

Music Special Collections at the University of Pennsylvania

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Introduction

As the oldest institution of higher education in Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania, founded in 1751, has been the frequent choice of local musical organizations and musicians as a home for letters, scores, photographs, sound recordings, and other materials that document their contribution to Philadelphia's rich musical heritage. This article describes some of the more significant collections housed at the Penn Library that offer researchers invaluable sources for studying the musical life of the city.

Early Philadelphia Musicmaking

Public subscription concerts were presented in Philadelphia as early as 1757, organized chiefly by Francis Hopkinson (1737-1791)-- statesman, judge, inventor, and composer--who claimed the distinction of being "the first native of the United States who has produced a musical composition." The Hopkinson Collection includes manuscripts of works by Hopkinson as well as copies he made for his own library of music by his contemporaries. These manuscript volumes are supplemented by thirteen volumes of printed music that represent an extraordinary compilation of eighteenth-century American and European music.

Musical Fund Society

In 1820, a group of professional and amateur musicians formed the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia, the oldest American music benevolent society still existing to the present day. The society sponsored an extraordinary amount of musical activity throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Vocal and instrumental departments were created and headed by the "Directors of the Music"; regular "practises" were scheduled on Thursdays during all but the summer months; and concerts were presented on a regular basis by society members, frequently with the assistance of guest soloists. These performances were often elaborate affairs requiring large forces of instrumentalists and singers, and the choice of repertory remained faithful to the Society's goal to "promote a sound and critical musical taste in the community."

To support this musical activity, the Society devoted significant funding to the establishment of a music performance library, made up of both printed music and manuscript copies of music that was unavailable for purchase. When only a score was available, orchestral parts were hand-copied, and on other occasions a score would be made from purchased printed parts. The Society also made copies of performance materials borrowed from such organizations as the Handel and Haydn Society of New York and the Moravian Brethren in Bethlehem. The result is a collection rich in first and early published editions of music as well as in contemporaneous manuscript copies.

The records and music library of the society were maintained in the society's offices in Musical Fund Hall (806 Locust Street) until the sale of the hall in 1924. At that point, several arrangements were made for the preservation of these historic documents until they ultimately were donated by the society to the Penn Library in 1991. The music scores, parts, and sheet music are now housed in Annenberg Rare Book & Manuscript Library, and many have been individually cataloged.

The Musical Fund Society collection also includes correspondence, minute books, engagement books, and other archival materials. Because of the complicated history of subsequent transfers through the years, only a portion of the correspondence remains in the collection at the University of Pennsylvania. Most of it dates from 1946 to 1980, and comprises routine correspondence relating to membership matters, concerts, grants, and the business of the officers of the society. The series of minutes is fairly complete from 1820 through the mid-1950s. Engagement books for the Musical Fund Hall cover the period from 1883 to 1918, and they reveal interesting details

about the social life of the city, since this was a period when the hall was used far more frequently for balls, union meetings, political meetings, religious services, vaudeville acts, and sporting events than for music concerts.

Dr. Edward Iungerich Keffer (1861-1933), a Philadelphia dentist and amateur musician, assembled a large collection of nineteenth-century sheet music and bequeathed it to the society upon his death. The Keffer Collection of Sheet Music includes over 2,000 editions published from 1790 through 1895. Of these, over half were published in Philadelphia. Full-color scanned images of some of the music treating topics related to Philadelphia may be viewed at the website of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library.¹

In an effort to encourage the composition of new chamber music, the society sponsored an international chamber-music composition competition in the mid-1920s. Among the over six hundred submissions was the Third String Quartet by Bela Bartok, who ended up sharing the first prize with Italian composer Alfredo Casella. The original performance materials of Bartok's quartet were held by the society until 1991, when Gretel Ormandy, Eugene Ormandy's widow, acquired them for the Penn Library's Eugene Ormandy Collection. The gift included an autograph score of the quartet, a second manuscript score, partially in the hand of the composer, and a set of manuscript parts, with Bartok's autograph corrections.

Stokowski and Ormandy

Since its founding in 1900, the Philadelphia Orchestra has been at the center of the musical life of the city, and the papers of Leopold Stokowski and Eugene Ormandy, the conductors responsible for building and sustaining the reputation of the orchestra over the course of seven decades, are preserved in the Penn Library.

Stokowski was also a prolific arranger, and his orchestral arrangements and transcriptions form the core of the Stokowski Collection at Penn. Although he was most famous for his transcriptions of organ music by J.S. Bach--such as the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor featured in Walt Disney's "Fantasia"--only thirty-six of the over two hundred arrangements that survive are of music by Bach. Some of the other composers receiving Stokowski's distinctive treatment are Mozart, Schubert, Chopin, Brahms, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, and Wagner.

The Eugene Ormandy Collection encompasses a broad range of materials, including correspondence, marked scores, photographs, and broadcast recordings. Ormandy's daily routine included writing both personal and professional correspondence, and these letters make up the largest part of the collection. There are also letters written on Ormandy's behalf by his secretaries and by orchestra management and replies received from Ormandy's correspondents. Some notable correspondents of the 1930s and 1940s include Ormandy's mentor, Jenö Hubay; Leopold Stokowski, whose letters offer insight into his working relationship with Ormandy; Stokowski's wife, Olga Samaroff Stokowski, who championed the appointment of Ormandy as Stokowski's successor; Alma Mahler-Werfel, with whom Ormandy consulted regarding Mahler's work; Albert Einstein, who asked Ormandy to help violinist Boris Schwarz obtain his entry visa to the United States; composers such as Sergei Prokofiev, Percy Grainger, Sergei Rachmaninoff; and soloists such as Fritz Kreisler, Lotte Lehmann, and Lauritz Melchior. Personal correspondence with family members shows that Ormandy was deeply involved with his family and was willing to help them, particularly when they were pursuing careers in music.

Ormandy's official correspondence related to the Philadelphia Orchestra often reflects the shifting nature of the relationship between management and players, particularly letters dating from the 1960s, when the discontent of the players led twice to strikes. The collection also contains correspondence with instrumentalists (or often their agents and mentors) who hoped to join the orchestra and with young soloists who wrote seeking advice. In addition, Ormandy corresponded with established solo

artists, choir directors, and other conductors whom he sought to engage for performances.

Ormandy often commissioned works from composers, and there is correspondence concerning these commissions as well as two specific commissioning projects. The earlier project was funded by Reverend Theodore Pitcairn of Philadelphia and resulted in commissions awarded to one composer each year for five years, starting in 1960. The other was a commissioning project that was planned for the 1976 Bicentennial year and funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Ormandy Collection includes an oral history collection consisting of the transcripts of ninety-three interviews conducted between 1969 and 1996. Four of the interviews were with Ormandy, and the rest were with conductors, soloists, composers, Philadelphia Orchestra members and administrative staff, other professional colleagues, family, and friends. The original tape recordings are also a part of the collection.

The Stokowski and Ormandy collections include over 2,000 scores and sets of parts marked by the conductors for rehearsals and performances with the Philadelphia orchestra. Stokowski treated his scores as scrapbooks and often pasted in postcards, photos, related texts, and letters.

Marian Anderson

The University of Pennsylvania is the principal repository for documents concerning the life and career of singer Marian Anderson. Her music library and personal memorabilia are now housed just a short distance from the neighborhood where she grew up. The papers comprise 495 boxes and include correspondence, business records and contracts, biographical materials, notes, journals, calendars, and financial documents. Programs and publicity materials documenting her singing career are extensive, as is the collection of awards and honorary degrees she received.

The Marian Anderson Collection also includes her entire music library and her collections of sound recordings and photographs, all of which have been separately cataloged. The music library contains more than 2,000 songs in manuscript—including many by Florence Price—as well as more than 2,000 printed scores. Interviews with Howard Taubman and with Studs Terkel and lectures featuring Miss Anderson on audio tape have also been preserved and cataloged. Among the most interesting recordings are those made of rehearsals in her home studio and the test pressings of her commercial recordings. The thousands of photographs in the collection are preserved in albums and scanned on the website of the Rare Book & Manuscript Library.²

Rudolf Serkin

One of the most recent additions to the music-related collections at Penn are the papers of pianist Rudolf Serkin (1903-1991), which include correspondence, reviews, and clippings related to his performing career as well as his teaching and administrative work at the Curtis Institute of Music and the Marlboro Festival. Among the correspondents are cellist Pablo Casals, violist Alexander Schneider, violinist Adolf Busch, artistic manager Arthur Judson, recording executive Goddard Lieberson, and his son Peter. The Serkin Collection is not yet cataloged and processed, so a detailed listing of the holdings is not available.

Working with Materials at Penn

Because of their age and condition, most of the materials described in this article are held in the Walter H. & Leonore Annenberg Rare Book and Manuscript Library, lo-

cated on the sixth floor of the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library. The entrance to the building faces Locust Walk between 34th and 36th Streets. The Rare Book & Manuscript Library is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 4:45 pm, and Saturday from noon to 4:00 pm during the fall and spring academic semesters. The library is open to all who need to consult its collections. Readers must provide current photographic identification for admission to both Van Pelt-Dietrich Library and this department. Please call 215/898-7088 for more information. To view selected items from the Penn Library's music special collections, browse the virtual exhibitions³.

Notes

1. <http://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/keffer/philmus.html>
2. <http://www.library.upenn.edu/special/photos/anderson>
3. <http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/music>