



Roland Hayes: The Legacy of an American Tenor

Christopher A. Brooks, Robert Sims

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Performing in a country rife with racism and segregation, the tenor Roland Hayes was the first African American man to reach international fame as a concert performer and one of the few artists who could sell out Town Hall, Carnegie Hall, Symphony Hall, and Covent Garden. His trailblazing career carved the way for a host of African American artists, including Marian Anderson and Paul Robeson. Performing the African American spirituals he was raised on, Hayes's voice was marked with a unique sonority which easily navigated French, German, and Italian art songs. A multiculturalist both on and off the stage, he counted among his friends George Washington Carver, Eleanor Roosevelt, Ezra Pound, Pearl Buck, Dwight Eisenhower, and Langston Hughes. This engaging biography spans the history of Hayes's life and career and the legacy he left behind as a musician and a champion of African American rights. It is an authentic, panoramic portrait of a man who was as complex as the music he performed.

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