

Guide to the John Cheshire Papers, 1853 - 1945 and undated

JPB 83-158

Music Division

**The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
New York, New York**

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Date Completed: February 2005

Processed and encoded through a gift from Robert W. Wilson.

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	John Cheshire Papers
Collection ID:	JPB 83-158
Creator:	Cheshire, John and Zoe Cheshire
Extent:	.9 linear feet (2 boxes)
Repository:	Music Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Administrative Information

Access

Collection is open to the public. Photocopying prohibited. Advance notice may be required.

Publication Rights

For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

Preferred Citation

John Cheshire Papers, JPB 83-158, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Custodial History

Papers donated by Zoe Cheshire in 1945.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2005.

Biographical Note

John Cheshire, harpist and composer, was born on March 28, 1837 in Birmingham, England. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London from 1852-1855 and afterwards under Sir G.A. Macfarren and J.B. Chatterton. In 1855, he was appointed harpist to the Royal Italian Opera and in 1865, principal harpist at Her Majesty's Theatre. From 1858-1861, he toured in South America, and in 1879 Norway and Sweden. In 1888, he was the harpist to the National Opera Company. His compositions included an opera, *Diana*, which he wrote while in Brazil, *Cantata, The King and the Maiden* (book by Arthur Matthison), performed at St. James Hall on April 20, 1866, and *The Buccaneers*.

In 1871 he married Mathilda Maria Frances Baxter, an excellent pianist who appeared with success at many of his concerts. From this union, three daughters (Iris, Pearl and Zoe) and a son (Harold) were born. Zoe Cheshire and Harold Cheshire followed their parents into the limelight, as a harpist in New York and an actor in England, respectively.

For the last twenty years of his life, John Cheshire lived and performed, mostly, in America. He died on Sept. 26, 1910 in New York, NY.

Sources:

- New York Times Obituary. "John Cheshire, Harpist, Dead." Proquest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1857-Current file): Sept. 27, 1910, p. 13.
- New York Times Obituary. "Mrs. Mathilda Cheshire." Proquest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1857-Current file): Sept. 16, 1927, p. 23.
- New York Times Obituary. "Zoe Cheshire." Proquest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1857-Current file): Sept. 16, 1946, p. 5.
- Scrapbooks (Box 1, Folders 2-10)
- Wier, Albert, E. *The Macmillan Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of John Cheshire (1853 – 1945 and undated) consist of scrapbooks, a music journal, a certificate and scores. Most of the clippings and letters found within the scrapbooks refer to the musical careers of both John Cheshire and Zoe Cheshire. His daughter, Zoe Cheshire, created the majority of the scrapbooks found within this collection. As such, programs indicating her performance of her father's composition can be found; as well as information regarding the distribution of her father's possessions after his death.

Aside from a few photographs found within a scrapbook, there are no items within the collection that reveal the private life of John and Mathilda Cheshire.

Organization

The collection is organized into two series and two subseries. They are:

Series I: Personal Papers, 1853 -1945 and undated

Series II: Scores, 1885 - 1904 and undated

Subseries 1: John Cheshire Arrangements, 1885 - 1904 and undated

Subseries 2: Other Artists, undated

Series Descriptions

Series I: Personal Papers, 1853 - 1945 and undated **1 box**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series contains John Cheshire's music journal, scrapbooks and a certificate. The scrapbooks created by Zoe Cheshire on her father's work, as well as her own, are included in this series.

Series II: Scores, 1885 - 1904 and undated **1 box**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series is composed of two subseries. The first subseries contains John Cheshire's arrangements, whereas the second subseries contains the scores of other artists found within the collection.

Subseries 1: John Cheshire Arrangements, 1885 - 1904 and undated **.75 box**

This subseries contains John Cheshire's harp arrangements.

Subseries 2: Other Artists, undated **.25 box**

This subseries contains the musical compositions written by other artists found within the collection.

Box/Folder	Description
F. 25	A - Z, 1899 Jan. and undated Subseries 2: Other Artists, undated
F. 26	Dunkley, Ferdinand, undated
F. 27	Kennedy, J., undated
F. 28	Unknown, undated
F. 29	A - Z, undated

Separated Material –Music Division:

The majority of John Cheshire's scores were individually catalogued and are available through the Music Division.