

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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Marion Williams and the Stars of Faith, well known gospel group organized in 1958, will perform the fourth Jazz in the Garden concert at the Museum of Modern Art on Thursday evening, July 20 at 8:30 p.m. in the series of promenade concerts being presented every Thursday this summer by the Museum and Metronome magazine. Admission is 50 cents in addition to \$1.00 admission to the Museum whose galleries and restaurant are being kept open on these evenings until 10 p.m.

Although Gospel music has been presented at some jazz festivals, including Newport and Indiana, the July 20 appearance of Miss Williams and the Stars of Faith marks the first time in New York City that a gospel group has appeared in a jazz series. Members of the group are Frances Steadman, contralto, Catherine Parham, soprano, Henrietta Waddy, "the grand old lady of gospel singing" and Mattie Williams, mezzo-soprano. They will be accompanied by Alberta Carter.

Gospel singing, the music of the American Negro church, has come to the attention of a wider audience in recent years, primarily through the spreading fame of Mahalia Jackson, and such recent developments in the jazz field as the phenomena of "soul" music. Today there are hundreds of gospel groups, ranging in size from quartets to massive choirs. Among the characteristics of gospel music are emotional intensity, strong rhythm and a unique blend of biblical and contemporary reference. In addition most gospel groups have a strong theatrical flavor.

Marion Williams and the Stars of Faith are currently starring in Gary Kramer's production, "The Gospel Roots of Jazz," a three hour stage show with narration. This was hailed at the Indiana Jazz Festival this June as the best of the Festival; Marion Williams and Henrietta Waddy received standing ovations for their solo numbers. Excerpts will be included in the Jazz in the Garden program.

Marion Williams, whose record of "Packin' Up" has sold more than one million copies was born in Miami in 1927 and began singing in a local West Indian Holiness church at the age of six. By the time she was 20 she had joined the Clara Ward Singers, one of the most famous gospel groups. Her voice encompasses all registers from near-bass to lyric coloratura. She is also a gifted song writer and arranger.

Frances Steadman, a native of North Carolina, moved to Baltimore in her teens, and sang with the Ward Singers for several years before joining the Stars of Faith. Catherine Parham, a dynamic shouter, also sang with the Ward Singers and with Professor Charles Taylor's group.

Henrietta Waddy appeared on the stage as a girl. Today she is noted for her sensational performance of such songs as "Get Away Jordan" which she sings and dances. Mattie Williams, the only member of the Stars of Faith who has not sung with the Ward Singers, was formerly with other groups, including Alex Bradford's singers.

Tickets for the concert will go on sale on Saturday, July 15 at the Museum of Modern Art. The concert will be canceled in case of rain and tickets honored for the concert scheduled for next Thursday. The galleries and restaurant will remain open in any event, however, and a film is always shown at 8:00 p.m. on these evenings.

The July 27 concert will be Horace Parlan and the Playhouse Four.

Additional information and photographs are available from Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York City CI 5-8900.