Beyond Lift Every Voice and Sing
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I WOULD LIKE TO thank the New York City opera diva Dr. Linda Elliott and Dr. Susan Hayes of New York University for encouraging me to pursue the master’s degree and the PhD at a incredibly difficult turning point in my life, when I was grieving for the death of my cherished mommy and struggling with the transition from dancer and singer and wrestling with moving beyond a performance career. They provided comfort, unbending support and guidance, and compelled me to take the leap into academia. Miss Kharen Fulton, Director of Graduate Admissions at Emory University, steered me through this transition and I count her as a true friend. I cannot express how much these women mean to me, how much I cherish their friendship, or how grateful I am to them for guiding me at that sorrowful juncture in my life. The Department of Ethnic Studies at University of California, San Diego provided a rich environment for scholarship. They also gave me travel grants, a research grant, and a dissertation fellowship. I thank the department wholeheartedly for helping me to make a smooth transition from dancer and singer to scholar, no small feat indeed.

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*Beyond Lift Every Voice and Sing* began as a dissertation, and my committee remained an extraordinary one that included Dr. George Lipsitz, Dr. Ramon Gutierrez, Dr. Ross Frank, Professor George Lewis, Dr. Benetta Jules Rosette, and Dr. Jane Rhodes. After reading *Telling Histories: Black Women Historians in the Ivory Tower*, a must read for all African American scholars and graduates students, I realize how truly amazing they are, for they gave me boundless support for my research and the dissertation. My mentors, Dr. Ramon Gutierrez, Dr. Ross Frank, Dr. George Lipsitz, and Professor George Lewis, provided kindness and constant guidance over the years and I am truly grateful to them. Ramon and Ross read the book proposal, gave me comments, and aided me in my pursuit of the coveted book contract. I am thankful to Dr. Benetta Jules Rosette, who mentored me and whose Arts, Culture, and Knowledge group, including my friends and colleagues Dr. Ricardo Guthrie, Dr. Cristin McVey, J. R. Osborn, Dr. Jonathan Markovitz, Lea Marie Ruiz, Dr. Francesca Castaldi, and Mylene Ribadeniera, offered an intellectual environment that sustained me as we met weekly, ate pizza and cookies, and assessed the manuscript. I am also grateful to Dr. Jack Allison, Dr. John Gilbert, and Dr. Pina Mozzanni of New York University, whom I met while pursuing the master's degree in vocal performance. Drs. Allison and Gilbert encouraged me to pursue my subject, black composers of musical theater. I am ever indebted to Dr. Kelly Wyatt for introducing me to a wide array of African American composers.

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Growing up in Brooklyn, New York means that I cannot remember a time when I was not at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture or the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts mining the archives. The curator Diana Lachatenere, Andre Elizee, Steven G. Fullwood, Berlina Robinson, Anthony Toussaint, Deborah Willis, Nurah Jeter, and James Huffman of the Schomburg Center always remained incredibly supportive of my research from elementary to graduate school. Diana always extended herself and offered her knowledge by calling and introducing me to descendants related to my research. At the Schomburg the librarians and the archivists gave me advice and pulled materials that they thought I should look at. Like a cheering section over the years, they pushed me on to victory.

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Figure 1. J. Rosamond Johnson, James Weldon Johnson, and Bob Cole. Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture