

M. E. Valverde

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We Hold Your Names  
Sacred  
*for TTBB 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](http://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 TTBB chorus (div.) and piano

Dane Figueroa Edidi

Mari Esabel Valverde

b. 1987

As if unearthing an unseen truth ♩ = ca. 54

*mf-f poco marc.*

Tenor 1

Sis - ters whose lives were

Tenor 2

Sis - ters whose lives were

Bass 1

Sis - ters whose lives were

Bass 2

Sis - ters whose lives were

Piano

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4

T 1  
tak - en Mem'-ries of you we sing

T 2  
tak - en Mem'-ries of you we sing

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

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

Pno.

1.

7

T 1  
you we sing Note chord

T 2  
you we sing Note chord

B 1  
you we sing Note chord

B 2  
you we sing Note chord

Pno.  
*mp espress.*

2.

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11

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

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

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

B 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*

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

B  
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.*

T 1  
8 up so you may know so you may know

T 2  
up so you may know so you may

B 1  
up so you may know so you may

B 2  
up so you may know so

Pno.

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25 *mp* T1 solo

T Solo

B Solo

Speakers

Speakers

T 1 *mf*  
for - ev - er joy.

T 2 *mf*  
know for - ev - er joy.

B 1 *mf*  
know for - ev - er joy.

B 2 *mf*  
you may know joy.

Pno. *mp*  
L.H.

Ja-

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\*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*

T Solo  
8  
quar-ri - us Hol - land

B Solo  
*mp* *B1 solo proclaimingly*  
Chy-na Gib - son

Speakers  
8  
*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

T 1  
8  
*pp*  
Chy - na

T 2

B 1

B 2  
*pp*  
Ja quar - ri - us

Pno.

## Pronunciation Notes:

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

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

28 *più f*

T Solo  
8 Ty Un - der - wood

B Solo  
*più f*  
Pen - ny Proud

Speakers  
8 Ty Un - der - wood Pen - ny Proud

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

T 1  
8 Gib - son

T 2  
8 Ty Un - der - wood

B 1  
*pp*  
Pen - ny

B 2  
*ppp*  
Hol - land Chy - na

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

T Solo

8

Crys - tal Ed - monds

B Solo

*mf* firmly, not quite shouted

Is - lan Net - tles

Speakers

8

*mf*

Crys - tal Ed - monds

Is - lan Net - tles

Speakers

*mf*

Crys - tal Ed - monds

Is - lan Net - tles

T 1

*pp*

Ty

Is - lan

T 2

*pp*

Pen - ny

B 1

Proud

B 2

*p*

Crys - tal Ed - monds

Pno.

*mp*

The musical score is for a song with two verses. The first verse, 'Crystal Edmonds', is performed by the T Solo and B Solo parts, with the Speakers providing accompaniment. The second verse, 'Islan Nettles', is performed by the T 1 and T 2 parts, with the B 1 and B 2 parts providing accompaniment. The piano part provides a steady accompaniment throughout. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *pp*, and *p*, and articulation marks like 'x' and '7'.

## Pronunciation Notes:

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

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

32 *(mf)* T2 solo

T Solo

An - gel Rose

B Solo *(mf)* B2 solo

Lex - i

Speakers

An - gel Rose Lex i

Speakers

An - gel Rose Lex - i

T 1

Net - tles

T 2

An - gel Rose

B 1

*pp* Crys - tal Lex - i

B 2

*pp* Is - lan

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*

T Solo  
8 Lay-la Pe-láez Sán-chez Bri-

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

Speakers  
8 *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

T 1  
8 *p*  
An gel Muh - lay - sia

T 2  
8 *p*  
Lex i

B 1

B 2  
*mp*  
Lay - la Pe - láez Sán - chez

Pno.  
*mf*

## Pronunciation Notes:

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

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

36

T Solo  
an - na "B - B" Hill

B 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

T 1  
Book er

T 2  
*mp*  
Bri - an - na "B - B" Hill

B 1  
*p*  
Lay - leen Po -

B 2  
*p*  
Muh - lay - sia

Pno.

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## Pronunciation Notes:

Brianna "BB" Hill / bri.'a.nə 'bi.bi 'hɪl / or "bree-AH-nuh BEE-bee HILL"

Layleen Polanco / lei.'li:n po.'lan.ko / or "lay-LEEN poh-LONG-koh"

rit.

Tempo Primo ♩ = ca. 54

38 *mp* *mf-f*

T 1 Bri - an - na May your smile be made e -

T 2 May your smile be made e -

B 1 lan - co May your smile be

B 2 May your smile be

Pno. *mp* *mf*

41 1.

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

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

B 1 made e - ter - nal May jus - tice be brought with this re frain

B 2 made e - ter - nal May jus - tice be brought with this re frain

Pno.

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44

2.

*poco cresc.* *sfz*

T 1  
8 brought with this re - frain Sis - ters

*poco cresc.* *sfz*

T 2  
8 brought with this re - frain Sis - ters

*poco cresc.* *sfz*

B 1  
May jus - tice be brought with this re - frain Sis - ters

*poco cresc.* *sfz*

B 2  
May jus - tice be brought with this re - frain Sis - ters

Pno.

*f*

The musical score is for a choir and piano. It features four vocal parts: Tenor 1 (T 1), Tenor 2 (T 2), Bass 1 (B 1), and Bass 2 (B 2). The piano part (Pno.) is written in grand staff. The lyrics are: 'brought with this re - frain Sis - ters' for the tenors and 'May jus - tice be brought with this re - frain Sis - ters' for the basses. Performance markings include 'poco cresc.' and 'sfz' (fortissimo) for the vocal parts, and 'f' (forte) for the piano. A rehearsal mark '44' is at the beginning of the first vocal line, and a first ending bracket '2.' spans the first two vocal lines. The piano part ends with a fermata and a forte dynamic marking.

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47 *mp* gently, reverently

T 1 we hold sa - cred we hold sa - cred your

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

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

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

Pno.

51

T 1 names

T 2 names

B 1 names

B 2 names

Pno. *p*