

Music Blurb for 1-19-2020 – Lift Every Voice and Sing

“Lift every voice and sing” was first written as a poem for a school celebration of Abraham Lincoln’s birthday on February 12, 1900. It was recited by 500 students at the segregated Stanton School in Jacksonville, FL. It was written by the school’s principal James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938) to introduce their honored guest Booker T. Washington. In 1905 Johnson’s brother John set the words to music and in 1919 the NAACP dubbed it the Black National Anthem “for its power in voicing the cry for liberation and affirmation for African American people.”