



Let It Shine!

Celebrating Piano Music by Black Composers

By Aaron Mathews

Black composers have contributed exceptional works to the canon of classical piano literature. Over the span of my career as a pianist and pedagogue, I have researched, performed and shared these often-unknown gems with students, colleagues and audiences. Pieces for all skill levels are shared here, thus providing excellent options to diversify one's repertoire at any level. Learning and teaching these pieces will heighten students' awareness of other cultures, styles and techniques.

For me, it has been inspirational to discover these works. Knowing that my ancestors and contemporaries have composed such quality music has allowed me to connect on a deeper level to my craft.

What a joy it was for me to discover:

- ▶▶ Florence Price—the first female Black composer to achieve national recognition
- ▶▶ Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges—the first known composer of African descent

- ▶▶ George Walker—a Pulitzer-prize winning composer
- ▶▶ Samuel Coleridge-Taylor—an African-British composer.
- ▶▶ Black women composers including Margaret Bonds, Regina Baiocchi, Betty Jackson King, Eleanor Alberga, Valerie Capers, Marian Harrison and Zenobia Powell Perry
- ▶▶ Contemporary composers—Bruce Russell, David Bontemps, Quinn Mason, Carlos Simon, Roger Dickerson

For specific forms, I recommend the following composers:

- ▶▶ **Sonatas:** Florence Price, Brian Nabors, George Walker, Gerard Aymonche, David Bontemps, Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, David Baker
- ▶▶ **Études:** H. Leslie Adams, Fred Onovwerosuoke, Roberto Valera, Florence Price
- ▶▶ **20th Century:** Tania Leon, Anthony Green, Adolphus Hailstork, James Lee, III
- ▶▶ **Theme and Variations:** Trevor Weston, David Bontemps

Thank you for *your* interest in this music. To listen to some recordings, search "Dr. Aaron Mathews' Piano Studio" on YouTube, and you will see the playlists that I have compiled. Further, I am happy to supply an accompanying handout, which provides a more extensive list of Black composers and their works, while also sharing information on how to locate and purchase the works. ◀◀

Aaron Mathews, DMA, is an assistant professor of piano and artist-in-residence at Xavier University of Louisiana. He earned degrees in piano pedagogy and performance from Morehouse College, Georgia State University and the University of South Carolina.





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Piano Music by Black Composers

Aaron Mathews, D.M.A.

Assistant Professor of Piano / Artist-in-Residence
Xavier University of Louisiana
amathew4@xula.edu

ABSTRACT

Black composers have contributed exceptional works to classical piano literature. This poster highlights some of the most significant repertoire that is available.

This repertoire will:

1. Engage performers and audiences
2. Enhance and develop essential piano skills
3. Contribute to one's general edification
4. Heighten awareness of other cultures, styles, and piano techniques.

INTRODUCTION

Piano music by Black composers provides options beyond the traditional canon of classical piano repertoire. I encourage you to consider these works as new options for you and your students.

Selections included in this presentation are limited to the following criteria:

- Solo piano literature
- Primarily classical repertoire
- Available for purchase / download
- Favorites of mine and my students

CONTACT

Feel free to contact me with any questions and to receive an accompanying **handout** which contains a more extensive list of Black composers and their works, while also sharing information on how to locate the works.

FOR RECORDINGS:

Search "Dr. Aaron Mathews' Piano Studio" on Youtube for an extensive playlist.

SELECTED COMPOSERS



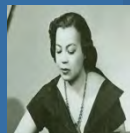
Florence Price



Saint-Georges



William Grant Still



Margaret Bonds



Samuel Coleridge-Taylor



Betty Jackson King



George Walker



R. Nathaniel Dett

LIVING COMPOSERS



Quinn Mason



Regina Baiocchi



Godwin Sadoh



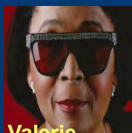
Jeremy Ajani Jordan



H. Leslie Adams



Fred Onovwerosuoke



Valerie Capers



David Bontemps

SELECTED REPERTOIRE

ELEMENTARY PIECES

Florence Price

Beginning Pieces, Vols. 1 and 2
*black keys, 5 finger positions, imitation, hand shifts, 8th notes

Godwin Sadoh

Childhood Dreams (10 pieces)
*based on songs from African countries

Zenobia Powell Perry

Vignette No. 2
Childhood Capers

Neeki Bey

Piano Accents: Africa (10 pieces)

INTERMEDIATE PIECES

William Grant Still

Piano Works for Children
Seven Traceries

Valerie Capers

Portraits in Jazz – 12 studies; must-buy

Harry T. Burleigh

From the Southland – 6 pieces; folk melodies; lyrical; lush chords

Saint-Georges

Adagio in F Minor – classical gem from the *first known* composer of African descent

Hale Smith

Faces of Jazz - 12 studies

Regina Baiocchi

Azuretta
Piano Etude #4

Jeremy Ajani Jordan

Children's Songs: Nocturne, Mazurka, and Scherzo

Quinn Mason

New Era Bagatelles
Piano Suite 'Homage a Lola Perrin'

John W. Work, III

Scuppernong
Appalachia

Florence Price

An Album of Piano Pieces (17)
A Second Album of Piano Pieces (14)

Three Suites for Piano
Song Without Words (G major)
The Goblin and The Mosquito
Silk Hat and Walking Cane

Margaret Bonds

Tangamerican

Basile Bares

Los Campanillas

Oswald Russell

Jamaican Dance No. 2

SELECTED REPERTOIRE

ADVANCED PIECES

Florence Price

Fantasia Negre Nos. 1, 2, 4
Sonata in E Minor

Fred Onovwerosuoke

24 Studies in African Rhythm

Margaret Bonds

Troubled Water

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

24 Negro Melodies
Moorish Dance
Three-Fours – (6) waltzes

R. Nathaniel Dett

Magnolia; *In the Bottoms*

George Walker

Sonatas Nos. 1-4
Prelude and Caprice

Edmund Dede

Mephisto Masque

Betty Jackson King

Four Seasonal Sketches

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson

Toccata; Sonatas

William Grant Still

Three Visions
A Deserted Plantation

H. Leslie Adams

26 Etudes for Solo Piano

Brian Raphael Nabors

Piano Sonata

David Bontemps

Gede Nibo (12 Variations)

David Baker

Jazz Dance Suite

Daniel Roumain

Jam!

FINAL THOUGHTS

Thank you for your time and interest in piano music by Black composers. This is *not* an exhaustive list. It merely gives a glimpse into the wonderful music that has been created.

REFERENCES

- Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago
- www.africlassical.com
- Keyboard Music of Black Composers: A Bibliography
- Composers websites: H. Leslie Adams, Regina Baiocchi, Everett Jones, Quinn Mason, Jeremy Ajani Jordan
- Scores available through: IMSLP, Amazon, Sheet Music Plus, Classicalondemand.com, Theodore Front Music