Collection Summary

Title: Belle Brown Collection
Span Dates: 1865-1912
Call No.: ML31.B76
Creator: Brown, Belle
Extent: 180 items
Extent: 3 containers
Extent: 1.75 linear feet
Language: Material in English, German, and French
Location: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/2010563516

Summary: Belle Brown was an American soprano who had a brief operatic career abroad around the turn of the twentieth century. Although little biographical information exists about her, the contents of this collection document her relationships with prominent and respected European performers of the day. She studied with many celebrated performers and pedagogues, including Désirée Artôt, Pauline Lucca, and Jean and Edouard de Reszke. The collection contains correspondence with performers and pedagogues; photographs and prints of composers, performers, musicians, and other influential figures in European musical society around the turn of the century; and miscellaneous clippings and ephemeral materials.

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
Artôt, Désirée, 1835-1907--Correspondence.
Bronsart, Hans von, 1830-1913--Correspondence.
Brown, Belle--Correspondence.
Brown, Belle--Photographs.
Brown, Belle.
Hempel, Frieda, 1885-1955--Correspondence.
Lucca, Pauline, 1841-1908--Correspondence.
Rosè, Arnold, 1863-1946--Correspondence.
Rubinstein, Anton, 1829-1894--Correspondence.

Subjects
Opera--19th century.
Opera--20th century.
Sopranos (Singers)--United States--Correspondence.
Sopranos (Singers)--United States--Photographs.

Form/Genre
Clippings (Information artifacts)
Correspondence.
Photographic prints.

Provenance
Gift, Miss Belle G. Brown, 1933-1934
Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Processing History

The Belle Brown Collection was processed by Caitlin Miller in 2009. The finding aid was coded for EAD by Janet McKinney in 2010. In 2012, Nancy Seeger revised the finding aid to include additional materials that were shelved elsewhere.

Copyright Status

Materials from the Belle Brown Collection are governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.). and other applicable international copyright laws.

Access and Restrictions

The Belle Brown Collection is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Music Division prior to visiting in order to determine whether the desired materials will be available at that time.

Certain restrictions to use or copying of materials may apply.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item, date, container number], Belle Brown Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Though little biographical information exists concerning Belle G. Brown, the contents of her collection document her relationships with prominent and respected European performers at the turn of the twentieth century. Miss Brown was born in Massachusetts to Joseph and Maria Brown and, aside from her studies in Europe, remained a Bostonian until at least the early 1900s. During the decade leading up to 1900, Miss Brown enjoyed the privilege of studying with such celebrated performers and pedagogues as Désirée Artôt, Pauline Lucca, and Jean and Edouard de Reszké. In 1893, Bronsart von Schellendorf (General Intendant of the Court Theatre at Weimar from 1887-1895) offered a five-year contract to Miss Brown to perform for the Court Theatre. Two years into her contract, on December 15, 1895, the Boston Globe printed an announcement that “Miss Belle Brown of Newbury Street [had] received by cable an offer of an engagement at the opera house in Weimar.” Both her contract signed by Schellendorf and the cable offer to perform in Weimar reside in this collection. There is also a limited amount of information available concerning Miss Brown’s professional opera career abroad as well as the remainder of her life, which was presumably spent in Boston (correspondence indicates that she resided in Boston’s Hotel Puritan when she gifted her materials to the Music Division in 1933 and 1934).

Scope and Content Note

The Belle Brown Collection spans the years 1865-1912 and includes correspondence, newspaper clippings, Miss Brown’s contract with the Court Theatre in Weimar, a program of Anton Rubinstein concerts, and iconography related to Miss Brown’s vocal training abroad as well as her brief opera career in Weimar. The collection also documents Miss Brown’s professional and personal associations with influential European artists.

The “Correspondence” series spans 1865 to 1912 and includes letters and cards from performers and pedagogues, most notably Désirée Artôt and Pauline Lucca. There are also eight letters to Miss Brown and Lucca from Bronsart von
Schellendorf dated 1893-1894, reflecting the first years of Miss Brown’s contract with the Weimar Court Theatre. Other significant musicians whose correspondence appears in the collection include Frieda Hempel, Arnold Rosé, and Anton Rubinstein. Correspondence is arranged alphabetically by correspondent and then by topic.

The second series, “Miscellaneous Documents,” is comprised of a small number of newspaper clippings and obituary notices concerning musicians, most significantly Lucca. In addition, there is a program of Anton Rubinstein concerts and the contract Bronsart von Schellendorf offered to Miss Brown in 1893. This series is organized alphabetically by the subject of the document.

Finally, the “Iconography” series, which is the largest series of the collection, offers 114 prints and photographs of influential figures in European musical society around the turn of the century. Nineteen photographs are autographed by the subject of the photograph or inscribed to Miss Brown; most impressive of these signatures are those of Lola Artôt de Padilla, Leschetizky, and Liszt. The majority of these photographs are also annotated by Miss Brown, often indicating the person and his/her relationship to Miss Brown’s music career. Iconography is arranged alphabetically by subject of the photograph.

**Organization of the Belle Brown Collection**

The Belle Brown Collection is organized into three (3) series:
- Correspondence, 1865-1912
- Miscellaneous Documents, circa 1873-circa 1908
- Iconography
Description of Series

Container       Series
BOX 1           Correspondence, 1865-1912
                 Arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

BOX 1           Miscellaneous Documents, circa 1873-circa 1908
                 Arranged alphabetically by subject of the document.

BOX 1-3         Iconography
                 Arranged alphabetically by subject of the photograph.
## Container List

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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</table>
| BOX 1     | **Correspondence, 1865-1912**  
Arranged alphabetically by correspondent. |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/1 | Artôt, Désirée, 1890-1892  
to Miss Belle Brown (4)  
to Mr. and Mrs. Brown (3) |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/2 | Bronsart von Schellendorf, Hans August Alexander, 1893-1894  
to Miss Belle Brown (6)  
to Pauline Lucca (2) |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/3 | Brown, Belle, undated |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/4 | Ehrenstein, Gisela von, 1892 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/5 | Hempel, Frieda, 1912 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/6 | Krebs, Maria, 1893  
This letter was formerly shelved under ML95.K79. |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/7 | Kullak, Franz, 1897  
This letter was formerly shelved under ML95.K91. |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/8 | Leisinger, Elisabeth, undated |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/9 | Leschetizky, Theodor, 1887  
This letter was formerly shelved under ML95.L378. |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/10 | Lucca, Pauline, 1865-1900  
These items include letters to Belle Brown, her mother, and Otto Gumprecht.  
The Lucca material was formerly shelved under ML95.L81. |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/11 | Palmer, Nevada, undated |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/12 | Reszké, Marie de, 1912 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/13 | Rosé, Arnold Joseph, undated |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/14 | Rubinstein, Anton, undated  
This may have been formerly shelved under ML410.R89A12. |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/15 | Schönheit, Wilhelm, 1893 |
| BOX 1     | **Miscellaneous Documents, circa 1873-circa 1908**  
Arranged alphabetically by subject of the document. |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/16 | Brown, Belle  
Contract with the Deutsches Nationaltheater in Weimar. Signed May 8, 1893 by Bronsart von Schellendorf  
Cable invitation to perform at the Deutsches Nationaltheater, 1895 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/17 | Lucca, Pauline  
Newspaper clippings  
Includes clippings from 1908 and other dates.  
Obituary card |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/18 | Marchesi, Mathilde  
Newspaper clipping |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/19 | Rubinstein, Anton |
Programme of the Rubinstein concerts, 1873

This may have been formerly shelved under ML410.R89A12.

BOX-FOLDER 1/20
Seidl, Anton
Obituary

BOX 1-3  Iconography
Arranged alphabetically by subject of the photograph.

BOX-FOLDER 1/21
Arnoldson, Sigrid
2 photographs (1 autographed)

BOX-FOLDER 1/22
Artôt de Padilla, Lola
4 photographs (2 autographed)
1 postcard

BOX-FOLDER 1/23
Bach, Johann Sebastian
1 photograph of Toby E. Rosenthal’s painting “Morgen andacht bei Sebastian Bach” (1870)

BOX-FOLDER 1/24
Barblan, Otto
1 photograph

BOX-FOLDER 1/25
Beethoven, Ludwig van
2 photographs [portraits]
1 photograph of Beethoven’s Geburtszimmer
1 photograph of painting by Stieler
1 photograph of Beethoven’s death mask

BOX-FOLDER 3/1
Beethoven, Ludwig Van
Photograph of painting by Rödig

BOX-FOLDER 1/26
Bernhardt, Sarah
2 photographs

BOX-FOLDER 1/27
Brahms, Johannes
1 photograph
1 photograph of painting by Eichhorn

BOX-FOLDER 3/2
Brown, Belle
3 photographs

BOX-FOLDER 1/28
Chopin, Frédéric
1 photograph of Félix Barrias’s painting “La Mort de Chopin” (1885)

BOX-FOLDER 1/29
Czesek
1 photograph

BOX-FOLDER 1/30
Fuchs, Frau Robert
1 photograph

BOX-FOLDER 1/31
Fuchs, Robert
1 photograph

BOX-FOLDER 1/32
Gadski, Johanna Emilia Agnes
2 autographed photographs

BOX-FOLDER 1/33
Goetschius, Percy
1 photograph

BOX-FOLDER 1/34
Gounod, Charles François
1 photograph

BOX-FOLDER 1/35
Krakauer, Alexander
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| BOX-FOLDER 1/36| Lebert, Sigmund  
                2 photographs                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/37| Lehmann, Lilli  
                1 photograph                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/38| Leschetizky, Theodor  
                2 photographs (1 autographed)                                                                                                                |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/39| Liszt, Franz  
                2 photographs (1 autographed)                                                                                                                |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/40| Löwe, Adele  
                2 photographs                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/41| Lucca, Pauline  
                10 photographs                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/42| Malten, Therese  
                2 photographs                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/43| Materna, Amalie Friedrich  
                3 photographs                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/44| Mead, Olive  
                2 autographed photographs                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/45| Melba, Nellie, Dame  
                1 autographed photograph                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/46| Meriam, Alice  
                1 photograph                                                                                                                                |
|               | Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus  
                1 photograph of Mozart’s Geburthaus                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 3/3 | Photograph of painting by Rödig                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/47| Nilsson, Christine  
                1 photograph                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/48| Padilla y Ramos, Mariano  
                2 autographed photographs                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/49| Patti, Adelina  
                1 photograph                                                                                                                                |
|               | 1 photograph with Patti’s niece                                                                                                                                                                  |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/51| Petzner  
                1 photograph                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 1/52| Plank, Fritz  
                1 photograph                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/1 | Rosé, Arnold Josef  
                3 photographs (2 autographed)  
                1 postcard                                                                                                                                 |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/2 | Rosé String Quartet  
                1 photograph                                                                                                                                |
<p>|               | 1 photograph with Anton Door                                                                                                                                                                      |
| BOX-FOLDER 2/3 | Rubinstein, Anton                                                                                                                                                                                  |</p>
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<th>Iconography</th>
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<td>BOX-FOLDER 2/4</td>
<td>San Carlo Theatre [Naples]</td>
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<td>Schmerling, Mme. Pessiack</td>
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<td>1 photograph</td>
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<td>1 photograph with Belle and Bessie Brown</td>
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<td>BOX-FOLDER 2/8</td>
<td>Schumann, Robert</td>
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<td>BOX-FOLDER 2/16</td>
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<td>Wallhoffen, Emil Maria</td>
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<td>Weber, Carl Maria von</td>
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<td>BOX-FOLDER 3/4</td>
<td>Group photograph</td>
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<td>Photograph of Désirée Artôt, Carmen Artôt de Padilla, Lola Artôt de Padilla, and Belle Brown (2 copies)</td>
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