



The New York Public Library  
Music Division

Guide to the

**Éva Gauthier papers**

1899-1960

JPB 13-29

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2013

## Summary

**Creator:** Gauthier, Eva, 1885-1958

**Title:** Éva Gauthier papers

**Date:** 1899-1960

**Size:** 4.82 linear feet (14 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by the estate of Éva Gauthier in 1959.

**Abstract:** Éva Gauthier (1885-1958) was a Canadian-American vocalist best known for her performances of contemporary music and her associations with George Gershwin, Igor Stravinsky, and other composers. The Éva Gauthier papers, dating from 1899 to 1960, document the singer's life and career through correspondence; photographs; writings; programs and publicity material; business and legal records; and clippings.

**Access:** Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult: <https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

**Conditions Governing Use:** For permission to publish, contact the Chief, Music Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

**Alternative Form Available:** Two photograph albums in this collection were microfilmed. They are available under call number \*ZB-3190.

**Preferred citation:** Éva Gauthier papers, JPB 13-29. Music Division, The New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2013 The collection was processed by the Music Division at an unknown date, and the original order removed. The correspondence was filed alphabetically, the photographs filed separately, the programs and some correspondence never processed, and the scores individually cataloged. With the exception of the scores, all collection contents were reunited in 2013. Programs and some correspondence were foldered, and the entire

collection reboxed.

## **Creator History**

Josephine Éva Phoebe Gauthier (1885-1958) was a Canadian-American vocalist best known for her performances of contemporary music, as well as her associations with George Gershwin, Igor Stravinsky, and other composers. She was born in Ottawa, Ontario, and began studying piano, harmony, and voice as a child.

In 1902, at age 17, she travelled to Europe for further study and to launch her career. She trained in Paris under the voice teachers Auguste-Jean Dubulle and Jacques Bouhy. Gauthier performed as a contralto at first, but expanded her range to include the soprano and coloratura registers, though she became known primarily as a mezzo-soprano.

By 1905, she had toured the United Kingdom and Canada with the famed singer Dame Emma Albani, who publically endorsed Gauthier as her successor. She toured Europe as a soloist for a few years before her 1909 opera debut in Pavia, Italy. The following year, Gauthier was scheduled to premiere in Britain with the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, but was replaced at the last minute. She resigned from the company and never attempted to perform opera again.

After the Covent Garden incident, Gauthier moved to Java, Indonesia, to live with her future husband, Frans Knoote, with whom she had a son named Evan. She stayed for four years, learning the music of Java and studying with a Gamelan orchestra (Gauthier may have been among the first classically trained western artists to do so). She also toured other countries in the region and performed recitals in China at a time when western classical music was rarely heard there.

Gauthier left Indonesia for New York when the First World War started. She began performing annually at Aeolian Hall, and a recital there in 1917 proved to be her breakthrough. She sang works of Stravinsky and Ravel, after which Stravinsky chose Gauthier to debut all his concert vocal compositions; she quickly became known for her associations with contemporary composers, who regularly submitted new works for her to perform.

Through the 1920s, Gauthier toured North America and Europe with a piano accompanist (usually Celius Dougherty), and occasionally performed with orchestras. She became attracted to jazz at that time, and in November 1923, at her annual Aeolian Hall recital, became the first classical musician to perform songs of Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, and George Gershwin (accompanied by the composer). The program also included music by Schoenberg, Milhaud, Bartok, and Hindemith, and proved to be historic; it directly led to Gershwin's own premiere at Aeolian Hall a few months later, when he debuted his Rhapsody in Blue with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra.

Gauthier took a hiatus from performance in the late 1920s because of health and financial issues, but resumed her career from 1931 to 1937, after which she retired to concentrate on teaching private students and giving master classes. She maintained a presence in the arts and music scene of New York, attending performances of her students and other vocalists; she was also a founding member of the American Guild of Musical Artists, and served on its board of governors.

In her final years, Gauthier wrote articles about her life and career for *The Musical Record* and *Musical Courier*, and also wrote for radio. She died in New York on December 20, 1958.

Source: "Éva Gauthier, mezzo-soprano and voice teacher (1885-1958)." Library and Archives Canada, accessed October 15, 2013. <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/gramophone/028011-1009-e.html>

## Scope and Content Note

The Éva Gauthier papers, dating from 1899 to 1960, document the singer's life and career through correspondence; photographs; scrapbooks; writings; programs and publicity material; business and legal records; and clippings.

Correspondence dates from 1900 to 1959, and comprises about half of the collection. It is in three divisions: family and friends, individuals, and organizations. The latter two hold letters regarding Gauthier's career and business. Notable individual correspondents include Dame Emma Albani, Ernst Bacon, David Bispham, Arthur Bliss, Jacques Bouhy, Paul Bowles, Benjamin Britten, Alexander Calder, John Alden Carpenter, Pablo Casals, Aaron Copland, Noël Coward, Frank and Walter Damrosch, Claude Debussy, David Diamond, Celius Dougherty, Olin Downes, George Gershwin, Ira Gershwin, Percy Grainger, Ernest Gye, W.L. Mackenzie King, Serge Koussevitzky, Walter A. Kramer, Otto Luening, H.T. Parker, Maurice Ravel, Claire Reis, Marcella Sembrich, Albert Stoessel, Leopold Stokowski, Virgil Thomson, Carl Van Vechten, Alec Wilder, and Thornton Wilder. Organizational correspondents include the Bohemians, the Canadian Government and Embassy, the Institute of International Education, the Juilliard School, the Music League of America, Musical America, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Philharmonic Society of New York, and Simon and Schuster (regarding Gauthier's proposed memoir).

Photographs consist of two family photo albums dating from 1900 to 1916, and over 350 loose photographs dating from the 1890s to the 1950s. These include over 250 formal and informal portraits of Gauthier dating from the 1910s to the 1920s, some by Carl Van Vechten. About 100 photographs of other musicians or family members are also present. The portraits range in size up to 10 inches by 14 inches. The two albums of family photographs were microfilmed and cataloged under classmark \*ZB-3190.

Gauthier's writings date from 1899 to 1948. They contain notes regarding her proposed memoir; historical essays on composers such as Gabriel Fauré, Erik Satie, Aaron Copland, Ernst Bacon, Samuel Barber, Virgil Thomson, and Howard Swanson; radio scripts; program notes; lectures; repertoire lists; address books; datebooks; and her diaries, which date from 1899 to 1912.

The programs and publicity materials date from the 1914 to 1937, and feature Gauthier's Aeolian Hall recitals, along with many other performances in North America and Europe. The clippings date from the 1920s to the 1950s.

Business and legal records date from 1902 to 1960. They hold performance and recording contracts, financial records, records of the Éva Gauthier Foundation, passports, and Gauthier's divorce papers. They also include meeting minutes of the Éva Gauthier Society for Contemporary Song, which was founded after Gauthier's death.

Gauthier's collection of published and manuscript scores were cataloged separately and are searchable under her name as an added author.

**Arrangement:** The papers are arranged alphabetically by document type.

## Key Terms

**Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Articles  
Black-and-white photographs  
Business records  
Clippings (information artifacts)  
Commercial correspondence  
Essays  
Lectures  
Legal documents  
Passports  
Personal correspondence  
Programs (documents)

**Subjects**

Mezzo-sopranos  
Music -- United States

**Occupations**

Musicians  
Singers  
Teachers

**Names**

Albani, Emma, Dame  
Bacon, Ernst, 1898-1990  
Bliss, Arthur, 1891-1975  
Bouhy, Jacques, 1848-1929  
Bowles, Paul, 1910-1999  
Britten, Benjamin, 1913-1976  
Calder, Alexander, 1898-1976  
Carpenter, John Alden, 1876-1951  
Casals, Pablo, 1876-1973  
Copland, Aaron, 1900-1990  
Coward, Noel, 1899-1973  
Damrosch, Frank, 1859-1937  
Damrosch, Walter, 1862-1950  
Dougherty, Celiuss, 1902-1986  
Downes, Olin, 1886-1955  
Gershwin, George, 1898-1937  
Gershwin, Ira, 1896-1983  
Grainger, Percy, 1882-1961  
King, William Lyon Mackenzie, 1874-1950  
Koussevitzky, Serge, 1874-1951  
Luening, Otto, 1900-1996  
Ravel, Maurice, 1875-1937  
Reis, Claire R. (Claire Raphael)  
Sembrich, Marcella, 1858-1935  
Stoessel, Albert, 1894-1943  
Stokowski, Leopold, 1882-1977  
Thomson, Virgil, 1896-1989  
Van Vechten, Carl, 1880-1964  
Wilder, Alec  
Wilder, Thornton, 1897-1975  
Bohemians (New York Musicians' Club)  
Institute of International Education (New York, N.Y.)  
Juilliard School of Music

Music League of America  
Musical America  
Philadelphia Orchestra  
Philharmonic Society of New York  
Simon and Schuster, Inc.

## Container List

### Business and Legal Records

- b. 1 f. 1-3 General 1902-1958
- b. 1 f. 4 Éva Gauthier Foundation 1946
- b. 1 f. 5-8 Éva Gauthier Gauthier Society for Contemporary Song 1959-1960
- b. 2 f. 1-6 Clippings 1920s-1950s
- b. 3 f. 1-4 Clippings 1920s-1950s

### Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 9-11 Family and Friends 1900-1958
- b. 4 f. 1-2 Family and Friends 1909-1951

### Individuals

- b. 4 f. 3-4 General 1911-1937, undated
- b. 4 f. 5 A 1926-1952, undated
- b. 4 f. 6-11 Albani, Emma 1905-1910, undated
- b. 4 f. 12-16 B 1905-1954, undated
- b. 5 f. 1-22 C - K 1902-1958, undated
- b. 6 f. 1-20 L - W and unidentified 1901-1958, undated
- b. 7 f. 1-5 Organizations 1902-1959

### Photographs

- b. 7 f. 6-7 Albums 1900-1916  
Available on microfilm under classmark \*ZB-3190.
- b. 8 f. 1-8 Loose 1890s-1950s
- b. 3 f. 5-7 Loose 1890s-1950s
- b. 9 f. 1 Loose undated

### Programs and Publicity

- b. 10 f. 1-4 1914-1925
- b. 11 f. 1-6 1920-1937
- b. 12 f. 1 Undated

### Writings

- b. 12 f. 2-5 Articles, Essays, Lectures, and Notes 1914-1937, undated
- b. 12 f. 6-7 Diaries and Datebooks 1899-1912, undated
  - b. 13 Diaries and Datebooks 1899-1912, undated
- b. 14 f. 1 Diaries and Datebooks 1899-1912, undated
- b. 14 f. 2 Radio Scripts and Program Notes 1925-1937, undated
- b. 14 f. 3 Repertory Lists 1937-1948, undated