



His Name So Sweet

Arranged by **Hall Johnson**

Adapted by **M. Roger Holland II**

SATB Choir
and Piano

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for The Spirituals Project Choir, University of Denver

HIS NAME SO SWEET

Negro spiritual
Arr. Hall Johnson, 1888–1970
Adapt. M. Roger Holland II

Moderato ♩ = 80

S, A *mp*

Oh Lord, I

5

T, B *mp*

jus' come from de foun - tain, I'm jus' from de

See Notes on page 10.

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8

foun-tain, Lord, I jus' come from de foun-tain. His name so

12

sweet. Oh Lord, I jus' come from de foun-tain, I'm jus' from de

sweet.

mf

16

foun-tain, Lord, I jus' come from de foun-tain. His name so

20 *mp*

sweet. *f* Yes, yes, I

Po' sin-ner, do you love Je - sus?

f *p*

24 *f*

do love m' Je - sus. His name so

f Sin-ner, do you love Je - sus?

28 *mf*

sweet. Oh Lord, I jus' come from de foun-tain, I'm jus' from de

mf *mf*

32

foun-tain, Lord, I jus' come from de foun-tain. His name so

36

sweet. *f* Class lead-er, do you love Je - sus? — *mf* Yes, yes, I

40

f Lead-er, do you love Je - sus? *p* His
do love m' Je - sus. *p*

43

mf

name so sweet. Oh Lord, I jus' come from de foun-tain, I'm

mf

mf

47

jus' from de foun - tain, Lord, — I jus' come from de

50

ff

foun-tain. His name so sweet. 'Zi-d'n El-der,* do you love

ff

*Negro dialect for "Presiding Elder."

54

Je - sus? —

mf

ff

El-der, do you love

Yes, yes, I do love m' Je - sus.

mf

ff

58

Je - sus? His name so sweet.

p

mf

Jus' come from de

p

mf

62

foun-tain, I'm jus' from de foun-tain, Lord, I jus' come from de

66

foun-tain. His name so sweet. Oh Lord, I jus' come from de

p *p>* *p*

70

foun-tain, I'm jus' from de foun-tain, Lord, I jus' come from de

74

foun-tain. His name so sweet.

rit. *rit. colla parte*

Notes

This adaptation for SATB choir is based on the arrangement for solo voice by Hall Johnson. Hall Johnson was among the first to create concert arrangements of spirituals, along with Jester Hairston, John Work, and William Dawson. His arrangements are featured in the classic films *The Green Pastures* and *Lilies of the Field*.

As with Johnson's original, most concert versions of spirituals by African Americans have been arranged by classically trained composers after the Western tradition and should be approached in the same way one would approach a piece of music in the classical idiom. In such instances, it is inappropriate to improvise, and one should honor what is on the written page.

Spirituals should typically be sung very rhythmically, recognizing the influence of the drum that is present in music of the African diaspora. I have indicated words that should receive stress with a tenuto marking, following the performance practice of the Johnson solo arrangement (e.g., measure 7). There are other instances of the Johnson markings such as the instruction to continue the phrase without a breath in m. 16 and elsewhere.

Note the question-answer (call and response) in measures 20–24, 36–40, and 52–56. There two instances of a high A in the soprano. This should be sung with some abandon—a tossing of the note, if you will—while still anchoring the tone sufficiently. The piano accompaniment is quite lively and evokes the style of playing in the early twentieth century. Note the *juba* dance inference beginning m. 45 and the crossing of hands beginning m. 61. As the piece comes to a close, there should be a quality of calm. The piano should support the phrasing of the vocals without leading.

—M. Roger Holland II

About the Arrangers

Hall Johnson (1888–1970) was a pioneer in arranging and performing spirituals as concert music. His robust education—including time at the Julliard school—prepared him for a career at the forefront of African American music. He formed the Hall Johnson Negro Choir in 1925. That ensemble participated in productions of Marc Connelly’s *The Green Pastures* on Broadway, radio, film and television. With Johnson as arranger and conductor, the choir sang as part of more than thirty feature films. As a specialist in spirituals, he worked with singers including Marian Anderson and Robert McFerrin. In 1975 he was elected posthumously to the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame.

M. Roger Holland II is a Teaching Associate Professor in Music and Religion and Director of The Spirituals Project at the Lamont School of Music, University of Denver. He earned his MDiv degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York City, where he also served as Artist-in-Residence and director of the Union Gospel Choir for over thirteen years. Union awarded him the 2015 Trailblazers Distinguished Alumni Award (the first for a graduate whose ministry is music), for his contributions to the legacy of African American music. He received a master’s (piano performance) from the Manhattan School of Music (New York City) and majored in music education (concentration in piano and voice) at Westminster Choir College (Princeton, New Jersey).

Roger is Liturgical Music Consultant for the Archdiocese of New York Office of Black Ministry, as well as Music Director for their special Masses at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Commissioned works include *The Dream and The Dreamer*, *The Tribulation Suite*, *The Call*, *Agnus Dei* and *Magnificat*. Original music collections include *Building Up the Kingdom* (featuring the single “Worthy God”) and his four-volume *Honey from the Rock*. He has played for the Broadway productions of *The Color Purple* and the Tony®-winning *Memphis*. Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York, presented Roger with the Pierre Toussaint Medallion for service in November 2016.

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