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Hey there and welcome to episode 66 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm so happy you're joining me today.

March is Women's History Month, and while certainly any time of year is a wonderful time to listen to and amplify the music of female composers, March is a special time to celebrate and reflect upon the contributions of female composers. I've linked to previous episodes of the podcast that we've done that have focused on female composers, and today we're going to add another one to our list as we learn about composer Florence Price.

Florence Beatrice Price, the first noted female composer of African descent to gain national status, was born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1887. Her father was a dentist and her mother, a music teacher who encouraged her musically-gifted daughter in her studies. Florence eventually went on to major in piano and organ at the New England Conservatory of Music, where she graduated with honors. By 1910, she was the head of the music department at Clark Atlanta University, an HBCU in Atlanta, Georgia.

In 1912, Florence married Thomas J Price and they moved back to Little Rock, Arkansas. Florence continued to study music composition while there in addition to raising their two daughters, though sadly, racial tension was escalating in her home town. When a lynching took place near her husband's office, their family moved to Chicago in 1927. In 1928, she published four pieces for piano.

Florence and her husband divorced in 1931, and she began working as an organist for silent films as well as composing songs for radio ads in order to make ends meet. She entered the Wanamaker Foundation Awards in 1932, and won first prize for her Symphony in E minor, officially launching her into her life as a composer as she became the first Black female composer to have a symphony

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later performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Florence Price had different musical influences in her life. She was deeply religious and involved in her church, and also trained in European classical style music. She combined the traditional classical music that she was trained in with haunting melodies of African American spirituals and folk tunes. Listen to a portion of her Five Folksongs in Counterpoint and see if you can pick out the melody of one of these spirituals in her collection of re-imagined folk songs.

In 1939, Washington D.C. was a segregated city. Famous singer Marian Anderson wasn't allowed to perform in Washington D.C.'s Constitution Hall because she was Black. The First Lady at the time, Eleanor Roosevelt, intervened, and as a result the Easter Sunday concert was held on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Marian Anderson chose to close the evening with one of Price's most famous songs – a haunting piece called “My Soul's Been Anchored in de Lord.” Because the concert was broadcast over the radio, hundreds of thousands of people across America heard Florence Price's music that night.

Following Price's death in 1953, much of her music was overshadowed as new musical styles became popular – and much of her work was lost. In 2009, dozens of her works and papers were discovered in her abandoned summer home, including her two violin concertos and her fourth symphony. I've curated a playlist of some of her works for you on YouTube, and you can find the link to that playlist on this episode's show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/66. You'll find performances of some of the pieces you've heard bits of in this episode as well as additional interpretations of her works. And be sure to check out the show notes as well for links to other podcast episodes from the archives that you should check out this Women's History Month. Again, you'll find the show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/66.

Thank you so much for joining me today to learn more about the life and musical gifts of composer Florence Price. I look forward to re-connecting with you in two weeks for more musical discoveries on the

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