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### Letter, 1942 April 21, from William Grant Still to Eva Jessye

William Grant Still

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3670 Cimarron Street  
Los Angeles, California

April 21, 1942

Dear Eva:

Many thanks for your letter, which came yesterday, and for sending the clipping from the newspaper. That was indeed a pleasant surprise, for I was glad to know that the critic hoped that I would write an opera someday---I guess he will be surprised if he ever finds out that I have written three of them and that I think they're good and would be successful, if only I could get them produced!!! Fate seems to have been against it so far, but I am still working and plugging with that in mind, and still have hopes.

I wrote you a card immediately after the broadcast, telling you how much I liked the choir's work, but I couldn't remember where you were staying in New York, so had to send it to Sumter, S.C. No doubt it has been forwarded to you from there by this time.

Now for your long letter: I was surely glad to have a detailed description of events, and since I am going to write at length to Mr. Stokowski either today or tomorrow, I want to quote to him what you said about him. I feel that he will be pleased to know that you enjoyed the association, and all the other nice things, for he is such a splendid person and is doing so much for everyone that I think he deserves to know that we all appreciate it.

I liked Whisonant very much, too--he put a great deal into a little part and made it most effective.

I thought that Miss Burge sang well in the performance, though she did lag a little in the Mother's Song. You ask about Etta Moten: I haven't heard her sing in concert, though when I did hear her sing a few little songs informally I liked her voice very much. If I should see Mr. Stokowski and if he should plan to repeat the Lynching piece at any time, I will ask him why he doesn't hear her sing with a view to using her. However, I don't want to appear to dictate to him; I think the choice should be up to him. And if you should happen to see him, and feel as though you would care to suggest it, I think that would be all right. Of course, I suppose you know that Mrs. Biddle likes Miss Burge very much, personally.

It might interest you to know that Hall Johnson telephoned here immediately after the broadcast. He said he liked it, and commented especially on the two choirs singing together in the Moussorgsky music. Then he asked rather pointedly whether the Lynching piece was going to be recorded!

There isn't any other news just at present, except that I'm very grateful for your thoughtfulness in sending the program, clipping and full description, and I'll keep you posted if anything comes up. All good wishes!

Sincerely,

Still

D.S. THE HALL JOHNSON INFORMATION IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL BECAUSE WE ARE OLD FRIENDS AND I DON'T WANT TO HURT HIS FEELINGS.