



Anthem: Social Movements and the Sound of Solidarity in the African Diaspora

Shana L. Redmond

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For people of African descent, music constitutes a unique domain of expression. From traditional West African drumming to South African kwaito, from spirituals to hip-hop, Black life and history has been dynamically displayed and contested through sound. Shana Redmond excavates the sonic histories of these communities through a genre emblematic of Black solidarity and citizenship: anthems. An interdisciplinary cultural history, *Anthem* reveals how this “sound franchise” contributed to the growth and mobilization of the modern, Black citizen. Providing new political frames and aesthetic articulations for protest organizations and activist-musicians, Redmond reveals the anthem as a crucial musical form following World War I.

Beginning with the premise that an analysis of the composition, performance, and uses of Black anthems allows for a more complex reading of racial and political formations within the twentieth century, Redmond expands our understanding of how and why diaspora was a formative conceptual and political framework of modern Black identity. By tracing key compositions and performances around the world—from James Weldon Johnson’s “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing” that mobilized the NAACP to Nina Simone’s “To Be Young, Gifted & Black” which became the Black National Anthem of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)—*Anthem* develops a robust recording of Black social movements in the twentieth century that will forever alter the way you hear race and nation.

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