

John H. Williams  
PO Box 350  
115 Elm Street  
Bennington, VT. 05201

September 26, 1981

Dear John:

I'm sorry that I haven't been able to respond to your letter of June 25, the accompanying report, and your second letter of September 16 until now. July and August were heavy travel times, and September brings the start of a new school year, along with pressures to meet a deadline for the conclusion of the revision of my book.

I must confess that the report appeared more forbiddingly exhaustive than it actually was when I finally read through it. However, as a matter of propriety, I feel I should comment only upon that portion of the report dealing with the four 'Recommendations.'

In general, these four recommendations state high goals for Bennington College with respect to its Black Music Division. Therefore, they do leave the impression that the College should take a positive role in the affirmation and support of this Division. However, (perhaps because they are only recommendations), they are vague in stating exactly how, and, more pointedly, how much and when the College will begin to increase this support. I'm sure that these would be questions from any one in Black Music Division who has read the report.

The third recommendation (page 8) states that "Black musicians may also build respect and rapport by sharing with other faculty," etc. But sharing involves at least two, and I know that in the larger institutions there often exists an attitude of condescension with those in the sciences and related areas toward all artists, regardless of their race, color, or creed. Recommendation 3 fails to articulate the role of the College in promoting a meeting ground, and, in fact, omits entirely the essential role of the College in facilitating an honest spirit of rapport and cooperation between its various Divisions and the Black Music Division.

There is one glaring inaccuracy on page 3 of the general report that should be changed, I'm sure that neither I nor the other two members of the Visiting Committee intended to leave the impression that: 1. European (sic) musical notation is of little value for Black music, since it does

not encompass the full range of improvisable musical possibilities." and 2. "Standard European harmony and rhythms provide the base for improvisation."

Both of these statements are factual inaccuracies from which I think all three members of the Visiting Committee would tend to recoil. The first statement is double-edged, in that an argument against it is to admit European dominance in the area of notated music. However, one has to argue against it, since it violates the life work and often-acknowledged contributions of Joplin, Morton, Ellington, Redmond, and many others. For me to acknowledge it is a negation of my own existence as a composer. However, things must be placed in proper historical context.

The Black American had the European culture imposed upon him by White Americans with a gun in one hand, and a whip in the other. Needless to say, there is a difference between having your ABC's imposed upon you violently and having a free choice in the matter, e.g., having the right to choose an oral tradition of notation-preservation, or the Indian or Chinese systems of notation in existence for thousands of years before the West had a culture.

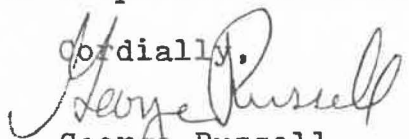
Secondly, I think that the Western system of notation, which has many forms, has been broadened by the impact of jazz music upon 20th century music; many celebrated contemporary composers honestly admit this. My most recent composition is forty minutes long and is 99% written music; I'll be playing the recording of it when I lecture at Bennington October 5.

The second statement is but a partial truth, and that truth is due to the aforementioned condition of the gun and the lash. In fact, if there is one thing that can be said as a solid fact concerning the evolution of Black music, it is its unrelenting drive in the direction of establishing its own harmonic perspective. The present modal revolution in jazz is an indication of that; the Western modes were transplanted from the older third world cultures. Africans have always had a far more sophisticated concept of rhythm than Westerners, and to overcome the enforced sterilities of the strict metric bar was the first target of the Black jazz musician. This can be heard even in church music and slave songs. The so-called 'freedom movement' of the 1950's, (of which Bill Dixon was a broadly-acknowledged exponent), completely overcame metric restrictions and, in doing so, contributed a new dimension to the American musical culture.

I hope I have made a case for deleting this paragraph from the report.

Alice and I will be at the Paradise Motel on October 5, and I will be giving a seminar at Paul Robeson that evening. Should you wish to contact me, I am always at your disposal. Our best to Deborah.

cc: Bill Dixon  
Carl Atkins  
Nathan Davis

Cordially,  
  
George Russell

# THE DAVID HOCHSTEIN MEMORIAL MUSIC SCHOOL



50 NORTH PLYMOUTH AVENUE ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14614 716-454-4596

November 10, 1981

Mr. John H. Williams II  
110 Monument Avenue  
Bennington, Vermont 05201

Dear John:

I have recently received the revised drafts of the report drawn up by June Hanks and submitted on behalf of the Visiting Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to give my general approval of the report as it now stands. I did not respond to the original report, because I did not find it particularly inconsistent with the observations made by myself and the other members of the committee. I did, however, find George Russell's comments on that original report interesting and valid. The point that Bill Dixon and his staff raised concerning the fact that the report sounded like an apologetic, for me was a much more serious one. I, too, had some misgivings concerning this point, and should have communicated this to you.

If my memory serves me correctly, the members of the Visiting Committee were very strong in their feeling that Bennington College had only two options: (1) Give full support and funding to the Black Music Division or (2) eliminate the division altogether. The original report (and to a certain extent, this revised draft) seemed to imply that we of the Visiting Committee shared in the feeling that the Black Music Division had been a mistake, but now the college was "stuck" with it. I, for one, would like to state unequivocally that this was not my view nor that of my distinguished colleagues. We all felt that the Black Music Division was making a valuable contribution to the cultural and educational life of Bennington College and that the first of the two options stated earlier was preferable. I do remember stating that, of course, it was Bennington's choice to admit, that within the cultural and educational view of the college, it had made a mistake in starting the division, but this was not the view held by the Committee.

As to some of the other issues raised regarding funding, attitudes, and facilities, I do not feel I can respond simply because we were made privy to only the most general information in these areas. My personal feeling is that there appears to have been a general pattern of neglect and lack of support by the College toward the division. This, of course,

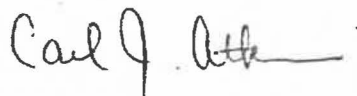
November 10, 1981

would need to be rectified if the Division is to be maintained and allowed to flourish. In regards to the relationship between the Black Music Division and the (other) Music Division, the report is accurate in terms of the Committee's feeling that the philosophy and methodology between the two Divisions is too disparate to allow any positive results from a merger.

Well, I have gone on more than I intended, but thought I should make some of these comments to clarify and/or to add weight to the report. I would just add, that I feel that you and June should be commended for a fine effort, characterized by sensitivity and objectivity toward a complex set of issues. I was honored to be asked to participate in this undertaking and hope my presence and comments have helped the over-all situation.

Please give my best to June, and especially to Bill Dixon and his fine staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Carl J. Atkins". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Carl J. Atkins



# Bennington College • Bennington • Vermont • 05201 • 802:442-5401

Donald R. Brown  
Dean of Faculty  
Bennington College

re: Budget for Fall 1980/Spring 1981

Don:

This Budget is being submitted along suggested guidelines you established during the Division Secretaries' meetings of the past term (Fall 1979). I hope that it doesn't appear excessive and that you don't think that we have taken advantage and have gone 'overboard'. Obviously we can get by (and well) with much less. I am, however, thinking along the lines that if all was as we all would like it to be, this would, for us, be the kind of budget that we would like to see realized. As a result this is our thinking at the moment. What I'm also trying to say is that these things (in my opinion) to ensure continued excellence in both teaching and studying, are necessary. Ultimately it would be good for both ourselves, our students and the college in general, were we able to have them.

With special regard to the recording studio (III)/which has been peripherally discussed in the past/ were such a studio to be established in Robeson House and if that studio were of quality, (one that would be compatible with anything say in New York) there is no reason why during the non-college season that that studio couldn't, within reason, be utilized to procure additional revenue for the college. To my knowledge, and I've done research on this, there isn't a decent studio (that would attract professionals or semi-professionals) in the area. And I did suggest the identical thing when the VAPA was still in the planning stage. Of course I'm also talking about an expenditure that would finally include 'adding on' (another building) to Robeson/<sup>House</sup> and equipment that, when digital recording becomes more of a reality (in the not too distant future) that would probably cost about \$250,000. True it may now sound alarming and out of the question, but when it is thought what kind of eventual money and student attraction that that could both generate and bring in, it is a mere pittance.

Thank you so much for your kind consideration.

Bill Dixon, Secretary  
Black Music Division

BD/st

BUDGET  
Fall 1980/Spring 1981

BLACK MUSIC DIVISION

Faculty: Dixon, Graves, Horenstein  
Assistants: Brooks, Qamar and one other person  
Special Assistant: Larry Jacobs; Jay Ash (???)

Facilities:

Studios in Jennings Hall: Dixon; Brooks; Graves; Horenstein; Qamar

Office Space in Jennings Hall: Office - S. Jones

PAUL ROBESON HOUSE: (teaching space; performing space; exhibition space;  
recording space; entertaining space; lounge space;  
studio space (Larry Jacob's studio))

- |    |                            |                      |                      |      |                   |
|----|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------|-------------------|
| I. | Guest Artists (performers) | one in the fall 1980 | one in the spring 19 |      |                   |
|    | Guest Lecturers            | one in the fall 1980 | one in the spring 19 |      |                   |
|    | Guest for Workshop - Sept. | Oct.                 | Nov.                 | Dec. | March, April, May |
|    | Total 6                    | 1                    | 1                    | 1    | 1 1 1             |
- II. Percussion Equipment: vibes; marimba, bass marimba; timpani; trap drum set (mallets, etc., for above); xylophone
- III. Recording Equipment: booth to built in Robeson House and the relevant equipment installed.
- IV. Video Equipment (to be installed in recording booth)  
Playback equipment for Robeson House for classroom use  
Teaching Equipment: Opague projector; slide projector (screen) 16mm film equipm
- V. Pianos: reconditioning of the two grands (Steinway and Knabe)  
piano for Graves' studio (Jennings)
- VI. Student Jobs: recording assistant; video assistant; studio clean up person (Robeson House); assistant to S. Jones (answer phone (mornings); do xeroxing, etc.)
- VII. Paul Robeson Archives: funds to establish an archives in the name of Paul Robes the films; the recordings, etc.
- VIII. Books: the Baker books; the Aebersold books, etc.; the Andrew White material (on Coltrane, Dolphy, etc.,) the collection of the Jazz Review (from the Smithsonian).

BUDGET  
Fall 1980/Spring 1981  
BLACK MUSIC DIVISION  
Page 2.

- IX. Recordings: Replace worn out recordings and recordings that have been lost.
- X. Funds to Renovate Paul Robeson House: paint the outside; refinish the walls inside; paint and general cleanup inside; carpet the stairs (upstairs); the main foyer; the gallery area and the classroom adjacent to the gallery; completely refinish and paint and carpet the upstairs lounge and listening room area; install a bar; furnish the room; lights, etc., piano, cassette equipment (playback); etc.; lights and dimmer board.

# BUDGET

Fall 1980/Spring 1981

## Breakdown and costs:

- I. One Guest Performing Artist in the Fall (Sept. 1980) 1/  
One Guest Performing Artist in the Spring (March 1981) 1/

One Guest Lecturer in the Fall (October 1980) 1/  
One Guest Lecturer in the Spring (April 1981) 1/

WORKSHOP: On Instruments, Ear Training, Etc.

Sept. Oct. Nov. (1980)  
1 1/ 1 1/ 1 1/

March April May (1981)  
1 1/ 1 1/ 1 1/

1/ Fee = \$150.00 plus expenses and room & board -- 10 @ \$250.00 = \$ 2,500

## II. PERCUSSION EQUIPMENT

one set of vibes; one marimba; one bass marimba; one set of timpani;  
one xylophone; one trap drum set; (includes \$500 estimate on xylophone) 9,600

III. RECORDING EQUIPMENT: (a) Recording Booth for Paul Robeson House /to be housed where the organ formerly was/ (also equipment to be housed in the booth) -- Booth and Equipment Estimate 10,000

(b) Playback equipment to be installed in Robeson House to facilitate the teaching of the ensemble classes and so that valuable and fragile equipment won't have to be moved from place to place. 3,000

IV. VIDEO EQUIPMENT: this equipment to be housed in recording booth so that the video can be done from booth or booth area. Estimate for the equipment: 5,000

V. PIANOS: The division has two grands that are in severe need of reconditioning. We have already obtained an estimate for the work (6,000). The Yamaha Grand we would like to trade (it is an inferior piano) because we can get a good Steinway with the Yamaha as a trade. Under the instruction we are looking at both the video and recording equipment (for the booth) as well as the pianos being able to be purchased under capital gains rather than out of the Division's operating or educational budget. There is also another small Yamaha Upright (approx. cost \$2,500) that is needed for the studio of M. Graves.

(pianos: new upright; rebuilding of two baby grands) 8,500

SUB TOTAL..... 38,600

BUDGET  
Fall 1980/Spring 1981  
Page 2.

Breakdown and costs:

VI. STUDENT JOBS: the following jobs for students are available:  
clean up person for classroom, performance, lounge and gallery  
areas of Robeson House.  
Recording Assistant; Assistant to S. Jones; Student to Schedule;  
(regular per hour minimum wage) estimate..... \$ 1,000.

VII. PAUL ROBESON ARCHIVES: funds to establish an archives of films; books;  
recordings, etc. 2,500.

VIII. BOOKS AND RECORDINGS: the Dave Baker Books; The Jamey Aebersold educational  
material, (books and recordings /music minus one series/; the  
Andrew White II material on Coltrane, Dolphy, etc., plus transcriptions  
of solos and documented material; collection of Andrew White recordings;  
material from the Smithsonian Collection especially the collection  
of the JAZZ REVIEW; the Ellington recordings, etc.) We also have  
to replace recordings from our small collection (for class use and  
other) that are no longer serviceable or that have 'disappeared'.  
Estimate..... 5,000.

IX.	<u>Recording Tape:</u>	<u>Video Tape;</u>	<u>Cassette Tape:</u>	
	\$1,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$1,000.00	
	(classes & Performance)	(special performances)	(classes & performance)	2,500.

X. LIGHTS AND A DIMMER BOARD For Robeson House  
(I have no way of estimating this)

XI. FUNDS FOR THE RENOVATION OF ROBESON HOUSE

(a) We would like to carpet the upstairs and the stairs; the  
gallery area; the foyer and the first floor classroom (this would  
eliminate the noise factor of people moving around when there are  
activities in other areas of Robeson House); (b) scrape and refinish  
the walls in the performance area and the upstairs area; (c) repaint  
and do a general cleanup of the entire house; (d) paint the outside  
of Robeson House; (e) make a lounge and listening room area of the  
upstairs; this would include furnishings and general playback  
equipment for both cassette and recordings. (I have no way of  
estimating this)

XII. BUDGET FOR SENIOR CONCERTS: 500.0

XIII. OPAQUE PROJECTOR - Teaching Aid for classes in composition - arranging  
and the ensembles 500.0

Plus Sub total Page 1	13,000.0
Total.....	38,600.0
	<u>\$51,600.0</u>



12/1/81

# John H. Williams II, Attorney, PC

PO BOX 350 • 115 ELM STREET • BENNINGTON • VERMONT 05201-0350 • (802) 442-8111

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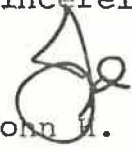
November 30, 1981

Susan Paris Borden  
Chairman, Board of Trustees  
Bennington College  
Bennington, Vermont 05201

Dear Susan:

Enclosed with this letter are the Report of the Black Music Visiting Committee, including attachments to the Report, and my transmittal letter as Chairman of the Visiting Committee. Copies of these materials are being sent to all of the members of the Visiting Committee, the Black Music Division and the Administration care of the President's office.

Sincerely yours,

  
John H. Williams, II

pdw

enclosure

cc: Nathan Davis  
George Russell  
Carl Atkins  
Lucien Hanks  
Black Music Division  
President's Office

John H. Williams, II  
110 Monument Avenue  
Bennington, Vermont 05201

November 30, 1981

Board of Trustees  
Bennington College  
Bennington, Vermont 05201

Dear Fellow Trustees:

Lucien Hanks and I joined this past Spring with three distinguished professional teachers and performers to form the Visiting Committee for the Black Music Division. Transmitted with our Report is brief background information about our guests. June Hanks has been kind enough to serve as the Reporter for the Committee.

A tentative draft of the Report was circulated over the Summer among the Committee members. Since no adverse comments were received back, that tentative draft was forwarded to the Black Music Division and Dean Brown on September 4th. Also forwarded at the same time was a draft of my transmittal letter for the Report. Bill Dixon telephoned me promptly after receiving the draft materials to request a meeting.

June Hanks and I got together with the Black Music Division on September 15th to discuss the Division's objections to the draft materials. After that meeting I made known to our visiting colleagues that the Division was critical of the draft and the transmittal letter. Soon thereafter I received helpful commentary from George Russell of our Committee. His letter is attached to the final Report. I subsequently spoke with Dean Brown reiterating the Committee's invitation for comment from him or others in the administration. Dean Brown felt that further comment was not indicated. As a result of this process, June revised the tentative draft with the intention of correcting any inaccuracies or misimpressions.

Enclosed you will find the Committee's final report as prepared by June. The Report in the form enclosed has been circulated among our three Visitors. Attached to the final Report is a thoughtful response from Carl Atkins of our Committee. The Report as submitted in final form was not circulated again to either the administration or the Black

Music Division. Concurrent with this transmittal letter I am sending copies of the Report to Dean Brown and Bill Dixon, inviting both of them to comment to the Trustees if they so desire.

The observations which follow are mine alone. Certain of these observations were expressed somewhat differently in the tentative draft of my transmittal letter. Members of the Black Music Division took particular exception to the draft transmittal letter because it commented at some length on the threshold question of whether it had been advisable to create the Division.

While I appreciate the Division's point that no other Division has been subjected to questions about the validity of its existence, I have felt that this is a concern of the Trustees and that the issue must be addressed. My analysis is--

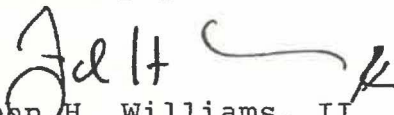
1. musical improvisation and the Black cultural tradition in America should be recognized in the academic program at Bennington College
2. this recognition need not have taken the form of establishing a separate Division
3. the College's commitment to Afro-American music and the Black cultural tradition would be significantly diminished if the Black Music Division's programs were "absorbed" by the other Divisions in some manner
4. this conclusion is highly subjective, and reflects my impressions about the history of the Division and present attitudes within the Community
5. if this conclusion is right, though admittedly subjective, the sensible thing is to be done with hindsight and affirm once and for all the Division's permanence at Bennington.

Mr. Russell, who wrote to me about the tentative draft, correctly observes that the recommendations of the Report are general and hence, in his words, "are vague in stating exactly how, and, more pointedly, how much and when" the College will affirm and support the Division in tangible ways. The Division apparently feels this omission is a

fatal flaw in the Report. Attached to the Report is the Division's 1980-1981 budget proposal. It illustrates what the Division has in mind when it talks about its fair share of the College's resources.

To be sure, the Report does not get into detail about the level of financial support the Division should receive from the College. My view is that the specifics of that must be left to the administration and the College's budgetary process and that the Report will have done its job if it is accepted by the Trustees in the spirit rendered, since the inescapable implication of the Report is that the Division has been a shortchanged stepchild, albeit not to the extent perceived by the Division. Very little can be accomplished to remedy the Division's valid grievances until there is general acceptance of the first premise. That is the issue for the Trustees in receiving, deliberating about and then taking action on this Report.

Sincerely yours,

  
John H. Williams, II

pdw



## A View of the Black Music Division

### Introduction:

After a trial year Black Music was granted academic status in 1974 as the College's eighth teaching division. Bill Dixon, Stephen Horenstein, Milford Graves, George Barrow and Arthur Brooks became its first faculty. In 1979 the faculty of Bennington College authorized the Division to grant majors without sharing responsibility with other Divisions. The first three Black Music majors graduated in 1980. Less than a year later, May 21, 1981, this Division was visited by a committee authorized by the Bennington College Trustees to evaluate Black Music as part of a routine examination of all Divisions of the teaching faculty. Three of the members of the committee came as professional teachers and performers of black or Afro-American music; two others represented the Board of Trustees. This committee spent one and one half days interviewing faculty and students, listening to student compositions and deciding on recommendations. Subsequently the two trustee members gathered supplementary materials relating to the Division to the College as a whole.



#### Assessment of the Division:

The Committee found that the Black Music Division is managed by widely recognized performers who have been able to develop to a high level the enthusiasm and musical skills of the participating students. This achievement becomes the more remarkable, considering that few students come from backgrounds rich in the Black Music tradition and many have learned their instruments as undergraduates. Though the announced divisional focus covers this genre of music only since 1940, the span of reference in instruction covers not only the American black tradition prior to 1940 but incorporates the Black tradition in the Caribbean, South America and Africa. Comparisons also take place with other musical traditions of the world, such as Europe and India. In addition the Division, particularly in its introductory course, relates black music to life in black communities. Having acknowledged this heritage, the Black Music Division deems itself propagator of an art form that is marked but not limited by its past. Through classes, lessons and ensemble groups often led by a team of teachers, the Division insures exposure of its student to its esthetic canons and provides musical experience for students at a variety of levels of instrumental skill. The first three majors graduated (1980) have found employment with musical organizations of the black tradition.

### Merger of Divisions:

Trustee interest has centered on the advisability of merging the Black Music' with the (other) Music Division. How can the separation be continued, particularly one that presumes a tie between music and skin-color or experience?

After meeting with members of both musical divisions, the committee found esthetic and pedagogical incompatibilities. Central to them is the role of the performer, who in the European tradition is subordinated to the composer but in the black tradition as improviser becomes the composer. Hence musical notation is almost indispensable only in the European tradition, while in the Black tradition its use is optional. On the other hand standard European harmony, which is no longer taught in the (other) Music Division, is deemed a handy tool for students of Black Music, though none are constrained by its rules. The greater complexities of African and Indian rhythms demand more instruction than is deemed necessary for most drummers in the European tradition. Black music grants them extra hours.

Rather than regard these differences as incompatibilities, many are able to regard them as complementary. Perhaps a dozen students of music have already made this discovery and are freely taking advantage of the offerings of both divisions. Indeed, institutions represented on this committee have already

merged the two musical traditions into a single department. These committee members quickly added, that reorganization had not reduced friction, and in competition for funds or space the European tradition tended to win. One committee member observed, "If you want Black Music to survive at Bennington, better have its own division." Visiting professors of Black Music nodded assent.

#### Black Music In Bennington College

In a small college we expect an approximate quality of divisions, but the scene in many ways suggests the discrepancies between mansions and shanties on tidewater Virginia rather than the equality of Levittown. With a faculty of three half-time teachers and two teaching assistants, Black Music is the smallest division on the basis of personnel. Its budget for operations (concerts, visiting musicians, instruments etc) is also the smallest among divisions. Except for bookish Literature and Social Science Divisions, the space allotted to Black Music is the smallest.

For the sake of balance, one should also note that Black Music is currently teaching the smallest number of students of any division and that the number of students enrolled in its courses fell two years ago from a level near 130 to approximately 65. Though some administrators felt that this decline justified the small pickings given the Division, on

its part the Black Music faculty attributed declining enrollment to Bill Dixon's sabbatical leave and the failure of the administration to hire a replacement for him. The decline also signaled the need to bolster the program of offerings. Promising young musicians were encouraged to come to teach; were paid from the operational budget, and thanked their employers for the opportunities provided them. On its part the College can point to having increased the operating budget from \$8,500 in 1976 to \$13,500 in 1980, but the Division recalls only hassles and recriminations to gain this level of support. The College administration has also made the Carriage Barn with its bright accoustics available for Black Music, only to become involved in a new dispute over renaming the building for Paul Robeson. At the same time Black Music shares with the (other) Music Division offices in Jennings, a secretary, a record library, deteriorating pianos and some of the same students.

During its seven years as a Division, Black Music's relations with the College have often been prickly. Among the Division's grievances are: no space was allocated for it in the building VAPA; for three or four years it was shifted from place to place within the College; it was not consulted about "Jazz Summers", a summer program designed to help VAPA pay its way; it was judged for many years in-

capable of supporting a major; it received little applause for bringing prominent contributors to Black Music to the College. Though no single incident may merit concern, strung together in the context of uneasy black-white relations, they are construed as racial discrimination. On its part the College administration has been embarrassed by Black Music's vitriolic condemnation of the Jazz Summers program, has been disappointed in its low level of participation in faculty meetings, committees and other occasions for demonstrating responsibility within the community, and has overlooked a number of irregularities to avoid being labelled "anti-black".

In short, instead of being accepted and esteemed for its contribution to the arts and its message for society, the Bennington College Community has in part isolated Black Music. Camille Paglia of the Literature Division, and one of the few champions of Black Music, explained this phenomenon at the dedication of VAPA in 1976 in a speech of tribute to Bill Dixon:

"There is no consolation here: those who seek assurance of the principle of benevolence pervading the universe will not find it in Bill Dixon's music. For the tradition of black music of which he is an advanced exponent, the reality of experience is suffering, pain, sacrifice, bitterness, anger. In the urgency



of this black music at its most intense we find untamed energy, a violence of emotion and expression. ... the Black music that is practiced at Bennington is still unabsorbed by the bourgeoisie, for it is too raw, savage, unnerving; it possesses too much enriching estrangement, too much 'metaphysical uneasiness'".

Here we see a dramatization of white anxiety vis a vis black America. This is one aspect of Black Music's reception. The other is academic, never proof to racial thinking, often slow to respond, obstinate and obsessive, yet driven by an ethic of open mindedness. Bennington espouses this catholic orientation, and has often suffered from assault on its senses and sensibilities. Debate follows where terms are hurled like "provincial", "obscene", "avant garde" and "sophisticated". Black Music has come and is being more slowly assimilated, not because of its music but because it is black. On the wider musical scene are many signs of an artistic convergence of music styles, where Bill Dixon and his international reputation stands in the forefront among composer-performers.

#### Recommendations:

1. We recommend the continuation of Black Music as an offering at Bennington College. The Liberal Arts have been invested with new meanings since the days when learned people

confined their attention to the Judaeo-Christian tradition. A Liberal Arts more in keeping with our times seeks to encompass the world in all its diversity. In this perspective Black Music is a gain that should not be easily relinquished, and because it is black rather than some other color, contact may help mitigate racist outlooks. While other institutions opt to reach these ends through literature, art or anthropology, Bennington can work as well through music. Indeed, it would be a pity to scrap this team that continues the founding Bennington tradition of 50 years ago, when faculty did not teach but collaborated as equals with students in common undertakings.

2. The Black Music Division should be preserved as a separate entity for the present. Neither of the two music divisions share at this moment sufficient mutual respect to make an effective collaboration. Alternative mergers may later arise that are more attractive, e.g. the formation of a Black Studies Division.

3. Recognition of the Black Music Division, to be genuine, must first address the specific inequities caused by this division. Among them are such questions as "The curriculum of Black Music is taught by three recognized faculty members, all receiving half-time pay. Why are none granted full-time pay? Why was one of the three assistant-

ships recently denied to the Division? On what basis does the operating budget of \$13,500 balance the higher sums allocated to other divisions? Though such questions do not exhaust the list of inequities, these and others must be addressed less with the aim of balancing claims against counterclaims and more in the spirit of attaining good relations with a partially alienated family member.

4. A second and more difficult assignment requires cultivating respect for and cooperation with Black Music in this community of learning. It lies beyond the scope of this report to prescribe such a program, yet one approach suggests that isolation per se is not confined to Black Music but can be viewed as a characteristic, more or less, acute, in most Divisions of the faculty. A first step in remedy is the organization of college-wide symposia, workshops, festivals, etc. where all divisions may contribute. A successful occasion of this kind was the Art and Sciences debates when the values and assumptions of the two were juxtaposed in a continuing series of evening meetings through much of a semester during the early 1940's. It added content and perspective beyond the ordinary horizons of divisional instruction, at the same time as it brought faculty and students together in a new setting. Of course, the efficacy of any such measure dissipates quickly, and new

measures must take their place, lest the gain be lost.

5. We recommend that Black Music accept the risk of increasing rebuff (which may be less than anticipated) by participating more fully in the affairs of the College as a whole. To be sure, the Division's contribution through its concerts may have brought disappointing attendance and outward signs of recognition, yet a challenge to pull in more listeners is quite compatible with high artistic standards. Rather than rest content in cooperating with Dance and Drama, black musicians could well initiate exchange of teachers and join common projects with Literature, Social or Natural Sciences. Similarly, the round of administrative meetings is dull and frustrating until these occasions can be seen as opportunities to move a step nearer toward a commonweal of arts, humanities and science. Bennington should be aided to become a center for social as well as artistic triumphs.

6. The Committee recommends continuing the dialogue that was begun by this Visiting Committee. In a few more years it can review the questions raised by this report and extend attention to topics more directly concerned with teaching. A longer exposure to the scene would be welcome, say four days, if it could be arranged. This Committee enjoyed its assignment and would welcome the oppor-

tunity to serve again.

Respectfully submitted this 30<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1981.

John H. Williams, II  
John H. Williams, II, Chairman

Lucien M. Hanks  
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# Bennington College

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Latest Publication - a book entitled "Writing  
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He was commissioned by Gulf Oil to do a tribute  
to Martin Luther King.

Has done field work in Turkey, Brazil, Morocco,  
Tunisia, and the Caribbean Islands.

1975 - listed in Whose Who in America and  
Whose Who in the World

As director first annual seminar on Jazz  
at the University of Pittsburgh in 1971. This  
has been an annual event since that time.

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Received private instruction throughout  
the 30's and 40's. In 1947 he went to New York  
to train.

Author of "Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal  
Organization". He has taught this concept  
at many university's throughout the country.

Received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1969 and

Former faculty of the Berkshire Music Center  
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Traveled throughout Europe in the 60's teaching  
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He has been a regular performer of the Boston  
Opera Company.

Solo performance with the Boston Pops and  
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Conductor - Genesee Datavia in New York.