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## R. NATHANIEL DETT'S GIFTS TO AMERICAN MUSIC

Hampton, Va., Dec. 26.—"The Chariot Jubilee" and other compositions of R. Nathaniel Dett, including "Weeping Mary," "In the Bottom," "Music in the Mine" and "Magic Moon of Mother Gold" are enthusiastically reviewed by Frederick Martens, contributing editor to "Musical America," in the December issue of the "Southern Workman," which is published by Hampton Institute. Mr. Martens' review, in part, follows:

### SPIRITUALS' WORLD APPEAL.

IN PREPARING to set down some of the impressions and reactions produced by a study of the more recent works which have come from the pen of R. Nathaniel Dett, my eye chanced to fall on the copy of "Religious Folk Songs of the Negro" which lay on my work-table, and I could not help but feel that it represented the ideal point of departure for any consideration of what this composer has done. Aside from any intrinsic value of its own the fine Hampton edition of these authentic plantation songs has served to inspire original work of enduring value and beauty on the part of those men who have carried the message of the old "spiritual" to a world audience—men like Coleridge-Taylor, Harry Burleigh, and R. Nathaniel Dett—and have proven that the folk-singing of the Negro may compare with that of any other race in emotional depth and melodic loveliness.

Nathaniel Dett is, chronologically, probably the most recent outstanding figure among American composers to exploit this field. How has he made his influence felt therein? As we remember, that admirable motet, "Listen to the Lambs," followed by "O Holy Lord," and the occupational chorus, "Music in the Mine," based on the characteristic "cries" of the miners (much in the spirit of Jannequin's old seventeenth-century secular motet on the "street cries" of Paris) first drew wider attention to Mr. Dett's masterly employ of the valuable thematic material he knows so well. Then later came those finished shorter choral workings out of "Weepin' Mary" and "I'll Never Turn Back No More," which cannot well be bettered as examples of how to enrich, by means of a sympathetic harmonization, the original simple contour of the "spiritual" without doing injury to its essentially folksong character.

"America the Beautiful," a fine patriotic chorus, does not, of course, fall into the category of folk-song numbers, but is a personal reaction to the spirit of the times which prompted it.

Of course these works and the "Magnolia" and "In the Bottoms" suites for the piano had already established Mr. Dett's reputation as one of the younger generation in America composition from whom more was to be expected. At the same time a period seemed to have been reached when critics would await with interest the appearance of subsequent numbers in order to come to a more definite conclusion as to the composer's true status, his importance as a really permanent factor in American composition.

"Chariot Jubilee" is inspired. It is not too much to say that the group of choral works and songs by R. Nathaniel Dett, which have just come from the press, establish beyond all chance of doubt that he is moving up and on, and is showing a deeper quality of inspiration, a richer and more matured finish of musicianship. This impression is unescapable in the case

of that truly inspired piece of choral writing, the "Chariot Jubilee," the motet for tenor solo and chorus of mixed voices with accompaniment of organ, piano, or orchestra, which the composer wrote at the request of the Syracuse University Chorus and its conductor, Professor Howard Lyman. The "request" or "occasion" number has an unenviable reputation for being dry and academic; that adjective "worthy" in the sense of lacking interest is often applied to it. But Nathaniel Dett's "Chariot Jubilee" should go far to destroy the general belief in the uninspired nature of the "request" number.

It is only a short score of some thirty-one pages, yet may claim to be a masterpiece of its kind. It has that inner cohesion, that unity of inspiration, of progressive culminating movement, the free yet musical logical simultaneous development which harmonizes rich detail with breadth of outline, all of which are so much more important than any mere outward and uninspired formal development. It is built—a whole throbbing, pulsing movement, whose fermatas are less interruptions of the mounting tide of choral motion than points of emphasis and departure for a more sustained and colorful working-up—on a few themes. These the composer has handled with a master's control of his material.

The richest variety of dynamite and interpretative effect, solo passages with cantellations that stand forth floridly, a splendidly contrasted handling of inner and outer voices in a counterpoint which is never arid: an ever-increasing fervor of expression, a stretto of movement, sonorous body of choral sound, and passionate intensity culminate in the magnificent allegro finale, rightly marked con abandon. The low basses at times have the ritual quality of the Greek Catholic male-choir voices. If R. Nathaniel Dett had written no other work the "Chariot Jubilee" would suffice to make his name. It has potentialities of effect present in very few, if any, choral works of its length.

### Choral Development.

While the "Chariot Jubilee" is outstanding among Mr. Dett's more recent output, yet there are other new numbers of his which deserve mention. There are, for instance, the adaptations of Negro spirituals which give the simple originals a distinctive personal art-song quality, without doing injury to their mood or spirit—"I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always," for a three-part chorus of women's voices; and "Done Paid My Vow to the Lord" for the same setting of voices, but with a fine solo part for low voice. The originals of these folk-tunes are not in the Hampton book of spirituals but from the private collection of Nathaniel Dett and G. Lake Innes respectively. We need only compare these lovely, haunting religious chorals of the slave states, as Nathaniel Dett presents them, with some of the so-called antebellum and "sacred songs" of the day in order to realize the gulf that yawn

between the truly inspired and the commercially motivated in devotional music.

And what has been said of Nathaniel Dett's choral developments of the "spiritual" themes, applies in equal measure to his admirable song transcriptions of similar material—"Follow Me" and "Somebody's Kockin' at Your Door," the first for high, the second for low voice. Yet, just as the "Chariot Jubilee" shows incontestably that he has a rich inspirational vein of his own (for to my thinking his work is in essence an original work), so in his songs he does not have to depend for all that he does on his folk-song themes. His "A Thousand Years Ago or More" calls up a Nilotic reminiscence with a poesy of imagination, a delicacy and beauty of melodic utterance that could not better express the soul of his poem. And in his "Magic Moon of Molten Gold," a serenade at St. Pierre, he gives its full meed of sensuous tonal charm to the imagery of the text. It is no pale, graceful serenade suited to a colder clime, but an ardent melody a-tremble with Creole passion. No, there can be no doubt but that Nathaniel Dett has set a hallmark, a standard on his work as a composer in these new scores of his which cannot well be questioned. And for this all lovers of the sincere and beautiful in music may be grateful.

### DAY OF PRAYER FOR OUR ASSASSINATED.

The time has come to act in harmony to bring to the attention of the world, now and forever, the existing conditions of the times in America and concerted endeavor to bring about better feeling.

To this end the Chicago Defender calls upon and urges the people throughout the length and breadth of the land to make Sunday, January 4, 1920, a day of solemn prayer, in memory of the thousands of people of our group who have been wantonly assassinated at the hands of demon mobs and murdered in cold blood for alleged crimes, without due process of law, as guaranteed by the constitution of the United States.

It is urged further that the people assemble in their various churches, lodge halls, and that families be called together in their homes and engage in prayer on this occasion, that the Congress and President of the United States may be stirred to immediate action in the defense of and for the universal protection of law-abiding people.

Note to pastors: Forward us the name of your church and approximate number attending services on January 4.

### NEGRO ADVANCEMENT SOCIETY DOUBLES MEMBERSHIP.

Race riots and lynchings in 1919 have only served to increase the determination of Negroes throughout the United States to organize to wipe out these evils, according to announcement made today by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, whose membership more than doubled in the year.

"Colored people of the United States are awake as never before to the need of organizing," said the announcement, "to obtain justice and maintain peace. The membership of this association, which was 8,427 in November 1917, jumped to 84,729 in November 1918, and more than doubled this,

reaching 88,292 on the first of December, 1919.

"The number of branches throughout the country jumped from 80 in 1917 to 145 in November, 1918, and was more than doubled in the current year, reaching 310 on December 1st last."

### BOULDER NEWS.

(By Ty Cobb.)

Mrs. M. Smith was given a surprise party last Wednesday night by her many friends. From the number of presents she received it shows the evidence of Mrs. Smith's popularity. Quite a nice time was enjoyed by all, but the game, "Upset the Fruit Basket," proved to be injurious to some as well as dangerous. The reporter dropped in and was invited to partake of a delicious spread. Oh, my! who is next?

The grand dance Christmas night promises to eclipse any social event given this season. Great preparations are being made and lots of friends are expected up from Denver.

Mr. and Mrs. George Reeves have just received a communication from their daughter, Miss Cleora, that she is en route to Lafayette, Mo., to visit her grandmother for the holidays. Miss Reeves is attending Lincoln Institute at Jefferson City, Mo.

Professor Biggers was up Saturday and formed a class for a business course.

The reporter departed Saturday for Kansas City, Mo., to spend the holidays with relatives and friends. Oh, yes, he will return.

From what the reporter saw in his rounds Santa Claus will make some of the young ladies very happy.

Now that all danger is past and the world did not burn up on the 17th, as predicted, the sages and wise men are out with heavy explanations as "I told you so."

The citizens of Goss street were much alarmed to see on the morning of the 17th Dick Morrison, Thorn Thompson, John Morris and G. Jones with telescopes in hand spying at the sun and assuring everyone that all danger had passed.

### TO AGITATE NEGRO OPPRESSION IN UNITED STATES.

Dudley Field Malone Will Speak—"The American Congo" to Be Described.

A mass meeting to rouse public sentiment to the wrongs suffered by the American Negro will be held on the evening of January 5th in Cooper Union on the occasion of the annual meeting in New York City of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, it was announced today at the headquarters, 70 Fifth avenue. Dudley Field Malone, former collector of the port of New York is to be the chief speaker.

Dr. W. B. B. DuBois has announced as his subject "The American Congo," a description of conditions in the South ravaging the horrors of the Belgian Congo.

The other speakers announced for the meeting are John Haynes Holmes and M. H. Gassaway, who was threatened with assassination in Anderson, South Carolina, because of his connection with the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The evening mass meeting is to be preceded by a business meeting at 2 p. m. at the Sage Foundation building.

## RACE NEWS Gathered From Various Sources

### LIBERIA MAKES SPECIAL APPEAL TO DENTISTS.

Monrovia, Liberia, Dec. 19.—During the visit of the Spanish influenza to this country several dentists fell victims to the malady, and as a result Liberia has issued an appeal to American dentists to turn their attention to this republic. A special appeal is being made to Chicago and New York dentists to correspond with C. J. George, Water street, Monrovia, Liberia, W. C. A. The letter says: "The field is unexplored and the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."

### AFRICAN PRINCE AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY.

Boston, Dec. 18.—Stephen Balfour Mfofo, a prince of an African royal family, is represented among the student body at the college of liberal arts of Boston University. The prince's father is a farmer at Larteh, West Africa, on the Gold coast, and is engaged in raising cocoa.

"Most young men from the Gold coast of Africa go to England for higher education," Mr. Mfofo said. "The schools at home are under the English and German system. I heard so much about America at home, so we came over here instead of going to England."

Mr. Mfofo has been in America five years, doing his college "prep" work and completing his plebe year of college at Wilberforce, Ohio. He will remain this year at the college of liberal arts of Boston University, where he is registered as a sophomore. Next year he will go to Boston University, school of medicine. Upon completing his medical course in 1924 Mr. Mfofo plans to return to Gold coast and practice medicine among his native people.

Two of his fellow countrymen are students at Harvard University.

### FORMER PRESIDENT'S SON AGREES TO GO ON HOWARD UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

Washington, D. C.—Dr. Emmett J. Scott, Secretary-Treasurer of Howard University, announces that Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, son of the former President of the United States, has accepted the suggestion of Dr. J. Stanley Durkee, president of Howard University, that his name be proposed for election as a member of the Howard University Board of Trustees at the meeting of the board to be held in February.

President Roosevelt, in speaking of Howard University some years ago, said,—"It is from this institution that are graduated those who will lead and teach their less fortunate fellows. Upon their leading and teaching much depends for their race and their country. I have a peculiar interest in Howard University because of having seen the effects of their work close at hand."

The former President's son has something of the same "peculiar interest in Howard University," and is planning to cooperate in every way possible with the officials of the Uni-

versity in putting under way the great reconstruction and reorganization program of the University, which has assumed a new leadership and has attained, as has been aptly said, a new conception of her mission, through aiming practically and deliberately at meeting the national demand in race leadership, and thus fulfilling her proper duty and mission as the national institution for the higher and professional educational of colored youth.

### THEY WOULDN'T CARRY THE FLAG.

In front of The Helena Independent office a few evenings ago, the fife and drum corps assembled to play martial music. Dr. L. M. Rheem, secretary of the Commercial Club, called for a volunteer to carry the American flag. Several hundred men and boys were assembled. The Commercial Club secretary called to several men to carry the American flag. They shook their heads. Several young boys were appealed to to carry the flag. They did not want the job. The doctor raised his voice.

"Any of you men should be proud to carry that flag anywhere," he shouted.

No one responded. A second call was made. Pushing his way through the crowd Otho Allen, a colored man, got near Rheem and said:

"I'll carry that flag anywhere." The colored man was given the flag of his country to carry. He carried it proudly. The white men in the crowd thinned out and finally disappeared into near-by loafing places.

They did not want the sound of martial music to reach their ears.

### Y. M. C. A. NOTES.

The meeting at Fern hall last Sunday afternoon was full of enthusiasm and pep. Miss Martin of the American Woodmen, representing that organization as its delegate on the program, was at her best, giving selections from her own poetical compositions. Mrs. Pope, who was to have represented the Eastern Star, was prevented by illness from appearing. That body, however, was represented by Mrs. Derry and Mrs. Sloan, the retiring and succeeding presidents. Editor Joseph D. D. Rivers of The Colorado Statesman, on being called upon, stated that he had not come to the meeting to talk, but to do, and forthwith made good his statement by presenting a check of a substantial size for the work. Several memberships also were reported, the largest number being turned in by Gilbert Zachery of the Denver Athletic Club.

A desperate effort is being made to finish the quota and close the big drive by tomorrow (Sunday) night. To that end a monster rally and closing-year meeting will be held at Shorter Church tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock, at which the effort will be made not only to secure the quota but also to "go over the top." William E. Sweet, of Sweet, Foster, Tandy & Co., president of the local work and recently elected president of the International Y. M. C. A., will be the principal speaker. He will tell the men the hopes and plans of the board of directors for the work, and encourage them to make good in every way. Ira E. Lute, the general secretary, will also be present. This will be by far the most important meeting ever held by the branch, and every man and woman in the city should be present. Music will be furnished by the church choir.