Charles Hambitzer Music Manuscripts
Guides to Special Collections in the Music Division of the Library of Congress

Music Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2009

Contact information: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/perform.contact

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/2006577402

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/eadmus.mu009016

Processed by the Music Division of the Library of Congress
Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Music Division, 2009
Revised 2010 March
Collection Summary
Title: Charles Hambitzer Music Manuscripts
Span Dates: circa 1910-1918
Call No.: ML31.H36
Creator: Hambitzer, Charles, d. 1918
Extent: 200 items
Extent: 2 containers
Extent: 2 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/2006577402
Summary: Charles Hambitzer (1878 or 1881-1918) was an American pianist, teacher, and composer. His best known piano student was the teenage George Gershwin. Hambitzer's compositions include orchestral tone poems, incidental music for plays, two operettas, and a variety of shorter pieces.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People
Hambitzer, Charles, -1918--Autographs.
Hambitzer, Charles, -1918--Manuscripts.
Hambitzer, Charles, -1918.

Subjects
Music--Manuscripts--United States.

Provenance
The Charles Hambitzer Music Manuscripts were donated to the Library of Congress in 1991 by Marc George Gershwin and his mother, Judy Gershwin, sister-in-law of George and Ira Gershwin.

Custodial History
Judy Gershwin found Hambitzer's manuscripts in a storage room in her Central Park West apartment, which had formerly been the home of her mother-in-law, Rose Gershwin. It is believed that George Gershwin left the manuscripts with his mother, Rose, when he moved to California in 1936. In the same trunk as the Hambitzer materials was a manuscript page of Porgy and Bess, probably dating to 1935 (this page has been retained by the Gershwin family). There is no evidence of just how George Gershwin, who was twenty when Hambitzer died, came to possess the manuscripts, although it is known that he corresponded with members of the Hambitzer family.

Accruals
No further accruals are expected.

Processing History
The Charles Hambitzer Music Manuscripts were processed in 1992 by Linda B. Fairtile and encoded for EAD by Janet McKinney in December 2009.
Copyright Status

The status of copyright on the materials of the Charles Hambitzer Music Manuscripts is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The Charles Hambitzer Music Manuscripts are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Performing Arts Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: container number, Charles Hambitzer Music Manuscripts, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Charles Hambitzer (1878 or 1881-1918) was born in Beloit, Wisconsin, to a musical family. His great-grandfather was a violinist at the Russian court and his father owned a music store in Milwaukee. After studying with Julius Albert Jahn and Hugo Kaun, Hambitzer played in the orchestra of the Arthur Friend Stock Company, and taught piano, violin, and cello at the Wisconsin Conservatory. In 1908, he moved to New York City, where he joined Joseph Knecht’s orchestra at the Waldorf-Astoria, frequently appearing as a piano soloist. At the same time, he opened a music studio on the Upper West Side, and among his many pupils was the fourteen-year-old George Gershwin, who began his studies with Hambitzer in 1912. In 1914, Hambitzer’s wife died of tuberculosis, and in 1918 he succumbed to the same disease, exacerbated by an emotional breakdown. It has been widely suggested that his death caused the young Gershwin to abandon his own budding career as a concert pianist.

Hambitzer’s feverish approach to composition reflects a prodigious musical talent. His works include orchestral tone poems, incidental music for plays by Shakespeare and others (his Twelfth Night Suite was used for a Sothern and Marlow production), two operettas, and numerous songs and short instrumental compositions. Although a number of his tone poems were performed by the New York Philharmonic and his operetta, The Love Wager, toured the United States, few of Hambitzer’s works were ever published, since he seems generally to have lost interest in a piece upon its completion. Although he was under contract to compose theatrical music for the Shubert Organization, nothing resulted from this arrangement; this uncharacteristic lack of productivity has been attributed to creative and personal differences. In the 1930s it was reported that a number of Hambitzer’s manuscripts were in the possession of his family, although some relatives believed that his most significant scores had been retained by Joseph Knecht.

Scope and Content Note

The Charles Hambitzer manuscripts consist of sixteen orchestral scores or part sets for tone poems and incidental music, as well as several short pieces for various instruments and approximately twenty-five songs and stage numbers in piano-vocal format. Sketches and miscellaneous fragments are also represented. Although George Gershwin once recalled that Hambitzer, his first significant music teacher, “wrote what I then considered the finest light music,” there appears to be no connection between these manuscripts and Gershwin’s own compositions.

Organization of the Charles Hambitzer Music Manuscripts

The Charles Hambitzer Music Manuscripts are organized into two series:

- Instrumental Scores and Parts
- Piano-vocal Scores
## Description of Series

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<td><strong>Instrumental Scores and Parts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 2</td>
<td><strong>Piano-vocal Scores</strong></td>
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## Container List

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<th>Container</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Instrumental Scores and Parts</td>
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</table>
| BOX-FOLDER 1/1 | The Bedouins  
|             | Full score and parts |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/2 | Chan toy: a Chinese sketch  
|             | Parts |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/3 | First-born [incidental music]  
|             | Parts |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/4 | Hamlet [incidental music]  
|             | Parts |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/5 | If I were king [incidental music]  
|             | Parts |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/6 | [Introduction and Trio]  
|             | Piano score |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/7 | (Mignonne) Petite valse  
|             | Violin I part only |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/8 | Mistress Nell [incidental music]  
|             | Parts |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/9 | Mosquito ballet  
|             | Full score  
|             | Incomplete? |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/10 | Opening - Act I  
|             | Full score |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/11 | Orientale  
|             | Violin [?] and piano score  
|             | Incomplete |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/12 | Out of the fold [incidental music]  
|             | Piano part only |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/13 | Prelude - Act III  
|             | Full score |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/14 | Quartet  
|             | Violin 2 part only |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/15 | Quo vadis [incidental music]  
|             | Parts  
|             | Includes Nero’s song no. 1 and 2 and [Terpsichore, thy praise we sing...] [all for voice and lute] |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/16 | Romeo and Juliet selection  
|             | Parts |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/17 | The shaughraun [incidental music]  
|             | Parts |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/18 | Soupirs  
|             | Parts |
Instrumental Scores and Parts

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| BOX-FOLDER 1/19 | Sourire - Mazurka  
Parts  
For piano, 2 violins, [and flute?] |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/20 | The three musketeers [incidental music]  
Parts |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/1 | The twelfth night suite  
Viola  
Full score and parts  
Malvolio  
Full score and parts  
In Olivia’s garden  
Full score only |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/2 | Waltz legends  
solo |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/3 | [Untitled instrumental parts nos. 9, 10, 11, 13, 18, 20, 21] |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/4 | [Untitled piece for treble instrument and piano]  
Score fragments |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/5 | [Unidentified instrumental parts and sketches] |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/6 | [Unidentified orchestral score fragments] |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/7 | [Unidentified piano sketches and fragments] |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/8 | [Unidentified violin? melody line sketch] |

Piano-vocal Scores

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<tr>
<td>BOX-FOLDER 2/9</td>
<td>[After the heat and the toil...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX-FOLDER 2/10</td>
<td>The belle of a garrison town</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| BOX-FOLDER 2/11 | A doctor  
Incomplete |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/12 | A factory girl |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/13 | Good-night song  
Unidentified sketches for a stage work on verso |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/14 | His little white delight  
Incomplete |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/15 | [Hurrah, hurrah...] |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/16 | I prithee send me back my heart |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/17 | I’m looking for a man  
Refrain incomplete |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/18 | A man, a maid, and a telephone  
Incomplete |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/19 | Opening - Act III |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/20 | The song of the wind |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/21 | Such is life |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/22 | What do I care for a pedigree  
Incomplete |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/23 | [From unidentified stage work]  
Grand entrance and recitative  
Maybe |
<p>| BOX-FOLDER 2/24 | [From unidentified stage work] |</p>
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<th>Piano-vocal Scores</th>
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[Come, come you lazy listless people...]
Incomplete
Includes *I've a drop or two of German in my veins* and *Welcome chorus* (incomplete)

[Women’s chorus part, unaccompanied]
Incomplete
Includes *We'll recognize his high degree...* (incomplete), *He believed what he read in the papers, Sobriety, Naya, Maid and a fad, I've a drop or two of German in my veins, Welcome chorus, When I'm eighteen*, and *Closing chorus - Act I*

**BOX-FOLDER 2/25**

[From unidentified stage work]
Dainty lace and lingerie
A fair exchange
It’s great to have a tete-a-tete

**BOX-FOLDER 2/26**

[Unidentified piano-vocal sketches and fragments]