

RASHAD PROGRAM YEAR ENDS ON HIGH NOTE

By **Regennia N. Williams, PhD**

“Teaching history through the arts” took on a new meaning for me as RASHAD closed out the academic year with its **2009 Religious History and Sacred Music Institute**. The keynote lecture, new music seminar, and performances attracted a combined total of nearly 500 people. These activities also provided countless opportunities for participants to acquire new knowledge about African American cultural history.

On Monday, April 20th, the **Greater Cleveland Choral Chapter of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses** opened the Institute with a performance in the newly renovated Main Classroom Auditorium. Michael Dotson and the Rev. John Engram directed the 50-member group’s presentation of contemporary Christian songs.

In the keynote lecture for the evening, “The Matrix of African American Sacred Music in the 21st Century,” **the Rev. Dr. Cheryl Kirk-Duggan** of Shaw University, a renowned author and theologian, shared information about her on-

going research and invited members of the audience to join her in critically analyzing the sacred music of our time.

The closing events of the Institute were just as exciting as the opening ones. The nave of Trinity Cathedral provided a beautiful setting for the April 25th New Music Seminar with Emory University’s **Dr. James Abbington**.

The April 26th concert showcased the talents of the **Spiritual Gifts Ensemble**, the **Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s All-City Chorale**, and **Dr. Fred Wheatt and the Melting Pot Orchestra**; and the May 2nd **Wings Over Jordan Workshop** brought the Institute and RASHAD’s program year to a thrilling conclusion.

All of RASHAD’s Spring 2009 programs helped facilitate the creation of scholarly and creative works that will enhance student learning at Cleveland State University for years to come. Among the most significant outcomes are:

- The Rev. Dr. Kirk-Duggan’s willingness to contribute her revised essay to the fall 2009 issue of RASHAD’s *Journal of Traditions and Beliefs*



Regennia N. Williams and the Rev. Hilton O. Smith, Turner Construction’s Senior Vice President and National Director of Community Affairs and program patron for the Spiritual Gifts concert

- The availability of the streaming video of Dr. Cynthia Crane’s, lecture, “Divided Lives: Jewish-Christian Women in Nazi Germany”
- The first Praying Grounds educational video, “Spiritual Gifts”
- Publication of the *Proceedings of the Women and Spirituality Symposium* in the fall of 2009
- The creation of “An Essential Gospel Music Listening Library” for the University Library
- New sheet music and audio recordings for the Praying Grounds University Library collection, and
- The release of a new educational and promotional CD, “Live in Cleveland,” containing selections from the Spiritual Gifts Ensemble’s April 26th concert.

We celebrate these past successes, but, as information on the pages of this publication suggests, we are also thinking strategically and formulating plans for future growth and change.



In Concert: Spiritual Gifts, April 26, 2009

Non-Discrimination Statement

Cleveland State University is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in employment and education. No person at the university will be denied opportunity for employment or education or be subject to discrimination in any project, program, or activity because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, handicap or disability, disabled veteran, Vietnam era veteran or other protected veteran status.

“PRAYING GROUNDS AND CONTESTED TERRAIN”

The following criteria will be used to measure the project's overall success:

- Attendance at and evaluation of public programs
- Student enrollment in and evaluation of new course offerings
- Increase in the number of interviews collected, transcribed, and added to the archive
- The number of people using the archive, including the web-based materials
- The quality of the scholarship produced based on the use of archival materials
- The ability to attract new program partners, patrons, friends, sponsors, and matching dollars at the local, state, national, and international levels

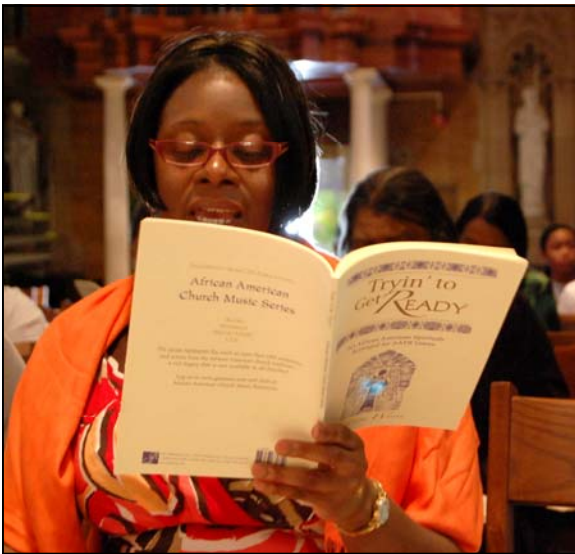
- *Executive Summary for RASHAD and Praying Grounds, July 5, 2008*



The Rev. Dr. Cheryl Kirk-Duggan of Shaw University (right) and the Greater Cleveland Choral Chapter of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses (below) at the April 20th opening event for the 2009 Religious History and Sacred Music Institute



NEW MUSIC SEMINAR AT TRINITY CATHEDRAL



Above: Dr. James Abbington (standing, right) and participants in the April 25th African American Church Music Seminar at Trinity Cathedral

“WE’VE COME THIS FAR BY FAITH!”



Top (left to right): CSU student hostesses in the Praying Grounds exhibition area before the concert; Warren Whitfield
Middle: Audience members
Bottom (left to right) : Lisa Hutson; Dr. Albert Antoine, Mrs. June Sallee-Antoine, and Beverly Brown

IN CONCERT: SPIRITUAL GIFTS & FRIENDS, APRIL 26, 2009



**Top (left to right): CSU student hostess; CMSD All-City Chorale
Middle: Spiritual Gifts and CMSD All-City Chorale, David M. Thomas, Music Director
Bottom (left and right): Members of the Melting Pot Orchestra**



Praying Grounds

RASHAD



June 12, 2009

Dear Friend:

In December 2008, I wrote to thank you for your past support of the Praying Grounds Oral History Project, the Spiritual Gifts Ensemble, the *Traditions and Beliefs Newsletter*, and the other successful projects of the Initiative for the Study of Religion and Spirituality in the History of Africa and the Diaspora (RASHAD). While the overall quality of our programs remains good, we understand that there is always room for improvement. Today, I am writing to ask you to join us in building on our past successes, by working with us to complete a comprehensive self-study and program evaluation that will help shape our vision for a brighter, more productive future. **Change is in the air!**

Just the other day, I received a copy of the Spring/Summer 2009 issue of *Think*, the magazine of Case Western Reserve University (my other alma mater). The publication contains several thought-provoking articles, but Darrell Delamaide's piece on "Building Blocks for Change" was my hands-down favorite. Among other things, the author offered the following:

A Step-by-Step Guide to Creating Change

1. Establish a vision for the future and a strong desire to attain it.
2. Compare where you are with where you want to be.
3. Create a learning agenda based on identified weaknesses.
4. Think positively.

This information could not have come at a more appropriate time. This summer, I want to convene summit and strategic planning meetings for a core group of RASHAD's major stakeholders. Beverly Brown and Geraldine Hardin-Washington, both CSU alums and charter members of Spiritual Gifts, have already expressed an interest in working with me. I also scheduled an appointment to speak with the Rev. Dr. Earl Preston, Jr., a CSU alum, founder of the renowned Prestonians Choral Ensemble, and Senior Pastor of the Morning Star Baptist Church. Thanks to the aforementioned individuals and others, my guest list for the first meeting already has approximately 20 names on it, but your input is also needed.

Last year, I asked for your donations of time, talent, and treasure, including books, sheet music collections, and manuscript materials for our Praying Grounds archives. I thank you for your generosity, and, in these lean financial times, I am especially grateful for your support. **This year, however, I am, first and foremost, in need of your time. If you are interested in participating in one or two strategic planning sessions this summer, please call or write before June 30, 2009.**

Sincerely,

Regennia

Regennia N. Williams, PhD

Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs '86 and '90

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THE WINGS OVER JORDAN WORKSHOP, MAY 2, 2009

Coming in Fall 2009 . . .

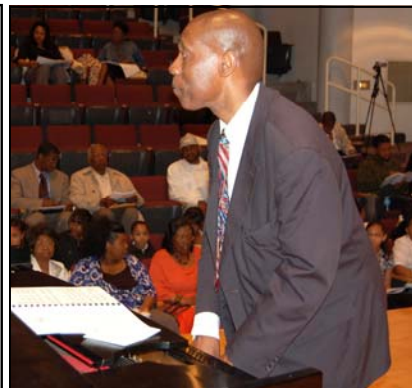
Spiritual Gifts: Unity and Diversity in One Body

A seven-week program (September–October) offering music workshops, performance and recording opportunities, and entrepreneurial activities for composers and singers of all ages

Requirements:

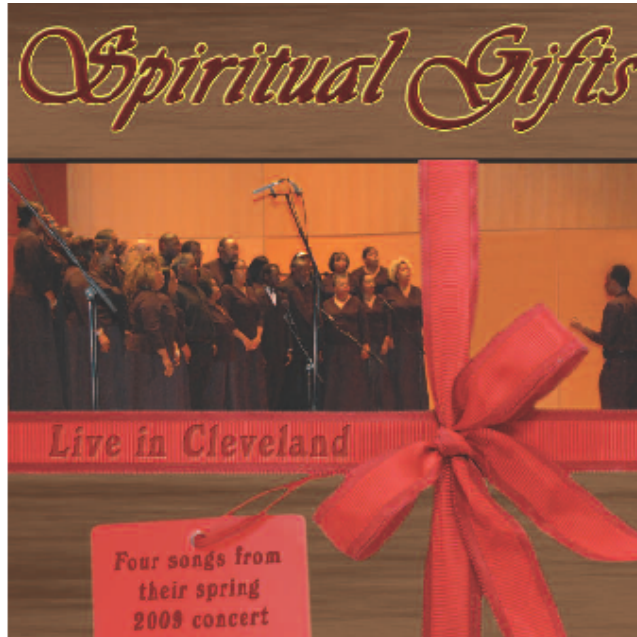
- An open mind
- Ability to perform solo and / or choral arrangements of the music of the historic African American church, including, but not limited to, spirituals, hymns, gospel, and contemporary Christian songs of the Black Diaspora
- Printed performance resume (one or two pages) with names and telephone numbers of two references
- Audition (Soloists and small ensembles—one person per part— welcome.)
- Attendance at Monday rehearsals, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., Trinity Cathedral, Cathedral Hall, 2230 Euclid Avenue (across from Cleveland State University)

**The scheduling of auditions will begin on July 15, 2009.
For more information, call (216) 523-7182 or write to r.williams@csuohio.edu.**



Top to bottom: Drene Ivy, Glenn Brackens, and the Wiley Middle School Challenge Choir at the May 2nd Wings Over Jordan Workshop

Now Available in the Praying Grounds Archive and the University Library's Multimedia Collection



Spiritual Gifts' new educational and promotional CD!

RASHAD

Initiative for the Study of
Religion and Spirituality in the
History of Africa and the Diaspora



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TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS

Dr. Regennia N. Williams, *Founder and Editor*

Patricia O'Luanaigh, *Associate Editor*

Photographs by Jeffery Ivey, unless otherwise noted

Join **Leonard Gregory Burks** (right), founder and director of *Cleveland's Voices of Praise*, for a gospel music workshop and concert with the Rev. Dr. Valentino Lassiter, Minister Emi Fujisaki, and other speakers and gospel singers from Japan and the United States. The workshop is scheduled for 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, June 18 and 19, 2009, at Trinity Cathedral, 2230 Euclid Avenue. The workshop registration fee is \$10. The concert will take place at the Lee Memorial A.M.E. Church, at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 20, 2009. The church is located at 861 East 105th Street. For more information, call (216) 346-0831.



Photo: Regennia N. Williams