

Center for Black Music

Jeffrey Murdock
Director
479-575-5760
jeffreym@uark.edu

Center for Black Music Website (<https://fulbright.uark.edu/black-music/>)

The Center for Black Music conducts research into Black sacred music while providing service to a variety of constituencies and opportunities for students to engage with visiting scholars, music industry experts, and earn scholarships. Most forms of authentic American music are rooted in Black music of some kind. Black gospel music — a result of the merging of American Christianity and the music brought to America by Black Africans of the diaspora — is particularly linked to many of the social and cultural movements in the state of Arkansas. Because of the historical racial tension in the Delta region, Gospel music has served to influence the lives of Black Arkansans for centuries.

The Center for Black Music engages faculty and students from the university's Department of Music and the Program in African and African American Studies for research, educational and performing programs, and service-oriented projects. Historically, the performance of most music of African origin has traditionally been deemed ineligible for quality academic study. In modern music programs, however, there is a growing trend among educators to work toward effectively including all genres of music in the educational setting.

In recent years, divisional changes have occurred in major record labels reflecting a fundamental reorientation of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, which conducts the Grammy Awards annually. This change has created greater opportunities for collaborations between major music industry partners and higher education. This center will support those industry partnerships, interdisciplinary research in Black music and allied areas across campus, and support student development to fill roles within this growing area of the music world.