

Music Exploration Series # 2 – 9/13/20

African-American Music, from *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*

Join the Zoom Coffee Hour discussion at 10:00 am here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82801190646>

Lift Every Voice and Sing II: An African American Hymnal (LEVAS) is an official Episcopal hymnal which may be used along with or in place of *The Hymnal 1982*. This hymnal broadens the musical styles available to a congregation by drawing upon the long history of music composed and sung by African Americans. It contains Spirituals, Traditional and Contemporary Gospel Songs, Protestant Hymns, Missionary and Evangelistic Hymns, and Service Music, so its reach is broader than only African American music. See more information about it here, including the text of any *LEVAS* hymn <https://hymnary.org/hymnal/LEVAS1993>.

Some hymns are in both *LEVAS* and *The Hymnal 1982*, but they usually have different arrangements: “Go tell it on the mountain,” “Were you there,” “Let us break bread together,” “Go Down Moses,” “There is a balm in Gilead,” “O sacred head, sore wounded.”

“Jesus, Jesus” *LEVAS* # 76 - Spiritual

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cjWGkPhIQg>

“Steal Away” *LEVAS* # 103 - Spiritual

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0GcVKLRcd8>

“I’ve Got Peace Like a River” *LEVAS* # 201 - Spiritual

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qL_hOEBRbco

“Wade in the water” *LEVAS* # 143 - Spiritual

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NQvOFTioJg>

“Sweet, Sweet Spirit” *LEVAS* # 120 - Doris Akers, Black Gospel music composer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9EGwkimNeQ>

“Lift every voice and sing” *Hymnal* # 599, *LEVAS* # 1 - Words by James Weldon Johnson, civil rights activist, writer, composer, politician, educator, lawyer, of the Harlem Renaissance. Also known as the “African American National Anthem.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyS3HPInHtI>

“It was poor little Jesus” in *Hymnal* # 468 - Spiritual; note that this is not in the Christmas section of the hymnal, as it takes the longer view of Jesus’ life.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4c1L6ICpbg>

“Taste and See” *LEVAS* # 154 - Psalm 34, Dr. James E. Moore, Jr., African American composer from Virginia

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_GaH8bqr_s

“Blessed Absalom” *LEVAS* # 44 - *Lauda Anima* with words by Harold T Lewis

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcviVhQ_2Rg

Text: https://hymnary.org/text/born_in_bondage_born_in_shackles

“In the Garden” *LEVAS* # 69 - White Gospel composer C. Austin Miles

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2eSfKqMRbA , sung by Mahalia Jackson.

“Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” *LEVAS* # 196 - White Gospel composer Elisha Hoffman, sung by Mahalia Jackson.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Mb0XA2BDx0>

A bonus, not from *LEVAS*: We Are Christmas - Spelman College Glee Club

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kj33F8ZBQCM>

Like this music? You can purchase the CD “It is Well With My Soul: Selections from *Lift Every Voice and Sing*” sung by the Choir of Grace Episcopal Church, Norfolk VA

<https://www.amazon.ca/Well-My-Soul-Selections-Every/dp/0898692903>

Some Black Episcopal churches, such as St Peter’s, Church Hill, use *The African American Heritage Hymnal* which is not an Episcopal hymnal:

<https://www.amazon.com/African-American-Heritage-Hymnal-Spirituals/dp/1579991246>

Discussion questions:

How does African American music speak to you differently from other music through its text themes, music style, and rhythms?

What more can you offer about this style from your experience as a singer, musician, or listener?

How often do we use this style at GHTC? Recent examples that come to mind?

How well do you like it? Would you like us to use more or less of it?