



The New York Public Library
Music Division

Guide to the

American Music Center collection of score manuscripts

1935-1996

JPB 13-39

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2013.

Summary

Creator: American Music Center (New York, N.Y.)

Title: American Music Center collection of score manuscripts

Date: 1935-1996

Size: 7.51 linear feet (28 boxes)

Source: Donated by the American Music Center from 1982 to 2001.

Abstract: The American Music Center was a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the creation, performance, and appreciation of new American music. For much of its history, one of its principal activities was the creation of a research and circulating library of scores and recordings submitted by its members. The American Music Center collection of score manuscripts, dating from 1935 to 1996, holds music by ten composers: Gerald Busby, Ron Carter, Wendy Mae Chambers, Arthur Cohn, Judith Dvorkin (also known as Judy Spencer), Virginia Samuel, Les Thimmig, William Turner, Grace A. Yeager, and an unidentified composer who wrote incidental music for plays by Laurence Klavan.

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>

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Processing note: Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2013.

Creator History

The American Music Center (AMC) was a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the creation, performance, and appreciation of new American music. It was founded in 1939 as a membership association by the composers Marion Bauer, Aaron Copland, Howard Hanson, Harrison Kerr, Otto Luening, and Quincy Porter. For much of its history, one of the AMC's principal activities was the creation of a research and circulating library of scores and recordings submitted by its members. Featuring published scores and unpublished manuscripts, the library eventually held more than 60,000 items.

From 1982 to 2001, the Music Division of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts agreed to receive from the AMC scores of composers who had been deceased for 25 years or longer. In 2001, the entire AMC library was donated to the Music Division. In 2011, the AMC merged with Meet The Composer to form New Music USA, which continues to collect scores and recordings of new music in digital form.

Custodial History

From 1982 to 2001, the American Music Center regularly donated scores of composers who had been deceased for 25 years or longer to the Music Division. In 2001, the AMC donated its entire collection of scores and recordings to the Music Division. This collection consists of the manuscript component of the AMC library.

Scope and Content Note

The American Music Center collection of score manuscripts, dating from 1935 to 1996, holds music by ten composers: Gerald Busby, Ron Carter, Wendy Mae Chambers, Arthur Cohn, Judith Dvorkin (also known as Judy Spencer), Virginia Samuel, Les Thimmig, William Turner, Grace A. Yeager, and an unidentified composer who wrote incidental music for plays by Laurence Klavan.

The manuscripts consist of sketches, unfinished compositions, works-in-progress, and final versions of scores and parts in either the composer's or a copyist's hand. Some scores are manuscript reproductions. The collection also contains correspondence and business papers of Judith Dvorkin. The best-represented composers are Dvorkin, William Turner, and Grace A. Yeager. The eleventh series of the collection holds scores and sketches by unknown composers and orphan score pages.

Key Terms

Titles

Captain Kangaroo (Television program)

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Commercial correspondence

Personal correspondence

Programs (documents)

Scores

Scripts (documents)

Occupations

Composers

Lyricists

Subjects

Music -- United States

Music libraries

Names

Busby, Gerald

Carter, Ron, 1937-

Chambers, Wendy Mae

Cohn, Arthur, 1910-1998

Dvorkin, Judith

Klavan, Laurence

Samuel, Virginia

Spencer, Judy

Thimmig, Les, 1943-

Turner, William, 1952-1987

Yeager, Grace A.

Container List

b. 1 f. 1 Series I: Gerald Busby undated (One folder)

Gerald Busby (b. 1935) is an actor as well as a composer who has written music for film and theater. This series contains one manuscript copy of a score for clavichord or harpsichord, with an illegible title.

Series II: Ron Carter 1975-1989 (3.5 boxes)

Ron Carter (b. 1937) is one of the foremost bassists in jazz. The scores in this series represent his work as a composer and arranger, as well as the arrangements of others. They include scores for his albums *Anything Goes* (1975, arrangements by David Matthews), *Empire Jazz* (1980, arrangements by Carter of music by John Williams), *Parade* (1979, arrangements by Wade Marcus), *Peg Leg* (1978, arrangements by Robert M. Freedman), and *Yellow and Green* (1976, arrangements by David Matthews). Also present is Carter's score for the film *Beatrice* (1988), his incidental music for the play *J.C. Is Alive* (1989), and two arrangements by David Matthews for unidentified projects.

- b. 28 f. 1 *Anything Goes* 1975
- b. 3 f. 1-2 *Beatrice* 1988
 - b. 2 f. 2 *Beatrice* 1988
- b. 1 f. 3-4 *Empire Jazz* 1980
 - b. 2 f. 1 *Empire Jazz* 1980
- b. 3 f. 3 *J.C. Is Alive* 1989
- b. 2 f. 4 *J.C. Is Alive* 1989
- b. 2 f. 3 *Parade* 1979
- b. 28 f. 2-4 *Parade* 1979
 - b. 1 f. 2 *Peg Leg* 1977
- b. 28 f. 5 *Yellow and Green* 1976
- b. 28 f. 6 Unidentified mid-1970s

Series III: Wendy Mae Chambers 1974-1985 (3.5 boxes)

Wendy Mae Chambers (b. 1953) has written both large-scale compositions and pieces for solo performers. She employs unusual instrumentations such as 77 trombones, toy pianos, or household tools such as cooking utensils and vacuum cleaners. This series contains 17 of her compositions, and untitled or incomplete scores.

- b. 27 f. 1 *5 Phases of the Moon* 1974
 - b. 4 *10 Grand* 1983
- b. 27 f. 2 *Duet* 1974
- b. 27 f. 3 *Fanfare Revisited* 1975
- b. 27 f. 4 *A Gathering for Viola, Horn, Bassoon, and Piano* undated
- b. 27 f. 5 *Jabberwocky* undated
 - b. 2 f. 6 *The Kitchen* 1979
- b. 27 f. 6 *The Kitchen* 1979
- b. 2 f. 5 *A Mass for Mass Trombones* 1993

Series III: Wendy Mae Chambers (cont.)

- b. 27 f. 7 *Music for Choreographed Rowboats* 1979
- b. 27 f. 8 *Paradise* undated
 - b. 5 *Pluck* 1984
- b. 27 f. 9 *Prelude and Fugue for Two Violas* 1975
- b. 27 f. 10 *Seconds* 1974
 - b. 2 f. 7 *Solar Diptych* 1985
 - b. 2 f. 8 *Sonic Vibrations* 1975
- b. 27 f. 11 *Street Music* 1978
- b. 27 f. 12 *Wedding Music for Teddie* 1976
- b. 27 f. 13 *Untitled or Incomplete* undated

Series IV: Arthur Cohn 1935-1964 (.5 boxes)

Arthur Cohn (1910-1998) was a composer, conductor, and critical and historical writer on music. This series contains manuscripts for five of his works, as well as a folder of sketches. The scores include *Kaddish for Symphony Orchestra* (1964), *Quotations in Percussion* (1958), and *Suite for Mezzo-Soprano with String Quartet* (1941).

- b. 6 f. 1 *Kaddish for Sympony Orchestra* undated
- b. 6 f. 2 *Producing Units, Op. 20* 1935
- b. 6 f. 3 *Quotations in Percussion, Op. 53* 1958
- b. 6 f. 4 *Quotations for Woodwind* 1957
- b. 6 f. 5 *Suite for Mezzo-Soprano with String Quartet, Op. 39* 1941
- b. 6 f. 6 *Sketches* undated

Series V: Judith Dvorkin / Judy Spencer 1950-1993 (14.5 boxes)

Judith Dvorkin (1928 – 1995), under the pen name of Judy Spencer, wrote the music, lyrics, or libretto to many songs, musicals, and operas, often for children. She earned her bachelors degree at Barnard College and Masters at Columbia University, where she studied with Roger Sessions and Douglas Moore. She also studied jazz with the pianist Teddy Wilson.

Equally active as a composer and a lyricist/librettist, her co-writers included such musicians as Norris Turney and Jimmy Rowles. She also produced English translations of songs in Spanish for publication. Dvorkin is perhaps best-known for her lyrics to songs for the Captain Kangaroo television series (with music by Earl Rose). She composed "serious music" (song cycles, chamber music, and orchestral works) under her own name, but she also used it on occasion when writing songs and musicals. In addition to her compositional work, Dvorkin established and was the first Director of the American Composers Alliance Library. For many years, she was the Chief Librarian and Archivist of the music library at Broadcast Music, Inc.

This series contains scores for about 160 of her compositions. It also holds business or creative correspondence with Dvorkin's co-writers and publishers, as well as concert programs and resumes.

Dvorkin's scores include music and/or lyrics and scripts for musicals such as *Cyrano*, *Seven At A Blow*, *The Musical Mark Twain*, *The Snow Queen*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Reluctant Dragon*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *The Frog Prince*; 23 songs written for the *Captain Kangaroo* program; and at least 100 lead sheets for other songs. Among the pieces written under her real name are *The Children – Song Cycle for Bass*; *Song Cycle for Mezzo-Soprano and Orchestra*; *Three Letters: John Keats to Fanny Brawne* (for baritone and chamber ensemble); *The Crescent Eyebrow* (for soprano and chamber ensemble); *Eight Piano Solos*; and *East of Samoa*, an opera with a libretto by Dvorkin and music by Paul Rosner.

This series is in four divisions: Correspondence, Programs, Resumes, and Scores. The scores are arranged alphabetically, with the exception of the songs, which have separate files for *Captain Kangaroo*, songs written with Dick Chodosh, settings of poetry by Dorothy Parker, and translations.

- b. 7 f. 1-3 **Correspondence 1964-1992**
- b. 7 f. 4 **Programs 1956-1972**
- b. 7 f. 5 **Resumes undated**
- Scores**
- Compositions**
- b. 6 f. 7-11 **B - Fo 1953-1958, undated**
- b. 8 f. 1-6 **C - S 1955-1959, undated**
- b. 9 f. 1-10 **Fr - Ta 1954-1971, undated**
- b. 10 f. 1-6 **Th - Tw 1956-1958, undated**
- b. 11 f. 1 ***Three Letters: John Keats To Fanny Brawne* 1968**
- Musicals and Operas**
- b. 10 f. 7 **General undated**
- b. 10 f. 8 **A undated**
- b. 7 f. 6-7 **B 1974, 1992**
- b. 12 f. 1-4 **C - F 1950-1978, 1991**
- b. 11 f. 2-3 ***Cyrano* 1964**
- b. 12 f. 5-6 ***Cyrano* 1964**
- b. 13 f. 1-3 ***Cyrano* 1964**
- b. 7 f. 8-10 ***Cyrano* 1964**
- b. 14 f. 1-5 **Ga - J 1962-1964**

Series V: Judith Dvorkin / Judy Spencer (cont.)

Scores (cont.)

Musicals and Operas (cont.)

- b. 14 f. 6-7 *The Musical Mark Twain* 1963
- b. 11 f. 4-5 *The Musical Mark Twain* 1975-1976, 1981
- b. 15 f. 1-4 O - Re undated
- b. 16 f. 1-4 Rel - Se 1972-1975
- b. 17 f. 1-3 S - T 1991, undated
- b. 17 f. 4 Sketches

Songs

- b. 18 f. 1-4 General 1959-1983, undated
- b. 19 f. 1-5 General 1959-1983, undated
- b. 20 f. 1 *Captain Kangaroo* 1950s
- b. 20 f. 2 Chodosh, Dick undated
- b. 20 f. 3 Parker, Dorothy undated
- b. 20 f. 4 Spanish Translations 1951-1968
- b. 20 f. 5-6 Sketches undated
- b. 7 f. 11-12 Series VI: Laurence Klavan 1985 (2 folders)

Laurence Klavan (b. 1954) is a novelist and playwright. The scores in this series contain incidental music and annotated scripts for two of his short plays, *Uncle Lumpy Comes to Visit* and *Smoke*. The composer is not credited.

- b. 7 f. 13 Series VII: Virginia Samuel 1996 (1 folder)

Virginia Samuel is a violist and composer. She earned a bachelor of music in viola performance and master of music in composition at the New England Conservatory, and a Ph.D. in composition at Harvard University. The American Academy of Arts and Letters honored her twice with awards for her compositions, in 1994 and 2004. This series holds the manuscript for her composition *Elegy for Solo Violin*.

- b. 20 f. 7 Series VIII: Les Thimmig ca. 1982 (1 folder)

Les Thimmig (b. 1943) is a clarinetist, saxophonist, composer, and conductor active in both jazz and classical music. He received degrees in composition from the Eastman School of Music and Yale University, and has taught at Yale University and the University of British Columbia. He now teaches at the University of Wisconsin. This series contains a copy of the manuscript for his *Concerto for Six Players*.

Series IX: William Turner 1974-1987 (5 boxes)

William Turner (1952-1987) was a composer, dramatist, producer, and actor. He wrote music for plays, musicals, and operas, as well as individual songs and instrumental music. Turner studied theater at Carnegie-Mellon University and the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco. A founding member and artistic director of Theatre Express in Pittsburgh, Turner wrote, directed, produced, or composed music for more than 24 productions there from 1976 to 1980. These included *A Lyrical Opera Made By Two To Be Sung* (a libretto by Gertrude Stein), and *The Unlit Corridor: A Horror Story*. In addition to his own works, he directed productions of Eugene Ionesco's *Killing Game* and Sam Shepard's *Angel City* (for which he also wrote incidental music). In the early-1980s, Turner moved to New York City, where he wrote and directed an opera, *A Bird in the Hand: Two Solos*, and adapted, directed, and composed music for Al Carmine's *Camp Meeting*, which premiered in 1986 at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. William Turner died of AIDS-related causes in 1987.

This series consists of all of Turner's manuscripts, which were donated by his brother, Robert, to the American Music Center upon William's death. They include sketches, scores, lyrics, and libretti for 36 plays, songs, musicals, and operas, including *Ireland*; *The Unlit Corridor: A Horror Story*; *A Lyrical Opera Made By Two To Be Sung*; *A Bird in the Hand: Two Solos*; *Camp Meeting*; *Angel City*; *In the Jungle of Cities* (by Bertolt Brecht); and *As You Like It*. Also present is *Three Short Scenes for Orchestra*, written under the pen name of Herman Bernardd (a pun on the name of film composer Bernard Hermann); and *Dance*, also for orchestra.

The series holds papers consisting of the program for Turner's memorial concert and an incomplete list of Turner's compositions compiled by Charles Gilbert. A slightly different (but also incomplete) listing of Turner's works is in a .pdf document accessible from the archival portal.

- b. 21 f. 1 Papers 1987
 - Scores
 - Instrumental and Vocal Works
 - b. 21 f. 2 *Christmas Carols* undated
 - b. 20 f. 8 *Dance* undated
 - b. 21 f. 3 *Fanfare for the Common Mitch* undated
 - b. 20 f. 9 *The Forest of Arden* undated
 - b. 21 f. 4-7 I - R undated
 - b. 23 f. 2 *Suite From A Lyrical Opera Made By Two To Be Sung* 1981
 - b. 11 f. 6 *Three Short Scenes for Orchestra* undated
 - b. 22 f. 1 *Wonderful in Summer* undated
From *Making of Americans*. String quartet.
 - Theatrical Music
 - b. 23 f. 1 *Angel City* late 1970s
 - b. 22 f. 2 *As You Like It* 1976
 - b. 21 f. 7-13 B - C 1985-1986
 - b. 22 f. 3 *Double Time* 1974
 - b. 24 f. 1-2 F - G 1960s, undated
 - b. 22 f. 4-5 *In the Jungle of Cities* undated
 - b. 24 f. 3 *John Brown's Body* undated
 - b. 22 f. 6-7 *A Lyrical Opera Made By Two To Be Sung* 1978-1979
 - b. 24 f. 4 *A Lyrical Opera Made By Two To Be Sung* 1978-1979
 - b. 24 f. 5-6 R 1969, undated
 - b. 25 f. 1 *The Rehearsal* undated

Series IX: William Turner (cont.)

Scores (cont.)

Theatrical Music (cont.)

- b. 23 f. 3 *The Unlit Corridor: A Horror Story* 1977-1987
- b. 24 f. 8 *Writer's Opera* undated
- b. 24 f. 9 Unidentified Production undated
- b. 24 f. 10-12 Untitled and Unfinished Scores and Sketches undated
- b. 25 f. 2 Untitled and Unfinished Scores and Sketches undated

Series X: Grace A. Yeager 1954-1971 (1 box)

Grace A. Yeager mainly composed songs for voice and piano with lyricist Harold Hanning. She also created choral pieces and settings for poetry, particularly works of Robert Louis Stevenson, and instrumental chamber works. This series holds about 60 of her compositions. These include songs written with Hanning, as well as settings of poetry by Stevenson, Alfred Tennyson, Elizabeth Glass Barlow, and William Thackeray. The poems by Stevenson are gathered in a single, untitled song cycle. Other works in the series are choral pieces such as *Blow Bugle Blow*; *Boundless*; *Lord, I Cry Unto Thee*; *My Boy Billy*; and *I Will Sing of Mercy and Judgment*. Also present are an orchestral piece titled *David's Lament*; pieces for piano, two vocalists and piano, and flute or clarinet and piano; and sketches and untitled works.

Instrumental Music

- b. 25 f. 3 C - V undated
- b. 23 f. 4 *David's Lament* 1971

Songs and Vocal Music

General

- b. 25 f. 4-6 A - I 1954-1960, undated
- b. 26 f. 1-3 J - W 1954-1960, undated
- b. 26 f. 4 Untitled Song Cycle of Robert Louis Stevenson Poems undated
- b. 26 f. 5 Untitled Song Cycle of Harold Hanning Lyrics undated
- b. 26 f. 6 Unfinished or Untitled Scores and Sketches
- b. 23 f. 5 Series XI: Works and Sketches by Unknown Composers and Orphan Score Pages undated (1 folder)