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Natalie Leota Henderson Hinderas (1927-1987)

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Black Women in America

An Historical Encyclopedia

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VOLUME I

A-L

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could understandably be viewed as a slaveholder, her method of slaveholding actively challenged the assumptions behind the southern institution that defined slavery as a natural condition and the slave as having no rights.

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VIRGINIA GOULD



Natalie Hinderas began as a child prodigy, giving her first full-length public recital at the age of eight. This highly respected pianist went on to become a strong advocate of the work of Black composers. [Schomburg Center]

HINDERAS, NATALIE LEOTA HENDERSON (1927-1987)

Born June 15, 1927, in Oberlin, Ohio, Natalie Henderson was born into the musical household of Abram and Leota (Palmer) Henderson. Her parents were both students at Oberlin—her father was a jazz pianist and her mother was a classical pianist who taught at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

As a child, Natalie was surrounded by music and musicians. She began playing the piano at the age of three. Her formal piano studies began at six and she also studied violin and voice at an early age. Natalie was a child prodigy at the piano and played a full-length public recital at the age of eight. She played a concerto with the Cleveland Women's Symphony at the age of twelve. She was musically educated in the public schools of Oberlin, Ohio. She later received the B.Mus. in 1945 from Oberlin Conservatory as their youngest graduate. (She had been admitted as a special student at the age of eight.) Assuming the name Natalie Hinderas, she did postgraduate work in piano at the Juilliard School of Music with Olga Samaroff and at the Philadelphia Conservatory with Edward Steuermann. She also studied composition with Vincent Persichetti.

In 1954, she made her Town Hall debut and received critical acclaim. Thereafter she toured extensively as a concert pianist in the United States, Europe, and the West Indies. The U.S. Department of State sponsored two tours abroad that included Africa and Asia as well as Europe. In the mid-1950s, Hinderas signed a contract with NBC to travel to their owned and operated stations in the various major cities to play solo recitals, concertos, and variety shows.

Hinderas made a debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra in four concerts in 1971. She was the first Black female instrumental soloist to appear with the orchestra in subscription concerts. Her debut piece was the contemporary Ginastera Concerto. Many concerts followed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, the Cleveland, Atlanta, New York, San Francisco, and Chicago symphony orchestras, and others. Her orchestral performances featured

Rachmaninoff's Concerto no. 2 in C Minor, the Schumann Piano Concerto, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, and George Walker's Piano Concerto no. 1, which she commissioned in 1975. Her recording debut came in 1971 with the album *Natalie Hinderas Plays Music by Black Composers* (DESTO); other recordings followed on the Orion and Columbia labels. She was hailed as an extremely intelligent and thorough pianist with comprehensive technical ability and honest musical instincts (*Musical Courier* 1954). Throughout her career she promoted and recorded works by Black performers and composers, among them R. Nathaniel Dett, William Grant Still, John W. Work, and George Walker, whose works she recorded.

She received numerous awards and fellowships, including the Leventritt, John Hay Whitney, Julius Rosenwald, Martha Baird Rockefeller, and Fulbright fellowships. She also received an honorary doctorate of music degree from Swarthmore College (1976). In 1968, Hinderas joined the faculty of Temple University, where she was a full professor at the time of her death on July 22, 1987.

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MARVA GRIFFIN CARTER

HINKSON, MARY (1930-)

Mary Hinkson, dancer, teacher, and choreographer, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1930. She attended the University of Wisconsin, which had a budding dance program. After graduation, Hinkson moved to New York to study with Martha Graham, the modern dance pioneer and visionary. Hinkson danced with the Martha Graham Dance Company in many roles that Graham created specifically for her, such as *Ardent Song* (1955), *Acrobats of God* (1960), *Samson Agonistes* (1962), and *Phaedra* (1969). Hinkson

is best remembered for her role as Circe in the dance of the same name in 1963.

Hinkson has worked as a guest artist with many dance companies in the United States and in Europe. Some of the other choreographers she worked with were Pearl Lang (*Chosen People*, 1952), Donald McKayle (*Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder*, 1959, in which she created the female lead), John Butler (*Carmina Burana*, 1966), George Balanchine (*Figure in the Carpet*, 1960), and Anna Sokolow (*Seven Deadly Sins*, 1975) in which Hinkson danced in *The Dance of Anna*.

Hinkson remains known for her long and outstanding work with Graham, which began in 1951. She has taught the Graham technique at the Martha Graham School in New York. Although Hinkson is known primarily as a dancer and a teacher, she has choreographed several dances. She performed her most notable dance, *Make the Heart Show*, in 1951. Hinkson also has taught at the Dance Theatre of Harlem's school, the Juilliard School, and at the High School of Performing Arts, all in New York City.

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KARIAMU WELSH ASANTE

HOBSON, ANN (1943-)

During the 1960s, Ann Hobson broke ground as one of four African-American musicians in the nation's leading symphony orchestras. Born in Philadelphia on November 6, 1943, Hobson began to study the harp at age fourteen. During her senior year at Philadelphia's Girls High, she was noted as being of concert caliber. After high school, she enrolled at the Philadelphia Musical Academy and continued her harp study through the summer at the Maine Harp Colony (which had rejected her years earlier because of her race). In Maine she met a teacher, Alice Chalifoux, whose protégé she later became. She transferred to the Cleveland Institute of Music in order to study with the noted harpist and teacher, who later