Copy

Twenty-four Hundred Sixteenth Street
Washington 9, D. C.

MUSIC DIVISION
APR 30 1946
RECEIVED

April 28, 1946

Miss Martha Graham
66 Fifth Avenue
New York City

My dear Martha:

Professor Merritt, who is in charge of the forthcoming symposium at Harvard University, came yesterday to discuss with Doctor Spivacke and myself the musical programs which we are planning for that unusual and, I think, very distinguished event next May. Our discussions focused mainly upon the part which we hope you will play for us in giving the last program on the evening of May third.

I assume that your absence from New York has prevented you from replying to the letter which I wrote sometime ago and I now have to add to that letter the announcement that both Doctor Spivacke and Professor Merritt feel that it would be a much more distinguished program if you were in charge of the whole thing, rather than to have other manifestations of the art by LaMerø, Ted Shawn or the Monte Carlo Ballet Dancers. This opinion has resulted in a decision to ask you to give an entire program of three new works to be commissioned by the Coolidge Foundation and would, of course, involve much more preparation. We decided that if it is agreeable to you to do this, we would ask William Schuman, Leonard Bernstein and Benjamin Britten to write the music for you and to put the entire responsibility into your hands in the same manner in which you do this at various theatres during your tour. We are prepared to commission three composers and to offer you up to twenty-five hundred dollars to put on these three rather important works.

The main difficulty with all of us seems to be the fear of a heavy burden in preparing the stage, costumes, scenery, etcetera, but Doctor Merritt felt that if you would be willing to assume the direction of all this, he could find workmen in Cambridge or Boston who could carry out your instructions; and I told him that I had no doubt that whoever does it for you in New York theatres or elsewhere could take charge. In order to make sure of a complete understanding, it would relieve us all and give me much pleasure if you could come to Cambridge to confer with Mr. Merritt on the spot and to decide definitely whether or not such a plan is practical. As they are hoping to make announcements soon, it would be well if you could do this immediately. Of course, we do not wish to speak to the composers about the plan until we know your attitude in the matter.

I am writing to Professor Merritt today to suggest to him that instead of using Saunders Theatre (which is, of course, a music hall and not an opera house) that we should try to find an available theatre near the University. This may not be possible, but, at any rate, I shall suggest the idea. Now, what I hope to hear from you is whether I may have the pleasure of seeing you in Cambridge, and, if so, how soon?

I shall be at the Colony Club in New York on Wednesday morning, but as I am leaving for Cambridge as early as I can manage to be ready, I will ask you not to try to see me there. Perhaps you would be good enough to telephone to me between nine and ten on Wednesday morning to let me know if any of this appeals to you, and when I may expect you in Cambridge.

I do hope that it may eventuate, and that both Harvard and the Coolidge Foundation will in this manner add to their laurels.

Much love to you, and here's hoping,

E. S. E.