

YALE INSTITUTE OF SACRED MUSIC PRESENTS

Eternal Gain:
A Symposium on
Dr. Mattie Moss Clark
and The Clark Sisters

*Hosted by the Interdisciplinary Program in
Music and the Black Church*

APRIL 13, 2023

8:30 AM–6:00 PM

GREENBURG CONFERENCE CENTER

&

MARQUAND CHAPEL

ABOUT THE DAY'S EVENTS

Timed to coincide with a Clark Sisters Residency at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music, this symposium is a day-long meditation on the distinctive musical, spiritual, and cultural contributions of Dr. Clark and the Clark Sisters. One of the most celebrated groups in the history of Black gospel music, the Clark Sisters have earned the adjective that is often appended to their name: *legendary*. What stories do these musical lives help audiences and analysts to see and hear? Today, Ashon Crawley, Ambre Dromgoole, Marla Frederick, Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, Deborah Smith Pollard, Guthrie Ramsey, Todne Thomas, Eboni Marshall Turman, Henry Washington, Jr., and Almeda M. Wright will show how the careers and legacies of Dr. Clark and the Clark Sisters illuminate a host of issues pertaining to the music(s) of the Black church, including gender, kinship, instrumentality, fashion, media, and the music industry.

Braxton D. Shelley

Associate professor of music, of sacred music, and of divinity

Director, Interdisciplinary Program in Music and the Black Church

We are grateful to the following sponsors for their support of this event:

Department of African American Studies

Andover Newton Seminary

Yale School of Art

Belonging at Yale

Chaplain's Office

Degraffenreidt Resource Fund and 320Y Fund, Faculty of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office

Yale Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Yale Divinity School

Yale School of Drama

Yale School of the Environment

Film and Media Studies Program

Yale School of Medicine

Department of Music

Yale School of Nursing Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Department of Religious Studies

Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

ETERNAL GAIN: A SYMPOSIUM ON DR. MATTIE MOSS CLARK AND THE CLARK SISTERS

THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 2023

8:30–9:00 AM	Breakfast (Greenberg Conference Center—Lobby)
9:00–9:30 AM	Welcome and opening remarks (Greenberg Dining Room)
9:30–10:45 AM	PANEL I: Kin (Greenberg Dining Room) Dr. Todne Thomas, Dr. Almeda Wright, Dr. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes Dr. Jamil Drake, <i>chair</i>
10:45–11:00 AM	Break
11:00–12:15 PM	PANEL II: Ensemble (Greenberg Dining Room) Ambre Dromgoole, Dr. Marla Frederick, Dr. Deborah Pollard Dr. Laura Nasrallah, <i>chair</i>
12:15–12:30 PM	Break
12:30–1:15 PM	KEYNOTE: Dr. Guthrie Ramsey (Greenberg Dining Room)
1:15–2:00 PM	Lunch (The Old Refectory in YDS)
2:15–3:45 PM	Masterclass with Clark Sisters (Marquand Chapel in YDS) Special meeting of REL948/MUSIC483
3:45–4:00 PM	Break
4:00–5:15 PM	PANEL III: Method (Greenberg Dining Room) Dr. Ashon Crawley, Dr. Henry Washington, Dr. Eboni Marshall Turman Dr. Adrian Hernandez-Acosta, <i>chair</i>
5:15–6:00 PM	CLOSING SESSION: Coda (Greenberg Dining Room)

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

Ashon Crawley is a writer, artist and teacher, exploring the intersection of performance, blackness, queerness and spirituality. He moves in and out of multiple genres in order to sound out a critique of the normative world—to sound out the possibility for alternatives, for otherwise. He is the Associate Professor of Religious Studies and African-American and African Studies at the University of Virginia, and is author of *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility* (Fordham University Press) and *The Lonely Letters* (Duke University Press). As Founder of the Otherwise Arts Lab, an integrative arts practice and space, Crawley brings together scholars, artists, musicians and community members to exchange ideas, concepts, and practices. He has been granted fellowships with Yaddo, MacDowell, New City Arts Initiative, and Gilead COMPASS Faith Coordinating Center. His audiovisual art has been featured at Second Street Gallery (Charlottesville, Virginia), Welcome Gallery (Charlottesville, Virginia), Bridge Projects (Los Angeles, California) and the California African American Museum (Los Angeles, California).

Ambre Dromgoole (she/her) is a doctoral candidate in the departments of religious studies and African American studies at Yale University. She has published and presented research in a variety of venues including the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, *Journal of Ethnomusicology*, *The Revealer Magazine*, and *Black Perspectives*. Her dissertation “There’s a Heaven Somewhere’: Itinerancy, Intimacy, and Performance in the Lives of Gospel Blues Women, 1915–1983” is currently being supported by the Ford Foundation, Louisville Institute, and the Crossroads Project.

Marla Frederick is Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Religion and Culture at Emory University’s Candler School of Theology. A graduate of Spelman College, she earned a PhD in cultural anthropology from Duke University. An authority on religion, race, and ethnography, her research centers on the study of religion and media, religion and economics, and the sustainability of Black institutions in a “post-racial” world. She is the author of *Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith*, *Colored Television: American Religion Gone Global* and co-author of *Televised Redemption: Religion, Media, and Racial Uplift in the Black Atlantic World*. In 2007, her co-authored book, *Local Democracy Under Siege: Activism, Public Interests and Private Politics*, won the Best Book Award for the Society for the Anthropology of North America. Prior to her role at Emory, she was Professor of African and African American Studies and of the Study of Religion at Harvard University. She has served as the President of the Association of Black Anthropologists and President of the American Academy of Religion.

Cheryl Townsend Gilkes (pronounced “Jillks”) is the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Professor Emerita of African-American Studies and Sociology at Colby College (Waterville, Maine). An ordained Baptist minister, she is an assistant pastor for special projects at the

Union Baptist Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She has served as visiting faculty at several seminaries and schools of divinity, most recently Chicago Theological Seminary. She also serves as a Distinguished Professor, Community Liaison, and Research Consultant for the Hartford International University for Religion and Peace (formerly Hartford Seminary). She holds degrees in sociology from Northeastern University (B.A., M.A., Ph.D.), has pursued graduate theological studies at Boston University's School of Theology, and has received an honorary Doctor of Divinity (D. D.) from Ursinus College. In addition to her book, *If It Wasn't for the Women: Black Women's Experience and Womanist Culture in Church and Community*, she has published articles in scholarly journals and edited volumes on race and ethnicity, the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, and African American religion. She has also published sermons in several journals and edited volumes. Until the pandemic, she was "Dr. Dr. Cheryl" on Colby College's radio station, where she hosted a gospel music radio show, "The Uncloudy Day," for 19 years. Since the pandemic she has contributed several opinion pieces to Religion News Service and has written the introduction to the fiftieth anniversary publication of James Cone's book, *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation*.

Deborah Smith Pollard, Professor of English Literature and Humanities, has been a faculty member at the University of Michigan-Dearborn since 1995 where she has served as director of African and African American Studies and chair of the department of Literature, Philosophy, and the Arts. Her published research topics have included praise and worship in the urban church, Christian rap, women gospel announcers, and the changes in attire in gospel music. Her book, *When the Church Becomes Your Party: Contemporary Gospel Music* (Wayne State University Press) was named a Notable Book by the Library of Michigan. Her most recent article, "'All I See Is Your Booty and Cleavage': Sex and the Contemporary Gospel Song," was published in December of 2021 by *The Journal of the Society for American Music*. She recently completed her book manuscript about the international impact of Edwin Hawkins' arrangement of "Oh Happy Day." Additionally, Pollard is an international gospel music lecturer, consultant, and Stellar-award winning radio host. She is currently co-host and co-producer of "Sunday Morning Inspiration" on i-Heart Detroit's WMXD 92.3 FM with Glenda Curry.

A Guggenheim Fellow and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, **Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr.** is a music historian, pianist, composer, and Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Pennsylvania. A widely published writer, he's the author of *Who Hears Here: On Black Music Pasts and Present* (2022), *The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History and the Challenge of Bebop* (2013), and *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (2003). He edited and wrote a foreword for Rae Linda Brown's *The Heart of a Woman: The Life and Music of Florence B. Price* (2020) and co-authored with Melanie Zeck, Samuel A. Floyd, Jr.'s *The Transformation of Black Music* (2017). As a producer, label head, and bandleader, Ramsey has released five recording projects, including *A Spiritual Vibe, vol. 1* and has performed at The Blue Note, The Annenberg Center for the Performing

Arts, and Harlem Stage. He recently scored the 2019 prize-winning documentary *Making Sweet Tea* and his documentary *Amazing: The Tests and Triumph of Bud Powell* (2015) was a selection of the BlackStar Film Festival. Ramsey co-curated the National Museum of African American History and Culture's 2009 exhibition *Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing: How the Apollo Theater Shaped American Entertainment* and was a consultant and narrator in the 2020 Emmy Award winning HBO documentary *Apollo: The Soul of American Culture*. Ramsey is the CEO of Musiqology Media Group, a production and consulting agency that helps artists produce their best work and to tell their story successfully.

Todne Thomas is a socio-cultural anthropologist and the newly appointed Associate Professor of Divinity and Religious Studies at Yale Divinity School. In collaboration with Afro-Caribbean and African American congregants, Thomas conducts ethnographic research on the racial, spatial, and familial dynamics of black Christian communities in the U.S. Conceptually, her work integrates critical race and kinship theories to understand the racial and moral scripts of evangelicalism and neoliberalism. Her latest book, *Kincraft: The Making of Black Evangelical Sociality* (2021), explores the internal dynamics of community life among black evangelicals, who are often overshadowed by white evangelicals and the common equation of the "Black Church" with an Afro-Protestant. Her new, forthcoming book, *From Hate to Hallows: Reframing Black Church Arson*, explores the burning of the College-Hill Seventh Day Adventist Church in Knoxville, TN. She uses reparative ethnography to explore the possible causes of this unsolved arson. She has also co-edited *New Directions in Spiritual Kinship: Sacred Ties across the Abrahamic Religions* (2017) and authored peer-reviewed articles for *Journal of Africana Religions*, *Anthropology and Humanism*, and *Journal of African American Studies*. These publications and her numerous presentations have established her as one of the most important figures in the emergence of "ethnographic ecclesiology."

The Reverend **Eboni Marshall Turman**, Ph.D. is the associate professor of theology and African American religion at Yale University Divinity School in New Haven, CT. A first-career concert dancer and ordained National Baptist preacher, her research interests span the varieties of 20th-century U.S. theological liberalisms, most especially Black and womanist theological, social ethical, and theo-aesthetic traditions. She co-chairs the Black Theology unit of the American Academy of Religion; is an executive board member of the Society of Christian Ethics; and a founding member of the Black Church Collective, for which she served as lead author of the recent "On Black Lives Matter: A Theological Statement from the Black Churches." Dr. Turman is currently completing her second monograph tentatively titled, "Black Women's Burden: Male Power, Gender Violence, and the Scandal of African American Social Christianity," and she has recently begun preliminary research for her third monograph, titled "In My Flesh Shall I See God: Black Womanist Theological Aesthetics." Through her research and scholarship, Dr. Turman is transforming the way we frame the Black experience, the contemporary movement for Black lives, and the moral significance

of the Black community, specifically the 21st-century black church. A trailblazer in the church and academy, she is the youngest woman to be named Assistant Minister of the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City (2002–2012), and the second woman to preside over the ordinances in its 215-year history. She formerly served as Director of Black Church Studies at Duke University Divinity School (2013–2016). She is the only womanist theological ethicist on faculty at Yale Divinity School; the recipient of the Yale University Bouchet Faculty Excellence award for research and teaching; the Inspiring Yale award; a Yale Public Voices fellow; one of *Ebony* magazine's Young Faith Leaders in the Black Community; included on *The Network Journal's* prestigious 40 Under 40 List; and named as one of the "Top 5 Young Preachers in America" by ROHO. She lives in New York City and southern Connecticut with her wonderful spouse, Rossie E. Turman III, Esq., and their three daughters. Follow Dr. Turman on Twitter and Instagram @ebonithoughts.

Henry Washington, Jr. is an interdisciplinary scholar of race, gender, and aesthetics in the post-slavery United States, and an Assistant Professor of Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Wesleyan University. His research and teaching draw on the methods of literary criticism, performance theory, visual cultural analysis, and black feminist and trans theories to examine how dominant regimes of knowledge construct and maintain "difference" to justify uneven distributions of power that would otherwise betray the West's performance of democracy. His book project in progress, "Enfleshing the Criminal: Producing and Policing Black Sexual Difference," examines the role that visual-cultural consensus about the black female body's supposedly evident difference enabled the trajectory of criminological "empiricism," as well as the ways that black artists and intellectuals contended with the ostensibly objective terms on which racialized gender subsequently appeared. His writing has been published in *Women & Performance*.

Professor **Almeda M. Wright** is the Associate Professor of Religious Education at Yale Divinity School. Her research focuses on African American religion, adolescent spiritual development, and the intersections of religion and public life. Professor Wright's publications include *The Spiritual Lives of Young African Americans* (Oxford University Press, July 2017), a book she co-edited with Mary Elizabeth Moore; *Children, Youth, and Spirituality in a Troubling World*; and an issue of *Practical Matters Journal* that she edited. Her research has also been supported by the John Templeton Foundation, the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning, the Fund for Theological Education, and the Louisville Institute. She is currently finishing a larger project on activist-educators that outlines the radical dimensions of African American Religion and Education throughout the twentieth century. Professor Wright is an ordained minister of the American Baptist Churches and has been on the ministerial staff of several churches, including Union Baptist Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Victory for the World United Church of Christ in Stone Mountain, Georgia.

UPCOMING EVENT

Concert: An Evening with The Clark Sisters

Friday, April 14, 2023 • 7:30 PM

College Street Music Hall, New Haven CT

Livestream available at <https://ism.yale.edu/event/evening-clark-sisters>

The Clark Sisters are an American gospel vocal group consisting of four sisters: Jacky Clark Chisholm, Elbernita “Twinkie” Clark-Terrell, Dorinda Clark-Cole, and Karen Clark Sheard. The Clark Sisters are the daughters of gospel musician and choral director Mattie Moss Clark. They are credited for helping to bring gospel music to the mainstream and are considered as pioneers of contemporary gospel. Their biggest crossover hits include “Is My Living in Vain?,” “Hallelujah,” “He Gave Me Nothing to Lose,” “Endow Me,” their hit song “Jesus Is A Love Song,” “Pure Gold,” “Expect a Miracle,” and their largest mainstream crossover gold certified, “You Brought the Sunshine.”

The Clark Sisters are renowned for their vocal stylings, dubbed as “The Clark Sound.” They incorporate high and fast melismas, acrobatic trills and riffs, and deep, soulful growls or “squalls.” The sisters are also known for the individual distinctive sounds that they contribute. Jacky (contralto) is known for her soft, smooth, deeper vocals. Dorinda (mezzo-soprano), the “jazzy” sister, inputs scats and riffs. Uses her piercing soprano vocals that can be clearly heard on early tracks. Also known for her runs and high melismas. Karen (soprano) is known for her unique riffs, runs, growls, scats, very vast vocal range, ability to belt whilst in the whistle range, and has also been known to implement an “echo” in her live performances. Twinkie is known for her complex runs, riffs, powerful mixed-voice belts, soulful squalls and deep growls. Twinkie (Soprano/Mezzo-Soprano/Alto/Contralto/Tenor/Baritone) is credited with being the “heart of the Clark Sisters.” Early in the group’s development, Twinkie was the chief songwriter, music and vocal arranger, producer, and also possessing a wide vocal range from soprano to a low baritone.

The Clark Sisters have won three Grammy Awards. With 16 albums to their credit and millions in sales, the Clark Sisters are the highest-selling female gospel group in history.

 ism.yale.edu  facebook.com/yaleism  @yaleism  twitter.com/yaleism

Yale INSTITUTE OF SACRED MUSIC