

M. E. Valverde

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We Hold Your Names
Sacred
for SSAA chorus (div.) and piano

About the Poet

Dubbed "the ancient jazz priestess of Mother Africa," Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi is a Black, African, Cuban, Indigenous, American trans performance artist, author, a Helen Hayes nominated actress, a two-time Helen Hayes Award Nominated choreographer, a Helen Hayes Award winning playwright, dramaturg, educator, speechwriter, advocate and co-editor of *The Black Trans Prayer Book*. She is the founder of the Inanna D Initiatives, which curates, produces, and cultivates events and initiatives designed to center and celebrate the work of transgender and gender non-conforming artists of color. She is the curator and a co-producer of Long Wharf Theater's *Black Trans Women at the Center: An Evening of Short Plays*. Her radio play, *Quest of the Reed Marsh Daughter*, can be heard on the *Girl Tales* podcast, and her play *The Diaz Family Talent Show* can be read on the *PlayAtHome.org*. She was featured as Patra in *King Ester* and acted as a story consultant for the series. She wrote episode 9 "Refuge" of Round House Theater's web series *Homebound* and was one of the writers for Arena Stage's short film *The 51st State*. For more information, visit www.LadyDaneFE.com.

*Sisters whose lives were taken
Memories of you
we sing
Note, chord, melody, harmony
psalm*

*Prayers
we offer with tears
Love
with words we give
High
we lift your spirit up
So you may know forever joy*

*Jaquarrius Holland
Chyna Gibson
Ty Underwood
Penny Proud
Crystal Edmonds
Islan Nettles
Angel Rose
Lexi
Layla Pelaez Sánchez
Muhlaysia Booker
Brianna "BB" Hill
Layleen Polanco*

*May your smile be made eternal
May justice be brought
with this refrain
Sisters we hold sacred your names*

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Composer's Notes

Lady Dane says we say their names "to get the heavens to move for us." Such practice hearkens back to our Indigenous ancestors whose ceremonies honor the departed. Likewise, we hold ourselves accountable for keeping our sisters' memory alive, for the ultimate death would be that the lives within their names were forgotten. For too many of our Black and Indigenous transgender siblings of color, their humanity was ignored long before their lives were stolen by cowards.

In singing "We Hold Your Names Sacred," we join our voices with a surge up to the sky. From the start, a stepwise bass in the piano is played in octaves like slow, determined feet marching towards justice. The voices enter wide and full, merge gradually into a single line raising supplications for joy, and then, disperse speaking our sisters' names into eternity. In call and response, as in organized protest, various soloists invoke their memory, and upon reciting each name, each life is acknowledged as a blessing. The choir follows, rising like clouds, singing their names individually as spirits are summoned from subconsciousness. Ultimately, all voices unify to resound a demand for justice that our sisters' loving memory will be everlasting.

We do not need to be told the traumas of members of the Black and transgender communities as a prerequisite to boldly show up for them. For those who are here, we must act now and continue learning along the way. Let us say our sisters' names and fight for justice as they would have it.

For remarks on the lives and deaths of our transgender sisters mentioned in Dane Figueroa Edidi's original text, turn to the end of the musical score.

#BlackTransLivesMatter
#SingForTWOC

dur. = ca. 4'

Commissioned for GALA Choruses #SingForTWOC Project

We Hold Your Names Sacred

for SSAA chorus (div.) and piano

Dane Figueroa Edidi

Mari Esabel Valverde

b. 1987

As if unearthing an unseen truth = ca. 54

mf-f poco marc.

Soprano 1

Sis - ters whose lives were

Soprano 2

mf-f poco marc.

Sis - ters whose lives were

Alto 1

mf-f poco marc.

Sis - ters whose lives were

Alto 2

mf-f poco marc.

Sis - ters whose lives were

Piano

mf

mp-mf

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S 1
tak - en Mem'-ries of you — we sing

S 2
tak - en Mem'-ries of you — we sing

A 1
tak - en Mem'-ries of you we sing

A 2
tak - en Mem'-ries of you we sing

Pno.

1.

7

S 1
you — we sing — Note chord —

S 2
you — we sing — Note chord —

A 1
you we sing — Note chord —

A 2
you we sing — Note chord —

Pno.

2.

mf

mf

mf

f

mf

mp *espress.*

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11

S 1
mel - o - dy — har - mo - ny — Psalm *f*

S 2
mel - o - dy — har - mo - ny — Psalm *f*

A 1
mel - o - dy — har - mo - ny — Psalm *f*

A 2
mel - o - dy — har - mo - ny — Psalm *f*

Pno.
poco cresc. *mf*

14

Pno.

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Poco movendo ♩ = ca. 66

17

mf *p* *mf* *simile*

S Prayers we of-fer with tears Love with words we give High we lift your spir-its

A Prayers we of-fer with tears Love with words we give High we lift your spir-its

Pno. *sub. p*

20

mp *p poco a poco cresc.*

S 1 up so you may know so you may know

S 2 up so you may know so you may

A 1 up so you may know so you may

A 2 up so you may know so

Pno.

* *mp* S1 solo

S Solo

A Solo

Speakers

Speakers

S 1

S 2

A 1

A 2

Pno.

for - ev er joy.

know for - ev - er joy.

know for - ev - er joy.

you may know joy.

mf

mf

mf

mf

mp

L.H.

Ja-

25

Not authorized for performance!

*This is the call and response section. Beginning at m. 25, as much as half of the choir separates into speaking parts and the other half singing parts. The top four staves of the scores are reserved for speaking parts the very top two of which are reserved for solo speaking parts. There will be a minimum of four – but as many as twelve – solo speakers each one representing the four choral sections. The third and fourth staves are reserved for the speaking group which repeat the name just sung by a soloist. Speaking soloists may join the speaking group before and after their solos. While it is desirable that the names are recited organically – not strictly in rhythm – the speaking parts are notated in rhythm to keep the speaking parts temporally aligned with the singing parts and the piano.

26 *proclaimingly*

S Solo
quar-ri - us Hol - land

A Solo
mp *A1 solo proclaimingly*
Chy-na Gib - son

Speakers
mp *all other speakers*
Ja-quar-ri - us Hol-land Chy-na Gib - son

Speakers
mp *all other speakers*
Ja-quar-ri - us Hol-land Chy-na Gib - son

S 1

S 2
pp
Ja - quar - ri - us

A 1
pp
Chy - na

A 2

Pno.

Pronunciation Notes:

Jaquarrius Holland / dʒə.ˈkwɛə.ɪ.əs ˈhɑ.lənd / or "juh-KWAIR-ee-us HAW-lund"

Chyna Gibson / ˈtʃaɪ.nə ˈɡɪp.sən / or "CHAI-nuh GIPP-sun"

28 *più f*

S Solo Ty Un - der - wood

A Solo *più f* Pen - ny Proud

Speakers *più f* Ty Un - der - wood Pen - ny Proud

Speakers *più f* Ty Un - der - wood Pen - ny Proud

S 1 *pp* Pen - ny

S 2 *ppp* Hol - land Chy - na

A 1 Gib - son

A 2 *pp* Ty Un - der - wood

Pno. *poco cresc.*

Pronunciation Notes:

Ty Underwood / 'taɪ 'ʌn.də.wʊd / or "TIE UN-der-wood"

Penny Proud / 'pe.ni 'praʊd / or "PEH-nee PROUD"

mf firmly, not quite shouted

30

S Solo

Crys - tal Ed - monds

A Solo

mf firmly, not quite shouted

Is - lan Net - tles

Speakers

mf

Crys - tal Ed - monds

Is - lan Net - tles

Speakers

mf

Crys - tal Ed - monds

Is - lan Net - tles

S 1

Proud

S 2

p

Crys - tal Ed - monds

A 1

pp

Ty -

Is - lan

A 2

pp

Pen - ny

Pno.

mp

Pronunciation Notes:

Crystal Edmonds / 'kɪs.təl 'ed.mənz / or "KRİSS-tull ED-muns"

Islan Nettles / 'ɪz.lən 'nɛ.rətlz / or "IZ-lawn NEH-dulls"

32 (mf) S2 solo

S Solo

An - gel Rose

(mf) A2 solo

A Solo

Lex - i

Speakers

An - gel Rose Lex - i

Speakers

An - gel Rose Lex - i

S 1

pp

Crys - tal Lex - i

S 2

pp

Is - lan

A 1

Net - ties

A 2

p

An - gel Rose

Pno.

poco cresc.

Pronunciation Notes:
 Angel Rose / 'em.dʒəl 'rouz / or "AYN-gel ROHZ"
 Lexi / 'lɛk.si / or "LECK-see"

34 *f* *resoundingly* *più f*

S Solo Lay-la Pe-láez Sán-chez Bri-

A Solo *f* *resoundingly* Muh-lay-sia Book-er

Speakers *f* Lay-la Pe-láez Sán-chez Muh-lay-sia Book-er

Speakers *f* Lay-la Pe-láez Sán-chez Muh-lay-sia Book-er

S 1

S 2 *mp* Lay - la Pe - láez Sán chez

A 1 An - gel Muh - lay - sia

A 2 *p* Lex - i

Pno. *mf*

Pronunciation Notes:

Layla Peláez Sánchez / 'lej.la pe.'la.es 'san.tʃes / or "LAY-lah pay-LAH-ace SAHN-chess"

Muhlaysia Booker / mə.'lei.ʒə 'bu.kə / or "muh-LAY-zuhh BOOK-er"

36

S Solo
an - na "B - B" Hill

A Solo
più f
Lay - leen Po - lan - co

Speakers
più f
Bri - an - na "B - B" Hill Lay - leen Po - lan - co

Speakers
più f
Bri - an - na "B - B" Hill Lay - leen Po - lan - co

S 1
p Lay - la *mp* Lay - leen Po -

S 2
p Muh - lay - sia

A 1
Book - er

A 2
mp Bri - an - na "B - B" Hill

Pno.

Pronunciation Notes:
 Brianna "BB" Hill / brɪ.'ɑ.nə 'bi.bi 'hɪl / or "bree-AH-nuh BEE-bee HILL"
 Layleen Polanco / leɪ.'li:n po.'lɑŋ.ko / or "lay-LEEN poh-LONG-koh"

rit.

Tempo Primo ♩ = ca. 54

38

S 1 lan - co May your smile be made e -

S 2 May your smile be made e -

A 1 Bri - an - na May your smile be

A 2 May your smile be made e -

Pno.

mp *mf-f* *mp* *mf-f* *mp* *mf*

41

S 1 ter - nal May jus-tice be brought with this re - frain May your

S 2 ter - nal May jus-tice be brought with this re - frain May your

A 1 made eter - nal May jus-tice be brought with this re frain

A 2 ter - nal May jus-tice be brought with this re - frain May your

Pno.

1.

44

2.

poco cresc. *sffz*

S 1 brought with this re - frain Sis - ters

poco cresc. *sffz*

S 2 brought with this re - frain Sis - ters

poco cresc. *sffz*

A 1 May justice be brought with this re - frain Sis - ters

poco cresc. *sffz*

A 2 brought with this re - frain Sis - ters

Pno.

47 *mp* gently, reverently

S 1 we hold sa - cred we hold sa - cred your

S 2 *p* gently, reverently we hold sa - cred sa - cred your

A 1 *p* gently, reverently we hold sa - cred sa - cred your

A 2 *p* gently, reverently we hold sa - cred sa - cred your

Pno.

51

S 1 names

S 2 names

A 1 names

A 2 names

Pno. *p*