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National Association
for Music Education

NBMC/ NASPAAM CELEBRATES



The National Black Music Caucus/National Association for the Study and Performance of African American Music (1972–2022) welcomes you to its 50th Anniversary Celebration!

BY WILLIAM T. MCDANIEL JR., PhD

In 1972, an organization was born that celebrated its 50th anniversary in March 2022. Here is a little bit of our story over the past 50 years as we invite you to celebrate with us.

NBMC/NASPAAM Mission Statement and Goals

The National Black Music Caucus is an organization whose purpose is to further the development and dissemination of African American music through advocacy, education, and performance. The organization is committed to providing leadership and motivation for music educators, musicians, and others interested in fostering the inclusion of African and African American music in education and in society. This organization serves its membership and others by increasing awareness of Black music and its contribution to the Arts. Our goals are to:

- Promote, preserve, and advance the tradition of African American music throughout the world.
- Serve as an advocate for African American music education throughout the United States.

- Ensure the inclusion of African American music from preschool through the university level.
- Foster recognition of the importance, significance, and contribution of African American music to American culture.
- Generate support for the development of quality music education programs and the music potential of Black youth.
- To continue the development of African American music educators, performers, and audiences of music.
- To voice concerns of Black music educators throughout the United States.

How We Began

More than two hundred Black musicians who attended the 1972 biennial convention of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) in Atlanta, Georgia, convened an impromptu, offsite protest meeting in direct response to the dearth of Black music and Black musicians represented on the program and the near exclusion of Black musicians on the Jazz Night program. The unprecedented and impactful meeting was held on the campus of Morehouse College on the last day of the five-day convention, March 11, 1972. It was chaired by Dr. T. J. Anderson, who was elected the first national chairman (later president); Dr. Eddie Meadows was elected vice president, and Dr. Warrick Carter was elected treasurer and became the executive secretary.

This initial meeting generated an excitement, passion, and fervor to establish an organization that would ensure the inclusion of Black clinicians and conductors, Black performance groups, and the music of African Americans at national and regional conventions of MENC. This historic meeting inspired all in attendance and laid the groundwork for a new and bold organization whose primary mission was to promote, preserve, and advance the tradition of African American music and to serve as a voice for the concerns and interests of African American music educators. The name of the new organization became the National

NASPAAM, when you made that decision to get up, to stand up, to speak out, to get your legs and your feet moving, and then to follow that with action, you did something spectacular.

— DR. MACKIE SPRADLEY



Black Music Caucus (NBMC). After 25 years, the name was changed to the National Association for the Study and Performance of African American Music (NASPAAM), but the mission remained the same.

As the membership, infrastructure, and strength of NBMC and NASPAAM grew, the organization began a practice of sponsoring its own biennial national conferences that not only expanded the footprint of the organization significantly but increased its influence and impact. NBMC and NASPAAM National Professional Conferences were held in Atlanta, Georgia; Charlotte, North Carolina; Nashville, Tennessee; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Washington, DC; Birmingham, Alabama; Chicago, Illinois; Jackson, Mississippi; and Houston, Texas. The national conferences brought together leading scholars, conductors, composers, performers, clinicians, researchers, music educators, and ensembles representing the rich tradition of African American music. The NBMC Symposia were held in Bloomington, Indiana, and Chesapeake, Virginia. Two NASPAAM Think Tanks were held in Philadelphia and Atlanta. Additionally, the organization published a newsletter, *Con Brio*, and a journal, *Talking Drum*.

On March 16, 2022, NASPAAM held a huge celebration to commemorate its 50 years of history and service. The 50th Anniversary Celebration was provided in a four-hour virtual format viewed nationally. The program featured nationally recognized scholars and music educators who presented provocative topics representative of the rich tradition of African American music, and short music videos of renowned artists performing were interspersed among the live presenters. The agenda included:

Welcome & Greeting ~ Dr. Marsha Kindall-Smith, NASPAAM President

Brief History of NBMC/NASPAAM ~ Dr. Ted McDaniel

Meaning, Music, and Social Justice in Our Anthems: “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing,” “We Shall Overcome,” “To Be Young, Gifted, and Black,” and “Say It Loud (I’m Black and I’m Proud)” ~ Dr. Shana L. Redmond

Keynote Speaker ~ Dr. Mackie Spradley, NAFME President

The Quilt Speaks ~ Dr. Rene Boyer

Black Music Matters: Curricular, Research, and Activist Leadership Inroads at the University of Michigan ~ Dr. Ed Sarath, Dr. Michael Nickens, Kayleigh Wilder

Rap/Hiphop Music and Culture in the Music Curriculum ~ Dr. Cheryl Keyes

Tribute to T.J. Anderson ~ “Chamber Concerto (Remembrances) 1988” Timothy Weiss and the Oberlin Conservatory Contemporary Music Ensemble

Reflections on the 50-Year History of NBMC/NASPAAM (1972–2022) ~ NASPAAM Board of Directors

Closing Remarks ~ Dr. Marsha Kindall-Smith, NASPAAM President

NASPAAM President Dr. Marsha Kindall-Smith, the longest reigning president from 2014–2022, set the tone for the entire celebration when she proclaimed that the opening song, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” composed by brothers J.W. & J.R. Johnson and sung by the HBCU Intercollegiate Choir, was appropriate because NBMC/NASPAAM members had “lifted our voices and sung for 50 years.” The program proceeded with outstanding speaker sessions, interspersed with meaningful music videos. Kindall-Smith used the video *Denyce Graves Honors Her Music Teacher* to not only comment on Denyce Graves and her music teacher but to introduce our keynote speaker, Dr. Mackie Spradley, NAFME president. Commenting about the video, Kindall-Smith offered this: “Ah...this just took my breath away...it’s perhaps the most heartwarming tribute to a music teacher about the power and value of school music in the lives of millions of students. I was a music teacher, and our keynote speaker was a music teacher, and introducing her is a highlight of my NASPAAM presidency... She is the right person at the right time. She is eager to be a part of our 50th anniversary celebration, and I proudly present Dr. Mackie Spradley, NAFME president.”



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– DR. MARSHA KINDALL-SMITH

Spradley provided a spirited, passionate, uplifting, and inspiring speech as she offered congratulatory remarks on the importance and significance of NBMC/NASPAAM, its mission, and its successes and challenges to make a meaningful difference and create change for those who teach, learn, and perform music. Realizing that NBMC was formed out of protest during the 1972 MENC Convention, she stated: “NASPAAM, when you made that decision to get up, to stand up, to speak out, to get your legs and your feet moving, and then to follow that with action, you did something spectacular. Everybody can’t do it — everyone doesn’t have the courage to do it. You had courage to allow your voice to take up space, and that was a good thing. It was a worthy fight...”

In a letter to NASPAAM, she wrote that “Your history is rich and full of stories of struggles and triumphs. For five decades, you have demonstrated great courage, determination, and unwavering faith in advocating for the study and performance of African American music. You have been the voice crying out for justice, standing up for fairness, and fighting for every opportunity to elevate this work. Thank you for paving the way for so many music educators, researchers, composers, performing artists, and other music careers. Your time, commitment, and effort to forge an inclusive, diverse, and equitable profession, projects a North Star for all of us. We celebrate you because you represent the best of us.”

In her final comments during her speech at the conference, Spradley said, “There is greatness in NASPAAM. Thank you for being our shining light, our North Star, and we join with you in celebrating your 50th anniversary.” She wrote this in her letter: “It is my personal hope that the National Association for the Study and Performance of African American Music and the National Association for Music Education will seek more and more opportunities to bind the intersections of our shared history. To the board and members of NASPAAM, congratulations!”

Mackie Spradley’s keynote address for the 50th Anniversary Celebration was indeed a highlight, along with a program of important scholars who presented thought-provoking sessions and music performers of the African American music tradition. I call attention, as well, to the

Tribute to T. J. Anderson, who was NBMC’s founding president and a noted composer. You will soon be able to view all of the speakers, as well as comments by the NASPAAM board of directors, on the website at naspam.org.

The 50th anniversary was a time for celebration for all who have been a part of this exciting journey to be certain that African American music and all who teach and love this music tradition will be a part of the historical record for all. Many thanks to our members and friends for your support.

The NBMC/NASPAAM story is an inspiring one defined by purpose, tenacity, and triumph. It is a narrative of committed, dedicated officers and board members who worked tirelessly toward a singular mission that they themselves defined: to promote, preserve, and advance the rich tradition and legacy of African American music throughout the world through education. The accomplishments are even more remarkable when one realizes that NBMC/NASPAAM — in addition to the conferences, think tanks, and symposia — also provided professional development opportunities for music educators and music students across the nation, with no staff, no office space, a volunteer board of directors, and non-salaried officers, or in the words of former President Carlesta Henderson, “no money, no thought of personal gain, but only a mission...”

During the past 50 years, NBMC/NASPAAM became a national organization with the programming that it provided at conferences, symposia, and think tanks. Additionally, concerts and workshops were given in the name of the organization and collegiate chapters were established. For the future, we expect that NASPAAM will continue to promote, preserve, and advance the tradition and legacy of African American music. We hope to partner with and engage all organizations, including NafME, who share our mission and goals. And we expect to see more music of that tradition in the curricula of schools and colleges and on the stages of concert halls throughout America and the world. Additionally, we intend to continue our work toward ensuring that African American musicians will be seated in the orchestras, bands, and choirs that makeup the world of music in our nation and around the globe. This statement from the NASPAAM Board of Director’s Handbook reveals our sense of purpose and solemn commitment to its goals:



Dr. T. J. Anderson, noted composer, was NBMC's first national chairman.

“Until the day comes when the scholarship, compositions, and people of African American descent and/or culture find their way into mainstream textbooks, performances, staffing of performing groups, offices, and universities in quantities commensurate with the contributions, there will be a role in musical America for the National Association for the Study and Performance of African American Music and other groups devoted to the perpetuation of African American music in the fabric of life in our country.”



WILLIAM T. MCDANIEL JR., PhD, is cofounder and past president of NASPAAM, and chair of the NBMC/NASPAAM 50th Anniversary Celebration Committee. He has also served as executive secretary and as conference chair. He is coauthor of “The Radical Origins and Mission of the National Black Music Caucus: The First Twenty-Five Years – 1972-1997” in *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education*, 2022, Vol.43(2) 248-272.



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