

# Florence B. Price Music Manuscripts



**Music Division, Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C.  
2021**

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/perform.contact>

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Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/eadmus.mu021056>

Prepared by the Music Division of the Library of Congress

Finding aid encoded by Mónica Hurd, 2021 November

## 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.

## 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

Date	Event
1887 April 9	Born Florence Beatrice Smith in Little Rock, Arkansas, to dentist James H. Smith (1835-1910) and Florence Gulliver
1897	Attended the Sisters of Mercy Convent School in Little Rock
1902	Graduated from Capitol Hill School in Little Rock as valedictorian
1903-1906	Attended the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, where she studied composition and counterpoint with George Chadwick and Frederick Converse Graduated with an artist diploma in organ and a teaching certificate
1906	Taught at the Cotton Plant Academy in Woodruff County, Arkansas
1907-1910	Taught at Shorter College in North Little Rock, Arkansas
1910-1912	Head of the music department at Clark University in Atlanta, Georgia
1912 September 25	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
1915	Birth of son Thomas C. Price (died 1920s)
1917	Birth of daughter Florence Louise (Florence Robinson)
1921	Birth of daughter Edith Price
1920s	Denied membership to the Arkansas State Music Teachers Association
1926 May	Won second place in Opportunity's Second Annual Contest for Negro Writers, funded by Casper Holtstein through <i>Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life</i> , for her suite for piano, <i>In the Land O' Cotton</i>
1927	Relocated with her family to Chicago, Illinois, where she became involved in the Chicago Music Association
circa 1927	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
1928	Publication of her work for piano, <i>At the Cotton Gin</i> . New York, G. Schirmer, Inc.
circa 1931	Published radio jingles under the pseudonym VeeJay and worked as a silent film organist in theaters throughout Chicago
1932 October	Won two first prizes in the Wanamaker National Composition Competition: for her <a href="#">Sonata in E minor</a> in the symphonic category and her Sonata for Piano in the piano composition category
1932 December	Katherine Dunham's dance troop premiered a work based on Price's composition <i>Fantasia Nègre no. 1 in E minor</i> , with Margaret Bonds as pianist
1933 June 15	Premiered Symphony no. 1 in E minor with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra directed by Frederick Stock
1934	Premiered Piano Concerto with the Chicago Women's Symphony Orchestra and piano soloist Margaret Bonds
1935	Invited to perform a piano recital of her own compositions in Little Rock at the segregated Dunbar High School

1939 April 9	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
1943 November 6	Wrote to Serge Koussevitzky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, requesting he examine samples of her work
1950	Commissioned by Sir John Barberolle, an orchestra conductor in Manchester, England, to compose an overture based on American spirituals
1953 February 18	Chicago Symphony Orchestra performed an arrangement of her song "Two Little Negro Dances: Rabbit Foot and Ticklin' Toes" on WGN-TV
1953 June 3	Died of cardiac arrest in Chicago
1964	Price Elementary School in Chicago named in her honor
1978	Singer Leontyne Price performed songs by Florence Price at the White House for President Jimmy Carter
2010	Re-orchestration of Price's Piano Concerto based on her original piano sketches by Center for Black Music Research composer Trevor Weston
2018	Posthumously inducted into the Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame

## Bibliography

- Brown, Rae Linda. "Price [née Smith], Florencea Bea(trice)." *Grove Music Online*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1093/omo/9781561592630.013.90000367402>
- "Modern Dancers Praised at Stevens." *The Chicago Defender*, December 24, 1932, ProQuest.
- Brown, Rae Linda, and Guthrie Ramsey. *The Heart of a Woman: The Life and Music of Florence B. Price*. Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2020.

## 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

Price, Florence, 1887-1953--Manuscripts--Facsimiles.  
 Price, Florence, 1887-1953.  
 Price, Florence, 1887-1953. Works. Selections.  
 Tobin, Lew, 1904-2003.

### 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

### Container

### Series

#### Music, 1928-1953

This series contains classed holograph scores of original compositions and arrangements by Florence B. Price.

Arranged alphabetically by title.

# Container List

Container	Contents
	<b>Music, 1928-1953</b> This series contains classed holograph scores of original compositions and arrangements by Florence B. Price. Arranged alphabetically by title.
LCCN: <a href="#">2002541599</a>	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: <a href="#">2003555636</a>	City Called Heaven, undated Arranged by Florence B. Price Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano
LCCN: <a href="#">2002541195</a>	Dawn's Awakening, 1936? Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Jas Joseph Burke Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano
LCCN: <a href="#">2003555635</a>	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: <a href="#">2002541194</a>	Desire, 1947? Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Orma Jean Surbey Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano
LCCN: <a href="#">91757007</a>	Fantasia Nègre no 1. in E minor, 1929 Music by Florence B. Price Holograph score for piano
LCCN: <a href="#">90752855</a>	God Gives Me You, 1946? Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Nora Connelly Holograph score for voice and piano
LCCN: <a href="#">2002541598</a>	Hitch up Your Belts Boys!, 1942 Music and lyrics by Florence B. Price and Charles J. Johnson Holograph score for voice and piano
LCCN: <a href="#">90752851</a>	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: <a href="#">2003555510</a>	If I Told the Stars, 1953? Music by Lew Tobin; lyrics by Florence B. Price Photocopy of print score for voice and piano
LCCN: <a href="#">2003555731</a>	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: <a href="#">90752846</a>	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: <a href="#">90752849</a>	Let's Give Love Another Try, 1945? Music by VeeJay (Florence B. Price); lyrics by Le Roy De Gregory

## Music, 1928-1953

### Container

### Contents

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- LCCN: [2003555506](#) Holograph score for voice and piano  
Peter Go Ring Dem Bells: Negro Spiritual, undated  
Arranged by Florence B. Price  
Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano
- LCCN: [2003555504](#) Resignation, undated  
Music and lyrics by Florence B. Price  
Photocopy of holograph vocal score for SATB chorus
- LCCN: [2003555505](#) Resignation, undated  
Music and lyrics by Florence B. Price  
Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano
- LCCN: [2003555507](#) The Retort, undated  
Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Paul Lawrence Dunbar  
Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano
- LCCN: [2003555503](#) Rise Mourners: Negro Spiritual, undated  
Arranged by Florence B. Price  
Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano
- LCCN: [2003555730](#) Sentimental Moonlight, 1947  
Music and lyrics by Florence B. Price and Leo Marzullo  
Holograph score for voice and piano
- LCCN: [2019563781](#) Sonata in E minor, 1932  
Music by Florence B. Price  
Photocopy of holograph score for piano
- LCCN: [90752854](#) Sunset, 1938?  
Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Odessa P. Elder  
Holograph score for voice and piano
- LCCN: [90752856](#) Then I Found Heaven When I Found You, 1938?  
Alternate title: Then I Found Heaven in You  
Music by Florence B. Price; lyrics by Bonnie McCallister  
Holograph score for voice and piano
- LCCN: [2002541597](#) To a Little Girl, undated  
Music by Florence B. Price  
Photocopy of holograph score for piano
- LCCN: [2002541584](#) Trouble Done Come My Way, 1939  
Music and lyrics by Florence B. Price  
Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano
- LCCN: [2002541196](#) Weary Traveler, 1951  
Arranged by Florence B. Price  
Photocopy of holograph score for voice and piano
- LCCN: [90752848](#) You're in My Heart to Stay, 1948?  
Music by VeeJay (Florence B. Price); lyrics by Le Roy De Gregory  
Holograph score for voice and piano