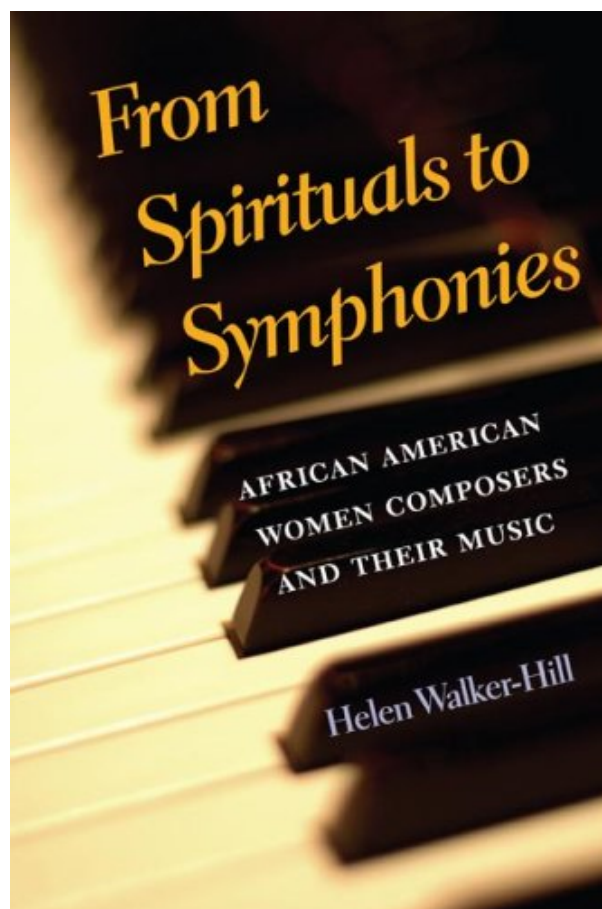
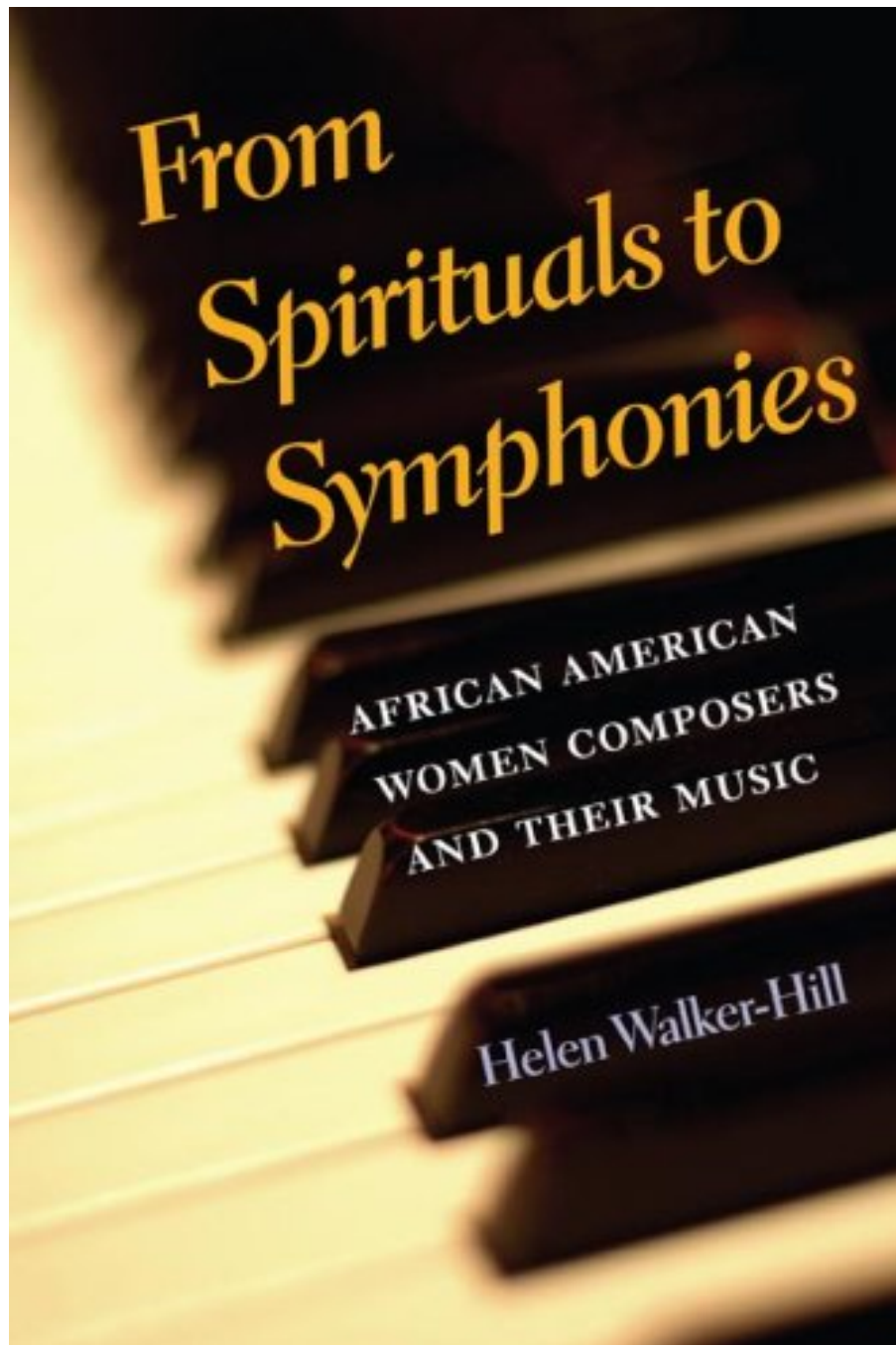


**FROM SPIRITUALS TO SYMPHONIES:
AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMEN
COMPOSERS AND THEIR MUSIC BY HELEN
WALKER-HILL**



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From Library Journal

Piano scholar Walker-Hill (*Piano Music by Black Women Composers*) presents an accessible, thoughtful, and humanist study of African American women composers who, for the most part, have been ignored by historians. Readers are introduced to Undine Smith Moore (1904-89), Julia Perry (1924-79), Margaret Bonds (1913-72), Irene Britton Smith (1907-99), Dorothy Rudd Moore (1940-), Valerie Capers (1935-), Mary Watkins (1939-), and Regina Harris (1956-), as well as the 20th-century social milieu in which they worked. Frankly examining race and gender issues and individual challenges, such as blindness or being adopted, the author, who conducted interviews with many of the composers and their families, also discusses the music of each woman at length in appreciative, nontechnical language. Detailed works lists and an appendix enumerating other black women composers add reference value; opening and concluding overview chapters supply historical context and big-picture views. Besides Mildred Denby Green's groundbreaking *Black Women Composers: A Genesis* (1983), which focuses more on the music than on the women themselves and includes musical analyses and examples, there aren't other books on this subject. Public and academic libraries, then, would do well to acquire this study. Bonnie Jo Dopp, Univ. of Maryland Libs., College Park
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Review

"This excellent and beautifully produced publication will immediately interest those working in music history and women's studies. It is an exemplary study of significant composers born between 1904 and 1956. . . . Essential."

--Choice

"Walker-Hill's writing about the lives and music of these composers is clear and accessible to the general public. . . . It serves as an excellent starting point for research by future scholars."--Journal of African American History

About the Author

Helen Walker-Hill has taught at the University of Colorado, Muhlenberg College, and the University of Wyoming. She currently lives in Evergreen, Colorado. Her previous publications include *Piano Music by Black Women Composers: A Catalog of Solo and Ensemble Works*.

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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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Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Great Reference book of overlooked Composers...A true Diamond!

By Mizzmoon7

This book is fantastic. Helen Walker-Hill does another great job of publishing a work about African American Women composers. The book also contains never before seen photos and detailed biographical information about the composers. This book is a gem!

This book goes great with *African American Women Composers: A century of Music*, edited by Helen Walker-Hill.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

I love this book!

By AfroAmericanHeritage

I love this book! While the research is scholarly, the writing is fluid and compelling, devoid of academic lingo which might otherwise frighten off those who are not students of music. I felt like I really got to know each of the composers here personally, and the book prompted me to track down their music online. I have a list of sources at my website, AfroAmericanHeritage dot com

This is an essential work providing a historical overview plus a closer look at the life and works of Undine Smith Moore (1904-1989) Julia Perry (1924-1979) Margaret Bonds (1913-1972) Irene Britton Smith (1907-1999) Dorothy Rudd Moore (b.1940) Valerie Capers (b.1935) Mary Watkins (b. 1939) and Regina Harris Baiocchi (b. 1956). Despite having gained national and international recognition during their lifetimes, the contributions of many of these women are forgotten today. Includes a selected list of composers and a selected Bibliography/Discography.

Recommended to anyone interested in Music History, African American and/or Women's Studies.

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I love this one too!

By Valerie Harris Gregory

I got some wonderful insights into the life of our African American Women Composers. I have been looking for more information on them and this book was a great start.

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