

The New York Public Library
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Music Division

Guide to the
Harold Vincent Milligan papers

1903-1951

JPB 13-03

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, February 2013

Summary

Creator: Milligan, Harold Vincent, 1888-1951

Title: Harold Vincent Milligan papers, 1903-1951

Size: 3.47 linear feet (12 boxes)

Source: Donated by Meredith Mayer in 2005.

Abstract: Harold Vincent Milligan (1888-1951) was an American organist, composer, and writer on music. The longtime organist for Riverside Church in Manhattan, his papers hold correspondence, scores, clippings, concert programs, diaries, writings, financial records, awards and citations, and a photograph.

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

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Preferred citation: Harold Vincent Milligan papers, JPB 13-03. Music Division, New York Public Library.

Processing note: Processing consisted of foldering and arranging papers and scores, and rehousing diaries and scrapbooks.

Creator history

Harold Vincent Milligan (1888-1951) was an American organist, composer, and writer on music. He spent his early years in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, and from the age of twelve, he was an organist in churches where his father was minister. He moved to New York City in 1907 to study with William Crane Carl, organist of the Old First Presbyterian Church, and at the Guilman Organ School. His teachers included T. Tertius Noble, Clement R. Gale, and Arthur E. Johnstone. After one year as organist at the First Presbyterian Church of Orange, New Jersey, Milligan worked five years at Rutgers Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, and two years at Plymouth Church in Brooklyn. In 1915, he was appointed organist at the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church (later renamed Riverside Church), a position he held until his retirement in 1940. He served as president of the National Association of Organists (1929–1932) and national secretary of the American Guild of Organists (1926–1951).

For many years Milligan wrote criticism for *The Diapason* and *The New Music Review*, and was a columnist for *The American Organist* and *Woman's Home Companion*. He wrote *Stories of Famous Operas* (1950), and edited *The Best Known Hymns and Prayers of the American People* (1942), and (with Geraldine Souvaine) *The Opera Quiz Book* (1948). Milligan also authored short fiction, lectured on opera at Columbia University, and was associate director of the Metropolitan Opera radio broadcasts.

Milligan composed two operettas for children, *The Outlaws of Etiquette* (1914) and *The Laughabet* (1918), and incidental music for several plays, as well as numerous songs, secular and sacred choral works, and organ pieces. In addition, he collected and edited four volumes of previously undiscovered 18th century American songs, chiefly by Francis Hopkinson, and wrote the first biography of Stephen Foster (1920).

Source: Mary A. Wischusen. "Milligan, Harold Vincent." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed February 7, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2088095>.

Scope and content note

The Harold Vincent Milligan papers hold correspondence, scores, clippings, concert programs, diaries, writings, financial records, awards and citations, and a photograph. They are arranged alphabetically by format.

The correspondence is professional in nature and mostly dates from Milligan's time at Riverside Church. The letters are from publishers, organists, composers, church officials, and patrons. Walter Damrosch, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and Arthur Foote are among the correspondents.

The scores, almost entirely manuscripts, hold original compositions, and Milligan's arrangements and edits of music by others. His original music contains songs for solo voice or chorus (usually settings of poetry), incidental dramatic music for piano or organ, and piano pieces. The sole published piece, *Three Songs with Pianoforte Accompaniment*, is autographed by the composer. The scores also hold four folders of sketches and unfinished/untitled manuscripts.

The arrangements and edits include music by Victor Pelissier, Benjamin Carr, Raynor Taylor, George Frideric Handel, Johannes Brahms, Joseph Haydn, and Stephen Foster. They are for piano, organ, or voice and keyboard.

Clippings and programs are mostly housed in bound books. Several of the books contain clippings only, while those holding both clippings and programs are referred to as "scrapbooks" in the box listing. There are also several folders of loose clippings and programs. Clippings date from Milligan's teen years until his death, and include performance reviews, articles and criticism he authored, and his obituaries (presumably gathered by family or friends). The concert programs span much of his life to 1939.

The bulk of the nine diaries cover the years 1903 to 1914. The later diaries (1928-1935) are more akin to datebooks, albeit heavily annotated at times.

Milligan's writings hold book notes, outlines and typescripts (some for work never completed); typescripts for published articles; lecture notes; lyrics and poetry (some used in songs); the libretto for an opera called *Daffodil: A Mayday Revel in Two Acts* (the music for which is not in the collection); and typescripts for short stories, some of which may have been published. The lecture subjects are operas and opera

composers. Box 11, folder 2 contains a list of Milligan's articles and their date of publication.

The financial records consist of a single ledger book of personal expenses. The photograph is a portrait of Milligan in his early 20s. The awards and citations include the text of a speech delivered by a school official at the awarding of an honorary doctorate to Milligan in 1939 from Washington and Jefferson College (though not the diploma itself).

Arrangement

This collection is arranged alphabetically by format.

Key terms

Names

Damrosch, Walter, 1862-1950
Foote, Arthur, 1853-1937
Foster, Stephen Collins, 1826-1864
Milligan, Harold Vincent, 1888-1951
Riverside Church (New York, N.Y.)
Rockefeller, John D. (John Davison), 1874-1960

Occupations

Composers
Musicians
Organists

Special formats

Black-and-white photographs
Clippings (information artifacts)
Commercial correspondence
Diaries
Manuscripts (document genre)
Programs (documents)
Scores
Scrapbooks
Typescripts

Container list

- b.1 f.1 Awards and Citations, 1939-1951
 - Clippings (See also scrapbooks)
 - Books
- b.1 f.2 1907-1910
- b.1 f.3 1913-1922
- b.2 1920-1924
- b.3 1923-1931
- b.4 1924-1935
- b.6 f.1-2 Loose, 1910-1951
- b.1 f.4 Loose, 1951 (Obituaries)
- b.1 f.5-7 Correspondence, 1913-1948
 - b.5 Diaries, 1903-1914, 1928-1935
 - b.5 Financial Records, 1912-1937
- b.6 f.3 Photograph, ca. 1910
- b.1 f.8 Programs, 1929-1939 (See also scrapbooks)
- Scores
- b.6 f.4 Arrangements, undated
- b.6 f.5-6 Compositions, 1916, undated
- b.10 f.1-4 Sketches and Unfinished Music, undated
- Scrapbooks (Clippings and Programs)
- b.7 1903-1906
- b.8 1905-1916
- b.9 1916-1920
- Writings
- Books
- b.1 f.9 Church Music, 1937, undated
- b.1 f.10 Opera History, 1950-1951
- b.11 f.1 *Stephen Collins Foster: A Biography*, ca. 1919-1920
- b.11 f.2-3 Essays and Articles, 1924-1951
- b.11 f.4 Lecture Notes, 1949
- b.11 f.5-6 Lyrics and Poetry, undated
- b.11 f.7 Opera, undated
- b.12 f.1-2 Stories, 1944, undated