

Introduction

Africa!

Rememb'ring Africa

.....

So long, so far away!

Langston Hughes, *Troubled Island*
(Act I: Martel's aria)

This book explores aspects of William Grant Still's aesthetic development in the context of the much-contested personal, professional, and cultural landscape in which he worked. Although its focus is on the 1930s—the decade of Still's maturity as a composer—the different voices presented here reflect the conflicts that surrounded Still throughout his dual careers as commercial musician and composer of concert music and opera. Encoded in these different narratives are intersections among the ideas and realities of the Harlem Renaissance, musical modernism, and American musical nationalism. These engage issues involving race, class, musical style and genre, and, to a lesser degree, gender and geography—issues that affected the way Still's music was written and performed, listened to and written about, then as much as now.

W. E. B. Du Bois's famous statement in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) about racial doubleness, certainly well known to Still, may serve as the launching point for this study:

The Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost.¹

Du Bois's insight about what he called the "double consciousness" or the "two-ness" of African Americans struck a responsive chord at the time and remains a touchstone that frames the lives of many individuals who share the African American experience. It carries a particular weight when considering creative artists such as Still (as Gayle Murchison points out in her chapter), although explorations of its consequences by black cultural critics have consistently focused on the other arts more than on concert music.² Certainly Still's desire for a "fusion" of widely separated musical styles—actually several fusions—plays out Du Bois's aspiration "to merge his double self into a better and truer self." We are only beginning to glimpse the process by which Still explored his own doubleness as a creator of music as well as the multiple contradictions that surrounded him.

Still's roots were African American, southern, and relatively elite. His family's lack of wealth was no bar to its social status as, in Willard Gatewood's phrase, "aristocrats of color." Both of his parents were college graduates, rare among African Americans of their generation. Both followed the teaching profession, highly regarded because formal education, so long denied, was widely understood as fundamental to race progress. Still's stepfather (Still's father, a musician, died shortly after his birth), a postal employee—always referred to as "Mr. Shepperson"—also held a respected position in the community. The family attended the Allison Street Presbyterian Church, one of the congregations favored by Little Rock's African American elite. Still's genteel training, his enduring sense of high obligation to better the lot of his race, and even his light skin fit Gatewood's description of an elite African American of his time.³ His position of relative privilege made him a member of what Du Bois had labeled the "Talented Tenth" of the generation of the Harlem Renaissance. Still was well aware of the debate over how African Americans might best take their full place in American society, for Du Bois's slightly older rival, Booker T. Washington, was a guest in the Still/Shepperson home in Little Rock on one occasion.⁴ Still's elite affiliation combined with his creative direction and political conservatism have led to ambiva-

lence about his artistic contributions, for what is usually called the black middle class is “surely one of the most disparaged social groups in all of modern history.”⁵

As a child, Still observed all the forms of music making practiced in his community, including traditional religious music sung at home by his grandmother. Yet his musical inclinations lay with the European-influenced African American concert tradition, an often-ignored part of his heritage. His first role model was the Afro-English composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912), who made several trips to America after the turn of the century. Several older contemporaries were writing concert music that drew from this tradition; Nathaniel Dett, Harry T. Burleigh, and Will Marion Cook all encouraged him and became his friends. His early experience in Harlem included performances of the symphonic repertoire organized by and for African American audiences, as documented in the *New York Age*; such concerts were not unique to New York City.⁶ Still’s interest in “serious” music, especially opera, seems never to have wavered, although a career as a composer appeared hopelessly out of reach for many years. After all, most “serious” composers in the United States, regardless of race, had (and have) other means of supporting themselves. It is a mark of Still’s determination that he was eventually able to devote so much of his time to composition; he created operas, symphonies, and ballets in addition to his commercial work.

In spite of the energy and the complex webs of patronage, audience, and neighborhood that shaped the Harlem Renaissance, the immediate effect of the cultural boom of the 1920s for African American musicians (including Still) was to provide more opportunities to do much as they had earlier done, though at a higher level and with more respect as the popular genres moved from minstrel shows to vaudeville to Broadway revues like *Shuffle Along*.⁷ Their new freedom was far from complete, as is especially clear from the perspective of the late twentieth century. Nevertheless, stereotype-driven constraints on blacks as entertainers clearly weakened, allowing the “minstrel mask” to slip and sometimes revealing the creative ferment taking place behind it. Opportunities for new artistic departures that were commercially sustainable remained limited despite the importance of those that were successful. Indeed, many of the black entertainers and artists who achieved substantial fame or success in Still’s lifetime did it by performing selected aspects of African American culture to a predominantly white audience. This process necessarily involved continuing mediation and adaptation among black and

white cultural and performance traditions and among stereotypes held by both blacks and whites about themselves and each other.

Successful commercial adaptations with which Still was directly involved include the achievement of his mentor W. C. Handy, the “father of the blues,” who transcribed and published an existing aural tradition limited to a particular region and group for a wider audience, thereby altering it dramatically and creating the immensely popular “classic” blues; the 1921 musical *Shuffle Along*, which (with Still as a member of its orchestra and a contributor to its orchestrations) initiated a new era of black musicals in the 1920s; and much of his later work in New York as arranger, performer, and conductor. Other adaptations and translations were undertaken by many other artists. White audiences usually accepted them as “black” culture; African American audiences often applauded but sometimes saw them as something else. Collectively, they created new genres and styles that are now seen as quintessential elements of our diverse American culture.

In presenting himself as a composer of concert music, Still chose a path less traveled by members of the race, a path less understood by both blacks and whites to this day. As a composer of concert music, he crossed barriers of class as well as color, forcing him to rethink his racial doubleness in new ways. This move required him to forge new means of communicating and contextualizing his Africanness, taking into account (among other things) the musical language of modernism, with its elements of primitivism and colonialism, that he learned from his teacher Edgar Varèse and the younger white modernists who were his contemporaries. By pursuing his interest in composing concert music, Still had to address the “minstrel mask” directly. It is this challenge that led him to reformulate his long-standing interest in American music away from the modernists’ direction of exploring the dissonant, antisentimental “modern.” Instead, he sought sophisticated formal constructs that opened the way to and even demanded a truer fusion of European and African American traditions into a genuinely new American voice. That unique and continuing process of rethinking and the circumstances that surrounded it are the underlying theme of this book.

From 1925 on, Still’s “serious” works were performed before elite white audiences, making a mark even though they often drew mixed reviews—reviews that turned increasingly on both racial difference and the class-related distinction between concert and popular music. This

criticism is frustrating to read and interpret, since it is often couched in oblique terms with coded meanings not only for racial stereotypes but for aspects of musical style and language as well; in these cases the underlying issues are very seldom addressed or explored directly. For example, in Still's 1924 suite for eight instruments and three voices "used instrumentally," *From the Land of Dreams*, performed once (February 8, 1925) and recently rediscovered, a blues gesture appears as a contrasting theme, embedded in a framework of startlingly original instrumental/vocal timbres and chromatic dissonance (Example 1). The *New York Times* critic Olin Downes, not recognizing Still's construct, wrote about it, "One hoped for better things from Still. . . . Is Mr. Still unaware that the cheapest melody in the revues he has orchestrated has more reality and inspiration than the curious noises he has manufactured?" The ultramodern clothing that surrounded the blues theme in the work was clear to his audience, but the blues was not, confounding the expectation of his hearers and probably his intent as well. In May 1931, Downes wrote of the ballet *Sahdji*: "The ballet Sahdji is fully as racial in content as the former work [i.e., *Africa*]. . . . But this is real music, music of a composer of exotic talent and temperament." In addition to the racial stereotypes such as "exotic," with its implication of a difference involving sexuality, the importance of class distinctions drawn between Still's commercial work ("the cheapest melody") and the concert music under review, along with arguments over modernism ("curious noises . . . manufactured"), in these comments appears repeatedly in commentaries on Still's music.⁸

Discussions of commercial theater in the 1920s tend to give a richer perspective for the context in which Still's aesthetic ideas developed and his early performances took place than does published music criticism. The first all-black Broadway dramatic production that attempted to portray African Americans as a collection of diverse humans rather than primarily as clowns was William Jourdan Rapp and Wallace Thurman's *Harlem*, written over several years but not produced until 1929. (Thurman had been a mentor to Still's friend Harold Bruce Forsythe in his pre-New York, Los Angeles days.) *Harlem* drew extensive discussion of racial issues in the press, as well as some acknowledgment of its particular "checker" audience with its implications about class.⁹ Some excerpts quoted here are applicable to Still's achievement in music and illustrate the context in which he worked more effectively than do the reviews of

Lento $\text{♩} = 76$

High soprano (hum) *p dolce*

Sop. (hum) *p rall.*

Clar., Viola, Cello, Horn, D.b. *a tempo pp*

Clar., Double bass *pp*

Mezzo sop. (hum) *p rall.*

H. sop. "ah" *dim.* *molto rit.* *p a tempo* *f > p*

Oboe *f* *p*

Clar. *p*

9 *dim.* *f* *p*

H. sop. (alone) (hum) *pp* *a tempo*

Example 1. Opening, *From the Land of Dreams*. The diatonic passage, hinting at the beginning of a blues, is in bars 6–9, played by the oboe. Courtesy of William Grant Still Music.

his work by music critics.¹⁰ Drama critics waxed most negative when *Harlem* characters failed to act the racial stereotype:

It is only where the sober realities of life among the negroes are touched upon that the play becomes as forced and absurd and totally lacking in sympathetic insight. Very little of the essential childlike humor and pathos of the colored race is allowed play.¹¹

Most of it is untamed and broad-gauged stuff, full of rowdy jokes and gestures which do somehow catch an authentic jungle note in the brownstone

wastelands of One Hundred and Thirty-fifth street. . . . Since most of the principal actors are negroes, it is stimulated at once by the natural born instinct of that festive race for cutting up monkeyshines.¹²

The authors of *Harlem* responded to the critics' racially directed criticism by laying out the stereotypes they had deliberately avoided:

Most Negro dramas previous to "Harlem" dealt with what Negroes call "white folks' niggers," while "Harlem" actually presents the Negro as he is.

"White folks' niggers" consist of three distinct categories: the old servant or mammy type known derisively among the Harlemites as "Uncle Toms" and "handkerchiefs," the lazy slow-foot type typified by such vaudevillians as Bert Williams and Miller and Lyles [who starred in *Shuffle Along*, mentioned above], and the superstitious, praying type who is always thrown into abject fear by darkness, lightning and thunder. All these types flatter the white's sense of superiority and it pleases him to believe that all colored people are like this. The dramatist who shows them thusly is bound to be complimented for his keen understanding of the Negro.¹³

Like the authors of *Harlem* and other African American creative artists, Still had to deal repeatedly with the ingrained stereotypes. Blacks and whites alike in many ways remained the prisoners of the old type-casting from the minstrel-vaudeville-variety show tradition. Nevertheless, for racial issues to be discussed so extensively in the white daily papers as well as in magazines intended for African American audiences, at least in the case of *Harlem*, reveals that the subject was at last open for debate.

In Du Bois's terms, Still's achievement was to compose concert music not as represented "through the revelation of the other world" but in a unique African American voice speaking as itself, in its own behalf. By finding his "speaking self," Still took a step toward giving African Americans a direct view of themselves, direct representation in the literate European-derived universe of concert music. From this well-grounded position he was empowered to take the further step of speaking as a "universal" composer, though one who often chose his own form of African American-derived musical speech.

The combination of essays from the 1990s and sources from the 1930s in this book meets the challenge of creating a context that will allow a critical reassessment of Still's music and his place in twentieth-century American culture. It seems more important at this juncture to allow a

range of voices to be heard, even at the cost of some repetition, than to attempt a definitive interpretation when so many questions about Still's life and music remain unanswered. The contributed essays by Willard B. Gatewood and Gayle Murchison and the chronology by Carolyn L. Quin collectively provide a launching point. Gatewood begins with a description of the Little Rock of Still's boyhood. He depicts the conditional privilege, located within and dependent on a deeply racist society, enjoyed by Still's forebears and influencing him. Equally important is the reiteration of the theme that Still grew up in a period of increasing racial violence and tension. Along with his family's commitment to racial uplift, his mother's opposition to the growth of Jim Crow laws formalizing racial segregation of public facilities in Little Rock and elsewhere significantly influenced Still's later career decisions. Murchison presents an exposition of the relationship between Still's work and the Harlem Renaissance, particularly with reference to Alain Locke's *The New Negro*, a connection that has not been addressed in Still scholarship until recently. Murchison suggests three style periods for Still's concert music, in keeping with his own statements: "ultramodern," "racial" (from 1925), and "universal" (1932 on). The connection she makes between the Harlem Renaissance and modernism is particularly valuable for understanding Still's position in American music.

Two of the essays focus on close associates and collaborators, Harold Bruce Forsythe (1906–1976) and Verna Arvey (1911–1987). These two associates, friends themselves for many years though enormously different in aesthetic approach and personality, each influenced Still far more than their common role as contributors of librettos might suggest. The biographical sketches of each that form chapters here provide background for their own essays on Still as well as serve to emphasize their personal and professional importance to Still. In their persons as in their writings, they enrich the dialogue on Still and his work that is only now beginning to emerge. These writers stand in striking contrast to each other.

Forsythe, librettist for Still's first opera (*Blue Steel*) and a Los Angeles-based advocate of the New Negro movement, has been virtually an invisible person, one whose very identity has been a source of confusion.¹⁴ The first to write seriously about Still, Forsythe engages emotionally with his music, most notably with the orchestral tone poem *Darker America*, which he argues is the product of Still's essential, African-based sensibility. Through *Darker America*, Forsythe addresses Still's "peculiar isolation from [his] race," which he correctly sees as "only ap-

parent [for] underneath there are significant ties,”¹⁵ thus providing an otherwise missing contemporary New Negro view of how Still addressed his racial doubleness in his artistic production during a highly productive period. Forsythe’s contribution, published here for the first time, is the more valuable because well-known black intellectuals such as Du Bois and Alain Locke did not address Still’s music (or anyone else’s) with anything like the level of conviction and forcefulness that they applied to drama, fiction, and poetry.

Forsythe faced the challenge of writing about Still’s music without much in the way of usable literary models, a problem analogous to the challenge Still faced in seeking musical models for his compositions. The subtitle of Forsythe’s iconoclastic essay is appropriated for this book partly for its continuing aptness to Still research. In addition, it is intended to recognize for the first time that Forsythe is the initiator of Still criticism and to acknowledge the passionate commitment and insight that inform his writing.

Verna Arvey is better known than Forsythe, but she has almost faded from view as an individual despite her position as Still’s publicist and collaborator starting in 1934, his wife from 1939 until his death in 1978, and executor of his estate thereafter.¹⁶ Forsythe and Arvey had been friends from their student days in the mid-1920s at Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles. Forsythe, whose family lived on property owned by a Still cousin, met Still in the course of a year’s study at the Juilliard School in New York in 1927–1928. Arvey learned about Still several years before Forsythe introduced her to him during his early L.A. visits in 1929–1930. After Still moved permanently to Los Angeles in 1934, a romantic triangle developed among the three, leaving a residue of hostility that both influenced the course and skewed the record of Still’s career.

George Fischer, Still’s major publisher, was dubious when Arvey approached him in 1937 with her plan for a biography (actually a ghosted autobiography in one of its drafts) but presently changed his mind and cut her text sharply to fit into a series of promotional booklets for the American composers whose work he championed.¹⁷ The resulting monograph, republished here, comes close at times to Still’s earlier exposition in his “Personal Notes” but nevertheless entails considerable filtering through both Arvey’s eyes and those of its publisher. The restrained, formal prose of her monograph contrasts sharply with Forsythe’s flamboyant, unapologetically personal style.

“Toward a Biography” forms the core of the book. The biographical essay on Still in Los Angeles clarifies numerous points with regard to

Still's state of mind at the time of his "expatriation" from New York City as well as his activities before and after the move, including his less-than-satisfying adventures in Hollywood. Still's most famous concert work, the *Afro-American Symphony*, completed within months of his return from his prolonged early sojourn in Los Angeles, is the central paradigm for the working out of the "fusion" aesthetic he had struggled over for nearly a decade. It was the success of this symphony that really launched Still on his career as a composer of concert music and carried his reputation far beyond the reach of those 1920s "new music" concerts, with their limited audiences and self-consciously modernist posture.

The "great truth" Still wished to convey through the *Afro-American Symphony* had to do not only with his religious convictions but much more directly with the creative synergy possible among American cultures as the African American influence took the position he desired for it, as an equal contributor, "another American voice," in his words. In his quest to achieve this goal he went far out of his way to avoid stereotypical portrayals of African American culture, most obviously through his creative uses of the blues. Still's concern with the blues is in fact analogous to that of many African American artists and writers of the mid-twentieth century, though that commonality has been little recognized by theorists of black culture.

One often unspoken issue for Still is his role in the anticommunist movement of the late 1940s and early 1950s, seen here as a dim reflection of his disillusionment at the failure of the dream embodied in his first symphony. Perhaps the cultural necessity for the supposed antimodernism of Still's *Afro-American Symphony* and the contradictoriness of his late political activity is summed up, however obliquely, in Forsythe's perception: "The intellectualism of modern music is more psychopathic than has been generally understood."¹⁸

Still's voice is heard directly in the first two of the sources. In 1933, Still produced several pages of autobiographical material in response to a request from Harold Bruce Forsythe. In addition to Still's own evaluation of his concert music up to 1933, these notes offer a key that leads toward the documentation and assessment of Still's little-known, apparently substantial contributions to Harlem's commercial music scene through his New York years (1919–1934). His correspondence with a Paris-based critic, Irving Schwerké, who arranged for performances of Still's music in Europe and otherwise encouraged him, shows him in relation to a supportive white critic.

Although Still's concert music had begun to attract critical attention from the mid-1920s, all of it was in the form of brief coverage of individual performances. The sources presented here, most of them never published until now, were the first to consider his music in any depth. Hence, they are important to an understanding of one of the mid-twentieth century's most prominent American composers of concert music and opera, and a major contributor to popular music of the 1920s and 1930s. The contradictions with which Still struggled shaped his remarkable creative output in ways we need to understand, as much today as during his lifetime.

NOTES

1. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903; reprint, New York: Fawcett, 1961), 16–17.

2. For examples, Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Houston A. Baker, Jr., *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) and other titles; Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) and other titles; Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993). African Americans in jazz and blues have attracted far more literary attention than those in other fields of music.

Baker's scheme, intended to apply to literary figures but appropriate as well for composers such as Still, involves complex and continuing negotiation among the "minstrel mask," the "mastery of formation," and presently the "deformation of mastery" in all fields of music. These categories generally refer to the portrayal of African Americans as European Americans wished or wish to see them and the mastery of the white formal languages by blacks and the consequent adjustment of the formal language to accommodate and express the creator's intention. These stages of expressiveness are not necessarily sequential; they may well overlap in ways as various as the creative artists involved.

3. See Willard Gatewood's chapter in this volume; also Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990); and Du Bois.

4. Du Bois's visit is reported in Verna Arvey, "Scribblings," longhand notes on Still (no date, no page number). Gatewood is unable to confirm a visit to Little Rock by Du Bois; most likely Arvey was in error and the visitor was Booker T. Washington. (See Gatewood's chapter below.) Still's brief interest in becoming a chicken farmer was probably inspired by Washington's visit and his writings.

5. Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 76, quoted in Ingrid Monson, "The Problem with White Hipness: Race, Gender, and Cultural Conceptions in Jazz Historical Discourse,"

Journal of the American Musicological Society 48 no. 3 (Fall 1995): 396–422. See also Imamu Amiri Baraka [LeRoi Jones], *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: William Morrow, 1963), 231, 130, and passim, for expressions of concern about the integrity of the “autonomous blues” in the face of [Monson] “conformist and assimilationist demands of a black middle class that has dictated an ‘image of a whiter Negro, to the poorer, blacker Negroes.’”

6. *New York Age*, February 12, 1921, 3, “In the Realm of Music,” reports that Still was a member of the New Amsterdam Musical Association orchestra that gave a concert at the New Star Casino on 107th Street on Sunday evening, February 5, 1921, at 10:00 P.M. Dancing followed the formal program, a variation not modeled on symphony concerts downtown. Hall Johnson, later director of a black choir famous for its performances of spirituals, was among the violas. The program included music by Rimsky-Korsakov, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Montague Ring, Sarasate, Ethelbert Nevin, and Elgar. (Coleridge-Taylor and Ring had African ancestors.)

Michael W. Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues: The Music of Thomas Andrew Dorsey in the Urban Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). See chap. 5, “Old-Line Religion and Musicians, 1920–1930,” esp. pp. 106 ff. Harris documents a vigorous, widespread musical practice, although he regards it negatively as part of a borrowed middle-class culture that attempted to suppress indigenous African American musical customs. It is likely that most of these had features, like the dancing that followed the Star Casino performance, designed to accommodate both the location and the audience.

7. The nexus of blackface entertainment that provides part of the background from which the black musicals of the Harlem Renaissance is treated in, among other places, Robert Toll, *Blackening Up* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); and Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). For discussions of the need for more broadly based and perceptive musical analysis, see Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman, eds., *Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), especially Don Michael Randel, “The Canons in the Musicological Toolbox,” and Gary Tomlinson, “Cultural Dialogics and Jazz: A White Historian Signifies.”

8. Still reacted to this incident by suppressing *From the Land of Dreams*. His experience raises the question of whether his next work to be performed at a similar concert, *Levee Land*, was intended as a practical joke. *Levee Land*, discussed in Murchison’s essay, uses a blues singer and mixes “ultramodern” gestures with blues chord progressions. The performance of the work by the well-known blues singer Florence Mills, then appearing in a show with which Still was involved (*Runnin’ Wild*), created a sensation, but the connection between Still’s self-styled “stunt” and the response to *From the Land of Dreams* went unremarked.

9. Francis R. Bellamy, *Outlook and Independent*, undated clipping in Wallace Thurman Papers, James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection, Beinecke Li-

brary, Yale University. Bellamy wrote, "One of the most interesting things about 'Harlem,' the new negro play at the Apollo, is its audience. For it is a prize-fight audience, a spectacle audience, and is fairly representative, we should say, of the element of American society among which the negro in real life has to make his way. . . . The white audience may seem more sinister to you than the colored play."

10. Wallace Thurman (1902–1934) spent several years in Los Angeles (ca. 1922–1925) before going to New York City and earning a reputation as a fine editor. There he met the younger Bruce Forsythe and published some of his early essays in a short-lived journal, so far unlocated, the *Outlet*. Thurman's influence on Forsythe's thinking about race will become clear in the separate chapter on Forsythe. For a recent study on Thurman, see Eleonore van Notten, *Wallace Thurman's Harlem Renaissance* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, Ga.: Rodolphi, 1994). See also n. 7, p. 110. The clippings quoted below are in the Wallace Thurman Papers, James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

11. Francis R. Bellamy, *Outlook and Independent*.

12. John Anderson, *New York Evening Journal*, February 21, 1929. Clipping in Wallace Thurman Papers.

13. William Jourdan Rapp and Wallace Thurman, "The Negro Made Human: Two Authors Defend Their Play," unlabeled clipping, Wallace Thurman Papers.

14. In "Chosen Image: The Afro-American Vision in the Operas of William Grant Still," *Opera Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 1–23, Donald Dorr confuses Forsythe with Richard Bruce [Nugent], a writer, artist, and actor from Washington, D.C., who wrote the initial sketch for *Sahdji* that appears in *The New Negro* (1925). (Bruce's sketch was expanded by Locke for *Plays of Negro Life* two years later; the expanded version became the source for Still's ballet.) Several years later, Locke wanted to recruit Bruce, not Forsythe, to write a libretto, for which Locke had constructed an outline, on the subject of Atlantis. Dorr cites a "Dear Bruce" letter from Locke, in the Department of Special Collections at Howard University. From its contents, the undated letter was written between the premiere of *Sahdji* in May 1931 and Locke's departure for Europe on June 13, 1931. Many of Locke's letters to Still begin "Dear Still," suggesting that Locke addressed males by their last names in his letters.

Although Locke claimed in the same letter to have registered the title and outline for "Atlantis," no record of it now exists in the Copyright Office. I am grateful to Wayne Shirley for making the copyright search and for pointing out that the material submitted by Locke for copyright, if it was in outline form, would probably have been rejected.

15. Forsythe's letter dated "1933" by a hand that is probably Still's is reproduced as an addendum to Forsythe's monograph. This letter elicited Still's "Personal Notes," also reproduced here.

16. Edward R. Reilly's remark that "widows of composers can have a considerable effect on the posthumous images we have of their husbands" surely applies to the Still-Arvey relationship. Quoted in "Snapshots," *Nineteenth Cen-*

tury Music 20, no. 2 (Fall 1996): 199, referring to Herta Blaukopf, ed., *Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss: Correspondence, 1888–1911*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

17. In April 1937, Fischer wrote to Still, “Frankly speaking, I am of the opinion that it would seem rather premature to now already publish an extended biography relating to yourself. In my opinion, this ought to be postponed for yet a few years until your name as a composer is still better known in every musical household.” Two other letters from George Fischer to Still, September 24 and November 1, 1937, reveal his change of mind. Box 18, Still-Arvey Papers. The Fischer correspondence takes up more than one full box. Fischer handled several of Still’s most successful publications in the late 1930s and promoted them assiduously.

18. Forsythe, “Frailest Leaves,” undated typescript [ca. 1935], p. 445. Forsythe Papers, The Huntington Library.