

Florence stroke in
chicago, illinois. it
wasnt until



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Florence Price, Composer The purpose of a biography is to enhance the readers knowledge about a particular persons life, in this case, Florence Beatrice Price, and offer a sort of historical background focusing on significant events, accomplishments, and personal aspects of that particular individuals life.

Ideally, the writer molds complex biographical facts birth and death, education, ambition, conflict, milieu, work, relationship, accident into a book or article that has the independent vitality of any creative work but is, at the same time, true to life. Barbara Garvey Jackson, author of the biography on Florence Price chosen for this class, has noted that the purpose of her article is to assess the cultural world in which she Florence grew up, her own life and professional career in Little Rock and Chicago, and the present states of study about her. In my opinion, Jackson does an exceptional job in providing the type of information that she purposely set out to offer such inquisitive readers like myself.

Let me begin by offering a tidbit of biographical information about Florence Price. Florence Beatrice Smith Price was born April 9, 1888 in Little Rock, Arkansas. She was the third child born to Dr. James H.

Smith, a dentist, and Florence Irene Gull, a schoolteacher. Previous to studying composition and organ at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Florence received her first musical training from her mother at age four. After much musical education, she was soon found teaching in the music departments at Shorter College in Arkansas (1906-1910), and Clark University in Georgia (1910-1912). In 1912, she married Thomas J. Price and

together they had three children. Florence successfully established herself as a concert pianist, church organist, composer, and teacher, which soon became her claim to fame. A prominent composer of the Harlem Renaissance, Florence Price published her first composition at age eleven, and at age sixteen began receiving modest fees for her publications. Among her most famous compositions is the Symphony in E Minor, which received its world premiere at a performance by the Chicago Symphony in 1933.

Florence died on June 3, 1953 of a stroke in Chicago, Illinois. It wasn't until after her death in 1953, that she became well known for her miraculous musical talent. Being that Jackson's article is relatively lengthy, compared to other biographies written about Price, I seemed to have gathered a better understanding about her personal and professional life and of whom she truly was.

Jackson's article seemed to portray Price as more than just a composer, but rather as a woman who successfully and honorably acquired a special talent in music. Her knowledge about Price's life and the events that occurred during that particular era seemed to be extremely abundant. There were several mentions of historical events such as the great Chicago fire of 1871, political references, and World War I, which enhance the ambiance. Unfortunately, it seemed to me that she over did it a bit. I realize that her objective is to assess the cultural world in which she Florence grew up, her own life and professional career in Little Rock and Chicago, and the present states of study about her, but during the course of the article, I found myself straying away from the main idea. As if I were losing track of the importance of the

musician herself, and focusing more on the intimate details that Jackson described.

I assume that her purpose for inserting such irrelevant points or topics and then elaborating on them is to capture a sense of reality and cultural sympathy. Which, in a way did exactly that, but I soon became uninterested and had to force myself to continue reading. Within this article, there is a wealth of both personal and professional information.

Much of the information was on Price herself, but there were moments that Jackson elaborated on rather insignificant topics or people. For example, when Jackson would mention someone who had made an influence on Prices life or musical career, she would go into information overload about that person. I can understand that she may want to make the biography seem more personal, but there is no need to give a mini-biography on every person who was of