A HISTORY OF THREE AFRICAN - AMERICAN WOMEN WHO MADE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO MUSIC EDUCATION BETWEEN 1903 AND 1960

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to write a history of three African-American women who made important contributions to music education between 1903 and 1960. The three women who are presented in this study are Emma Azalia Smith Hackley (1867 – 1922), Harriet Gibbs Marshall (1869 – 1941), and Lulu Vere Childers (1870 – 1946). Emma Azalia Smith Hackley established the Vocal Normal Institute of Chicago, Illinois. Harriet Gibbs Marshall founded the Washington Conservatory of Music and School of Expression in Washington, D.C. Lulu Vere Childers was responsible for developing the small music program at Howard University in Washington, D.C. first into a Conservatory of Music, and then into a School of Music.

I gathered information for this thesis from both primary and secondary sources. For primary sources, I obtained information about Emma Azalia Smith Hackley from the Detroit Public Library, which has a collection of rare African-American music, drama, and dance materials, including those of Hackley. I also visited the University of Detroit Mercy Library to acquire rare newspapers that featured articles pertaining to all three women. In addition, I contacted the Moorland–Springarn Research Center at Howard University in Washington, D.C. for information about Childers and Marshall. I used the following online databases as secondary resources: (a) Music Index, (b) WorldCat, (c) Music Educators National Conference, (d) ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, (e) Music Education Resource Base, and (f) Computer-Assisted Information Retrieval Service System. Implications for music education included the importance of raising the awareness of the significant contributions to music education made by the African-American women in this study. One of several suggestions for further research was that
similar historical studies should be done about other African-American women and men in music education.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Wray and Alice Patterson and to my love, Dyrel Johnson. If it were not for your continued love and support, I don’t know where I would be. I love you!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Vincent J. Kantorski. His guidance and patience during this process has helped me immensely. I can only hope to become as devoted a teacher as he has been to me. I would also like to express my appreciation to Dr. Sandra Frey Stegman for her guidance and willingness to be an important part of this process. Her input in writing this thesis was extremely valuable. In addition, I would like to thank the faculty of Bowling Green State University’s College of Musical Arts who helped me to successfully complete my graduate degree. The lessons that I learned from each of them will follow me for the rest of my life. Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their continued love and support.

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Galatians 6:9
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Pre Civil War Education of African-Americans

During the slavery period in this country (17th century to 19th century), African slaves were not allowed to be educated. In many places, they could even be put to death if they were caught reading or writing. Educators who tried to secretly teach blacks were tormented and driven out of town. The Quakers, who were openly opposed to slavery, felt that once slavery was abolished there would be a need for educated blacks. Abolitionists like Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), John Jay (1745-1829), and Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) believed that slaves deserved the right to an education since America was built upon individual freedom (Morgan, 1995, p. 36).

The Quakers funded one of the first black colleges in the country in Cheyney, Pennsylvania, which was the Institute for Colored Youth, now named Cheyney University. In 1839, after receiving a donation from white philanthropist Richard Humphries, the Institute for Colored Youth was opened and taught vocational skills such as shoemaking and farming to black youth. Charles Avery, a wealthy white minister from Philadelphia, contributed a part of his $300,000 (approximately $6.7 million today) estate in 1849 to establish Avery College in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania. The Ashmun Institute opened in 1854 with contributions from the Presbyterian Church. It was originally intended to provide higher education to male students of African descent in the arts and sciences; eventually it also opened its doors to women of African descent. The Ashmun Institute was later renamed Lincoln University after President Abraham Lincoln in 1866. The Cincinnati conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church decided to raise money for a black college in Ohio. Consequently, Wilberforce University opened in 1856 and was later reorganized under the direction of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (Bennett, 1982, p.172).
Post Civil War Education of African-Americans

On January 1, 1863 Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which abolished slavery. However, without slave masters to house and feed them, many blacks were left homeless and penniless because of this decision. Most importantly, they had no form of education. For this very reason, Congress created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, which was more popularly known as the Freedmen’s Bureau. Headed by Union General Oliver O. Howard, the bureau’s main tasks were to provide aid for white and black Civil War refugees, control confiscated and abandoned property, reestablish order, and protect the freedmen (Butchart, 1980, pg. 98). It was created on March 3, 1865, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation, and although it was supposed to last for only one year, Congress extended it in 1866 despite a veto by President Andrew Johnson. One of the most important contributions of the bureau was the establishment of numerous schools for African-Americans.

Many of the historically black colleges and universities were founded by the bureau during this period of Reconstruction. The following 20 colleges were founded in the 11 year period between 1865 and 1876: Atlanta University (1865), Virginia Union University (1865), Fisk University (1866), Lincoln University (1866), Howard University (1867), Morehouse College (1867), Morgan State University, (1867), Talledega College (1867), Hampton University (1868), Claflin University (1869), Clark College (1869), Dillard University (1869), Tougaloo College (1869), Allen University (1870), Benedict College (1870), LeMoyne-Owen College (1870), Alcorn State University (1872), Bennett College (1873), Knoxville College (1875), Meharry Medical College (1876) (Bennett, 1982, p. 218). Black colleges and universities, along with many liberal predominately white institutions such as Oberlin College in Ohio, contributed to the education of
numerous black scholars. They produced not only many prominent doctors, scientists, and teachers, but also a host of talented musicians.

Music in general played a large part in African-American culture. For example, during the slavery period, black slaves used music to communicate messages and to inspire each other. In general, after the Civil War, many teaching jobs were held by black men and women. The respect given to music teachers enabled them not only to influence their students, but also to provide assistance and guidance to other members of the community (McGinty, 1997, p. 218). One of the earlier black music educators in the late 19th century was Letitia Arnold who was appointed as the first music teacher in the black schools of Washington, D.C. on September 1, 1869 (Elward, 1981, p. 35). Washington, D.C. holds a reputation of being the center of classical music activities for African-American musicians in the 19th century. This could have been largely due to George F. T. Cook who served as superintendent for the black schools there from 1868-1900. Cook constantly strived for excellence in music (and all subjects) and attracted highly capable music educators to his black school system (Elward, 1981, p. 35).

Another prominent educator who made a significant contribution to music education was John E. Esputa who worked in the schools as a music educator and was the director of Washington D.C.’s Black Opera Company. One of his most famous students was John Phillip Sousa, who was also a Washington, D.C. native. During Esputa’s career as a teacher, he gave benefit concerts to raise money for black schools, created a textbook that consisted of a collection of solfege exercises called *Esputa’s Musical Instructor*, and wrote grade-by-grade requirements in music to be tested at the end of each school year. This test consisted of analysis of music compositions, sight singing, and notating a composition on the blackboard (Elward, 1981, p. 36). The music educators mentioned above paved the way for the three women who will be discussed in this thesis; all of them
(Emma Azalia Hackley, Harriet Gibbs Marshall, and Lulu Vere Childers) had successful teaching careers in Washington, D.C.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to write a history three African-American women who made important contributions to music education between 1903 and 1960. The three women who are presented in this study are Emma Azalia Smith Hackley (1867 – 1922), Harriet Gibbs Marshall (1869 – 1941), and Lulu Vere Childers (1870 – 1946). My initial interest in this topic was the result of reading an article by Howe (2001) titled An Historical Perspective on Contributions of American Women Music Educators. Carefully reviewing this article led to greater interest and additional readings including Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists since 1860 (Locke & Barr, 1997), most specifically the chapter written by McGinty (pp. 59 –70) titled As Large as She Can Make It: The Role of Black Women Activists in Music, 1880 – 1945. Based on the information in this book, I selected the three African-American women who are the subjects of this study.

Procedure

I gathered information for this thesis from both primary and secondary sources. For primary sources I traveled to Detroit, Michigan to obtain information about Emma Azalia Smith Hackley. The Detroit Public Library has a collection of rare African-American music, drama, and dance materials, including those of Hackley. The collection was established in 1943 and is named after her. I also traveled to the University of Detroit Mercy library to acquire rare newspapers that featured articles discussing all three women. It was unrealistic for me to travel to Washington, D.C. for additional primary sources about Marshall and Childers, but I contacted the Moorland – Springarn Research Center at Howard University, which is one of the world’s largest and most
comprehensive repositories for the documentation of the history and culture of people of African descent. My secondary sources were the following online databases: (a) Music Index, (b) WorldCat, (c) Music Educators National Conference, (d) ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, (e) Music Education Resource Base, and (f) Computer-Assisted Information Retrieval Service System.
CHAPTER II: BIOGRAPHIES

Emma Azalia Smith Hackley (1867 – 1922)

Early Years

Azalia, as she was affectionately known, was born in Murfreesboro, Tennessee on June 29, 1867 to Henry and Corilla Smith. Henry worked as a blacksmith; Corilla was a schoolteacher and founded the first school for African-Americans in Murfreesboro. This school offered private music lessons to freed slaves from ages 14 to 20. The success of the school created racial tension, and educators were often threatened with physical violence; some were forced to leave the state. Corilla Smith even had bricks thrown through her school window several times while she was teaching.

After the birth of Azalia’s sister, Marietta, in 1870, their parents thought it would be best for the family to relocate to Detroit, Michigan in order to be near Azalia’s grandfather. Corilla had great ambitions for her daughter, Azalia. She wanted her to be an educator of other African-Americans and an outstanding figure in the music world (Davenport, 1947, p. 31). As a child, Azalia’s mother often sang to her, especially before Azalia went to sleep. At the age of three, Azalia was playing piano without any formal training. When she was six years old she entered the Miami Public School in Detroit, becoming the first African-American to enter this predominately white school. On the first day of school, Corilla told her daughter “It is up to you to make good and uphold the Negro and pave the way for those who are to follow you” (Davenport, p. 31). Corilla’s dreams for her daughter instilled an enormous sense of pride in Azalia. Even though she was often mistaken for white, Azalia always identified with her African-American heritage.

In 1879, Azalia entered Central High School in Detroit. She was a good student from the very beginning. In 1882, the year before she graduated, Azalia’s parents
separated. Her mother, Corilla, had to support both of her daughters on her own. This was especially difficult for her because Marietta, Azalia’s younger sister, had been very ill since birth. Corilla struggled to pay for Marietta’s medical care and Azalia’s private lessons in French and violin. Azalia decided to help her mother support the family by performing at singing engagements and playing violin with local orchestras. In spite of having the pressures of work and school, Azalia graduated from Central High School with honors in 1883. Following graduation, she attended Washington Normal School in Detroit and, in 1886, became its first African-American graduate. She then taught second and fourth grade at Detroit’s Old Clinton School (Davenport, 1947, p. 44).

In 1889, at the age of 22, Azalia met her husband to be, Edwin Hackley, at a recital given by Sisseretta Jones, a world-renowned soprano. Edwin was originally from Detroit, but was living in Denver where he was an attorney and political figure in his community. Following a five-year long-distance courtship, they eloped and were married on Azalia’s 27th birthday in 1894. The couple moved to Denver to start their new life together (Brevard, 2001, p. 23).

**Denver**

While in Denver, Mrs. Hackley continued her career as an educator and performer. She and her husband became well known in their community, Azalia as a coloratura soprano and Edwin as a strong political figure. Azalia attended the Denver School of Music to obtain a Bachelor of Music degree, becoming the first African-American woman to do so in 1900. The Colorado Statesman, which was an African-American newspaper started by her husband, announced her graduation saying: “Mrs. Hackley, who is the first Colored graduate from the College of Music of the University of Denver, received the degree of Bachelor of Music. She is the pride of the faculty and college and one of the most thoroughly educated musicians of her race” (Davenport, 1947
After graduation, Azalia began teaching in the Extension Department of the Denver School of Music and became the featured soloist at faculty concerts. At the same time, she sang in the Star Quartet Choral Society, which consisted of the Dean of the Denver School of Music and his wife Mrs. Blakesless, Professor Rossingnol (one of Azalia’s colleagues), and Azalia herself. In addition, she was the assistant director of the Monday Musical Club, which was the largest white choral ensemble in Denver.

Azalia chose to do many things in the community in addition to what she was required to do at the university. Her ultimate goal was to peak the musical interest of the young people in the community. Many of her recitals served as advertisements for choral training. When discussing her recitals she stated, “I want my concerts to be more than a mere evening of musical enjoyment; I want to plan them so that the youth may be inspired, stimulated, and trained at the same time” (Davenport, 1947, p. 88).

Unfortunately, all of her efforts as a performer and teacher, along with Edwin’s work as an attorney and politician, could not support them financially in Denver, which led them to relocate to Philadelphia in 1900.

*Philadelphia*

Upon moving to Philadelphia, Azalia decided that she wanted to focus her attention on the education and advancement of young African-American musicians. In addition, she wanted to stimulate a greater appreciation for African-American composers and Negro Spirituals. After suffering from financial setbacks in Denver, Azalia decided that she needed additional support in order to pursue these goals. As a result, she joined several African-American political groups. She also became involved with the *Negro Music Journal* and the Washington Conservatory of Music, the latter of which was founded by Harriet Gibbs Marshall, another African-American woman who will be discussed later in this thesis. Azalia knew that touring as a vocalist could also help her
raise money. One of her first recitals in Philadelphia took place on May 28, 1901 at the Bethlehem African Methodist Episcopal Church. She sang four selections during this program: *Staccato Polka* (Richard Mulder); *Villamelle* (Dell’Aqua); *Serena i vaghi rai Bel raggio Lusinghier* (Rossini) and *If I Were You* (Campbell – Tipton). As Azalia’s popularity as a vocalist continued to grow, she performed in many cities in the United States including Kansas City, Boston, and Washington, D.C. Simultaneously, she further pursued her exceptional teaching career (Brevard, 2001, p. 34).

In 1902 Andrew F. Hilyer, who was the Treasurer of the Samuel Coleridge Taylor Choral Society in Washington, D.C., requested that Azalia serve as a consultant for the development of the Choral Society. She graciously accepted, although her specific involvement is unknown (Brevard, 2001, pg. 36). In addition to her work with the Choral Society, Azalia had recently been asked to be the professor of voice at the Washington Conservatory of Music where she taught for the academic year 1903-1904. In 1904 she organized the People’s Chorus, which was later renamed the Hackley Choral Society. The People’s Chorus was made up of more than 100 singers from several church choirs. Azalia was usually featured as its principal soloist. However, she often featured members of the chorus who showed great promise, with hope of inspiring them to continue to pursue musical careers (Davenport, 1947, p. 115). One of those promising members was the great contralto Marian Anderson, who joined the chorus at the age of twelve. In 1939, Anderson became the first African-American woman to sing at the Lincoln Memorial, drawing a crowd of 75,000 people.

In 1905 Azalia decided that a trip abroad would be beneficial to her artistry. Once again, she needed money to accomplish this so she produced a large-scale recital that featured her as a soloist along with two of her students, Charles Marshall and Mary Saunders Patterson. The other performers were Edwin Francis Hill, violinist; Leila
Walker Jones, dramatic reader; and Carl Rossini Diton, pianist (Davenport, 1947, p. 117). The recital took place at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia and the seats were priced between 25 cents and two dollars, which is approximately $5 to $45 today (Friedman, nd). The recital raised enough money for Azalia to live in Paris for one year. While there, she studied with prominent voice instructor, Jean de Riszhe (Brevard, 2001, p. 38).

**Europe and Other Travels**

After two trips to Europe, Azalia devised several ways to help other young artists study abroad. For example, she developed a scholarship program to help young black singers study in several European cities such as London and Munich. Clarence Cameron White (1880 – 1960), a violinist who became a celebrated black composer, was the first beneficiary. He received $600, which would be equal to $12,600 today. The money was used to send Clarence to study in London with Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Other recipients of the scholarship included R. Nathaniel Dett (1882 – 1943), pianist; singers Cleota Collins (1893 – 1976) and Florence Cole Talbert (dates unknown); violists Harrison Emmanuel (dates unknown) and Kemper Harreld (1885 – 1971); and Carl R. Diton (1886 – 1962) who was also a pianist (McGinty, 1997, p. 224).

After she had successfully sent these students overseas, Azalia made a third trip to Europe, but this time she taught music lessons in addition to studying voice. She established two private voice studios in London and organized choruses in three sections of the city. Azalia’s success caused her to spend most of her time away from her home in Philadelphia. This became a strain on her and her husband Edwin’s relationship, which may have contributed to their separation in 1909. In that same year, Azalia self-published her book, *A Guide in Voice Culture*, an 18 page practical guidebook for young artists. In 1910 she embarked on a lecture tour throughout the South in which she visited predominately black schools, colleges, churches, and civic organizations. The topics of
her lectures were based upon her experiences as a performing musician, educator, and an African-American woman. They varied with each visit and included the “rudiments of voice culture,” understanding the capacity of the African-American voice, the art of living a happy life, and the subject of love (Davenport, 1947, p. 138). The lectures were usually followed by musical demonstrations, such as one would see in master classes, or entertainment.

Vocal Arts Institute

In 1912 Azalia set her sights on establishing her own institute where young musicians could be trained in vocal arts. After visiting Chicago to give a series of free voice lessons, she decided that it would be an ideal place to start building her school. She became aware of an old building on Calumet Street that was suitable for classroom space and living quarters, although none of the sources reviewed for this thesis stated if she purchased it herself. In the spring of 1912, the school opened its doors with four staff members and a matron. The curriculum was comprised of seven components: instruction in voice; rhythmical and musical calisthenics; lectures on poise, charm, balance, and stage personality; breath control; enunciation; voice placement; and the psychology of performing for an audience. The Institute also gave opportunities for realistic experiences in performing to prepare the students for future careers in music. Azalia often presented her students in recitals throughout Chicago (Davenport, 1947, p. 161).

Students came from all over the country to enroll in her school, which she named the Vocal Arts Institute. Many of them were not required to pay tuition because Azalia believed that the most talented students were often those who had the least money. The school was extremely successful. In fact, many of the other music training programs in the city had to close because the Institute offered its students so much instruction for so little money. However, because the school often permitted students to be trained for free,
it suffered many financial difficulties. Fearing that it would not survive, Azalia realized that she would once again have to travel to gain financial support. This tour would make people aware of the Institute as well as raise money to keep it open. Azalia spent most of her time traveling to cities around the country giving voice lessons, sponsoring festivals that featured the music of African-Americans, and giving recitals that included some of her most promising students. She also authored a series of articles in 1913 and 1914 that were published in the *New York Age*, which were collectively titled *Hints to Young Colored Artist*. By 1916, after approximately three years of touring, Azalia grew tired of being on the road so much. It was beginning to take its toll on her health. She started to wonder if the emotional, physical, financial, and mental stresses were truly worth it. The Institute was very important to her but it seemed impossible to maintain (Davenport, 1947, p. 165).

*The Colored Girl Beautiful*

Her final attempt to raise money for the Institute was to publish her book, *The Colored Girl Beautiful* (Hackley, 1916), which is currently out of print. However, a microfilm version was acquired for this thesis from the Ohio State University library. In the Forward, Azalia talks about the inspiration for her book:

This volume has been compiled from talks given to girls in colored boarding schools. The first talk was given at the Tuskegee Institute at the request of the Dean of the Girls Department (Hackley, 1916).

She then goes on to explain that:

The talks were very informal and personal and as the girls asked questions the thought came to me to jot down the points, that similar talks might be given to the girls in other schools. Then came the request, “You come so seldom, can you
print the talks?” Much of the talks could not be printed because many of the questions and answers were personal.

If I had a daughter I would desire that she should know these things and more, that she might be a beacon light to her home and to the race. As I have not been blessed with a daughter, I send these thoughts to the daughters of other colored women, hoping that among them there is some new thought worthy of a racial “Amen” (Hackley, 1916).

_The Colored Girl Beautiful_ featured 18 chapters that presented a wide range of topics. To Azalia, all of these topics work together to make up the essence and beauty of the African-American woman. The topics are as follows:

1. The Future
2. The Colored Child Beautiful
3. The Colored Girl Beautiful
4. Laws of Attraction – Vibrations
5. Love
6. Personal Appearance
7. Deep Breathing
8. Originality
9. Youth and Maturity
10. Self Control
11. Her Relationship with Men
12. The Religion of the Colored Girl Beautiful
13. The School of the Colored Girl Beautiful
14. The Home of the Colored Girl Beautiful
15. The Colored Working Girl Beautiful
Azalia wanted the people who needed her book the most to be able to afford it so she sold it for 75 cents (equal to approximately $14 today), which was much less than it was worth (Davenport, 1947, p. 167). Even though the book was extremely successful, it still did not generate enough money to keep her school open. In the spring of 1916, the Vocal Arts Institute closed its doors after being open for only four years. Azalia continued to teach until her health declined considerably. On December 13, 1922, Emma Azalia Smith Hackley died of a cerebral hemorrhage in Detroit.

In 1939, A. Merrill Willis and Edith Baker established the Hackley School of Music in New York City in Azalia’s honor. In 1943, the E. Azalia Hackley Memorial Collection of Music, Drama, and Dance was established at the Detroit Public Library by the Detroit Musicians’ Association (Brevard, 2001, p. 340).
Harriet Aletha Gibbs Marshall (1869 – 1941)

Early Years

Harriet Aletha Gibbs was born on February 18, 1869 in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Her father, Mifflin Gibbs, was a prominent businessman and political figure who was elected a municipal judge in 1873 in Little Rock, Arkansas. In 1879 President McKinley appointed Gibbs as the United States Consul to Tamatave, Madagascar. Maria Alexander, Harriet’s mother, was born in Kentucky and was a graduate of Oberlin College. When Harriet was nine years old, she started taking piano lessons with her sister, Ida. She began studying at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music at age 11 and at age 15 she graduated from high school and began her collegiate studies at Oberlin (McGinty, 1979, p. 60).

Teaching Career and Washington Conservatory of Music

In 1889 Harriet became the first African-American woman to graduate from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music with a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance. She later continued her studies in Boston, Chicago, and then Paris where she studied with Moritz Moszowski. After touring the United States briefly as a concert pianist she acquired a teaching position at the Normal School in Huntsville, Alabama. Her next position was at Eckstein-Norton University, a small black industrial college in Cane Spring, Kentucky. Harriet established the music department during her ten-year stay at this institution. She raised money for the construction of a music building by performing solo piano concerts that also included the Eckstein-Norton Choir, a group she organized and directed. In 1900, she left Cane Spring and moved to Washington, D.C. to become the Assistant Director of Music for African-American public schools. However, Harriet was frustrated in this position because of the lack of funding and insufficient facilities in the schools, which undermined her efforts to meet the needs of her black students. Even
though she was in charge of the black music department, most of the authority lied in the hands of her administrators. Harriet had intended to establish a music conservatory for black students for some time and being the Assistant Director of Music for African-American public schools made her realize even more how much an African-American conservatory was needed. She convened a group of music teachers who were well recognized for their contributions to music education in order to organize a board of directors for her proposed school. This group included two Washington city commissioners, the director of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and various other professional men and women of Washington, D.C. (McGinty, 1979, p. 63).

The result of this group’s planning was the establishment of the Washington Conservatory of Music in 1903. The faculty included world-renowned African-American musicians such as Clarence Cameron White, violinist and composer; J. Hilary Taylor, pianist and founder of the *Negro Music Journal*; and Emma Azalia Smith Hackley, soprano and educator (discussed at length earlier in this thesis), along with Gabriele Lewis Pelham, Livonia Haywood Johnson, Jeanette Williamson, and Harriet herself. The Conservatory offered courses in applied instruction (piano, voice, organ, strings), string ensemble, music history and musical biography, harmony (including counterpoint), public school music, and class piano (Schmalenberger, 2004, p. 45).

The opening of the conservatory was announced in the *Negro Music Journal*, which served as the official publication of the school. J. Hilary Taylor explained in it the positive impact that this school would have on the black community: “This movement should meet with the approval and support of all earnest music-lovers and educators and the public in general. If we desire racial progress, we must encourage all worthy movements that tend to uplift a community” (Negro Music Journal, 1902, p.28). Also
featured in this article was a list of the board members, a faculty roster, and pictures of some of the faculty.

The Washington Conservatory of Music was first housed in the True Reformers Hall. In 1904 Harriet’s father, Mifflin Gibbs, gave her a building at 902 Tea Street, N.W., which became the school’s permanent home. When the school moved from the True Reformers Hall, a new department, the School of Expression, which offered training in elocutionary and rhetorical skills, was added. Coralie Franklin Cook became the first director. Cook had studied rhetoric and public speaking at several colleges including Emerson College of Oratory in Boston. She eventually became the Chair of the Department of Oratory at Howard University (Schmalenberger, 2004, p. 49).

The conservatory struggled to remain open because of financial difficulties during its first several years. However, Harriet devised several ways to raise money to keep the school open. For example, she invited noted public figures to speak at student concerts, including Mary Church Terrell, an activist and teacher who started the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) (Schmalenberger, 2004, p. 59). Fortunately, the conservatory also received financial contributions from philanthropist E. V. Macy and E. H. Dodge, along with Alain Locke, W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and Silver Burdett, a music textbook publishing company. These contributions were the result of Harriet’s many correspondences with state representatives, politicians, musicians, and any other potential donors (McGinty, 1979, p. 63).

On June 3, 1906 Harriet married Napoleon B. Marshall who joined the faculty as a music history teacher and also took over many of the business arrangements (McGinty, 1979, p. 64). By this time, the conservatory had nine faculty members and 160 students.
It was becoming widely known and attracted students from the North, South, and Midwest.

The first commencement ceremony of the Washington Conservatory of Music was held in 1910 at the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church. The graduates were from five departments: School of Expression (Harriet Collier, Nathaniel Guy), Teachers Course in Piano and Theory (Celestine Lott, Florence Camper, Deserie Catlet, Cornelia Barton, Cleveland Lemons), Piano Tuning (Daisy Westbrook), Piano, Theory and Voice (Daisy Westbrook), and the Artist Course in Piano and Theory (Ruth Grimshaw, Helen Moss, Henry Lee Grant) (McGinty, p. 64). Grant would go on to become one of the founders of the National Association of Negro Musicians and Duke Ellington’s harmony teacher. The following is an excerpt from Ellington’s autobiography *Music is My Mistress* (1976):

Henry Grant, who taught music in our high school heard about me and invited me to come to his house to study harmony. It ended up a hidden course in harmony that lighted the direction to a more highly developed composition. It was a music foundation and I jumped at the opportunity because most of the advanced musicians had taken harmony from Henry Grant (Ellington, 1976, p. 28).

The conservatory’s second commencement, in 1911, was an even larger celebration than the first. This time it was held at the Howard Theater, one of the nation’s first African-American theaters, which helped to launch the careers of many talented artists such as Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, and Ethel Waters. Members of the Philadelphia Philharmonic (now named the Philadelphia Orchestra) came to participate in the orchestra at the commencement ceremony. Bessie Wilhelmina Patterson, one of the five graduates, played the Rubenstein piano concerto, opus 70. Patterson went on to
become director of music at Prairie View Normal School in Texas (McGinty, 1979, p.65).

National Negro Music Center

Harriet began a new project in 1920. She wanted to build a center that would be devoted to the preservation of black music and set a goal to raise $100,000 (approximately $1.2 million today) to go toward what would be called the National Negro Music Center. The primary fundraiser for this project was a program called “Three Periods of Negro Music and Drama,” a large-scale event that included music oratory, pageantry, and dance (Schmalenberger, 2004, p. 160). The program was divided into three sections: African, Antebellum in America, and Modern. The African section featured performers dressed in African garb who presented songs, dances, and recited folktales from African culture. The second section, Antebellum in America, included three Negro folksongs and three songs from an operetta written by T.A. Heathman and A. Russell Woodlay. The last section, Modern, was more lengthy than the first two sections. Twelve songs, ten of which were written by African-American composers such as H. T. Burleigh, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and R. Nathaniel Dett, were presented (Schmalenberger, 2004, p. 162). There were two performances of “Three Periods of Negro Music and Drama,” the first in New York City on April 24, 1921 and the second in Washington D.C. on May 6, 1922. A newspaper article with the headline “Give Concert to Aid Negro Conservatory,” which was published in Musical America (1921), stated the following concerning the New York City performance:

In the interest of a movement to establish a National Negro School of Music, Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes combined with the Washington Conservatory of Music in presenting one of the finest expositions of Negro music ever given to this country (Musical America, 1921, p.6).
The article went on to mention some of the participants including Beatrice Henry and Katherine Easmon. It also recognized the compositions of Burleigh, Coleridge-Taylor, and Dett. As an overall statement the article said that “The program proved a most eloquent appeal in behalf of the black man’s art and revealed splendidly the proficiency of African music” (*Musical America*, 1921, p. 6). Unfortunately, Harriet raised only $1100 from both performances. Falling so far short of her goal, she realized that it would take considerably more time to raise the $100,000 needed to open the National Negro Music Center.

*Haiti*

In 1923 Harriet left the conservatory temporarily to move to Haiti where her husband had been appointed cultural attaché. While there she co-founded an industrial school for girls and her experiences led to the publication of her book *The Story of Haiti* (1930). This 177 page book, retrieved from the Bowling Green State University Library, was a detailed history of Haiti from 1485 to 1929. Harriet received excellent reviews for her thorough research of Haitian history. One of those reviews was published in the *Journal of Negro History*:

> Mrs. Marshall’s interest in the history of Haiti was doubtless aroused by living in the country a number of years with her husband who held a position there in connection with the embassy of the United States. While the facts of history set forth in the book may be obtained from various works on Haiti, certain observations and methods of treating these phases of the history of the island naturally developed as they would in the mind of one with first hand information. In this respect, therefore, the book has a significance, which some other works cannot have (Brewer, 1930, p. 28).
In 1933, after her husband’s death, Harriet devoted all her time to the Washington Conservatory of Music and School of Expression and to raising money for the National Negro Music Center. By this time, she had changed the name of the fund to the Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Memorial fund. Coleridge-Taylor was an African-English composer who had been a huge influence on the African-American musicians at that time, including Harriet herself. Her new goal was to raise $5,000 (approximately $72,000 today) to go toward the Center. In order to achieve this goal she wrote *The Last Concerto* (1936), which was a drama based on the life and works of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. The specific amount raised from this event is unknown, but the National Negro Music Center opened sometime after 1937 (Schmalenberger, 2004, pg. 186). However, the end product was different from her original vision. Instead of being a research facility, it became a library that featured the publications of black composers that were donated by several major publishing companies. The last production was the “Masque Musical” (1937). This program was more multicultural than the previous programs, featuring music from various countries such as Asia, South America, and Europe. It was performed once in 1937 and again in November of 1940.

**Final Years**

Harriet continued to direct the Conservatory and National Negro Music Center during her final years even though she was confined to a wheelchair because of rheumatoid arthritis. She died on February 25, 1941 at the age of 72. After Harriet’s death, her cousin Josephine Muse became director of the Washington Conservatory of Music and School of Expression. The Conservatory closed when Muse died in 1960. Today, most of the materials of the Conservatory are housed in Howard University’s Moorland-Springarn Research Center, which is the world’s largest repository devoted to
the preservation of the African-American heritage (McGinty, 1979, p. 68). As of 2004, the building where the Conservatory was housed was still standing, but in disrepair. Efforts to determine if the Washington Conservatory of Music was still standing were unsuccessful.
Lulu Vere Childers (1870-1946)

Early Years

Lulu Vere Childers was born in Dryridge, Kentucky on February 28, 1870 to former slaves Alexander Childers and Eliza Butler. When she was five years old her family moved to Howell, Michigan and, in 1890, she graduated from Howell High School. After graduating from high school, Lulu attended the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Oberlin, Ohio to study voice. She received a diploma rather than a degree in 1896 because at that time the Conservatory did not grant degrees. However, ten years later, in 1906, her diploma was replaced by a Bachelor of Music degree. During her college years, Lulu performed in the Midwest with the Eckstein-Norton Music Company, which was a quartet of singers led by Harriet Gibbs Marshall (who was discussed earlier in this thesis). Earnings from the quartet’s performances contributed to the development of the music department at Eckstein-Norton University. After graduating from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Lulu continued to pursue her interest in singing by studying with William Shakespeare, Sydney Lloyd Wrightson at the Washington Conservatory of Music, and Oscar Devries at Chicago Musical College (McGinty, 1999, p. 810).

Teaching Career

Even though Lulu had promising vocal talent, her interests were in teaching, choral conducting, and administration. From 1896 to 1898, she taught music in the public schools of Ulrichsville, Ohio before starting a career as a college music professor at Wiley College in Marshall, Texas in 1898. She also served as director of the Music Department at Knoxville College in Knoxville, Tennessee from 1900 to 1905. While there, she formalized the institution’s music curriculum and strengthened the choral
ensemble. In 1905 she moved to Washington, D.C. to become an instructor of methods courses and vocal music at Howard University (McGinty, 1992, p. 421).

_Development of Howard University Music Department_

Howard University’s music department was steadily developing prior to Childers’s appointment. The first music teacher was J. Emma Griffin, who was hired in 1870. She resigned after only two months stating that her salary was too low. Many other teachers were hired after that but none of them stayed for more than two years for the same reason. M. E. Goldberg was the music instructor from 1873 to 1874. He established the glee club and chorus during his tenure. After he resigned, the administration decided to close the music department. Students were employed as music instructors between 1874 and 1876, but they petitioned the Board for a skilled professional to instruct the choir and glee club. As a result, Mr. Taylor (first name not given) from Howard University’s Theological Department was hired to be the administrator of the music department (Dyson, 1941, p. 127).

The Howard University music department did not have a permanent teacher until 1893, when William J. Stevens was hired. He served for 11 years, during which time he developed the glee club and chorus, which M. E. Goldberg had founded. Gabrielle L. Pelham, a graduate of the Conservatory of Music in Adrian, Michigan, was made Director of Music at the University in 1905, which was the same year Lulu Vere Childers was hired (Dyson, 1941, p. 128).

For several years after Childers was hired, she and C. Beatrice Lewis were the only two members on staff; Childers taught voice and Lewis taught piano. However, during the development of the School of Music, Lulu, having been appointed as the Director of Music in 1906, steadily established the music faculty. Many of the faculty members she hired stayed for only a couple of years, primarily because they were still
active performers. By 1935, there were 13 faculty members including the noted African-American composer Camille Nickerson (1888–1982) (Dyson, 1941, p. 136).

*Choral Productions*

In 1906, a year after Lulu’s arrival, the music department became a part of the Teachers College (Dyson, 1941. p. 128). In order to develop the new department, Lulu established a college-level curriculum, hired experienced instructors, and developed the chorus, which was now named the University Choral Society. She also conducted the chorus for Sunday afternoon Vespers. Quite often the chapel would be filled to capacity, especially during Christmas and Easter programs. At the 1929 Christmas service, Lulu drew a crowd so large that there was standing room only and 400 people had to be turned away because of the limited space (Logan, 1969, p. 280). However, according to Dyson (1941), with the development of the automobile, and the introduction of Sunday movies and baseball, audiences began to dwindle.

By 1907 the University Choral Society had reached a new level of achievement with its performance of Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, which featured Lulu as a soloist along with H.T. Burleigh (1866-1949), Charlotte Murray, Sidney Woodward, and Pearl Barnes. This performance received excellent reviews and drew a considerable amount of attention to the Department of Music at Howard University. Each year, Lulu presented a new choral work including Handel’s *Messiah* (1912), Gabriel Pierne’s *The Children’s Crusade* (1915), and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor’s *Hiawatha* (1919) (McGinty, 1982, p. 108).

*Opera Productions*

Along with her noted choral productions, Lulu also presented numerous opera performances, which was unusual for an undergraduate college music program at that time. In 1923, the university presented Gilbert and Sullivan’s operetta *The Mikado*, which
Lulu directed. Later productions included *Il Trovatore* (1939), *Faust* (1940), and *I Pagliacci* (1942). For these performances, Lulu directed the University Choral Society, which had been enhanced by participants from the Men’s and Women’s Glee Clubs. One unique feature was the presence of a large symphony orchestra, which incorporated members of the National Symphony Orchestra as well as University Symphony at Howard (McGinty, 1982, p. 109). Washington newspaper critics were very impressed with the university’s professionalism and musicianship. Gunn reviewed the 1939 performance of *Il Trovatore* in the *Times-Herald* (21 May, 1939) stating:

> The direction, both in the pit and on the stage, was excellent. Several of the soloists showed excellent vocal and dramatic gift. The choruses were brilliant, the ballet picturesque, the orchestra competent, though practically unprofessional, and every person in the production, the conductor excepted, is a Negro (McGinty, 1982, p. 109).

In 1910, a music theory course was added to the curriculum and an ear-training course was added in 1911. Music history was added in 1913 and the Department of Music became the Conservatory of Music the same year (Dyson, 1941, p. 132). In 1918, the Conservatory of Music’s name was changed to the School of Music. However, it was not until 1929 that all of the courses were organized into a four-year plan that lead to a bachelor of music degree. Also, in 1929, a Public School Music department was added and in 1934 the School of Music offered a bachelor of public school music degree.

**Concert Series**

One additional activity that Lulu started and that continued for many years was an annual concert series that brought famed musicians to the Washington community (McGinty, 1999, pg. 810). The series included recitals performed by Estelle Pinckney-Clough, Roland Hayes, H.T. Burleigh, Florence Cole-Talbert, and William Simmons.
During the 1938-1939 series, she invited contralto Marian Anderson to perform. Lulu, along with university officials, knew that they would need a large venue for a performer of Marian Anderson’s status. The performance gained national attention because both the Board of Education of Washington, D.C. and the Daughters of the American Revolution (D. A. R.) refused to let Anderson perform in their facilities because of her race. Many people were outraged by this deliberate racism including both the First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who resigned from the D. A. R. because of it, and Harold Ickes, secretary of the interior, who in turn invited Anderson to perform at the Lincoln Memorial. On Easter Sunday of 1939 Marian Anderson gave a free recital on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to an audience of 75,000 people.

**Final Years**

A year later, in 1940, Lulu Vere Childers retired from Howard University after teaching there for 35 years. In 1942 she was granted an honorary Doctor of Music degree from Howard for her service to the university. She died in 1946 at her home in Howell, Michigan. The classroom portion of Howard University’s fine arts complex was named Lulu V. Childers Hall in her honor in 1956. Lois Mailou Jones, a Howard University professor and artist of international fame, painted a portrait of Childers, which was hung in the building in 1964 (McGinty, 1999, pg. 811).
CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION

Similarities and Differences

The purpose of this study was to write a history of three African-American women who made important contributions to music education between 1903 and 1960. The subjects were Emma Azalia Smith Hackley (1867-1922), founder of the Vocal Arts Institute; Harriet Gibbs Marshall (1869–1941), founder of the Washington Conservatory of Music; and Lulu Vere Childers (1870–1946), who was responsible for developing the small music program at Howard University into the School of Music. While conducting research for this thesis, similarities and differences among these women became evident. For example, there were six similarities that surfaced either between two women or among all three women: (a) music lessons; (b) colleges attended; (c) authorship; (d) multiple teaching venues; (e) travel; and (f) valuing education and performance. Three differences among them were the (a) longevity of each institution, (b) types of institutions they founded or developed, and (c) availability of written material about each woman.

It was interesting that Hackley and Marshall both began their musical training at an early age. Hackley started playing piano when she was three years old, although it is not known for how long she continued to play. Sometime before entering high school, she began private lessons in violin and voice. Unlike Hackley, who had private studies in several instruments (piano, violin, and voice), Marshall primarily played one instrument, piano. Marshall began taking piano lessons with her sister Ida when she was nine years old. Marshall and Childers both graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. At age 11, Marshall began studying piano at Oberlin as a pre-college student, and at age 15 she began her collegiate studies there. Marshall became the first African-American woman to graduate from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music when she received her
Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance in 1889. Seven years later, in 1896, Childers received a Bachelor of Music degree from Oberlin with a specialization in voice.

In addition to teaching and performing, Hackley and Marshall authored several publications. Hackley wrote two publications, *A Guide to Voice Culture* (1909), which was an 18 page practical guidebook for young artists, and *The Colored Girl Beautiful* (1916). The latter was compiled from lectures given to African-American girls at several boarding schools. Both books are currently out of print but were very popular at the time. Hackley also authored a series of articles in 1913 and 1914 that were published in the *New York Age*. These articles were collectively titled “Hints to Young Colored Artists.”

Marshall published *The Story of Haiti* (1930), which was a detailed history of Haiti from 1485 to 1929. She received excellent reviews for her thorough research of Haitian history. In addition, Marshall occasionally wrote articles for the *Negro Music Journal*.

Another notable similarity among the three women is that they all taught in various cities in the United States. Hackley taught in more cities than Marshall or Childers. She taught in Detroit, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Denver. She also made a lecture tour in numerous cities throughout the South. Marshall taught in Alabama, Kentucky, and Washington, D.C., and Childers taught in Ohio, Texas, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C. The only city that all three women taught in was Washington, D.C. Marshall opened her Washington Conservatory of Music in 1903 and invited Hackley to teach there from 1903 to 1904. Childers came to Washington D.C. in 1905 and remained there until she retired in 1940. It is noteworthy that the three women in this thesis all had such close ties to Washington, D.C., which seems to have been where African-American musicians could go for opportunities to perform and teach. One important factor that may have contributed to this is the passing of a law in April 1862 that authorized the emancipation of slaves in Washington, D.C. This law was passed
eight months prior to the national Emancipation Proclamation, which became effective on January 1, 1863. During that short eight month period, between April 1862 and January 1863, thousands of blacks came to Washington D.C. from Maryland, Virginia, and other locations in the South. By 1900, the city was home to the largest urban concentration of African-Americans in the United States (McGinty, 1992, p. 409).

Although all three women had teaching careers in various places around the United States, two of them also taught in other countries. Hackley made several trips to Europe to study voice and also to teach voice lessons. She established two private voice studios in London and organized choruses in three sections of the city. Hackley also developed a scholarship program to help young black singers study in several European cities such as London and Munich. Marshall left the Washington Conservatory of Music temporarily to move to Haiti where her husband, Napoleon B. Marshall, had been appointed cultural attaché in 1923. While there, she co-founded an industrial school for girls and her experiences led to the publication of her book *The Story of Haiti* (Marshall, 1930).

It is noteworthy that all three women seemed to have valued education over performing. For example, Childers had promising vocal talent, but her interests were in teaching, choral conducting, and administration. When Hackley and Marshall performed it was often to raise money to improve students’ music education, not for their own personal gain. Hackley performed for the longest period of time of the three women. She performed for 39 years, from 1882 when she first performed with professional orchestras as a high school student until 1921 when her health declined. She died one year after that, in 1922, from a cerebral brain hemorrhage. The proceeds from many of her performances often went toward the education of young African-American musicians. When Marshall taught at Eckstein-Norton University in Cane Spring, Kentucky, she raised money for the
construction of a music building by performing solo piano concerts, and she did the same for the Washington Conservatory of Music.

One important difference among the three women in this study has to do with the longevity of the institutions they founded or developed. The Howard University School of Music, developed by Childers, is the only institution that is still open today. The Washington Conservatory of Music, founded by Marshall, was open for 57 years, from 1903 to 1960. The Vocal Arts Institute, founded by Hackley, was open for the least amount of time, only four years from 1912 to 1916. The type of school that each person started or developed was also different. The Vocal Arts Institute was unique because its entire curriculum was designed to train vocalists. In contrast, the Washington Conservatory of Music and the Howard University School of Music offered courses for instrumentalists and future music educators, in addition to vocalists. The Washington Conservatory of Music was distinctive because of its School of Expression, which was an unusual specialty area of study for a music conservatory. The School of Music at Howard University originally offered voice and piano courses only, but it later added music theory, music history, and public school music. Another notable difference among the three institutions was that the Vocal Arts Institute and the Washington Conservatory of Music were both founded by African-American women, but the Howard University School of Music was developed, not founded, by an African-American woman.

I found the least amount of material written about Childers; it appears that Hackley and Marshall have been researched more in depth than Childers. Currently, there are two biographies of Emma Azalia Smith Hackley. The first, titled Azalia: The Life of Madame E. Azalia Hackley, was written by Marguerite Davenport in 1947 and the second, A Biography of E. Azalia Smith Hackley, 1867-1922: African-American Singer and Social Activist, was written more recently by Lisa Pertillar Brevard in 2001. The life
of Harriet Gibbs Marshall was thoroughly chronicled in Sarah Schmalenberger’s dissertation titled *The Washington Conservatory of Music and African-American Musical Experience, 1903-1941*. In addition, Doris Evans McGinty provided an extensive history of Marshall’s life in the article “The Washington Conservatory of Music and School of Expression,” which was featured in the *Black Perspective of Music* (1979). McGinty also wrote the majority of sources I found about Childers. Interestingly, she became a professor of music at Howard University in 1947, which was only seven years after Childers, who had developed the university’s School of Music, retired.

**Implications for Music Education**

Women are very likely underrepresented in music education literature, especially African-American women. Since multiculturalism has become increasingly important in music education, awareness of the significant contributions of music educators of different races can be very beneficial to teachers and students. Standard nine of the National Standards for Music Education requires students to understand music in relation to history and culture. Consequently, it may be beneficial for general music teachers to use information from this thesis in their classrooms at all levels. It would be especially useful for lessons during Black History Month in February. Music teacher education programs can also use this material when discussing the history of music education, including early music educators. Furthermore, the women of this study can serve as role models to pre and in-service teachers, regardless of their race or gender, who desire to pursue administrative or leadership roles.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

1. Further research is needed to determine if any of the graduates of the Washington Conservatory of Music have gone on to make important contributions to music education.
2. Currently there are two books written about Emma Azalia Smith Hackley and one dissertation about Harriet Gibbs Marshall. However, more in-depth study is needed for Lulu Vere Childers and her contributions to the Howard University School of Music.

3. Similar historical studies should be done about other African-American women and men in music education.

4. A case study of living African-American women and men who have made significant contributions to music education may be beneficial to the profession.
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