Oxford Book Of Choral Music By Black Composers

Unearthing Voices: The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers

A Journey Through Innovation, Resilience, and Artistic Brilliance The world of choral music boasts a rich tapestry woven from diverse threads of tradition and innovation. Yet, for far too long, the contributions of Black composers have been overlooked or marginalized in mainstream narratives. The recent release of "The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers" offers a vital corrective, showcasing the profound impact and remarkable talent of these often-forgotten voices. This insightful collection opens a window into a vibrant history of artistic expression and inspires a new generation of choral conductors and enthusiasts. **A Testament to Resilience and Artistic Innovation** This anthology meticulously curated by renowned musicologists and scholars transcends a simple historical overview. It delves deep into the experiences that shaped the music, highlighting the cultural context and societal forces that influenced the composers' creations. This isn't just about collecting scores; it's about understanding the stories embedded within the music. For example, the inclusion of spirituals, a uniquely American genre with deep roots in the Black experience, adds a layer of emotional resonance. Furthermore, the collection moves beyond the well-known repertoire, introducing lesser-known works that deserve broader recognition. From spirituals to hymns, from a cappella masterpieces to works incorporating orchestral elements, the breadth of styles and techniques on display is truly astonishing. Diving Deeper: Analytical Insights and Practical Applications To gain the most from this collection, a critical approach is essential. Analyzing the scores provides invaluable insights into the compositional techniques employed. Examining the harmonic language, rhythmic patterns, and melodic contours reveals the composers' unique voices and artistic influences. For example, the use of call-and-response in spiritual arrangements or the incorporation of African rhythms in modern compositions can offer rich layers of interpretation for singers and conductors. *Practical Tips for Conductors and Singers:* • **Context is Key:** Before delving into the music, research the historical and social context surrounding the composition. This knowledge will deepen your understanding and enhance your performance. • **Embrace the Variety:** The collection encompasses a wide range of styles and eras. Experiment with different approaches for each piece, ensuring your interpretation aligns with the composer's intent. • Master the Dynamics: Pay close attention to the dynamics and expressive markings in the score. This is crucial for bringing the emotional heart of the music to life. • *Cultivate a Sense of Community:* Encourage a sense of shared understanding among your singers. Discuss the music's significance and the stories behind it. • *Encourage Vocal Exploration:* Many pieces encourage improvisation or call-and-response. Encourage your singers to explore these creative elements. Expanding Horizons: Beyond the Scores The Oxford Book isn't simply a collection of scores. It's a catalyst for change, challenging existing narratives and broadening the musical landscape. The anthology's value extends far beyond the pages of the book itself. It urges us to critically examine the role of Black voices in the music history canon and to actively seek out and support contemporary Black composers. **A Call to Action: Celebrating the Legacy** The inclusion of these works in our repertoire is a necessary step toward a more equitable and representative understanding of musical history. We can ensure the legacy of these artists persists by actively incorporating their music into our choral

programs, encouraging the next generation of composers, and celebrating the unique contributions of Black voices. Thought-Provoking Conclusion "The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers" isn't just a historical document; it's a call to action. It urges us to listen attentively, to understand deeply, and to embrace the richness and diversity of human expression. This book is not merely a collection of scores; it's a testament to the enduring power of music to bridge divides, celebrate resilience, and inspire future generations. By studying and performing this music, we not only honor the past but also pave the way for a more inclusive and vibrant future for choral music. **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):** 1. **Q: How can I access this anthology? A:** The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers is available for purchase through major online retailers and music stores. 2. Q: Is this book suitable for all skill levels? **A:** While some pieces might be more challenging than others, the anthology offers a range of difficulty levels. Conductors and singers should select pieces appropriate for their ensemble's abilities. 3. *Q: Where can I find resources and further information on these composers? A:* The book itself often includes biographical notes. Further research is readily available online through academic databases and dedicated websites. 4. Q: How can I integrate this music into my choral program? *A:* Start by exploring pieces within your ensemble's skill level. Consider incorporating the music into your repertoire rotation and share the historical context with your singers. 5. **Q: Why is understanding the cultural context important when interpreting this music? A:** Understanding the cultural context illuminates the composer's intentions and the social forces that shaped their work. It helps singers and conductors perform with greater sensitivity and emotional depth. **** Oxford Book of Choral Music, Black Composers, Choral Music, Music History, Spirituals, African American Music, Choral Conducting, Choral Singing, Music Education, Contemporary Composers.

The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers: A Resounding Celebration

For too long, the rich tapestry of choral music has been woven with threads that, while beautiful, have often overlooked the vibrant and powerful contributions of Black composers. Thankfully, this is changing, and the **Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** stands as a monumental testament to this overdue recognition. This isn't just a collection of sheet music; it's a curated journey through centuries of breathtaking innovation, profound emotional depth, and unwavering artistic spirit. Whether you're a choir director seeking fresh repertoire, a singer eager to explore new vocal landscapes, or simply a lover of choral music, this book is an essential addition to your library.

A Legacy Unveiled: Why This Collection Matters

The significance of the **Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** cannot be overstated. It addresses a critical gap in the choral canon, bringing to light the works of individuals whose voices have been historically marginalized or silenced. This collection is a powerful act of reclamation, showcasing the diversity of styles, traditions, and perspectives that Black composers have brought to the art form. From the spirituals of the enslaved to the complex symphonic textures of contemporary composers, this book offers a comprehensive and compelling narrative of Black musical ingenuity.

Beyond the Spiritual: Diverse Genres and Styles

While spirituals are a foundational and deeply moving part of Black American musical heritage, the **Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** extends far beyond this iconic genre. You'll discover a wealth of sacred and secular works, spanning classical, gospel, jazz-influenced, and avant-garde styles. This breadth ensures that choirs of all sizes and skill levels, from youth ensembles to professional choirs, can find pieces that resonate with their artistic vision and technical capabilities. The inclusion of diverse vocal arrangements, from SATB to smaller ensemble pieces, further enhances its versatility.

The Impact on Choral Repertoire

For choir directors, the **Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** is a treasure trove of fresh and exciting repertoire. It offers an opportunity to broaden the musical horizons of their singers and audiences, introducing them to composers they may not have encountered before. Imagine the impact of performing a powerful anthem by, say, William Levi Dawson, or a beautifully intricate motet by Margaret Bonds. These works not only enrich the concert program but also provide valuable learning experiences for singers, exposing them to different harmonic languages, rhythmic complexities, and expressive possibilities.

A Glimpse into the Composers and Their Masterpieces

The **Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** features a distinguished roster of artists, each with their unique voice and contribution. While the full scope is extensive, here are just a few examples of the brilliance you can expect to find:

Pioneers and Visionaries

1. **William Levi Dawson (1899-1990):** A towering figure in American music, Dawson's choral works, such as "Soon Ah Will Be Done" and "Jesus is a Rock in the Weary Land," are renowned for their robust harmonies, powerful melodies, and deep spiritual resonance. His arrangements of spirituals are considered definitive.
2. **Margaret Bonds (1913-1972):** A prodigious talent, Bonds bridged the worlds of classical music and spirituals with exceptional grace. Her "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" for choir and piano is a deeply evocative setting of Langston Hughes' poem, and her arrangements of spirituals are both soulful and sophisticated.
3. **Florence Price (1887-1953):** Though perhaps more widely known for her symphonies, Florence Price also penned beautiful choral works. Her music often draws on African American folk traditions, infusing her compositions with a unique melodic sensibility and emotional depth.

Contemporary Voices and Emerging Talents

The collection doesn't stop at historical figures. It proudly showcases the vibrant and evolving landscape of choral music created by contemporary Black composers. This ensures that the **Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** is not just a historical document but a living testament to ongoing creativity. You'll find works by:

1. **Undine Smith Moore (1904-1989):** Often referred to as the "Dean of Black Women Composers," Moore's choral music is characterized by its rich harmonies, intricate rhythms, and profound spiritual messages. Her "Scenes from the Life of a Martyr" is a significant oratorio.

2. **H. Leslie Adams (b. 1934):** Adams' choral works are known for their lyrical beauty, elegant melodies, and thoughtful craftsmanship. Pieces like "Nightsong" and "God be in my Head" are beloved by many choirs.
3. **R. Nathaniel Dett (1882-1943):** A key figure in the Harlem Renaissance, Dett's compositions often blend European classical techniques with African American folk melodies and rhythms, creating a distinct and compelling sound. His "The Chariot Jubilee" is a powerful example.

And the list goes on! The **Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** diligently includes a diverse range of voices, ensuring that the breadth and depth of Black choral music are truly represented. This commitment to inclusivity means you'll encounter composers from various geographical regions and cultural backgrounds, each bringing their unique experiences and artistic perspectives to the fore.

Navigating the Collection: A Practical Guide for Choir Directors

For choir directors, the **Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** offers a wealth of programming possibilities. Here are some tips for making the most of this invaluable resource:

Curating Concert Programs

When selecting pieces, consider the overall narrative you want to create for your concert. You could:

1. **Thematic Programming:** Group pieces by theme, such as "Songs of Hope," "Spiritual Journeys," or "Reflections on Love and Loss."
2. **Historical Progression:** Showcase the evolution of Black choral music by including works from different eras.
3. **Composer Spotlights:** Dedicate sections of your program to individual composers, allowing singers and the audience to delve deeper into their stylistic nuances.

Rehearsal Strategies

The varied styles and complexities within the **Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** may require specific rehearsal approaches. For pieces with intricate rhythms or unconventional harmonies, consider:

1. **Rhythmic Breakdown:** Isolate complex rhythmic passages and practice them with clapping or body percussion before singing.
2. **Harmonic Exploration:** Spend time on challenging harmonic progressions, ensuring singers understand the voice leading.
3. **Textual Interpretation:** Discuss the meaning and emotional weight of the texts, as many works by Black composers are deeply rooted in storytelling and social commentary.

Performance Considerations

When presenting these works to an audience, remember the historical context and the power of the music. Consider:

1. **Program Notes:** Include brief biographies of the composers and insights into the significance of the chosen pieces.
2. **Vocal Delivery:** Encourage singers to imbue their performances with the emotion and conviction that these

works deserve.
3. **Audience Engagement:** Create an atmosphere that fosters appreciation and understanding of the rich legacy of Black choral music.

Beyond the Pages: The Enduring Power of Black Choral Music

The **Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** is more than just a printed volume; it’s a gateway to a profound and often underappreciated aspect of musical history. It's a testament to the resilience, creativity, and unwavering spirit of Black artists who, through their music, have not only enriched the world but also provided solace, inspiration, and a powerful voice for generations. By embracing and performing these works, we actively participate in the ongoing process of cultural appreciation and ensure that these essential voices continue to resonate for years to come.

In a world increasingly aware of the importance of diversity and inclusion, the **Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** offers a tangible and accessible way to celebrate the brilliance of Black artistry. It’s an invitation to discover, to learn, and to be moved by the incredible power and beauty of choral music from the Black diaspora. So, whether you're a seasoned conductor or a curious singer, pick up this book. You'll find yourself immersed in a world of incredible musical expression, and your choir's repertoire, and your understanding of music history, will be immeasurably enriched.

Keywords: Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers, Black composers, choral music, African American composers, Black choral works, choral repertoire, new choral music, sacred choral music, secular choral music, gospel music, spirituals, classical choral music, contemporary choral composers, choral arrangements, choir directors, vocal music, music history, diverse repertoire, musical legacy.

The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers: A Celebrated Anthology

The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers stands as a landmark achievement in the world of choral repertoire, offering a rich and transformative collection that centers the voices, traditions, and artistic excellence of Black composers across history and culture. This landmark anthology goes beyond mere preservation—it redefines the canon by elevating works that have long been marginalized, bringing them into mainstream concert programs, academic study, and public listening. By compiling seminal choral works composed by Black artists, the volume not only honors their contributions but also deepens our understanding of music as a vessel of identity, resistance, and spiritual expression.

A Journey Through Sound and Story

What sets this anthology apart is its thoughtful curation, which spans generations and styles. From spirituals rooted in the African American experience to contemporary compositions that fuse global rhythms with choral tradition, the selection reflects both the historical depth and the living innovation within Black choral music. Each piece is chosen not only for its musical merit but for its cultural significance—works that carry the weight of community, faith, and social commentary. Listeners encounter the raw emotion of gospel-infused choral arrangements, the intricate polyphony of diasporic heritage, and bold experimental forms that challenge

conventional boundaries. This diversity invites audiences to engage with choral music not as a static tradition but as a dynamic, evolving narrative shaped by Black voices.

Applications Beyond the Concert Hall

Beyond its artistic value, the anthology serves as a vital educational and community resource. Music schools and conservatories increasingly incorporate its works into curricula, fostering inclusive learning environments where students explore the richness of Black choral heritage. Choral ensembles, especially those committed to diversity, find in this collection a treasure trove of repertoire that strengthens their artistic identity and broadens performance repertoires. Moreover, the volume supports cultural initiatives and festivals dedicated to amplifying underrepresented voices, empowering institutions to celebrate Black artistry with authenticity and depth. For religious and community groups, the anthology offers spiritually resonant choral works that reflect shared values and collective memory.

Benefits of Inclusion and Representation

The inclusion of Black composers in such a definitive choral anthology carries profound benefits. It challenges the historical erasure of Black contributions to Western choral traditions, inviting both creators and audiences to rethink what constitutes “classical” or “canonical” music. Representation in repertoire fosters belonging and inspiration—especially for young Black musicians who now see themselves reflected in the works performed and studied. It also enriches the broader musical landscape, exposing listeners to new textures, tonalities, and expressive techniques that expand their appreciation. By centering these voices, the anthology promotes equity in the arts, encouraging institutions to prioritize diversity in programming and funding decisions. This cultural shift strengthens the choral tradition as a whole, making it more vibrant, inclusive, and relevant.

The Future of Black Choral Music in the Global Canon

Looking ahead, the Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers signals a transformative moment in the evolution of choral music. As digital platforms and streaming services make these works more accessible, their reach extends far beyond traditional concert halls into classrooms, homes, and global streaming libraries. This increased visibility fuels ongoing commissions and commissions of new works, ensuring that the legacy continues to grow. Scholars are already mining the anthology for research on African diasporic influences, sacred music history, and the intersection of race, faith, and artistic innovation. Educators and performers are increasingly inspired to commission, perform, and teach these works, fostering a new generation of choral artists rooted in both tradition and transformation. In time, this anthology may well serve as the foundation for a more inclusive and representative choral canon—one where Black composers’ voices no longer stand apart, but are integral to the universal language of choral music.

The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers: A Resonant Legacy Unveiled

For decades, the landscape of choral music, while rich and diverse, has often overlooked the profound contributions of Black composers. The Western canon, heavily influenced by European traditions, has historically relegated these voices to the periphery. However, a monumental work, **The Oxford Book of Choral Music by**

Black Composers, is actively redressing this imbalance, offering a comprehensive and invaluable resource that celebrates a century of extraordinary musical artistry. This groundbreaking collection is not merely a compilation; it's a testament to the resilience, creativity, and enduring power of Black musical expression within the choral sphere.

Edited by the esteemed Dr. Rosephanye Powell, a celebrated composer and conductor in her own right, this book serves as a vital cornerstone for choirs, educators, students, and anyone seeking to expand their understanding and repertoire of choral music. It brings together a curated selection of works that span a significant period, showcasing a spectrum of styles, influences, and thematic concerns. Beyond its immediate utility, it functions as a powerful educational tool, fostering a deeper appreciation for the rich tapestry of Black musical heritage and its indelible impact on the global choral tradition.

A Gateway to Diverse Voices and Styles

The sheer diversity within **The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** is one of its most striking features. It moves beyond monolithic representations, presenting a nuanced panorama of Black musical thought. From the spiritual and gospel roots that have profoundly shaped American music to the more contemporary and experimental soundscapes, the collection offers a compelling journey. Listeners and performers will discover works that are deeply rooted in African American traditions, infused with elements of jazz, blues, and R&B, while also exploring sophisticated classical forms and innovative compositional techniques.

This rich stylistic variety is a direct reflection of the multifaceted experiences and influences of the composers themselves. You'll encounter pieces that evoke the profound emotional resonance of spirituals, the vibrant energy of gospel anthems, and the intricate harmonic language of contemporary classical compositions. The book consciously avoids a singular narrative, instead embracing the multitude of ways Black composers have engaged with the choral medium, from deeply personal reflections to powerful social commentaries. This exploration of diverse choral genres is crucial for a holistic understanding of the art form.

Spotlighting Revered Figures and Emerging Talents

The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers meticulously curates works from both established luminaries and promising contemporary artists. This dual approach ensures both historical context and a forward-looking perspective. Readers will find pieces by iconic figures whose influence has been undeniable, their compositions often serving as foundational texts within Black choral music. Simultaneously, the book champions emerging voices, introducing audiences to the innovative spirit and fresh perspectives of a new generation of Black composers.

The inclusion of works by figures like William L. Dawson, Hall Johnson, and Florence B. Price provides essential historical anchors. These composers, often pioneers in their time, laid the groundwork for many who followed. Their arrangements of traditional spirituals and their original compositions are imbued with a unique blend of tradition and innovation. In parallel, the book shines a light on composers such as Joel Thompson, Marques L.A. Garrett, and Stacey V. Gibbs, whose music is currently resonating powerfully in concert halls and houses of worship worldwide. Their fresh approaches to text setting, harmonic language, and choral textures demonstrate the ongoing evolution and vitality of Black choral music. This careful selection ensures a comprehensive overview, bridging historical significance with contemporary relevance.

Thematic Depth and Social Resonance

Beyond the purely musical, the works featured in **The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** often carry profound thematic depth and social resonance. Many pieces explore themes of faith, hope, struggle, liberation, and the enduring spirit of community. These are not simply abstract musical exercises; they are deeply human expressions that connect with universal experiences while also speaking to the specific historical and cultural contexts of Black life and identity.

The power of the spirituals, for instance, lies in their dual function as expressions of religious devotion and coded messages of resilience and resistance during times of profound oppression. This legacy continues in contemporary works that address issues of social justice, racial equality, and the celebration of Black heritage. The book provides a platform for these powerful narratives to be heard and understood, fostering dialogue and encouraging a more empathetic engagement with the Black experience. This exploration of thematic concerns makes the collection particularly relevant for choirs seeking to engage with meaningful and impactful repertoire. The juxtaposition of sacred and secular themes further enriches the listening and performing experience.

Pedagogical Significance and Repertoire Expansion

For choral directors, educators, and institutions, **The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** is an indispensable pedagogical tool. It offers readily accessible, high-quality repertoire that can be incorporated into a wide range of settings, from school choirs and church ensembles to university music departments and professional choral groups. The inclusion of diverse musical challenges, from accessible arrangements to more complex original works, ensures that choirs of varying skill levels can find suitable and enriching material.

This book is a vital resource for expanding the choral repertoire beyond the traditionally performed works. It empowers conductors to offer their singers a richer, more inclusive musical education, exposing them to a wider range of musical styles, historical perspectives, and cultural influences. By actively programming music by Black composers, choirs can contribute to a more equitable and representative musical landscape. This focus on repertoire expansion is critical for the growth and diversification of the choral arts. The availability of these scores also aids in the study of vocal technique and ensemble singing.

The Role of Dr. Rosephanye Powell

The vision and expertise of Dr. Rosephanye Powell are central to the success and impact of **The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers**. As an accomplished composer, conductor, and scholar, she brings a deep understanding of both the musical and cultural significance of the works included. Her meticulous curation and insightful editorial contributions ensure that the collection is not only musically sound but also historically contextualized and pedagogically valuable. Dr. Powell’s own compositional voice, known for its spiritual depth and vibrant energy, undoubtedly informs her approach to this monumental project.

Her dedication to amplifying the voices of Black composers reflects a broader commitment to inclusivity and diversity in the arts. This book is a testament to her unwavering belief in the power and importance of Black musical contributions. Her personal engagement with the pieces, often stemming from her own performance and conducting experiences, lends an authentic and passionate quality to the entire endeavor. The selection process involved careful consideration of musical merit, historical importance, and pedagogical suitability.

Impact and Future Directions

The publication of **The Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** marks a significant moment in the ongoing evolution of the choral music landscape. It serves as a powerful statement of inclusion and recognition, challenging long-held assumptions and opening new avenues for discovery. The book's availability will undoubtedly lead to an increase in the performance and study of these vital works, enriching concert programs and educational curricula alike.

Looking ahead, this collection is likely to inspire further research, scholarship, and the commissioning of new works by Black composers. It provides a solid foundation upon which future generations of musicians can build, fostering a more equitable and vibrant future for choral music. The ongoing discourse surrounding diversity in classical music will undoubtedly be informed by this seminal publication. As more choirs embrace this repertoire, the resonant legacy of Black composers will continue to echo and inspire, shaping the sound of choral music for years to come. This resource is more than just a book; it's a catalyst for change and a celebration of unparalleled artistic achievement. The continued exploration of African American sacred music and secular compositions promises a dynamic future for the art form.

The **Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers** is a vital contribution to the world of music, offering a compelling narrative of artistic excellence, cultural significance, and enduring spirit. It is a call to listen, to learn, and to celebrate the extraordinary voices that have so often been unheard.

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As technology continues to shape education, digital books will remain an integral part of modern learning environments. The ability to download Oxford Book Of Choral Music By Black Composers reflects an adaptive approach to education that prioritizes accessibility, efficiency, and learner empowerment. Digital literacy is now a critical skill.

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Questions & Answers About oxford book of choral music by black composers

No	Question	Answer
1	What makes the 'Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers' so significant in the world of music?	This anthology is groundbreaking as it brings together a diverse and rich collection of choral works by Black composers, many of whom have been historically underrepresented. It offers a vital resource for choirs, educators, and audiences to discover and engage with a wealth of musical talent.
2	Who are some of the prominent composers featured in this Oxford collection?	The book showcases a broad spectrum of composers, from established figures like William L. Dawson and Florence Price to contemporary artists such as Marques L. A. Garrett and Rosephanye Powell, highlighting a wide range of styles and historical periods.
3	What musical styles and genres can I expect to find in the 'Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers'?	You'll encounter a rich variety of styles, including spirituals, gospel, classical art song, contemporary liturgical music, and more experimental works, reflecting the diverse musical backgrounds and influences of the featured composers.
4	Why is it important for choirs to include music from this book in their repertoire?	Including these works is crucial for promoting diversity and inclusion in choral programming. It allows choirs to broaden their musical horizons, educate their singers and audiences, and celebrate the contributions of Black artists to the choral tradition.

5	Is the 'Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers' suitable for amateur choirs as well as professional ones?	Yes, the collection is designed to be accessible to a wide range of ensembles. It includes pieces with varying levels of technical demand, making it a valuable resource for both amateur community choirs and advanced professional groups.
6	Where can I learn more about the individual composers and the historical context of their music within this book?	The Oxford University Press typically provides extensive biographical information and historical context within the book itself, often including introductions and scholarly essays that offer deeper insights into the composers and their works.
7	How does this book contribute to the ongoing recognition and appreciation of Black artistry in music?	By providing a curated and accessible collection, the 'Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers' actively combats erasure and elevates the work of Black musicians. It serves as a definitive statement of their significant and ongoing contributions to the global choral landscape.

Oxford Book of Choral Music by Black Composers, African American choral compositions in Oxford, choral music by Black composers Oxford, Black choral works in Oxford anthology, Oxford choral repertoire by Black composers, Modern Black choral music Oxford, Oxford choral music archive Black composers, Black choral tradition Oxford series, Inclusive choral music Oxford Black composers, Oxford choral music by pioneering Black artists

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