

William Grant Still Research Guide

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William Grant Still


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Research Guide for Songs of Separation: William Grant Still and the Dilemmas of American Classical Music

This research guide is designed to support the February 5-6, 2009 **Visions and Voices** events, *Songs of Separation: William Grant Still and the Dilemmas of American Classical Music*.

William Grant Still (1895-1978) was one of America's foremost classical music composers. His oeuvre includes the *Afro-American Symphony*; *Songs of Separation* (an art-song cycle); and operas such as *Troubled Island* and *Bayou Legend*. A resident of Los Angeles from 1934 until 1978, he also composed scores for film and TV shows (including *Perry Mason* and *Gunsmoke*).

Still's artistic vision and life experiences during the era of segregation raise challenging questions about the classical-music canon, race, and California and American history.

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Research Help

This guide was developed by Librarian Sue Tyson (styson@usc.edu), with help from Stephanie Bonjack, Music Librarian and Music Library Head (bonjack@usc.edu), and Music Library Manager Robert Vaughn (rgvaughn@usc.edu).

If you have questions or need help with your research, please feel free to contact [Stephanie Bonjack](#).

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Songs of Separation: Events

A Concert of Music for Voice

Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009, 7:30 pm
Alfred Newman Recital Hall
Admission is free.

USC Thornton School of Music students perform a program of Still's vocal music. Following the performance, music historian Lance Bowling, vocalist Peter Lightfoot, and LA as Subject managing director Susan Anderson will hold a panel discussion.

A Look at the Composer's Life

Friday, Feb. 6, 2009, 1:00 pm
Doheny Library
Intellectual Commons, Room 233
Admission is free.

Judith Anne Still, the composer's daughter, will give a presentation of William Grant Still's life and career, including his birth in Mississippi to the descendents of slaves, his contributions to the blues and early radio, and his groundbreaking work as a conductor and composer. A reception follows the presentation.

[Comments \(0\)](#)

An Introduction to William Grant Still

For biographical information and a taste of William Grant Still's music, click on the links below. **Please note: These links are available to USC students, faculty, and staff only;** for free Website links, please go to the Websites tab in this guide.

- [Still, William Grant \(From Grove Music Online\)](#)
This article by Gayle Murchison and Catherine Parsons Smith provides a brief biographical introduction to Still.
- [Darker America \(symphonic poem\)](#)
Audio clip from the Classical Music Library
- [From the Black Belt \(symphonic suite\)](#)
Audio clip from the Classical Music Library
- [From the Hearts of Women \(vocal piece\)](#)
Audio clip from the Classical Music Library

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Selected USC Holdings

Click the link below to find a downloadable list of selected holdings on William Grant Still available at USC.

Holdings include scores; books authored by William Grant Still and others; sound recordings; in-process materials; and more.


[William Grant Still: Selected USC Holdings](#)
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Featured Music and Scores

William Grant Still's Highway One - Still, William Grant

Call Number: 11658mus, CD-Audio, Music Library
 Greenville, NC: Visionary Records, 2005
 Libretto by Verna Arvey
 Opera in two scenes

Festive Overture - Still, William Grant

Call Number: M1004.S84F4 1997, Score Collection, Music Library
 New York: C. Fischer, 1997
 For orchestra

Symphony No. 1: Afro-American - Still, William Grant

Call Number: 5826mus, CD-Audio, Music Library
 Colchester, Essex, England: Chandos, p1993
 Detroit Symphony Orchestra
 Neemi Järvi, conductor

Symphony No. 2: (Song of a New Race): In G Minor - Still, William Grant

Call Number: 6195mus, CD-Audio, Music Library
 Colchester, Essex, England: Chandos, p1993
 Detroit Symphony Orchestra
 Neeme Järvi, conductor

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Music Search

Search USC's Homer Catalog:

Search tip: For works authored by William Grant Still, type:

Still, William Grant

You can also search by title, as in:

"Songs of Separation" (currently on order for USC Libraries)

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Search Tips

When searching for music or works about music, experiment with using various keywords combined with AND, as in:

*composers and opera
 african americans and classical music
 "william grant still" and scores*

Try to use synonyms and related concepts in your searching. Use quote marks for exact phrase searching.

[Comments \(0\)](#)

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Book Search

Search USC's Homer Catalog:

Search tip: For works authored by William Grant Still, type:

Still, William Grant

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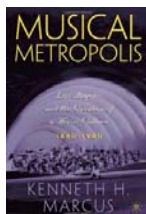
Featured Books



William Grant Still - Smith, Catherine Parsons
 Call Number: ML410.S855S64 2008, Music Library
 ISBN: 0252033221
 Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008



I Dream a World: The Operas of William Grant Still - Soll, Beverly
 Call Number: ML410.S855S69 2005, Music Library
 ISBN: 1557287899
 Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2005



Musical Metropolis: Los Angeles and the Creation of a Music Culture, 1880-1940 - Marcus, Kenneth
 Call Number: ML200.8.L7M37 2004, Leavey Library
 ISBN: 1403964181
 Also includes CD-ROM available at the Leavey Library Circulation Desk, Call #ML200.8.L7M37 2004 CD-ROM

Just Tell the Story: Troubled Island - Still, William Grant and Still, Judith Anne
 Call Number: ML410.S855J87 2006, Music Library
 ISBN: 1877873020
 Flagstaff: Master-Player Library, 2006
 Title continues: A collection of documents previously published and unpublished, pertaining to the first significant Afro-American grand opera, Troubled island, by William Grant Still, with librettists Langston Hughes and Verna Arvey / editors, Judith Anne Still, Lisa M. Headlee.

William Grant Still: A Voice High-Sounding - Still, Judith Anne
 Call Number: ML410.S855S755 2003, Music Library
 ISBN: 1877873152
 Flagstaff: Master-Player Library, 2003

William Grant Still: An Oral History - Still, William Grant
 Call Number: ML410.S855A5 2000, Music Library
 Flagstaff: Master-Player Library
 Includes CD of interviews, commentary, and more, Call #12596mus, Music Library.

In One Lifetime - Arvey, Verna
 Call Number: ML410.S855A78 1984, Music Library
 ISBN: 0938626361
 Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1984

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[Comments \(0\)](#)

Search Tips

When searching for books, experiment with using quote marks for exact phrase searches and with using various keywords combined with AND, as in:

*"troubled island"
 composers and opera
 african americans and classical
 music*

Try to use synonyms and related concepts in your searching.

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Other Books [Comments\(0\)](#) [Print Page](#)

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More Selected Books

Here are some more books of interest about William Grant Still and related topics:

- **William Grant Still: A Study in Contradictions**
Smith, Catherine Parsons
Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000
ML410.S855S65 2000
Music Library
- **William Grant Still: A Bio-Bibliography**
Still, Judith Anne
Flagstaff: Master-Player Library, 1996
ML134.S677S75 1996
Music Library
- **Langston Hughes: The Man, his Art, and his Continuing Influence**
Trotman, C. James
New York: Garland Publishers, 1995
PS3515.U274Z6733 1995
Doheny Library
- **William Grant Still and the Fusion of Cultures in American Music**
Still, Judith Anne
Flagstaff: Master-Player Library
ML410.S855W52 1995b
Music Library
- **The William Grant Still Reader: Essays on American Music**
Still, William Grant
Durham: Duke University Press
ML410.S855A5 1992
Music Library

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Article Quick Search

The following sources are being searched:

- [America: History and Life](#) 
- [International Index to Music Periodicals Full Text](#) 
- [JSTOR](#) 
- [Music Index](#) 
- [Oxford Music Online](#) 
- [ProQuest Research Library Complete](#) 
- [Web of Science®](#) 

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Other Databases

JSTOR A growing full text collection of core social science, humanities, and science journals

ProQuest Historical Newspapers Provides access to full text and page images of major historical newspapers, including the following. [Choose from a wealth of historical newspapers under the "Databases" drop-down menu.](#)

- [Los Angeles Sentinel, 1934-2005](#) -- major African American newspaper
- [Los Angeles Times, 1881-1986](#) - key mainstream newspaper

ProQuest Research Library Key multidisciplinary database providing fulltext access to magazine and newspaper articles, scholarly journal articles, and dissertations

Wilson Omnifile Key multidisciplinary database providing citations and full text

WorldCat Contains over 32 millions records of articles, books, and other resources from libraries around the world

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Recommended Databases

Suggested keywords: *opera, composers, classical music, african american composers, "troubled island," rac** (includes all terms that begin with the stem rac-, such as race, racism, racist), *social conditions*, and more.

Be sure to experiment with related terms and synonyms, combining terms with AND, as in:

opera and composers and california
rac and classical music and william grant still*

These databases are available to USC subscribers only; for free Web links, please click on the Websites tab in this guide.

- [African American Music Reference](#)
- [Classical Music Library](#)
- [Database of Recorded American Music \(DRAM\)](#)
- [Grove Music Online](#)
Authority on all aspects of music
- [International Index to Music Periodicals Full Text](#)
Full text index of 375 international music periodicals
- [Naxos Music Library](#)
- [RILM Abstracts of Musical Literature](#)
International bibliography of scholarly writings on music and related disciplines
- [ProQuest Interdisciplinary Dissertations and Theses](#)
Provides full text access for dissertations written from 1996 on. Choose Interdisciplinary Dissertations and Theses under "Databases"
- [America: History and Life](#)
The definitive index of articles and other literature covering the history and culture of the US and Canada, from the 15th century to the present
- [Web of Science/Arts and Humanities Citation Index](#)
Multidisciplinary database that includes Social Science Citation Index and Arts and Humanities Citation Index

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Subject Area Pages

[Selected Resources by Subject page](#) -- Social Sciences and Arts & Humanities

Some subject areas to browse include:
[Music](#)
[African American Studies](#)
[American Studies and Ethnicity](#)
[History--US & Canada](#)

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Some Resources on the Web

Here are some Web resources about William Grant Still and related topics:

- [Still Going On: Celebrating The Life and Times of William Grant Still](#)
- [William Grant Still Collection](#)
- [African American Odyssey](#)
- [Mississippi Writers and Musicians: William Grant Still](#)
- [National Gallery of Art Podcast: Concert of Still's Music](#)
- [Judith Anne Still Open Library](#)

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WGS on YouTube!

YouTube has many clips featuring performances of William Grant Still's works. Here's one featuring Rachel Barton Pine, classical violinist and founder of the String Student's Library of Music by Black Composers, a supplemental curriculum featuring music by composers of African decent from around the world:

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