

**The New York Public Library
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center
Music Division**

Guide to the
Arthur Cohn collection
1923-1941
JPB 13-21

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, August 2013

Summary

Creator: Cohn, Arthur, 1910-1998

Title: Arthur Cohn collection, 1923-1941

Size: 16.67 linear feet (37 boxes)

Source: Donated by Lois Cohn in 2003.

Abstract: Arthur Cohn (1910-1998) was an American composer, conductor, and critical and historical writer on music. The Arthur Cohn collection, dating from 1923 to 1941, mainly holds notes, drafts, illustrations, and research clippings for an unpublished book titled *The Art and Science of Orchestration*. It also contains scores for nine of Cohn's compositions.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photography and photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

Copyright information: For permission to publish, contact the Chief, Music Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Preferred citation: Arthur Cohn collection, JPB 13-21. Music Division, New York Public Library.

Custodial history: The collection was split into two parts by the Music Division. This part, mainly documenting the unpublished book *The Art and Science of Orchestration*, was arranged, foldered, and boxed by the Music Division, with the exception of the scores, which were not processed. The other part of the collection is held by the Division under call number JPB 03-4.

Processing note: Physical processing consisted of foldering and boxing scores, and numbering folders.

Related collections

Arthur Cohn papers, JPB 03-4. Music Division, New York Public Library. Contains correspondence, concert programs, and clippings.

Creator history

Arthur Cohn (1910-1998) was an American composer, and a critical and historical writer on music. He was also an important figure in music publishing, holding prominent posts at Mills, MCA, and Carl Fischer, and promoting the publication of new music. As an author, Cohn was known best for his writing

on contemporary music. Two of his books, *The Collector's Twentieth-Century Music in the Western Hemisphere* (1961) and *Twentieth-Century Music in Europe* (1965), came to be regarded as standard texts. Cohn died in Manhattan in 1998.

Source: James G. Roy Jr. "Cohn, Arthur." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed August 5, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06058>.

Scope and content note

The Arthur Cohn collection, dating from 1923 to 1941, mainly holds notes, drafts, illustrations, and research clippings for Cohn's unpublished book, *The Art and Science of Orchestration*, a guide meant for the professional or advanced student orchestrator or arranger. It also contains scores for nine of Cohn's compositions.

The files for *The Art and Science of Orchestration* consist of chapter notes; note cards; a file of notes, resources, and outlines; drafts and completed manuscripts of chapters; illustrations; and clippings used while researching the book. The Music Division produced a detailed list of the folder contents for this portion of the collection that can be viewed through the archival portal. The alphabetically-arranged chapter notes are a set of folders holding notes and articles on over 600 musical topics, such as instruments, composers, styles, or compositional and theoretical concepts. The note cards cover similar information, and also include a bibliography. The notes, resources, and outlines file includes articles by other writers as well as Cohn's notes on the structure of the book. The chapter drafts and completed manuscripts are heavily annotated and edited by Cohn. Illustrations are filed separately from the chapters, but bear identifying titles.

The scores, all manuscripts, largely date from the early 1930s. They include a flute concerto, two string quartets, a piece for string orchestra, and incidental music for a play titled *Too Late To Die*, by Christopher Wood. Some scores have more than one orchestration, and most have edits or other written notes.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged alphabetically by file title. The arrangement of the files for *The Art and Science of Orchestration* was not altered from the Music Division's order.

Key terms

Subjects

Instrumentation and orchestration
Music -- 20th century

Occupations

Composers
Orchestrators
Writers

Names

Cohn, Arthur, 1910-1998

Special formats

Clippings (information artifacts)
Drafts (documents)
Illustrations (layout features)
Research notes
Scores
Typescripts

Container list

The Art and Science of Orchestration

Chapter Notes, undated

- b.1 f.1-39 Accentuation - Banjo
- b.2 f.1-32 Bariolage - Bottles
- b.3 f.1-25 Bowing - Cello
- b.4 f.1-27 Cencerro - Combinations
- b.5 f.1-40 Concertina - Domras
- b.6 f.1-35 Double Bass - Faure
- b.7 f.1-27 Fife - Glasses
- b.8 f.1-17 Glissando - Handel
- b.9 f.1-8 Harmonics - Harmony
- b.10 f.1-12 Harp - Heterophony
- b.11 f.1-29 Highlighting - Instruments
- b.12 f.1-48 Intensity - Meyerbeer
- b.13 f.1-25 Microphone - Numerical Proportions
- b.14 f.1-26 Oboe - Pedal Point
- b.15 f.1-12 Percussion - Piccolos
- b.16 f.1-21 Pizzicato - Quotations in Scoring
- b.17 f.1-44 Ranges - Serpent
- b.18 f.1-34 Shostakovich - Strings
- b.19 f.1-49 Styles - Toy Instruments
- b.20 f.1-21 Transcriptions - Typophone
- b.21 f.1-21 Ukelele - Voicing
- b.22 f.1-22 Wagner - Zither

b.23 f.1-14 Notes, Resources, and Outlines, undated

Drafts and Completed Chapters, undated

- b.24 f.1-11 Abbreviations - Canonic Scoring
- b.25 f.1-25 Chinese Barber's Fork - Percussion Notation
- b.26 f.1-17 Pizzicato - The Use of Harmonics

Illustrations, undated

- b.27 f.1-29 Abbreviations - Tortoise Shells
- b.28 f.1-10 Altered Chords - Canonic Scoring
- b.29 f.1-17 General Considerations of Percussion Tutti - *The Warriors* by Percy Grainger (excerpts)

Alphabetical Note Cards, undated

- b.30 A - C
- b.31 D - O
- b.32 P - Tr
- b.33 Tu - Z
- b.33 Booklist

The Art and Science of Orchestration (cont.)

b.34 f.1-4 Clippings, 1923-1940s

Scores

- b.35 f.1 *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra*, Op. 37, 1941
- b.36 f.1 *Incidental Music for "Too Late To Die"*, Op. 16, undated
- b.36 f.2 *Music for Brass*, Op. 9, 1934
- b.36 f.3 *The Pot-Bellied Gods*, Op. 8, 1934
- b.36 f.4 *Retrospections for String Orchestra*, Op. 11, 1934
- b.37 f.1 *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, Op. 6, 1933
- b.37 f.2 *String Quartet No. 2 (Six Miniatures)*, Op. 4, 1933
- b.37 f.3 *String Quartet No. 3*, Op. 7, 1933
- b.37 f.4 *Suite for Viola and Piano*, Op. 2, 1932, 1937