



The New York Public Library Music Division

Guide to the

Jack Diether papers

1941-2006 [bulk 1941-1987]

JPB 13-28

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2013

Summary

Creator: Diether, Jack

Title: Jack Diether papers

Date: 1941-2006 [bulk 1941-1987]

Size: 9.06 linear feet (23 boxes)

Source: Donated by Doris Diether from 1996 to 2007.

Abstract: Jack Diether (1919-1987) was a journalist and musicologist best known for his expertise in and promotion of the music of Gustav Mahler and Anton Bruckner. The Jack Diether papers, dating from 1941 to 2006, hold correspondence, research files, and writings.

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Preferred citation: Jack Diether papers, JPB 13-28. Music Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2013 Physical processing consisted of foldering or refoldering portions of the collection, and arranging correspondence and research files.

Related Materials:

Jack Diether collection of sound recordings, 1967-1984, *L(Special) 02-06. Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound, The New York Public Library..

Creator History

Jack Diether (1919-1987) was a musicologist and music journalist best known for his expertise in the music of Gustav Mahler and Anton Bruckner. Born in Vancouver, he served in the Canadian Armed Forces from 1939 to 1946, and then moved to California. Diether arrived in New York City in 1956 after attaining United States citizenship.

Diether produced articles and reviews for many music magazines and journals between 1955 and

1986. He wrote for (and later became editor-in-chief of) *Chord and Discord*, the journal of the Bruckner Society of America, of which he was a director. He contributed to *Musical America*, *American Record Guide*, the *Chicago Daily News*, the *New York Times*, the *Villager*, the *Westsider*, *Chelsea Clinton News*, and the *East Side Express*. His tenure at *American Record Guide* was especially long (1955-1984). He also wrote articles for non-musical publications such as *Film Quarterly*, *The Journal of Orgonomy*, *Psychoanalysis*, and *The Psychological Review*.

Diether wrote concert program notes as well as album liner notes for a wide variety of music and recording labels. These included 70 Mahler and 30 Bruckner recordings. He also gave a number of lectures, and wrote the scripts for six radio programs for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, including the eight-part *The Life of Beethoven*. Other radio scripts he created included programs on Bruckner, Mahler, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Edward Elgar, and the film music of Bernard Herrmann.

Diether's Mahler-related activities spanned much of his life. For many years, he worked with the British musicologist James Wheeler to produce a realization of Mahler's unfinished Tenth Symphony. In 1976, Diether co-founded The New York Mahlerites (later renamed The Gustav Mahler Society of New York). The Mahlerites presented annual concerts from 1977 on, offering such rare works as Mahler's Piano Quartet movement, the *Songs to Josephine*, concert highlights from the Weber-Mahler *Die drei Pintos*, and a dance version of *Blumine*, choreographed and performed by Sallie Wilson.

Diether died of a heart attack on January 22, 1987. His wife, Doris, is a New York City zoning expert and activist.

Custodial History

The collection was maintained and arranged by Doris Diether until its donation.

Scope and Content Note

The Jack Diether papers, dating from 1941 to 2006, document Diether's career through correspondence, research files, and writings.

The General Correspondence is with researchers and musicologists; conductors and orchestras; magazine and journal editors; music critics; record companies; experts in Mahler and Bruckner; and figures associated with Mahler. Some of the files contain lists of correspondents, compiled by Doris Diether.

The best-represented correspondent is the British musicologist Joseph Wheeler, with whom Diether communicated for many years regarding Wheeler's production of a complete score for Mahler's Tenth Symphony. Other correspondents include Alma Mahler, Dmitri Mitropoulos, Deryck Cooke, Eugene Ormandy/The Philadelphia Orchestra, John Kirkpatrick, Mrs. Frederick Block, Gabriel Engel, and members of the Bruckner Society of America. Correspondence with editors usually concerns writing assignments, but Diether often wrote to criticize the writing or coverage of other publications. Correspondence with conductors and orchestras is usually to advocate for the programming of Bruckner and Mahler works.

Portions of the General Correspondence were photocopied by Doris Diether before their donation to the Music Division. She later donated originals of the correspondence. There is some duplication between the copies and originals, but some letters appear only as copies.

Doris Diether's correspondence, dating from after her husband's death, is also held in the General Correspondence. It documents Jack Diether's memorial service; Doris Diether's involvement with Mahler Festivals, including the contribution of her husband's unpublished notes; and her career as a zoning expert and urban planner.

The Research Files are mainly devoted to Mahler, but also contain files on Bruckner and the conductor Jascha Horenstein. They contain correspondence with scholars and conductors; Diether's research notes; bibliographies; clippings, program notes, and annotated articles; scores; and papers pertaining to the New York Mahlerites. They also hold a 1984 interview with Diether in which he discusses his life and career. The correspondence includes letters from Deryck Cooke, Dmitri Shostakovich, Anna Mahler, and Eugene Ormandy. Though Diether generally separated his Bruckner and Mahler research files, there is some overlap between the two, and other topics occasionally enter into the correspondence.

Published and annotated scores by Bruckner and Mahler comprise the bulk of the scores, which also include Diether's own manuscript of musical quotes used by Mahler; fragments of a copy of Deryck Cooke's realization of Mahler's Tenth Symphony, with a copy of the original manuscript in Mahler's hand; and a copy of the manuscript of an orchestration of Mahler's Seven Early Songs by Colin and David Matthews.

The Writings are composed of published articles, reviews, recording liner notes, and radio program scripts. They are present as typescripts and clippings. Clippings and/or typescripts for two publications, the American Record Guide and Chord and Discord, are arranged separately, as are typescripts of recording liner notes. The rest of the article clippings and typescripts are arranged chronologically. Other publications with Diether's writings include Musical America, the Chicago Daily News, The New York Times, The Villager, The Westsider, Chelsea Clinton News, and the East Side Express. The reviews are mostly of music performances, but also include dance and theater events.

The liner notes are mainly for Mahler and Bruckner recordings; they also include notes for albums of music by Dvorak, Borodin, Janacek, Walton, Vaughn Williams, Bach, Corelli, Handel, Vivaldi, and Purcell. The files contain a list of recordings for which Diether wrote the notes.

The radio programs include The Life of Beethoven, produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; several programs on Mahler produced by KOWL in Santa Monica, California; a program on Bruckner's Ninth Symphony produced by WBAI in New York; and Diether's revision of the script for the 1933 film Mystery of the Wax Museum.

Arrangement: The papers are in three divisions: General Correspondence, Research Files, and Writings. The latter two contain alphabetically-arranged subdivisions, but most of the content is arranged chronologically.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings (information artifacts)
Correspondence
Radio scripts
Research notes
Scores

Typescripts

Occupations

Music critics

Musicologists

Names

Block, Frederick

Bruckner, Anton, 1824-1896

Cooke, Deryck

Diether, Doris

Engel, Gabriel, 1892-1952

Mahler, Alma, 1879-1964

Mahler, Anna

Mahler, Gustav, 1860-1911

Mahler, Gustav, 1860-1911 -- Symphonies, -- no. 10

Mitropoulos, Dimitri, 1896-1960

Ormandy, Eugene, 1899-1985

Shostakovich, Dmitrii_ Dmitrievich, 1906-1975

Wheeler, Joseph H.

Bruckner Society of America

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

Container List

General Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 1 Diether, Doris 1987-2006
- Diether, Jack
- b. 1 f. 2-6 1941-1955
- b. 2 f. 1-5 1954-1958
- b. 3 f. 1-6 1958-1970
- b. 4 f. 1 1973-1980
- b. 4 f. 2 1981-1986, undated

Research Files

Bruckner, Anton

- b. 4 f. 3-5 General 1957-1987
- b. 11 Annotated Published Scores undated
- b. 12 Annotated Published Scores undated
- b. 4 f. 6 Horenstein, Jascha 1971-1978

Mahler, Gustav

General

- b. 4 f. 7 1956-1986
- b. 5 f. 1-2 1965-1983
- b. 5 f. 3-4 1975-1994
- b. 5 f. 5-6 Undated
- b. 6 f. 1 Undated
- b. 6 f. 2 Biographical Notes undated
- b. 6 f. 3 Bynes, Harold 1968-1977

Correspondence

- b. 6 f. 4-5 1959-1966
- b. 7 f. 1-7 1967-1969
- b. 8 f. 1-6 1970-1972
- b. 9 f. 1-7 1973-1985
- b. 10 f. 1-4 1982-1986

Scores

- b. 13 Published and Annotated undated
- b. 14 Published and Annotated undated
- b. 10 f. 5 Quote Transcriptions undated
- b. 10 f. 6 *Seven Early Songs* 1974
- Tenth Symphony undated
- b. 10 f. 7 Notes
- b. 15 f. 1 Scores

Writings

Articles and Reviews

Writings (cont.)

Articles and Reviews (cont.)

General

Clippings

b. 16 f. 1-5 1946-1983

b. 17 f. 1-5 1979-1982

b. 18 f. 1 1982-1986

Typescripts

b. 18 f. 2-5 1953-1967

b. 19 f. 1-4 1967-1984

American Record Guide

b. 19 f. 5 1955-1958

b. 20 f. 1-7 1959-1967

b. 21 f. 1-5 1966-1973

b. 21 f. 6 *Chord and Discord* 1968-1969

b. 15 f. 2 Liner Notes 1960s

b. 22 f. 1 Liner Notes 1968

Radio Programs

b. 22 f. 2 General 1948-1963

b. 22 f. 3 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 1969-1974

b. 23 f. 1 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 1972

b. 22 f. 4 *Wax Museum* undated