

December 20, 1906.

My dear Mr. Putnam:-

Nearly a month ago occurred, here in Colorado Springs, the death of Frederic Ayres Johnson. Mr. Johnson was one of the foremost of American Composers, as you doubtless know, composing under the name of Frederic Ayres.

Many of his works have been published both in Europe and in this country, by Stahl, Schirmer and the Wa-Wan Press. Mr. Sonneck knew him well, by his work and by correspondence, and I know met him during his only trip to New York in the twenty four years he lived in Colorado. Mr. Johnson came here as a young man for his health which he completely regained. His death from another cause than tuberculosis was most regretfully premature. He was only fifty years old with still many of his best composing years ahead.

I understand from his family that some of his original manuscripts are already in your collection at the Library. I have urged his wife and family to get to-gether all original manuscripts as well as yet unpublished ones, pending the time that you will want them. They all (his wife, mother, and sisters) feel that your music division is the place for the collection of his work.

There are several items which will be of interest to you I know. Last year he wrote

a Sonata for Violin and Piano which was intended for the Coolidge competition. It was sent by express and must have met with some delay for it arrived at its destination too late. This was a great disappointment to him for he felt that much of his best work is in this Sonata.

Last Spring the Cincinnati Conservatory conferred the Degree of Doctor of Music on him. He went on for the occasion and while he was there arrangements were made for an "Ayres" Day this winter. This concert was to include this new Sonata and a new Quartet which he had then just completed. After hearing it played by a quartet in Cincinnati he was persuaded to add a second movement, it being written originally for one movement only. This new movement he had commenced but it was left unfinished. In 1924-25 the Society for the Publication of American Music published his Trio in D Minor.

Just what should be the disposition of the manuscript of such a composer I do not know, but I know that you will. As his family felt some hesitation in writing to you, I volunteered to do so. As I have said, I have urged the collecting of all of his manuscript that his entire work might be kept together and not lie scattered, and right now is, of course, the time to do it. I believe that you know Mr. Johnson's brother-in-law, Mr. Oscar King Davis. His address is 102 Park Ave. Bronxville, New York. You may prefer to see and talk to him regarding this collection.

Personally, I have a number of his manuscripts, any or all of which I am most glad to present to you whenever you wish them, though I think most

of them are copies, not originals. I have, however, a violin obligato which he wrote for me for one of his songs, (a published song) and also a little negro lullaby which he wrote for me after a party when I took the part of a negro mammy. These I believe are originals.

You and your musical associates will be the judges of his musical worth, though that in its highest sense is hard for this generation to say. My concern is to help his wife to collect his manuscripts that they may someday find their home in the Music Division of the Library of Congress.

Faithfully yours,