

health. Living in full-time fight or flight mode when you are your sole provider, not knowing what the next year might bring if anything at all ... comes with a loss of professional dignity and sense of self-worth." Their comments speak to the structural failure of academic institutions in which contingent employees struggle to find career stability, let alone pay the bills. A securely-employed academic describes how the pandemic marked an "insidious 'hurry up' culture for creators in these last months ...[an] overwhelming expectation that we're all just sitting around waiting to make something — anything — now!" This bonus episode pays homage to cultural grief and serves as a meditation on music researchers' roles during times of crisis.

As a form of public scholarship, Robin undoubtedly realizes his statement that "it's time that more music scholars communicate to the public about their work." But which public? While some of the episodes are relatively jargon-free and could be understood by a non-specialist audience, a number of episodes would require a dictionary at hand for those unfamiliar with the discipline. This has less to do with Robin's intentions than with how music researchers are trained to discuss their work. Many of us have not had to communicate our scholarship outside of academic settings, let alone in an aural-only format. Robin's intervention demonstrates a particular need for all music researchers to begin taking seriously feminist scholars' calls to engage in public scholarship (Ketchum 2022). Only then can musicology fulfill any potential it may have to "change the world." 🌱

## REFERENCES

Ketchum, Alex D. 2022. *Engage in Public Scholarship! A Guidebook on Feminist and Accessible Communication*. Montreal: Concordia University Press.

*Melanated Moments in Classical Music*. 2020-ongoing. Hosted by Joshua Thompson and Angela Brown. Produced by Ezra Bakker Trupiano and Adam Fonacier with Classical Music Indy.

BREANNA STEWART  
McGill University

Conversations about racial representation have risen in recent years in parallel with increased awareness of systemic anti-Black racism. The podcast *Melanated Moments in Classical Music* deals with the work of Black people in classical music, and is a timely resource for musicians, music professionals, and music lovers. The podcast, which premiered in March 2020, is co-hosted by pianist and music sociologist Joshua Thompson and opera singer Angela Brown. Thompson's and Brown's animated dynamic enlivens discourse about music history. Their goal in the podcast is to "introduce and reintroduce [listeners] to melanated masterpieces written and performed by, for, and about Black people" (Thompson and Brown 2020a: 00:19).

The podcast is a production of Classical Music Indy, with episodes produced by Ezra Bakker Trupiano and Adam Fonacier, and theme music composed by Laura Karpman. Their website offers a wealth of information, including a summary and

corresponding transcription for each episode, links to additional information on the historical figures discussed, blog posts, and social media platforms. Full episodes are available on the website, as well as Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, and TuneIn/Alexa. Every episode highlights a musician, composer, or music professional of colour, introducing their music, as well as histories in classical music and Black diasporic experience that are often under-told. “Moments” is an apt description of the episodes, particularly in the first season, where they last no more than 17 minutes. The timespan of each episode ranges, however, with the most recent seasons averaging 30 minutes per episode. From history lessons to interviews, the episodes weave a tapestry of Black excellence in classical music.

Melanated Moments explores the stories of both well-known and obscure figures in music history, including Florence Price, Samuel-Coolidge Taylor, Undine Smith Moore, William Grant Still, Thomas “Blind Tom” Wiggins, Ignatious Sancho, and Moses Hogan. Many episodes also highlight the contributions of musicians and composers active today, such as Anthony Davis, Laura Karpman, Ric’key Pageot, and Drew Forde. Guests are frequently invited to discuss their own work or the works of another musician. Typically connected to the hosts personally or professionally, these guests — performers, composers, entrepreneurs, and scholars — offer a range of expert perspectives. What follows here traces a representative sample of emergent themes in the series.

Brown and Thompson offer a wealth of historical detail. For example, “A Circus Act No Longer” recounts the story of Thomas “Blind Tom” Wiggins. Non-ver-

bal, blind, and born into slavery, Wiggins nevertheless became a successful pianist and composer in the 19th century. “He might not have been able to speak or see,” Brown says, “but there were no chains on his mind” (Thompson and Brown 2020b: 8:00). In season 3, episode 6, Brown and Thompson explain why reevaluating these histories is so crucial. Reflecting on the contributions of composer and educator Undine Smith Moore, the hosts recount Moore’s reflections on her life in the Jim Crow South. As Moore could not even think about aspiring to be a composer, Thompson points out “this is why it’s important for you to see yourself in what you want to do ... it’s that self-determination piece that’s huge” (Thompson and Brown 2021c: 15:23).

Preservation and lineage emerge as recurring themes of the show. Anthony McGill, a guest on “You Have the Right to Stay Silent: A Journey to Catharsis” (season 2, episode 5), concisely reiterates the importance of acknowledging the lineage of Black composers and musicians: “none of us, especially as Black musicians, would be here if we weren’t standing on those people’s shoulders, if we weren’t part of this line” (Thompson and Brown 2021a: 22:15). While the podcast itself stands as a testament to this lineage, certain episodes are specifically concerned with preservation. Composer Dr. Mikhail Johnson, for instance, emphasizes the importance of preserving his Jamaican heritage through composition, explaining, “It’s about perpetuation of a cultural heritage, which could otherwise be lost if we do not find a way to catalogue and make it concrete in form” (Thompson and Brown 2022: 17:58).

The podcast also actively encourages the dissemination of music made by people of colour. In the aforementioned episode on Undine Smith Moore, Brown speaks directly to young musicians, urging them to program pieces by Black composers, saying, “going into the archives of their music and bringing them to life and breathing life into them on the stage, it helps broaden all of us” (Thompson and Brown 2021c: 22:54). Likewise, while speaking to Ric’key Pageot, a Montréal-born composer of Haitian descent in season 2, episode 6, Thompson states, “it’s not going to be enough to acknowledge and highlight these pieces, we got to program them,” to which Pageot responds, “if not us, who will?” (Thompson and Brown 2021b: 23:06).

While conversations about Black experiences offer a much-needed perspective within the history of music, music remains at the heart of the show. Brown and Thompson do not shy away from technical terms; they always try to define them. For instance, when a composer discusses “multiphonics,” a sound example fades into the background, offering listeners an aural definition of the term (Thompson and Brown 2021a: 19:28). Their careful handling of technical language increases accessibility for non-experts in music. The core focus on music is evident in the plentiful musical examples of this podcast, which form nearly one third of each episode, creating an immersive sonic space.

With the recent drive to diversify and expand repertoires in the field of professional, this podcast contributes a major corrective space. *Melanated Moments* could act as a starting point for instructors seeking to incorporate a broader history of musicians of colour into their classroom,

researchers attempting to familiarize themselves with composers who are ignored or exceptionalized in the classical canon, concert programmers and musicians hoping to perform diverse repertoires, and classical music newcomers and aficionados hungering for a rich, nuanced narrative of classical music history. Thompson and Brown offer enjoyable banter, provocative insights, and credible resources, encouraging music professionals and general audiences alike to begin to close the knowledge gap within the classical music canon. 🌿

## REFERENCES

- Thompson, Joshua and Angela Brown. 2020a. “The Dean – William Grant Still.” March 18. *Melanated Moments in Classical Music*. Produced by Ezra Bakker Trupiano. Theme music by Laura Karpman. Podcast. <https://classicalmusicindy.org/podcast-episode/episode-1-the-dean-william-grant-still/>
- . 2020b. “A Circus Act No Longer – Thomas ‘Blind Tom’ Wiggins.” April 7. *Melanated Moments in Classical Music*. Produced by Ezra Bakker Trupiano. Theme music by Laura Karpman. Podcast. <https://classicalmusicindy.org/podcast-episode/a-circus-act-no-longer-thomas-blind-tom-wiggins/>
- . 2021a. “You Have the Right to Stay Silent: A Journey to Catharsis.” March 10. *Melanated Moments in Classical Music*. Produced by Ezra Bakker Trupiano. Theme music by Laura Karpman. Guests, Anthony Davis and Anthony McGill. Podcast.

- <https://classicalmusicindy.org/podcast-episode/213576/>
- . 2021b. «Variations on Vodou – Ric’key Pageot.” April 14. *Melanated Moments in Classical Music*. Produced by Ezra Bakker Trupiano. Theme music by Laura Karpman. Guest, Ric’key Pageot. Podcast. <https://classicalmusicindy.org/podcast-episode/melanated-moments-s2e6-the-sounds-of-vodou-rickey-pageot/>
- . 2021c. “The Dean of Black Women Composers – Undine Smith Moore.” September 22. *Melanated Moments in Classical Music*. Produced by Ezra Bakker Trupiano. Theme music by Laura Karpman. Podcast. <https://classicalmusicindy.org/podcast-episode/mmcm-s3-ep6-the-dean-of-black-women-composers-undine-smith-moore/>
- . 2022. “Reaching Beyond Reggae with Dr. Mikhail Johnson.” September 13. *Melanated Moments in Classical Music*. Produced by Ezra Bakker Trupiano and Adam Fonacier. Theme music by Laura Karpman. Podcast, 36:23. <https://classicalmusicindy.org/podcast-episode/mmcm-s4e7-reaching-beyond-reggae-with-dr-mikhail-johnson/>