

**Guide to the Mildred Wellerson Papers, 1895-1972
[Bulk Dates, 1916-1923]**

JPB 06-71

Music Division

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

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Processed by: Helice Koffler
Date Completed: July 2006

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

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Mildred Wellerson Papers
Collection ID:	JPB 06-71
Creator:	Wellerson, Mildred
Extent:	5.3 linear feet (7 boxes)
Repository:	Music Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Abstract: The Mildred Wellerson Papers document the early career of the American cellist, who, as a child prodigy, had begun making public appearances by the age of four, and, under the name, Mila Wellerson, continued to perform as a young woman in the United States and Europe.

Administrative Information

Access

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

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Mildred Wellerson Papers, JPB 06-71, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in July 2006.

Biographical Note

American cellist Mildred Wellerson (born 1910) was a child prodigy who had begun making public appearances by the age of four, and, under the name, Mila Wellerson, continued to perform as an adult in the United States and Europe. Mildred was born in New York City to Russian parents, both of whom were musicians. She and her twin sister, Eugenia were taught to play instruments by their mother, Mera Schkolnik, who had given up her own professional career as a cellist after marrying Max Wellerson, a pianist. Not able to find an instrument small enough for young Mildred, who had expressed an interest in playing the cello by the age of three, her parents took a large viola and inserted a peg on the end and fashioned the child-sized cello on which she was trained. Eugenia, who studied violin, often appeared with her sister in early recitals, but it was Mildred, billed as “the Miracle of the Cello” who would eventually receive the most publicity and go on to secure professional engagements as a soloist. The twin sisters made their New York debut on April 30, 1916 at the Carnegie Chamber Music Hall and performed at many venues, chiefly in New Jersey (where they were living at the time), over the next few years. On March 20, 1920, Mildred made her official solo debut at the Carnegie Chamber Music Hall and had several other important concerts later that same year. These included two well-attended recitals, one at Aeolian Hall on March 22, and the other at the main auditorium of Carnegie Hall on November 6, in which Wellerson played her own composition, *Lullaby (The Cranky Baby)*. Wellerson also appeared as a soloist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra on November 8, 1920, under the direction of Eugene Ysaye. She toured Europe in the spring of 1922, where it was reported that she easily had passed the Paris Conservatoire examination, but was advised by admirers that she had no need to attend the prestigious academy.

By 1930, however, the Wellersons had divorced and the two girls were living with their grandmother in the Bronx. Adopting the professional name, Mila Wellerson, in 1930, she was one of the winners of a prize from the Walter W. Naumburg Musical Foundation, which sponsored her 1931 recital at Town Hall. Sporadic New York appearances followed, most notably a benefit performance for Polish Jews at Town Hall in 1935 and a 1937 Carnegie Chamber Music Hall recital with composer Boris Levenson, but the 1930s also found Mildred appearing at Radio City Music Hall (1934) and with WPA groups (1939). For reasons that are unclear, Wellerson had moved to Holland by 1952 and settled in the Hague. Although in a 1952 letter to her friends, Samuel and Rose Schwalb, Wellerson cited difficulties she faced in finding professional opportunities to play, claiming that the cello “is an instrument that is still not understood,” she did continue to perform with groups such as the Philips Symphonie Orkest, and another letter in the collection indicates that she was still living in Holland in 1972. It is not known what became of Mildred Wellerson after 1972.

Scope and Content Note

The Mildred Wellerson Papers primarily consist of clippings, fliers, photographs, programs, and scrapbooks that document the early career of the cellist, both as a child prodigy and as a young woman. The three scrapbooks are in different formats, but each covers roughly the same time period (1916-1923); these scrapbooks contain most of the biographical information on Wellerson that is to be found in the collection. Some loose materials, dating from the 1930s, which had been inserted between the leaves of the largest scrapbook have been removed and filed in separate folders by material type. While most of this material is in English, there are a few clippings and other items in Czech, Dutch, French, German, Russian, or Yiddish. Manuscript and printed scores partially document her repertory and include Wellerson's only known composition, *Lullaby (The Cranky Baby)*, as well as some cello arrangements she made of the works of other composers. Some of the printed scores are inscribed to Wellerson and include hard to find pieces by Jewish and women composers, such as Boris Levenson and Eda Rapoport. The collection, though limited in scope, contains material of interest on the phenomenon of child prodigies, opportunities for women musicians, and the development of the cello repertoire in the first half of the twentieth century.

Organization

The collection is organized into 3 series. They are:
Series I: Personal Papers, 1916-1972 and undated
Series II: Scores, 1895-1938 and undated
Series III: Oversized Material, 1917-1922

Series Descriptions

Series I: Personal Papers, 1916-1972 and undated

2 boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical

The Personal Papers series contains material mainly relating to Wellerson's career as a child prodigy. The correspondence consists only of one postcard and two letters sent by Wellerson from Holland to her friends, the Schwalbs. Of special interest are the two scrapbooks, each of which contains clippings and press notices. Another larger format scrapbook is found in the Oversized Material series; it is the only scrapbook that also contains some programs and fliers.

Series II: Scores, 1895-1938 and undated

4 boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical

The Scores series includes manuscript and printed music scores and parts, some of which are inscribed by the composer or another individual. A few of the items originally belonged to Wellerson's mother, Mera Schkolnik. Of note is the manuscript score of Wellerson's only documented composition, *Lullaby*.

Series III: Oversized Material

1 box

Arrangement: Alphabetical

The Oversized Material series contains one scrapbook and a poster for a March 10, 1922 concert in Paris. This large scrapbook lacks a cover and is probably missing several leaves.

Box/Folder Description**Series I: Personal Papers, 1916-1972 and undated****Box 1**

- F. 1 Clippings, 1922-1937 (Photocopies of loose material removed from scrapbooks; includes item in French and one in Dutch.)
- F. 2 Correspondence, 1950-1972
- F. 3 Fliers, 1920-1950 and undated (Includes material in French.)
- F. 4 Letterhead, undated
- F. 5 Painting, undated (Probable self portrait in watercolor and ink titled, "I Lose Myself," removed from scrapbook.)
- Photographs
- F. 6 Family and friends, 1946 and undated
 Mildred Wellerson
- F. 7 Candid shots, undated
 Portraits
- F. 8 Solo, 1951 and undated
- F. 9 With sister, Eugenia Wellerson, undated
- F. 10 Programs, 1920-1935 and undated (Includes loose material removed from scrapbook; some items in Czech, French, and German.)

Box 2

Scrapbooks

- F. 1 Composition book (5 x 5.75 inches), 1916-1923 (Note: fragile, handle with care; includes clippings in Dutch, French, German, Russian, and Yiddish.)
- F. 2 Ledger book (7.5 x 12 inches), 1920-1922 (Note: highly fragile, handle with care; includes one clipping in Yiddish.)

Series II: Scores, 1895-1938 and undated**Box 3**

Manuscript music

Wellerson works

Arrangements

- F. 1 Chopin, Frédéric, *Waltzes, piano, op. 64, No. 1 (Minute Waltz)*, undated - Score
- F. 2 Gluck, Christoph Wilbald, Ritter von and Giovanni Sgambati, *Melodie* (from *Orpheus and Eurydice*), undated - Score
- F. 3 Handel, George Frideric, *Larghetto*, undated - Sketch
- F. 4 *Russisches Lied*, undated - Short score

Compositions

- F. 5 *Lullaby (The cranky baby)*, undated - Score
- F. 6 *Opus 1*, undated - Sketch

Works by other composers

- F. 7 *Alla Sevillana*, undated - Cello part (May be composition by Joaquin Turina; Inscribed: "To my loving Mila Wellerson;" Note: very fragile, handle with care.)
- F. 8 Browning, Mortimer, *Irelamer: Imaginary folk tunes for cello and piano*, 1931 - Score and cello part
- F. 9 Gruen, Rudolph, *Poem*, undated - Score and solo part
- F. 10 Popper, David, *Hungarian rhapsody*, undated - Parts
- F. 11 Saleski, Gdal, *Reverie for violin (or cello) and piano*, undated - Score and solo part (Solo part inscribed: "To my Friend Paul Kochanski.")
- F. 12 Schumann, Robert, *Cadenza for Schumann's concerto (Concert, violoncello, op. 129, A minor)*, undated - Fragment only

Box/Folder	Description
F. 13	Vieuxtemps, Henri, <i>Duo brilliant</i> , undated - Violin and cello parts
F. 14	Unidentified works, undated - Short score and sketches
Box 4	
	Printed music
F. 1	Beethoven, Ludwig van, <i>3 duos für Clarinette und Fagott (für Violine und Violoncello, übertragen von Friedr. Hermann)</i> , undated - Cello part only (Inscribed: "Mildred and Eugenia Wellerson, Oct. 10 th /15.")
	Boëllmann, Léon, <i>Variations symphoniques</i> , undated
	Parts
F. 2	Woodwind instruments
F. 3	Brass instruments
F. 4	Stringed instruments
F. 5	Plucked instruments
F. 6	Score
F. 7	Brahms, Johannes, <i>Trios, piano, strings, no. 1, op. 8, B major</i> , undated - Cello part only
Box 5	
F. 1	Claffin, Avery, <i>Trio pour violon, violoncelle et piano</i> , 1924 - Score (Inscribed: "In souvenir of a reading 7/11/42, Avery Claffin.")
F. 2	Damesek, Abbe, <i>Casa Lopez: a novelty piano solo</i> , 1927 - Sheet music (Inscribed: "To a real friend and Pal like Mila Wellerson, Abbe Damesek.")
F. 3	Delius, Frederick, <i>Concerto for violoncello with orchestral accompaniment</i> , 1922-1923 - Score and solo part
F. 4	Ernst, Heinrich Wilhelm, <i>Concerto pour violon avec accompagnement de piano, op. 23</i> , undated - Violin part only (Note: very fragile, handle with care.)
F. 5	Goltermann, Georg, <i>Konzert (Concertos, violoncello, orchestra, no. 1, op. 14, A minor)</i> , undated - Piano score (Note: very fragile, handle with care.)
	Haydn, Joseph, <i>Concert für das Violoncell (Concertos, violoncello, orchestra, H. VIIb, 5, C major; arranged by David Popper)</i> , 1899
F. 6	Parts
F. 7	Score
F. 8	Hindemith, Paul, <i>Drei Stücke für Violoncello und Klavier, Op. 8</i> , 1917 - Score
	Jeral, Wilhelm
F. 9	<i>Concert (in A, für Violoncell)</i> , undated - Cello part only
F. 10	<i>Polonaise fantastique</i> , undated - Cello part only
F. 11	Kernochan, Marshall, <i>Molto cantabile for 'cello and piano or violin and piano</i> , 1938 - Score
	Levenson, Boris
F. 12	<i>Four lyric pieces for violoncello, op. 45, complete with pianoforte accompaniment</i> , 1920 - Score (Inscribed: "To the distinguished Celliste Mila Wellerson with compliments, Boris Levenson, New York, Dec. 29, 1930.")
F. 13	<i>Nocturne in D for violin or violoncello with piano accompaniment</i> , 1920 - Score (Inscribed: "To the distinguished violincelliste Mila Wellerson with compliments, Boris Levenson, New York, Dec. 9, 1930.")

Box/Folder	Description
F. 14	<i>Three pieces, cello & piano</i> , 1921 - Score (Inscribed: "To the distinguished 'celliste Mila Wellerson with compliments, Boris Levenson, New York, Dec. 8, 1930.")
F. 15	Lucerna, Eduard, <i>Ballade nach Adalbert Stifters Dichtung "Der Hochwald"</i> fur Violine oder Violoncell und Klavier, <i>Op. 11</i> , 1927 - Score and cello part
Box 6	
	Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus
F. 1	<i>Quartette für 2 Violinen, Viola und Violoncello</i> , undated - Score
F. 2	<i>Streich-Quintette</i> , undated - Cello part only (Inscribed: "Der großen Cellomeisterin Mila in Freundschaft gewidmet, Nohel.")
F. 3	Paganini, Nicolò, <i>Moto perpetuo</i> , 1895 - Score (Arranged for violoncello and piano by Julius Klengel; Note: fragile, handle with care.)
F. 4	Pekelský, Jaroslav, <i>Balada pro violoncello a klavír</i> , 1924 - Score and piano part (Inscribed: "Frl. Mila Wellerson zur freundlichen Erinnerung, Jaroslav Pekelský.")
F. 5	Popper, David, <i>Spinnlied: concert-etude, op. 55, no. 1</i> , undated - Score (Note: Very fragile, handle with care.)
F. 6	Rapoport, Eda, <i>Lamentations, based on Hebrew themes, for violoncello and piano</i> , 1933 - Score and cello part (Inscribed: "To Mila Wellerson, with my compliments, Eda Rapoport, Oct 10/37.")
	Saint-Saëns, Camille
F. 7	<i>Concerto pour violoncelle et orchestre, op. 33</i> , undated - Cello part only (Title page missing; Note: fragile, handle with care.)
F. 8	<i>La muse et le poète: duo pour violon et violoncelle avec accompagnement d'orchestre (ou de piano), op. 132</i> , 1910 - Score
F. 9	Schubert, Franz, <i>Ave Maria for violin and piano</i> , 1909 - Score
F. 10	Servais, Adrien-François, <i>Le désir: fantaisie et variations sur la valse du même nom = Fantasie und Variationen über den gleichnamigen Walzer: für Violoncello und Piano (oder Orchester): op. 4</i> , undated - Score and cello part only (Score lacks final page.)
F. 11	Unidentified works, undated - Detached leaves and other fragments of printed music (Includes cover page listing scores by Charles Dancla published by B. Schott's Söhne.)
<u>Series III. Oversized Material, 1917-1922 and undated</u>	
Box 7	
F. 1	Poster, 1922 (Note: very fragile, handle with care; in French.)
F. 2	Scrapbook, 1917-1920 and undated (Note: very fragile, handle with care; includes items in Russian and Yiddish.)