



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:** .2 linear feet (1 box)

**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, citations, correspondence and programs that document Jessye's professional career and recognition in her field.

**Access:** Some collections held by the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture 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. To request access to materials in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, please visit: [http://archives.nypl.org/scm/request\\_access](http://archives.nypl.org/scm/request_access)

**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

### Related Materials:

Eva Jessye Collection Also located at University of Michigan at Ann Arbor 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, citations, correspondence 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  
Black author  
Women conductors (Music) -- United States

### **Names**

Jessye, Eva, 1895-1992  
Jessye, Eva, 1895-1992 -- Correspondence.