



From Spirituals to Symphonies: African-American Women Composers and Their Music

Helen Walker-Hill

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Exploding the assumption that black women's only important musical contributions have been in folk, jazz, and pop

Helen Walker-Hill's unique study provides a carefully researched examination of the history and scope of musical composition by African American women composers from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Focusing on the effect of race, gender, and class, *From Spirituals to Symphonies* notes the important role played by individual personalities and circumstances in shaping this underappreciated category of American art. The study also provides in-depth exploration of the backgrounds, experiences, and musical compositions of eight African American women including Margaret Bonds, Undine Smith Moore, and Julia Perry, who combined the techniques of Western art music with their own cultural traditions and individual gifts. Despite having gained national and international recognition during their lifetimes, the contributions of many of these women are today forgotten.

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