

A Personal Note and Acknowledgements

Playing the music of Florence B. Price and reading her biography, *The Heart of a Woman*, by Dr. Rae Linda Brown, and having personally travelled to visit her homeland in Little Rock, Arkansas and Chicago, IL, Ms. Price has become a tremendous role model for me.

As an African American female composer, growing up during the late 19th century and composing during the early 20th century, Ms. Price faced an array of challenges and experienced numerous triumphs. She experienced a beautiful childhood and earned two degrees with a wonderful education in hand from the New England Conservatory. And she began her teaching career at two colleges before the unfortunate and disruptive awakening of Jim Crow would change life as she knew it. Challenges continued soon after graduation from the conservatory when she lost both her father to a penniless death, and her mother who abandoned the family circle. Eventually married, and with two daughters of her own, Price would soon have to escape from her hometown of Little Rock as a racially driven lynching incident in Little Rock that happened just steps away from her home forced her to migrate to Chicago with her family where Price would face more personal tragedy as the family tried to rebuild life that ultimately led to a horrific divorce.

Florence Price, protecting her daughters from eminent poverty, persevered through her writing, teaching piano lessons, self-advocation of her compositions, performing concerts, activities in numerous music memberships, winning composition competitions, and having her symphony played with a national symphony orchestra, she would become the first African American female classical composer to gain national status