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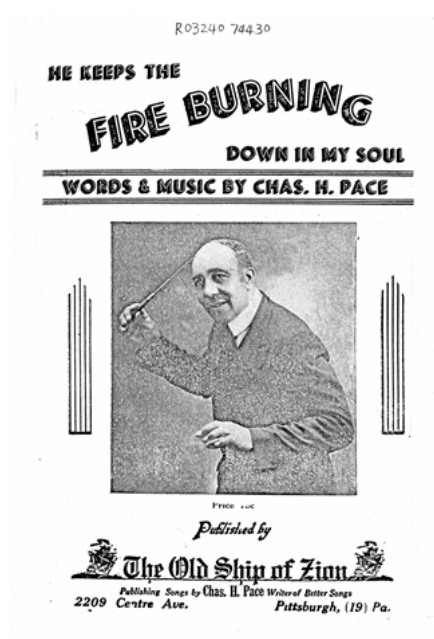


This email is a newsletter from the University of Pittsburgh Library System (ULS) sharing news, event information, collection updates, and more from the August Wilson Archive and Black arts and culture collections.

You Are Invited to

A Gospel Music Tribute to Charles and Frankie Pace

Saturday, March 25, 2023



Charles and Frankie Pace ran one of the nation's most successful independent Black gospel music publishing businesses out of Pittsburgh's Hill District from the 1930s to the 1980s.

Charles composed songs, made printing plates, and printed his music. Frankie helped distribute the music to a nationwide network of Black-owned stores. Their performances raised thousands of dollars for causes large and small, and their store was also the base for Frankie's activism.

Once believed to be lost, much of Charles's music is being recovered from his printing plates and other items in the [Charles and Frankie Pace Collection](#) held by the Center for American Music within the University of Pittsburgh Library System.

[**Celebrations of Charles and Frankie Pace's music will be held throughout the day on Saturday, March 25, 2023.**](#) Join us in celebrating the Paces, and hear some of their music performed for the first time in almost seventy years!

Reserve your free ticket!

Schedule of Events on Saturday, March 25

1:00 p.m.

Hillman Library, Room 340

3960 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Keynote

Keynote address on gospel music of Pace's time delivered by renowned music historian Dr. Mark Burford.

3:30 p.m.

Frankie Pace Park

901 Centre Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Rededication of Frankie Pace Park

Led by Dr. Kimberly C. Ellis of the Historic Hill Institute, a ceremony will feature city officials issuing a proclamation honoring Charles and Frankie Pace.

5:00 p.m.

Ebenezer Baptist Church

2001 Wylie Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Exhibit & Reception

A reception with exhibits highlighting items from the Charles and Frankie Pace Collection, curated by the University of Pittsburgh Library System's Center for American Music.

7:00 p.m.

Ebenezer Baptist Church

2001 Wylie Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Concert of Pace's Music

A performance by the Heritage Gospel Chorale, directed by Dr. Herbert VRP Jones, and the Alton Merrell Trio.

Co-sponsors: Historic Hill Institute, Ebenezer Baptist Church, American Musicological Society, University of Pittsburgh Library System and the Center for American Music, University of Pittsburgh's Hill District Community Engagement Center, and the Lower Hill Redevelopment.

Who Were the Paces?

Charles Pace started writing pop songs in the Midwest in the 1910s and transitioned to sacred music in the 1920s. As one of the earliest gospel composers, Charles helped establish the genre's conventions. He also led his ensemble, the Pace Jubilee Singers, in seminal radio performances and recordings of early gospel standards and traditional spirituals.

Charles met Frankie around 1934, and together they quickly launched a music publishing business. They were married in 1935 and moved to Pittsburgh in 1936, where they built their Hill District-based business into one of the most successful independent Black music publishing businesses of its day. They also founded the Pace Gospel Choral Union, which at its peak was composed of upward of 200 singers from Black churches throughout western Pennsylvania.

Gospel music was an important part of the Paces' activism. Their performances raised thousands of dollars for causes large and small, and Frankie made space at the music store for the offices of the Citizens Committee for Hill District Renewal, which she founded.



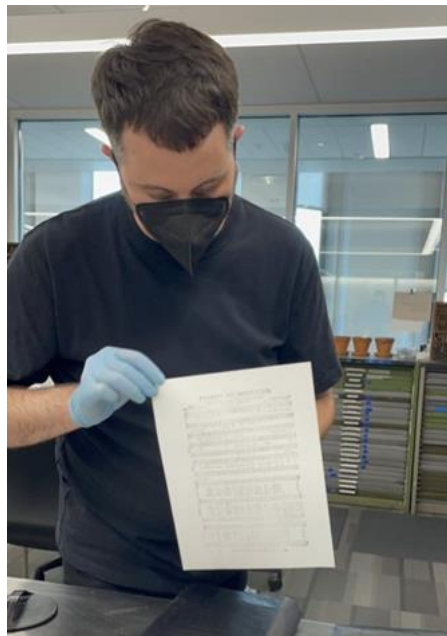
One of the only surviving images of the Pace Gospel Choral Union.

Restoring the Music

[The Charles and Frankie Pace Collection](#) contains several hundred negative photographs of his music and about 250 plates, representing about **140 complete pieces of music**. Although the plates have deteriorated over the years and can no longer be used on a printing press, there are still ways to recover the music.

The music that will be performed on March 25 was restored by scanning and inverting the photographs from negative to positive. For the music that survives only on printing plates, polymer copies of the plates can be made and safely used **on the presses in the ULS Text & conText Lab**.

With the Pace family's permission, [the sheet music is being digitized and made available to researchers and performers online](#). The recordings of the concert will also become part of the collection.



Sean Morrissey, Assistant Professor in Studio Arts, examines a hand-made imprint of one of Charles Pace's printing plates. The imprint will be used to make a polymer copy of the plate.



Plate of page 5 of "Because of You," by Charles H. Pace. Charles and Frankie Pace Collection, Center for American Music, University of Pittsburgh Library System.

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American **Musicological** Society



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