

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Music Department

Title: T. Carl Whitmer Collection

Overview of the Collection

Reference Code: Pittsburgh Music Archive #31

Creator: T. Carl Whitmer (1873-1959)

Dates: 1943 - 1958

Extent: 4 boxes, 1 manuscript

Language: English

Repository:

Music Department, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh-Main, 4400 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Acquisition Information: This collection was donated to Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Copyright: none

Restrictions: none

Requested Citation: T. Carl Whitmer Collection, Pittsburgh Music Archive #31, Music Department, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Finding Aid Created by: Joelle Killebrew, Mina Belle Wichmann

Related Finding Aids:

- Correspondence to and from Pittsburgh Musicians, Pittsburgh Music Archive #14

Notes on the Collection

Historical Note

T. (Thomas) Carl Whitmer was an American composer, organist, author and teacher. He was born in Altoona, PA, June 24, 1873, and died in Poughkeepsie, NY, May 30, 1959. He attended Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA. He was organist of Pine Street Presbyterian Church in Harrisburg, PA (1898-1899), director of the school of music at Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri (1899-1909), director of music at Pennsylvania College for Women (now Chatham University), Pittsburgh (1909-1916), organist and choirmaster of the Sixth Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh (1916-1932), and taught music at the Pittsburgh Musical Institute. He and his wife, painter Helen Crozier Whitmer, moved to Dramamont, near Newburgh, New York, in 1933 and founded an institution for instruction in dancing, painting, and music. Whitmer was especially known for the religious music dramas written for

performance at Dramamount festivals. He composed Biblical dramas, songs, choruses, organ and piano pieces, chamber music and symphonies, which were performed by many groups in his lifetime. He is the author of books of poetry, philosophy and music pedagogy. His critical essays appeared in various national magazines. The final issue of *Musical Forecast*, a Pittsburgh music magazine published from 1921-1948, is dedicated to him.

Scope and Content

This collection contains music programs of T. Carl Whitmer as a performer and/or composer, correspondence, photographs, news articles about Whitmer, and articles and essays written by Whitmer. 1 volume of a manuscript score was added, and more manuscript scores are in the closed stacks.

Container List

BOX 1

- **Folder 1** - Letters and publicity regarding 1943 Festival (his 70th birthday).
 - Annotations of his works
 - Letter from Charles W. Cadman
 - Clippings
 - Programs
 - Birthday greetings
 - Festival Concert program, May 14, 1943, at Carnegie Music Hall
 - Statement of income received for Festival
 - List of Patrons and Guarantors
 - Radio show transcripts
 - Copy of *The Musical Forecast*, May 1943, dedicated to Whitmer

- **Folder 2** - Letters 1948-1954
 - Arthur Farwell (2)
 - Gilman Chase (1) - criticizing an article by T.C. Whitmer in *The Diapason* regarding pipe organs and organists
 - correspondence *re* years as resident-composer at Pennsylvania College for Women (now Chatham University)
 - birthday greetings from friends
 - letters from Pittsburgh friends with references to Pittsburgh music and musicians
 - letters from Arthur B. Jennings, former Pittsburgh organist
 - letter from 1893 classmate at Franklin & Marshall College regarding their 60th reunion on June 6, 1953
 - letter from Clarence Cannon, Congressional representative from Missouri
 - letter from a friend who describes a flight during which she sat next to Edward Everett Horton who was returning to Oberlin College, his Alma Mater, for dedication of new buildings

- **Folder 3** - Letters 1955 and 1956

- Pittsburghers include:
 - Lester Trimble
 - Matt Cvetic, Jr.
 - Philip Lee Ralph
 - Shirley Patterson Kroske
 - Oscar Demmler
 - Marshall Bidwell
 - Ralph Lewando
- Others:
 - Rudolph Ganz
 - Paul Paray of the Detroit Symphony
 - a plumbing contract for 1956
- **Folder 4** - Letters 1957-1958
 - Pittsburghers include
 - J. Fred Lissfelt
 - Julian Williams
 - Oscar Demmler
 - Musicians' Club
 - etc.
- **Folder 5**
 - Undated letters but some dates may be presumed by reference to the receipt of the brochure mentioned in letters dated 1955. (See Folder 3.) One letter from Harold Friedell, director of music, St. Bartholomew's Church, NYC.
- **Folder 6** - Letters from Edgar and Louise Varèse:
 - 02.04.1944: *re* his intended broadcast of Whitmer's "Soul of America," asks for "all the metronomic indications of change of tempo or mood" from Whitmer's score.
 - 02.08.1944: *re* thanks to Whitmer for letter and record (which arrived broken). Requests metronomic speeds for portions of "Soul of America."
 - 02.24.1944: *re* thanks Whitmer for letter and announces intention of doing another Whitmer work "at the first opportunity..."
 - 03.15.1944: *re* acoustics at "The Music Center" and instrumentation of Whitmer's pieces.
 - 04.08.1944: *re* his inability to hear "Soul of America" on the radio or in concert. Mentions that Louise was glad that Whitmer liked her translation, that he is working hard and that he can't find a solicitor.
 - 05.02.1944: *re* thanks Whitmer for his regard.
 - 11.04.1944: invitation from Louise for lunch November 14
 - 11.15.1944: *re* thanks again. Mentions that Claudel is setting up a meeting.
 - Undated letter from Louise: *re* whatever was enclosed with letter. Thanks Whitmer for consenting to speak at a meeting about Varèse
 - 02.10.1946: *re* thanks Whitmer for his letter *re* her translation. Mentions death of Varèse's chorus and the fact that she and Edgar will be reading Whitmer's article
 - 10.03.1946: Louise thanks Whitmer for his praise of her translation. Mentions that Edgar is in "fine form."

- **Folder 7**

- Ten letters from Charles Ives and two from Harmony T. Ives (his wife). Some contain references to performance of his work with Slonimsky; some contain references to Whitmer's book "The Way of My Heart and Mind"; some contain comments on modern music and musicians.
- Brief correspondence between T.C. Whitmer, Helen Whitmer, and Irene Millen concerning the T. Carl Whitmer collection for the Music Library. - not there

BOX 2

- **Folder 1 - "The Anointing of Solomon"**

- Letters received by T.C. Whitmer after premiere performance at Carnegie Music Hall, May 21, 1957, including: letter from Mamie Eisenhower (the work was inspired by Dwight Eisenhower's inaugural prayer); correspondence *re* type setting of the work, Ray Green, American Music Edition
- Three Pittsburgh newspaper reviews of world premiere by Mendelssohn Choir, May 21, 1957.
- Letters of permission to use words of Walt Whitman (David McKay, Philadelphia) and of "Miss Turner" and Dr. Babcock (Maltbie?) from *The Smart Set*, New York
- Two letters dated 1917 from George M. P. Baird *re* use of his Hymn to America containing "The Song of Pittsburgh"
- Titles, copyright receipts - USA and British Museum - for "A Syrian Night," "When God Laughed," and "Choral Triptych"
- Lists:
 - Music and Literary Works of T.C. Whitmer in Carnegie Library, dated 1959
 - Scores of T.C. Whitmer in Carnegie Library with notation of performers and performances
 - Activities in addition to composition, books, etc., dated 1953

- **Folder 2 - Pine Street Presbyterian Church in Harrisburg, PA where T.C. Whitmer was organist**

- Six Free Organ Recitals there (typed copies, not originals) on October 29, 1898, through March 25, 1899
- Programs of concerts, directed by T.C. Whitmer 1943-1948, as sung by Southern Dutchess Singers, in Beacon, Dutchess County, NY
- Programs of performances of T.C. Whitmer's works, 1931-1957 - chronologically arranged (including venues in Pittsburgh, NYC, Denver, Houston and Colorado Springs)

- **Folder 3**

- Copy of *The Concert - A Sonnet of Sonnets*, by George Seibel, illustrated by Jeannette Shirk and inscribed to T.C. Whitmer: To the composer from George Seibel, as a birthday greeting "im wunderschönen Monat Mai 1943."
- Typescript pages numbered 265 to 371, but not complete:
 - Copy for small magazines (?) - pp. 265-269
 - The Passion - an outline - pp. 281-283
 - The Youth Choir, Freedom Plains Presbyterian Church, April 1941, pp. 330-332

- Article for *The Musical Forecast*, April 1941: "Harvey B. Gaul - Allegro Giocoso, A Personal Divertissement" - pp. 348-352 (Tribute to Harvey B. Gaul)
 - Review: "Bach Choir Opens Season with Record Audience" - not dated. Part of program included T.C. Whitmer's "Out of the Night."
 - Talk (?): "Outline of the Passion Play Idea" dated 09.12.1921, p. 358
 - Article from Beacon News (Dutchess County, New York) dated 05.27.194, with account of Western Pennsylvania American Guild of Organists concert 05.09.1946. Program of T.C. Whitmer's music. (See programs in Box 2, Folder 2)
 - "O Susanna - A little journey." Undated account of dedication of Stephen Collins Foster house on its removal to Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan - pp. 369-371
- **Folder 4** - Magazine articles:
 - *Creative Art*, February 1932 Vol. 10 No. 2, p. 117: "A Composer Looks at Painting"
 - *The American Organist* - various articles dating from November 1939 to October 1954
 - *The Diapason* - October 1952 and January 1, 1955
 - *New York Times* - February 22, 1953
 - *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* - May? written by Harvey Gaul about an article of Whitmer's in *The American Organist* on "Widor's Organ Symphonies."
 - Booklet: Reviews of *The Way of My Mind*, and *The Way of My Heart and Mind* by Whitmer
 - Royalty Statement dated 06.01.1957, *Art of Improvisation*
 - **Folder 5**
 - Note in Whitmer's handwriting: Material for a book chiefly of published essays. *Essays and Sketches* by T. Carl Whitmer
 - **Folder 6**
 - "Poems and Texts being a Pilgrimage by T. Carl Whitmer. "A Pilgrimage, being chiefly Texts written by the composer and used in the larger choral works of T, Carl Whitmer." Typewritten manuscript, 175 pages.

BOX 3

- **Folder 1**
 - Letters from M. C. Rogers (*nee* Mildred Weston?), most undated. Some from Gallitzen, PA, others from New York City, and Springfield, MA. Handwritten, mostly addressed to: "Dearest Himself and Miffie." (Folder about 4" thick.)

PHOTOS

- **Folder 2**
 - Dramamount (10 photos of their home in La Grangeville, NY)
- **Folder 3**
 - Whitmer's grandparents and parents (7 photos)
- **Folder 4**
 - Photos of Whitmer from 1873-1913, plus postcards of cities in England, Ireland, Germany and France
- **Folder 5**

- Helen Whitmer (26 photos of her), plus her sketches of Christmas cards. (One small sketch is of their Pittsburgh home at 316 Spahr Street in the Shadyside area)
- **Folder 6**
 - Helen and T. Carl Whitmer (mostly at Dramamount), some with friends, including one photo of Arthur B. Jennings
- **Folder 7**
 - Non-Whitmer, mostly unidentified; one of Mildred Weston (see correspondence in Box 3); one of Harvey B. Gaul
- **No folder**
 - One large photo of T.C. Whitmer's maternal grandparents taken February 1871

BOX 4

- **Folder 1**
 - Honorary degree from Franklin and Marshall College, June 25, 1944
- **Folder 2**
 - Letters of T.C. Whitmer written "to Papa" 1885-1886 (typed copies)
 - Good photo and story *re* Arthur Jennings on his retirement from University of Minnesota, cut from a magazine (*Diapason?*). Mentions that one of his teachers was T.C. Whitmer. Dated July 1, 1956.
 - Newspaper article from *Poughkeepsie Sunday New Yorker re* T.C. Whitmer's presentation to Helen (his wife) of bound copy of letters she wrote to her mother from their trip abroad 1906-7. Anecdotes and descriptions from the letter are included in the article.
 - Handwritten account by Helen of her wedding day and the two days preceding - very personal and touching.
 - *Bennett Bulletin* (Bennett Junior College, Millbrook, NY) with article on music at the school and photo of T.C. Whitmer with pupils and a second article *re* an article in September 1947 issue of Pittsburgh's *Forecast of the Arts* which contains a Tribute to T.C. Whitmer. (*Did Helen Whitmer teach at Bennett?*)
 - Undated, handwritten letter of T.C. Whitmer describing a performance of Samuel Barber's "Vanessa." (The opera was first performed at the Metropolitan Opera in 1958; this may have been an earlier production.)
 - David Bispham Memorial Medal for American Opera, inscribed to T.C. Whitmer for "Religious Music Dramas." The face on the medal is not T.C. Whitmer.
- **Folder 3**
 - Marriage license for Thomas Carl Whitmer and Helen M. Crozier, (May 18, 1898)
 - Helen's handwritten account of the first six months of married life.
 - Helen's letters to her mother from European trips 1901, 1906
 - Undated letters, written by both Helen and T.C. Whitmer. Note: Many of Helen's letters are illustrated with her own sketches

- Exhibition catalogue: The Fort Worth Museum of Art Loan Exhibition Paintings (includes "Italian Scene" by Helen Whitmer)

- **Folder 4**
 - Letters to Mr. And Mrs. Harold Kalt
 - Printed Sheet Music
 - Programs
 - Articles written by Whitmer

- **Folder 5**
 - Early Press notices

Volume 1 – Manuscript music score

- Air and Chorus from Christmas Oratorio by J.S. Bach. Accompaniment arranged for string orchestra by T. Carl Whitmer.

See also

- Whitmer, T. Carl. [The Way of My Mind \(1917\)](#)
- Whitmer, T. Carl. [The Way of My Heart and Mind \(1920\)](#)
- Whitmer, T. Carl. *Notes, Ideas, Sketches* - rML 60 .W47 (Oliver Room)
- [Pittsburgh Music Information File](#)
- [T. Carl Whitmer](#) in the CLP library catalog
- [Pittsburgh Concert Programs](#), vol. 10