

Willis Patterson
Associate Dean
Symposium Director



SYMPOSIUM

August 9-15, 1985

February 20, 1985

This letter is being sent to a list of the 100 successful black businesses throughout the country. It is a desperate attempt to enlist the financial support of your business in an effort to draw the attention of the major cultural institutions of this country (i.e. colleges and universities, orchestras, publishers, arts councils, musical societies, etc.) to the long and shameful neglect of the serious compositions of Black American music composers. Such names as William Grant Still, Nathaniel Dett, William Dawson, Will Marion Cook, Harry Thacker Burleigh, Hall Johnson, are among the names of Black American composers whom you may recognize as having preserved the wonderful heritage of the Spiritual for our generation to benefit from. It is highly possible, however, that you know nothing of the symphonies, piano works, solo compositions for other instruments and string quartets written by these composers, which make an equal contribution to mankind and to the race of Black Americans in musically depicting our heritage. Of even greater significance than this is the question... "How shall the musical heritage of the Black American in the form of serious compositions, which are being produced today, be preserved for the generations of blacks and others to come if reasonable efforts to expose, understand and preserve them are not made today"...?

It is in the interest of the answers to this question that a Symposium on Black American Music will be held at The University of Michigan School of Music, August 9-15, 1985. Through the presentation of Scholars, Composers, Artists and Educators in lectures, panel discussions, concerts, masterclasses and workshops, during this week, it is hoped that a national focus of attention will be drawn on this question and on some very practical and necessary solutions. Out of this Symposium will come publications of the papers, lectures and panel discussions which will also include the most comprehensive listing of the compositions of Black Americans ever assembled focusing on their serious works. This publications will be available to public schools, universities, cultural organizations, libraries and others throughout the country and abroad, making it possible for these organizations to know of these compositions, where they can be obtained and other pertinent details surrounding the performance and teaching of them. A most vital feature of this Symposium will be that thirty-five of the finest pre-professional Black scholars, performers and educators will be sought out from across the country and brought here as cost-free guests of the



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Symposium to add to their current preparation, the information and performance practices available to them here on the compositions of black American composers. (Which information has most assuredly not been available to them during their study and preparation to this point!)

In order to have this Symposium, grant applications have been sent to more than thirty philanthropic foundations and endowments across the nation. Responses have been received from the National Endowments of the Arts, of the Humanities, and from the Michigan Council for the Arts. Fifty-thousand dollars have been raised from these sources. A very careful, conservative budget of eighty-five thousand dollars is necessary in order that the quality of the goals of this Symposium be preserved, and its objectives be reached not only in those activities to be presented here, but also in those publications and recordings to be made and circulated later. Much of the effort at the proper preservation of our musical heritage will be represented in these post-Symposium publications. They must be done correctly!

A contribution from each of the corporations being sent this letter will go very far in assuring the necessary quality of this Symposium. If an average amount of five-hundred dollars were forthcoming from each of you, our goal would be reached and we could increase the number of young black guest scholars from thirty-five to fifty (at an average cost of \$600 each). Please give this request your immediate and positive consideration. Final plans are being made and we will need to know of your committment within the next forty-five days, in order to proceed with our plans. Printed notification of your role in assisting with this effort will be made in our programs and publications. Of course, your contribution will be tax-deductible since it will be made to The University of Michigan School of Music. Please make your check out as follows:

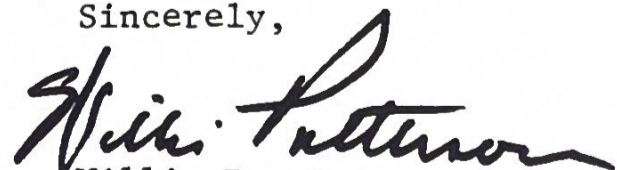
University of Michigan - Black Music Symposium

Mail to the following addresss:

University of Michigan
School of Music
2308 Moore
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

I hope it will be possible for you to personally be in attendance to these events. You will find them stimulating, educational and entertaining, and it will give me an opportunity to personnaly greet and thank you.

Sincerely,



Willis Patterson
Associate Dean
Symposium Director