Collection Summary

Title: Florence B. Price Music Manuscripts
Inclusive Dates: 1928-1953
Creator: Price, Florence, 1887-1953
Extent: 26 items
Extent: 3 containers
Extent: 1 linear foot
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/2020570150

Summary: Florence B. Price was a composer and pianist who rose to prominence during the 1930s when she became the first African American woman to have a symphony performed by a major American orchestra. She is predominantly known for her songs and arrangements of spirituals, but also composed symphonies, concertos, instrumental chamber music, vocal compositions, instructional piano music, and music for radio. This finding aid collates classed holograph scores by Price written under her own name and that of her pseudonym, VeeJay, which were submitted as copyright deposits to the Library of Congress from 1928 to 1964.

Acquisition Information

Deposits, Florence B. Price and her estate, 1928-1964

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Processing History

Music Division staff classed the Florence B. Price Music Manuscripts in ML96.P8328, ML96.5.P865, and ML96.5.T58 as they were received from 1928 to 1964. Mónica Hurd coded the finding aid in 2021.

Other Repositories

The University of Arkansas Libraries in Fayetteville has the Florence Beatrice Smith Price Collection which consists of correspondence, diary fragments, programs, photographs, scores, and the research files of Mary Dengler Hudgins on Price.

Related Material

The Artur Rodzinski Collection, Serge Koussevitzky Archive, and the A.P. Schmidt Company Archives all contain a small quantity of correspondence with Price.

The Selma Epstein Collection contains three printed scores by Price. There are holograph and printed compositions and arrangements by Price in the Theodore Presser Company Archive.

Copyright Status

Materials from the Florence B. Price Music Manuscripts are governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.) and other applicable international copyright laws.
Access and Restrictions

The Florence B. Price Music Manuscripts are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Music Division prior to visiting in order to determine whether the desired materials will be available at that time.

Certain restrictions on using or copying materials may apply.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item, date, container number], Florence B. Price Music Manuscripts, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1887 April 9</td>
<td>Born Florence Beatrice Smith in Little Rock, Arkansas, to dentist James H. Smith (1835-1910) and Florence Gulliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Attended the Sisters of Mercy Convent School in Little Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Graduated from Capitol Hill School in Little Rock as valedictorian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-1906</td>
<td>Attended the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, where she studied composition and counterpoint with George Chadwick and Frederick Converse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Taught at the Cotton Plant Academy in Woodruff County, Arkansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907-1910</td>
<td>Taught at Shorter College in North Little Rock, Arkansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1912</td>
<td>Head of the music department at Clark University in Atlanta, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912 September 25</td>
<td>Married Thomas Jewell Price (divorced 1931) and relocated to Little Rock where she continued to teach piano and began composing many instructional pieces for piano that she published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Birth of son Thomas C. Price (died 1920s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Birth of daughter Florence Louise (Florence Robinson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Birth of daughter Edith Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920s</td>
<td>Denied membership to the Arkansas State Music Teachers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926 May</td>
<td>Won second place in Opportunity's Second Annual Contest for Negro Writers, funded by Casper Holtstein through <em>Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life</em>, for her suite for piano, <em>In the Land O'Cotton</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Relocated with her family to Chicago, Illinois, where she became involved in the Chicago Music Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circa 1927</td>
<td>Attended the American Conservatory of Music and the Chicago Musical College where she studied with Arthur Olaf Anderson, Carl Busch, Wesley LaViolette, and Leo Sowerby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circa 1931</td>
<td>Published radio jingles under the pseudonym VeeJay and worked as a silent film organist in theaters throughout Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932 October</td>
<td>Won two first prizes in the Wanamaker National Composition Competition: for her Sonata in E minor in the symphonic category and her Sonata for Piano in the piano composition category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932 December</td>
<td>Katherine Dunham’s dance troop premiered a work based on Price’s composition <em>Fantasie Nègre no. 1 in E minor</em>, with Margaret Bonds as pianist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933 June 15</td>
<td>Premiered Symphony no. 1 in E minor with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra directed by Frederick Stock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Premiered Piano Concerto with the Chicago Women’s Symphony Orchestra and piano soloist Margaret Bonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Invited to perform a piano recital of her own compositions in Little Rock at the segregated Dunbar High School</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Marian Anderson performed Price’s spiritual arrangement of "My Soul’s Been Anchored in de Lord" on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., for more than 75,000 people circa 1940. Premiered Symphony no. 3 with the Michigan Symphony Orchestra and performed her Piano Concerto to a standing ovation. Wrote to Serge Koussevitizky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, requesting he examine samples of her work. Commissioned by Sir John Barberolie, an orchestra conductor in Manchester, England, to compose an overture based on American spirituals. Chicago Symphony Orchestra performed an arrangement of her song "Two Little Negro Dances: Rabbit Foot and Ticklin’ Toes" on WGN-TV. Died of cardiac arrest in Chicago. Commissioned by Sir John Barberolie, an orchestra conductor in Manchester, England, to compose an overture based on American spirituals. Wrote to Serge Koussevitizky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, requesting he examine samples of her work. Commissioned by Sir John Barberolie, an orchestra conductor in Manchester, England, to compose an overture based on American spirituals. Chicago Symphony Orchestra performed an arrangement of her song "Two Little Negro Dances: Rabbit Foot and Ticklin’ Toes" on WGN-TV. Died of cardiac arrest in Chicago.

Bibliography
"Modern Dancers Praised at Stevens." *The Chicago Defender*, December 24, 1932, ProQuest.

Scope and Content Note
The Florence B. Price Music Manuscripts chiefly contain holograph scores for voice and piano created by Price between 1928 and 1953. The works largely represent her most popular style of composition, the arrangement of Negro spirituals. In addition to these spirituals, the collection also contains one of Price’s most remarkable pieces, the holograph score for *Fantasie Nègre no. 1 in E minor*. This piece, for solo piano, was first performed by pianist Margaret Bonds in 1932. A score for "If I Told the Stars" with music by Lew Tobin and words by Price is also included.

Organization of the Florence B. Price Music Manuscripts
The collection is arranged in one series:

- **Music, 1928-1953**

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

**People**

**Subjects**
Choruses, Sacred, Unaccompanied.
Choruses, Sacred, with piano.
Music--Manuscripts--Facsimiles.
Piano music.
Piano with orchestra--Scores.
Sacred songs with piano.
Songs with piano.
Spirituals (Songs)

**Form/Genre**
Arrangements (Music)
Autographs (Manuscripts)
Fantasias (Music)
Musical settings.
Sacred music.
Scores.
Sonatas.
Songs.
Spirituals (Songs)
Vocal scores.
## Description of Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Music, 1928-1953</strong></td>
</tr>
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This series contains classed holograph scores of original compositions and arrangements by Florence B. Price.
Arranged alphabetically by title.
**Container List**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music, 1928-1953</strong></td>
<td>This series contains classed holograph scores of original compositions and arrangements by Florence B. Price. Arranged alphabetically by title.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **LCCN: 2002541599** | An Indian Summer on the Prairie, 1936  
Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Vachel Lindsay  
Photocopy of holograph vocal score for SSA chorus |
| **LCCN: 2003555636** | City Called Heaven, undated  
Arranged by Florence B. Price  
Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano |
| **LCCN: 2002541195** | Dawn’s Awakening, 1936?  
Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Jas Joseph Burke  
Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano |
| **LCCN: 2003555635** | Death’s Gwineter Lay His Cold Icy Hand on Me, undated  
Arranged by Florence B. Price  
Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano |
| **LCCN: 2002541194** | Desire, 1947?  
Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Orma Jean Surbey  
Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano |
| **LCCN: 91757007** | Fantasie Nègre no 1. in E minor, 1929  
Music by Florence B. Price  
Holograph score for piano |
| **LCCN: 90752855** | God Gives Me You, 1946?  
Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Nora Connelly  
Holograph score for voice and piano |
| **LCCN: 2002541598** | Hitch up Your Belts Boys!, 1942  
Music and lyrics by Florence B. Price and Charles J. Johnson  
Holograph score for voice and piano |
| **LCCN: 90752851** | If I Didn’t Love You, 1945?  
Music by VeeJay (Florence B. Price); lyrics by Le Roy De Gregory  
Holograph score for voice and piano |
| **LCCN: 2003555510** | If I Told the Stars, 1953?  
Music by Lew Tobin; lyrics by Florence B. Price  
Photocopy of print score for voice and piano |
| **LCCN: 2003555731** | Just a Dream That Never Came True, 1928?  
Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Frank Blaha  
Holograph score for piano, voice, and violin; holograph part for violin |
| **LCCN: 90752846** | Just to Be Near You, 1948?  
Music by VeeJay (Florence B. Price); lyrics by Le Roy De Gregory  
Holograph score for voice and piano |
| **LCCN: 90752849** | Let’s Give Love Another Try, 1945?  
Music by VeeJay (Florence B. Price); lyrics by Le Roy De Gregory |
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<tr>
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<td>Music and lyrics by Florence B. Price</td>
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<td>2003555507</td>
<td>The Retort</td>
<td>Florence B. Price</td>
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<td>Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Paul Lawrence Dunbar</td>
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<td>2003555503</td>
<td>Rise Mourners: Negro Spiritual</td>
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<td>Sentimental Moonlight</td>
<td>Florence B. Price and Leo Marzullo</td>
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<td>2019563781</td>
<td>Sonata in E minor</td>
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<td>Sunset</td>
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<td>Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Odessa P. Elder</td>
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<td>90752856</td>
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<td>2002541597</td>
<td>To a Little Girl</td>
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<td>Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Bonnie McCallister</td>
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<td>2002541584</td>
<td>Trouble Done Come My Way</td>
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<td>2002541196</td>
<td>Weary Traveler</td>
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<td>90752848</td>
<td>You’re in My Heart to Stay</td>
<td>VeeJay (Florence B. Price); lyrics by Le Roy De Gregory</td>
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<td>Holograph score for voice and piano</td>
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