faileth (for solo soprano voice)
Variation on a familiar hymn: "More love to thee" (arranged by Trotman-Simmonds)⁹

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⁸ Commissioned for the New Herrnhut's Men's Chorale

⁹ Words by W.H. Doane, Music by Elizabeth Prentiss. Commissioned for the New Herrnhut Moravian Senior Choir in Celebration of the 270th Anniversary of the Oldest Moravian Church in the New World in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands

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Track 10. *Virgin Islands march* (2:34)

Track 11. *Virgin Islands march* (short version) (1:44)

Track 12. *Virgin Islands march* (Olympics version) (1:12)

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Track 1. *The Governor's own* (2:26)

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[*The Governor's own*]

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