



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Eva Jessye collection

1963-1992 [bulk 1973-1992]

Sc MG 233

Summary

Creator: Jessye, Eva, 1895-1992

Title: Eva Jessye collection

Date: 1963-1992 [bulk 1973-1992]

Size: 0.25 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Gift from unknown donor, 1996.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: Eva Jessye, African American choral director, composer, arranger, and music historian was born in Coffeyville, Kansas, in 1895. In 1914, she graduated from Western University of Kansas City with a degree in music and then went on to Langston University in Oklahoma. She moved to New York in 1926 and by 1930, Jessye had formed and directed a professional choir. She was the first musical director for the original production of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. Acknowledged as the first African American woman to win international distinction as a director of a professional choir, Jessye was the recipient of numerous awards and honorary doctoral degrees throughout her life. She died at 97 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The Eva Jessye collection contains clippings, correspondence, writing, and programs that document Jessye's professional career and recognition in her field.

Preferred citation: [Item], Eva Jessye collection, Sc MG 233, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Accessioned by Rosalie P. Jeter, December 1997.

Related Materials:

Related collections in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture: Alice Childress papers, Sc MG 649; Frederick Wilkerson papers, Sc MG 377; Helen Armstead Johnson miscellaneous theater collection, Sc MG 599; Helen Brown scrapbook, Sc MG 520; Negro Actors Guild records, Sc MG 259; and Thaddeus Drayton collection, Sc MG 389

Other Eva Jessye collections are located at University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and Pittsburgh State University.

Creator History

Eva Jessye, African American choral director, composer, arranger, and music historian was born in Coffeyville, Kansas, in 1895. In 1914, she graduated from Western University of Kansas City with a degree in music and then went on to Langston University in Oklahoma. She moved to New York in 1926 and by 1930, Jessye had formed and directed a professional choir. She was the first musical director for the original production of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. Acknowledged as the first African American woman to win international distinction as a director of a professional choir, Jessye was the recipient of numerous awards and honorary doctoral degrees throughout her life. She died at 97 in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Scope and Content Note

The Eva Jessye collection contains clippings, correspondence, writing, and programs that document Jessye's professional career and recognition in her field.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American women composers
African American women musicians
African Americans -- Music
Authors, Black
Women conductors (Music)

Names

Jessye, Eva, 1895-1992

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Memorial 1992
- b. 1 f. 2 Correspondence 1977-1988
- b. 1 f. 3 Writings 1980-1988
- b. 1 f. 4 Programs 1963-1992
- b. 1 f. 5 Critiques 1987
- b. 1 f. 6 Clippings 1973-1992