

PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING THE PUBLICATION OF
A COLLECTION OF SPIRITUALS
TO BE ENTITLED:

THE NEW NEGRO SPIRITUAL

BACKGROUND:

Spirituals are a deeply rooted part of the American folk-music tradition. Those spirituals particular to Afro-Americans are the products of the merging of two vastly different cultures: The Western African culture and that of Western Europe. This rich music, born during the impoverished days of slavery, originated in camp meetings, churches and work settings as the products of spontaneous outbursts of religious and emotional intensity. These songs were preserved by oral tradition until long after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865. Beginning in 1917, *The Spirituals of Harold Thacker Burleigh* were published by the G. Ricordi Publishing Company of New York, somewhat standardizing the traditional melodies. His publication was followed by the collaborative efforts of James Weldon Johnson and his brother, John Rosamond Johnson in their publications *The Book of American Negro Spirituals* and *The Second Book of American Negro Spirituals*, published by the Edward B. Marks Publishing Company of New York in 1925 and 1926, respectively. The availability of such publications encouraged the performance of Afro-American Spirituals in various settings, including, but not limited to classical song recitals throughout the world.

Over the past thirty years the traditions, ideals and music of the Afro-American culture have undergone expansion. This growth has affected even the traditional spiritual in its harmonization and expression. Younger composers and arrangers have preserved the standardized melodies in new settings of various spirituals, while others offer only a shadow of the traditional sound, creating an interesting marriage between old musical concepts and new trends.

Preparation for publication of *The New Negro Spiritual* will be done by Professor Willis Patterson. Professor Patterson is the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at the School of Music and Chairman of the Voice Department. He has been involved with Black American Music of various types (i.e. Spirituals for solo voice and ensemble, Art Songs, etc) for more than thirty years. Professor Patterson was responsible for The Symposium of Black American Music held at the University of Michigan during August, 1985. His first publication, *An Anthology of Art Songs by Black American Composers* published in 1977 by the Edward B. Marks Music Company in New York, is now in its second edition and is being used internationally. The selections for *The New Negro Spiritual* are being carefully compiled from various resources, the primary source being Dean Patterson's personal library; assembled largely during his concert career of more than thirty years.

PROPOSAL:

This proposal offers a compilation of various arrangements of spirituals, emphasizing those compositions and arrangements for solo voice since 1955. These selective new spirituals will be available under one cover and offer opportunity for sampling and comparison of the several different creative styles of music in spirituals of nearly forty years. This collection will feature more than thirty different compositions of a variety of Black American composers and arrangers, as opposed to a variety of spirituals arranged by one composer, such as the Harold Thacker Burleigh collection or the collaborative work of the Johnson brothers previously cited. It is anticipated that the availability of such a collection of spirituals will create a large and positive response from singers in preparation for performances, as well as from audiences anxious to hear new creativity in Negro Spirituals. This collection will also have a strong positive impact upon the music schools and colleges, both inside and outside of the United States, by providing a

new source for examination and experimentation in the unique combination of Art Song and Folk-Song writing of Black American composers. *The Anthology of Art Songs by Black American Composers* experienced a similar response in its first publication and distribution.

Publication of this collection has been agreed to by The Edward B. Marks Publishing Company of New York City, and can occur within approximately one calendar year of the funding of this project. The anticipated budget is as follows:

(The following price estimates are based on costs involved with publication of *An Anthology of Art Songs by Black American Composers*)

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| 1. Acquisition of Spirituals: 40 songs @ \$100.00 per song | \$ 4,000.00 |
| 2. Professional reproduction of songs (typesetting, transposition, etc.) | 15,000.00 |
| 3. Editing (proof reading, checking for accuracy of musical notation, etc.) | 5,000.00 |
| 4. Travel and Telephone expenses (to confer with composers/arrangers and publisher) | <u>6,000.00</u> |
| TOTAL ESTIMATE | \$30,000.00 |