



Hall Johnson: His Life, His Spirit, and His Music

Eugene Thamon Simpson

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During his lifetime (1888-1970), Hall Johnson's concert arrangements of spirituals have been performed and recorded by stellar singers, such as Marian Anderson, Leontyne Price, Kathleen Battle, Jessye Norman, and Denyce Graves, and were sung by school and concert choirs all over the world. The Hall Johnson Negro Choir was acclaimed in concert halls throughout America and Europe, on Broadway, on radio, and in Hollywood and can be seen and heard in movie classics like *Lost Horizon*, *Jezebel*, *Dumbo*, and *Song of the South*. Yet the story of Johnson's life and accomplishments as conductor, composer, arranger, violist, author, and teacher has never been told until now.

Hall Johnson: His Life, His Spirit, and His Music is the first definitive biography of Hall Johnson, providing both a historical narrative of Johnson's entire life and work, as well as a comprehensive treatment of his movie career, his literary creations, his work in musical theatre, and a complete exploration of his music, with special emphasis on the larger works. Author Eugene Thamon Simpson, the curator of the Hall Johnson collection in New Jersey, has amassed important pieces of the collection, such as letters, reviews, interviews, and other documents by and about Hall Johnson, and referenced or published them here for greater accessibility. The book also includes personal recollections of Hall Johnson by people who knew him as teacher, conductor, or professional colleague. Over 20 photos, a discography, and a complete listing of Johnson's works help to document his achievements, making this a valuable resource for those interested in Black History Studies, the evolution of the Negro Spiritual, and blacks in American Cinema and musical theatre.

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