

Art Music by Caribbean Composers: Barbados

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INTRODUCTION

Barbados, the easternmost of all the Caribbean islands, was established as a British colony in 1627 and control of the island did not change hands during the colonial period (Bilby, 2008). Barbados remained solely under British control until gaining independence in 1966 and today remains part of the British Commonwealth (Gragg, 2005).

Colonizers quickly created a plantation economy, supported by large numbers of imported African slaves, with sugar cultivation as its major cash crop (Gragg, 2005). The Barbados sugar industry was hugely lucrative for Great Britain, rendering Barbados one of its most valuable colonies (Gragg, 2005). Owing much to its dual heritage, Barbadian culture is a mix of primarily African and British traditions.

Unique forms of indigenous folk music include tuk and spouge music. Tuk music, a local version of the common fife-and-drum marching band, dates back to the 18th century (Bilby, 2008). Tuk music is “lively, with an intricate, pulsating and quick rhythm” (Marshall & Watson, 2008, p. 347). Spouge

is a 20th century development (Best, 2005).

The Crop Over festival, which originated during colonial times as a harvest festival and which was revived in the 1970s as both a cultural and commercial event, provides an annual venue for traditional and popular music as well as other cultural activities. Calypso is a prominent feature of Crop Over (“Barbados Crop Over,” 2013). The Landship, founded in the 19th century, conducts parades of music and dance, loosely patterned after the British navy. “Dances during Landship parades ... typify European-African fusion: the British military march, jig, hornpipe, and maypole dance of the village green combine with African cross-rhythms and improvisation” (Millington, 1998, p. 819).

The Barbados Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture encourages appreciation of the musical and cultural heritage of the nation through the Cultural and Historical Exposure for Kids in Schools (CHEKS) program (Meredith, 2003). The Combermere school, one of the oldest secondary schools in the country, “has produced many students over the years who excelled in music and [has

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become] known as the premiere secondary school in Barbados for music education” (S. Jackson, personal communication, May 22, 2013). Among the musical alumni of Combermere are Arturo Tappin, the jazz saxophonist; Joy Knight, violinist and leader of the Barbados Youth Orchestra; Samuel Springer, organist; the late James A. Millington, violinist; and pop superstar Rihanna (S. Jackson, personal communication, May 22, 2013). Sean Jackson, another Combermere alumnus, is one of the outstanding Barbadian expat musicians and composers. He serves as the Director of Music at Stanwich Church in Greenwich, Connecticut and performs organ concerts all over the world (“Biography,” n.d.).

The Barbados Community College Division of Fine Arts offers an AA in Music. Roger Gittens, a Barbadian composer, arranger and musician, helped write the program. Gittens has composed a wide variety of pieces, from calypsos and jazz to gospel and choral music (“About Roger Gittens,” 2008). In describing

his song, “Come to Me” Gittens explains:

... this setting of the words of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 11:28-29 started as an attempt to marry calypso-type rhythms with the contrapuntal traditions of European art music. The piece is in ternary form and the syncopated melody is found only in the A section. This music, like several of my pieces, was inspired by my experience in Sunday worship at the Shrewsbury Methodist church in Barbados. It is my first *a cappella* composition and, although conceived for a quartet, it has been performed by choirs (R. Gittens, personal communication, June 18, 2013).

The Barbados National Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Barbados Chamber Orchestra, The Myriad Singers of Barbados, and the St. Leonard's Boys Choir provide opportunities for musicians to perform and for audiences to enjoy art music. The [Royal Barbados Police Force Band](#) performs widely both nationally and internationally.

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COMPOSERS

Cecil Archer (1901-1988)

Ryan Boyce (1977-)

Prince Cave (1921-1997)

Jason Catlyn (1980-)

Roland Edwards (1912-1985)

John Fletcher (1931-)

Arnold Josiah Ford (1877-1935)

Roger Gittens (1964-)

Gerard Hudson (c.1907-1975)

Frederich Samuel "Sam" Hunte

Sean Jackson (1973-)

Damian Leacock (1990-)

Andrew Lynch (1962-)

Kenrick Moore (1931-2011)

Bernard Morris (1917?-)

Litchfield Nurse (1947-)

Victor Pilgrim (1940-)

Christopher "Kit" Spencer (1938-)

Carley "Andy" Williams (1949-)

COMPOSITIONS, by composer

Boyce

Ancestors on the auction block (2007, a capella, from a poem by Vera Ball of Jamaica)

Ave verum (2003, for choir)

Baptist melody (2003, for a cappella choir)

Farewell my friend (2008, duet)

God is glorious (2011, for choir & organ)

How great is your name (2010, for choir, based on *Psalm 110*)

I'm the greatest (2008, solo with barbershop choir)

Just in time (2006, for choir & orchestra)

Oh Lord you know me (2009, solo with choir, marimba & piano)

Psalm of hope (2008, for piano)

Psalm 118 (2009, for choir)

Cave

The conciliator (1967, for military band)

Siesta (for military band)

Catlyn

Enter into his gates (2006, processional march)

Enter into his gates (2010, for organ)

HMBS Pelican (2009, march)

My march (2009, march)

Sunny isle (2009, for band)

You can be the one (2007, for choir)

Edwards

The federation song

The goodman song

In plenty and in time of need (1966, Barbados national anthem)

The St. Andrew murder

Welcome to Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II (1966, sung on her visit to St. Elizabeth School in St. Joseph, Barbados)

Ford

Universal Ethiopian anthem

Gittens

Bajan folk suite (2010, for orchestra)

Be still (for choir)

Come to me (for choir)

Emmerton (2010, for orchestra)

Feed my lambs (for choir)

From all that dwell below the skies (for choir)

Go in faith (for choir)

Orchestra and steel no. 1 (for big band)

Psalm 1 (2013, for choir)

Psalm 23 (2005, for choir)

Psalm 67 (2009, for choir)

Psalm 100 (for choir)

Psalm 121(for choir)

Rest of the weary (for choir)

Sing your praises (for choir)

Te deum (for choir)

When morning gilds the skies (for choir)

Hudson

Te deum laudamus (mass)

There was war in Heaven (for choir)

Hunte

Bathsheba (1997, slow march)

Broken trident (1988, unfinished quick march)

The crane (1992, slow march)

The garrison Savannah (2003, slow march)

Hackleton (1988, unfinished quick march)

Mount Hillaby (2003, quick march)

Paragon (2003, slow march)

Pico Tenerife (1987, unfinished quick march)

Pride and industry (1991, slow march)

RBPF (2003, quick march)

Saint Celia (1988, unfinished slow march)

Silver sands (1991, slow march)

Jackson

Advancing on the enemy (2009-2011)

Allegro for piano and strings (2009-2011)

Barbados we greet you (1987, for the 21st anniversary of independence in Barbados)

Bassoon andante (2009-2011)

Breath of Jesus (2009, for soprano duet & organ)

The call (2008, for soprano, tenor, choir, piano, violin, cello, trumpet, & snare drum)

C'est la vie (2009-2011)

A Christmas treat (2009-2011)

Dark encounter (2009-2011)

Delight in 'A' (2009-2011)

Forget-me-not (2009-2011)

Glorious sky (2009-2011)

God's hands are over St. Ann's (1995, school song for St. Ann's Church of England School, London, UK)

Horizon appearing (2009-2011)

Hot topic (2009-2011)

I was lost (1995, for soprano & piano)

Instantly lonely (2009-2011)

It's happening now (2009-2011)

Leading onwards (2009-2011)

Mad kicker (2009-2011)

Mirage (2009-2011)

Misty view (2009-2011)

Out of time (2009-2011)

Serene smile (2009-2011)

Sweet encounter (2009-2011)

Sweeter dreams (2009-2011)

Tongue-in-cheek (2009-2011)

Transport me (2009-2011)

Women of vision 10th anniversary (2011, film score)

Writing on the wall (2009-2011)

Yes we care (2009-2011)

Leacock

Across the galaxy (2011, for orchestra)

Blue blossoms (2012, for chamber orchestra)

Blue waterfall bird (2008-09, for flute quartet)

Dawn (2011, for orchestra)

Faeries and leprechauns (2011)

Flute quartet #6 (2008-09)

Jane's army (2011, for orchestra)

Orchestral poem #1 (2011, for string & wind orchestra)

Paper heart suite (2011, for string orchestra with piccolo & flute duet)

Lynch

The blue and gold (2006, for military band)

Moore

The trident of Bimshire (for military band)

Nurse

Jonathan (1992, quick march)

Pilgrim

Let all the peoples praise you [Todos los pueblos canten] (with Patrick Prescod, for choir)

Spencer

Allegretto (for piano)

Allegro molto (1987, for piano)

Ballad of an old woman (from a poem by Frank Collymore, for a cappella choir)

Coventry carol (for children's chorus, descant recorders & piano)

Cradle song (for piano)

Dance, "a two-part invention" (for piano)

Dance around D minor (for piano)

Diary in mosaic (1980-82, for piano)

Diversions (2009, for descant & treble recorder)

Folk song medley (from Barbadian folk songs, for a cappella choir)

Folk song medley (for descant recorder, treble recorder & tenor recorder)

Four songs (from poems by Michael Foster, 2006, for tenor & piano)

Jesu sweet Jesu mild (1998, for a cappella choir)

Lullaby (from a poem by Frank Collymore, 1979, for mezzo soprano & piano)

Manger lullaby (from a poem by J. A. Lynch, for children's choir & piano)

Melody in blue (1987, for piano)

Music for recorders (from Barbadian folk songs, for descant recorder, treble recorder, tenor recorder & bass recorder)

My gift (from a poem by J. A. Lynch, for children's choir & piano)

Prelude & fugue on two Barbadian folk songs (1985, for piano, dedicated to J.S. Bach on his 300th birthday)

Rondoletto (1996, for piano)

A short ramble (1986, for piano)

That younge childe (for a cappella choir)

Three connected pieces for flute and piano (2013, for flute & piano)

Three pieces (2006, for descant recorder, treble recorder & piano)

Three songs about morning (from poems by Esther Phillips, 1998, for mezzo soprano & clarinet)

Transformation (from a poem by Michael Foster, 2008, for male voice & piano)

Variations (2010, for piano)

Williams

Centennial (2002, for military band, commissioned for the Barbados Cadet Corps)

The drill hall (1994, for military band)

Independence day (1991, slow march, for military band)

A theme and variation (1991, based on a theme by Franz Joseph Haydn)

Visions (1989, quick march, for military band)

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