

A Guide to the Arthur Fickénscher Papers

Arthur Fickénscher Papers ca. 1895-1995
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A Collection in the Special Collections The University of Virginia Library 12731
Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library
1997

History

Processed by: Special Collections Department Staff
Date Completed: 1997
Encoded by: Elizabeth Slomba

Title Statement

A Guide to the Arthur Fickénscher Papers

Subtitle: Fickenscher, Arthur.

Collection: 12731

Author: Processed by Philip J. Di Benedetto; machine-readable finding aid created by Elizabeth Slomba

Sponsor: Funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Publication Statement

File size: 50 Kilobytes

Date: © 1997 By the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia. All rights reserved.

Publisher: Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library

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Funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from WordPerfect. [Date of source: 1997.]

Language Usage: Description is in English.

Revision Description

Feb 18, 2004 PUBLIC "-//University of Virginia::Library::Special Collections Dept.//TEXT (US::ViU::viu01897::Arthur Fickénscher Papers)//EN" "viu01897.xml" converted from EAD 1.0 to 2002 by v1to02.xsl (sy2003-10-15).

Feb 27, 2004 converted to conform to eadVIVA.dtd by vivastrict.xsl

Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

12731

Language

English

Extent

ca. 2000 items

Repository

University of Virginia. Library. Special Collections Dept.

Alderman Library
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903
USA

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research.

Use Restrictions

See the [University of Virginia Library's use policy](#).

Acquisition Information

The collection is a consolidation of gift acquisitions received in the Manuscript and Special Collections Departments of the University of Virginia over the period 1941-1997 from Edith Cruzan Fickénscher, Arditha Fickénscher, William W. Jones, Robert Septimus Pace, Jr., Gordon Rumson and anonymous donors.

The original classification numbers (listed below) of all acquisitions to this collection have been consolidated into a single classification number: 12731.

Previous Classification Numbers: Manuscript numbers: 1093; 5121,-a-b; 8815; Record Group numbers: RG-21/31.771 (.791) (.871) (.921) (.961) (.962) (.971).

Funding Note

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Preferred Citation

Arthur Fickénscher Papers, Accession 12731, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library

Biographical Sketch

Arthur Fickénscher, composer, pianist, teacher and inventor, was born to George W. and Elizabeth Wagner Fickénscher on March 9, 1871, in Aurora, Illinois. His musical education began at an early age; learning violin and piano under the tutelage and guidance of his music instructor father, he gave his first recital at age six. He spent his later formative years (1883-1889) as a student in Munich, Germany attending the *Hochschule der Musik* and the Royal Academy from which he graduated with unprecedented honors after studying under such notables in music theory and composition as Joseph Rheinberger and Ludwig Thuille. Upon returning to Illinois, Fickénscher taught piano privately to students and gave formal concert performances around the Chicago area. His reputation as an accomplished pianist and accompanist led to his participation in concert tours throughout the United States and Mexico with many of the distinguished singers of the day such as the great Wagnerian tenor, Anton Shott; Nikita, soprano of the Russian opera; Materna; David Bispham and Madame Shumann-Heink. These tours enhanced his reputation and allowed his piano mastery and musical artistry wide recognition.

In 1896, Fickénscher settled in San Francisco where he taught and coached young singers and studied the potentialities of the human voice. He also began to immerse himself in the composition of original music, being particularly drawn by the influence of the English poets of the Renaissance, Dante Rossetti and William Morris. In 1901, he married Edith Cruzan, an opera and concert singer whose theatrical and musical talents matched his own as they became an acclaimed recital team throughout the west coast. While living in San Francisco, the Fickénschers experienced the great earthquake of 1906. In the fire that devastated the city, they lost their home and many of their possessions including papers, press clippings, memorabilia and compositional manuscripts relating to their concert activities and Fickénscher's early music works.

In 1911, Fickénscher returned to Germany with his wife and young daughter, Arditha. He established a studio in Berlin providing vocal instruction to students and undertook a series of joint recitals with his wife that introduced them to admiring European audiences. In that period, his choral-orchestral poem, *The Chamber Blue* and the orchestral-choral symphonic poem, *Aucassin and Nicolette* were performed to positive reviews in concert presentations. Fickénscher also continued to pursue his idea of perfecting a keyboard for pure intonation and was granted a patent for its design in Germany in 1912.

At the outbreak of World War I, the Fickénschers returned to California. They opened a studio in both Oakland and in San Francisco to instruct and train singers, resumed their joint recital programs and lectures and soon became a couple in great demand in the music circles in the area and beyond. That demand induced them in 1917 to move to New York City, to again teach students and to present themselves in recital and concert programs to metropolitan music lovers.

A major change in Fickénscher's career style took place three years later. In 1920 he accepted an invitation from Edwin A. Alderman, then president of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, to serve as head of the newly established music department. Over the next 14 years he devoted himself in quiet dignity, but tireless energy to the challenge of organizing, developing and directing the administration of the department. He taught students; gave leadership to the University Glee Club and presented major concerts in Washington, Baltimore, New Orleans, Richmond and numerous other cities and towns throughout Virginia. He established the Albemarle Choral Club; conducted the University of Virginia and the Norfolk Symphony orchestras; participated in ensemble recitals, every 2 weeks over a period of 11 years and, in 1938, conducted a fully staged mimo-drama of his work, *The Chamber Blue* at the University. He performed organ recitals in the University's McIntire Amphitheater; provided piano accompaniment to students in vocal programs and instituted the McIntire Concerts program which featured such renowned artists as, Barrère, Alda, Novaes, Homer, Casals, Ponselle, Martinelli and Zimbalist. With all this, he still found time to arrange the settings of numerous college football songs; to serve as the regular organist at Christ Episcopal Church in Charlottesville and to continue work on his music compositions and on the development and construction of the "Polytone," his idea of a workable intonation keyboard which he designed to subdivide the octave into 60 tones.

In 1941, Fickénscher retired from the University of Virginia and returned to Fairfax in Marin County in California. There he worked to complete his major unfinished orchestral-choral symphonic poem, *The Land East of the Sun* and to publish an article on the Polytone which he had patented in February 1941. The article, "The Polytone and the Potentialities of a Purer Intonation," appeared in *The Music Quarterly* (July, 1941). In May, 1946, he participated in concert at Florida State Teacher's College, conducting *The Chamber Blue* with the Australian-American composer, Percy Grainger at the piano and, as pianist, joining a string quartet to play the Piano Quintet.

In 1947, the Fickénschers relocated to the city of San Francisco to spend their remaining years near their daughter. Edith Fickénscher died on January 9, 1950 and Arthur Fickénscher on April, 15, 1954. Some years later, in 1983, their ashes were spread over the grounds of the University of Virginia cemetery near the grave of their close friends, James Southall Wilson and his wife Julia by two devoted former students and lifelong friends and associates, Robert Septimus Pace, Jr. and William W. Jones.

As a composer, Arthur Fickénscher was influenced by Bach, Wagner and César Franck. His work reflected contemporary trends and was cast in a "sensuous mysticism" that intrigued many of his musical colleagues, particularly Percy Grainger (1882-1961) who considered Fickénscher to be one of the few musical geniuses of the 20th century.

Scope and Content

The Papers of Arthur Fickénscher contain ca. 2,000 items (11 shelf feet) that span the years 1895-1995. The largest portion of the papers, consists of originals and copies of virtually all of the music that Fickénscher produced. The remaining portion contains correspondence and other papers of a professional and personal nature. The collection has been divided into three major groups:

Group I, (Correspondence), contains letters sent to Fickénscher and drafts and second copies of letters that he prepared. The correspondence is subdivided into three categories: (1) General, (2) Named and (3) Polytone Related. These are listed by date or by correspondent name to highlight special interest or subject matter.

Group II, (Professional and Personal), contains items relating to Fickénscher's music and academic career activities. These include published articles; biographical background about his life and work; catalogue descriptions of his music; memorabilia in the form of concert and recital programs; reviews and newspaper clippings; a compilation of notes, drawings and music relating to the evolution and development of the "Polytone;" and an assortment of other miscellaneous items consisting of financial and contract records of the University of Virginia's McIntire Concerts (1919-1939); photographs of family and friends; instructor notes for voice lessons; some brochures about musical instruments; name and address notebooks and family birth, marriage and burial documents.

Group III, (Compositions), contains original manuscripts, master sheets for duplication and print copies of musical scores. These items have been consolidated into oversized folders for ease of reference and study and have been arranged in this listing under descriptive categories similar to those used by Fickénscher in describing his own compositions and by others who have catalogued his musical works. (see William W. Jones and Gordon Rumson (Box 1, below) and also William W. Jones, *Life and Works of Arthur Fickénscher, American Composer, 1871-1954*, unpublished, 1992).

A 33 1/3 rpm recording of *Willowwood*, (a setting of four sonnets by Rossetti for mezzo-soprano with piano, viola and bassoon accompaniment) has been transferred to the appropriate custodial section of the University of Virginia Special Collections Department where it is identified as part of these papers.

Container List

Group I: Correspondence

General

Unit Date 1911-1977, n.d.

Container Box 1

Name

Alderman, Edwin A.

Unit Date 1920

Container Box 1

Bailey, Howald T.

Unit Date 1951-1952

Container Box 1

Fickénscher, Arditha F.

Unit Date 1982

Container Box 1

Fickénscher, Edith Cruzan

Unit Date 1904-1941, n.d.

Container Box 1

Friedlander, Max

Unit Date 1923

Container Box 1

Grainger, Percy

Unit Date 1932

Container Box 1

Koons, Walter E.

Unit Date 1933

Container Box 1

Maganini, Quinto

Unit Date 1938

Container Box 1

Miscellaneous (non-Fickénscher)

Unit Date 1922-1989

Container Box 1

Newcomb, John L.

Unit Date 1941

Container Box 1

Pace, Robert Septimus, Jr.

Unit Date 1954

Container Box 1

Riesberg, F. W.

Unit Date 1934
Container Box 1

Toscanini, Arturo
Unit Date 1939
Container Box 1

Wecker, Karl
Unit Date 1934
Container Box 1

Polytone Related

Deagan, J. C.
Unit Date ca. 1914-1917
Container Box 1

Gerhard, Arthur
Unit Date 1931
Container Box 1

Grainger, Percy
Unit Date 1932
Container Box 1

Gustafson, Carolyn
Unit Date 1949
Container Box 1

Hitchcock, Frank
Unit Date 1939-1948
Container Box 1

Hughes, Edwin
Unit Date 1935-1942
Container Box 1

Huntington, Edward V.
Unit Date 1941-1942
Container Box 1

Kegley, H. Paul
Unit Date 1946-1947
Container Box 1

Kimmel, George P. and Cowell, Henry
Unit Date 1940-1950, n.d.
Container Box 1

Kinsolving, Charles M.
Unit Date 1941-1942
Container Box 1

Klann, August A.

Maxwell, August R.
Unit Date 1941-1946
Container Box 1

Lippelt, Marie
Unit Date 1922
Container Box 1

Loar, Lloyd A.
Unit Date 1941-1942
Container Box 1

Maxwell, Leon R.
Unit Date 1924-1925
Container Box 1

Miscellaneous
Unit Date 1919, n.d.
Container Box 1

Morhard, J. E.
Unit Date 1930
Container Box 1

Pitt, Don A.
Unit Date 1952
Container Box 1

Reisner, W.H. (Mfg.Co)
Unit Date 1941
Container Box 1

Slonimsky, Nicholas
Unit Date 1952
Container Box 1

Stoney, William
Unit Date 1941-1942
Container Box 1

Group II: Professional and Personal

Articles

By and about Arthur Fickénscher
Unit Date 1901-1953, n.d.
Container Box 1

Biographical

Background on life and work
Unit Date 1924-1954, n.d.
Container Box 1

Catalogue of Arthur Fickénscher's musical works (by William W. Jones)

Unit Date 1957

Container Box 1

Typescript, "Arthur Fickénscher-A Brief Overview," by Gordon Rumson

Unit Date 1995

Container Box 1

Concert Performances (Arthur / Edith Cruzan Fickénscher, and others)

Memorabilia

Unit Date 1895-1991, n.d.

Container Box 2

Extent (5 folders)

Miscellany

Arthur Fickénscher's vocal instruction notes

Unit Date 1949, n.d.

Container Box 2

Autographed score, "Lullaby," by Peter van de Kamp

Unit Date 1934

Container Box 2

Business records of McIntire Concerts, University of Virginia

Unit Date 1919-1939, n.d.

Container Box 2

Extent (4 folders)

Family memorabilia

Unit Date 1908-1990, n.d.

Container Box 2

Photographs--of Fickénscher family and friends

Unit Date 1940-1950, n.d.

Container Box 2

Photographs--of The Chamber Blue, mimo- drama stage production

Unit Date 1938

Container Box 2

Music Reviews

About Arthur and Edith Cruzan Fickénscher

Unit Date 1932-1946, n.d.

Container Box 3

Newspaper Clippings

About Arthur and Edith Cruzan Fickénscher

Unit Date ca. 1895-1952, n.d.

Container Box 3

"Polytone" Invention

Development notes and patent designs

Unit Date ca. 1912-1941, n.d.

Container Box 3

Extent (2 folders)

Manuscripts and publication material about the "Polytone"

Unit Date ca. 1941, n.d.

Container Box 3

Music scores for the "Polytone"

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 3

Newsclippings about the "Polytone"

Unit Date 1912-1935, n.d.

Container Box 3

Photographs of the "Polytone"

Unit Date n.d.

Container Box 3

Group III: Compositions

Scope and Content

(manuscripts, master sheets and prints of musical scores)

Orchestral

Aucalete, 1927. Fantasia on themes from "Aucassin and Nicolette"

Container Oversize I-1 (Box)

Day of Judgment("Dies Irae")

Unit Date 1927

Container Oversize I-1 (Box)

Extent (1-3 of 8 folders)

Day of Judgment("Dies Irae")

Unit Date 1927

Container Oversize I-2 (Box)

Extent (4-8 of 8 folders)

Interlude from "The Land East of the Sun"

Unit Date ca. 1949-1954

Container Oversize I-3 (Box)

Extent (3 folders)

Out of the Gay Nineties

Unit Date 1934

Container Oversize I-3 (Box)

Extent (1-2 of 3 folders)

Out of the Gay Nineties**Unit Date** 1934**Container** Oversize I-4 (Box)**Extent** (3 of 3 folders)**Willowwave and Wellaway. Fantasia on themes from "Willowwood"****Unit Date** 1925**Container** Oversize I-4 (Box)**Extent** (2 folders)**Orchestra with voice and/chorus****Aucassin and Nicolette****Unit Date** ca. 1907-1909**Container** Oversize I-5 (Box)**Extent** (1-4 of 10 folders)**Aucassin and Nicolette****Unit Date** ca. 1907-1909**Container** Oversize I-6 (Box)**Extent** (5-10 of 10 folders)**The Chamber Blue. Mimo-drama****Unit Date** ca. 1907-1935**Container** Oversize I-7 (Box)**Extent** (1-3 of 8 folders)**The Chamber Blue. Mimo-drama****Unit Date** ca. 1907-1935**Container** Oversize I-8 (Box)**Extent** (4-5 of 8 folders)**The Chamber Blue. Mimo-drama****Unit Date** ca. 1907-1935**Container** Oversize I-9 (Box)**Extent** (6 of 8 folders)**The Chamber Blue. Mimo-drama****Unit Date** ca. 1907-1935**Container** Oversize I-10 (Box)**Extent** (7 of 8 folders)**The Chamber Blue. Mimo-drama****Unit Date** ca. 1907-1935**Container** Oversize I-11 (Box)**Extent** (8 of 8 folders)**The Land East of the Sun****Unit Date** n.d.**Container** Oversize I-12 (Box)**Extent** (1-4 of 6 folders)

The Land East of the Sun

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-13 (Box)

Extent (5-6 of 6 folders)

Visions

Unit Date ca. 1908

Container Oversize I-13 (Box)

Chamber Works

Old Irish Tune

Unit Date 1946, 1995

Container Oversize I-13 (Box)

Quintet, ("Evolutionary Quintet" and "Piano Quintet 'From the Seventh Realm' ")

Unit Date 1890's-1951

Container Oversize I-14 (Box)

Extent (1-4 of 9 folders)

Quintet, ("Evolutionary Quintet" and "Piano Quintet 'From the Seventh Realm' ")

Unit Date 1890's-1951

Container Oversize I-15 (Box)

Extent (5-9 of 9 folders)

Variation Fantasy. Variations on a theme in medieval style

Unit Date 1937

Container Oversize I-16 (Box)

Extent (5 folders)

Chamber music with voice

Willowwood

Unit Date 1910, 1994

Container Oversize I-17 (Box)

Extent (4 folders)

Choral Works

Choral Settings of French Folk Songs

Unit Date 1922

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Scope and Content

Contents: mixed chorus: 1. Au clair de la lune; 2. Bonhomme que savez-vous faire?; 3. J'ai du bon tabac; male chorus: 1. Vive Henri Quartre; 2. Charmante Gabrielle; 3. Malbrouk

I Know a Maiden Fair to See. Poem by Longfellow

Unit Date 1912

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

My Country, 'Tis of Thee

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

A Roundelay. Words by Edith Cruzan Fickénscher

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Song of India. Choral arrangement scored by Arthur Fickénscher

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Suzette, ("An Idle Idyll")

Unit Date 1929

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Organ Works

Improvisational Fantasy. Dedicated to Richard Purvis

Unit Date ca. 1953

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Lament for Organ

Unit Date 1949, 1994

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Nocturne. By Benjamin Erich, arranged by Arthur Fickénscher

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Sacred Music

Anthem Hymn. Episcopal Hymnal #435, "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind"

Unit Date 1948

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Communion Service, 1945. Selections from the Episcopal Order of Communion

Unit Date 1945

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Scope and Content

Contents: 1. Kyrie Eleison; 2. Gloria Tibi; 3. Gloria Patri; 4. Benedictus Qui Venit; 5. Agnus Dei; 6. Gloria in Excelsis; 7. Amen; 8. Nunc Demitis; 9. Sanctus

Jubilate Deo in F

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Lenten Anthem, ("Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days")

Unit Date 1929

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Requiem a la Gregorian

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Untitled (possible Te Deum)

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-18 (Box)

Settings

College Songs of the University of Virginia

Unit Date 1923-1935, n.d.

Container Oversize I-19 (Box)

Scope and Content

Contents: "Alma Mater"; "Come Boys and Join Together"; "Eli Banana: Tilka Song"; "Georgetown is Dying"; "Give Us a Song, Boys"; "The Good Old Song"; "Ha! Ha! Virginia"; "Hike Virginia"; "In a Rose-Tinted Valley"; "Just Another Touchdown for U.Va."; "Now We'll Lick Old Yale"; "Oh! Carolina"; "Old Virginia"; "Orange and Blue"; "Virginia, Hail, All Hail!"; "Virginia, Hail, All Hail!" (version two); "Virginia Yell Song"; "Virginia's Banner"; "We're the Team from U. Va."

Voice and Piano

Acht Deutsche Volkslieder Zum Konzertvortrag, (Eight German Folk Songs for Concert Performance). English words by Edith Cruzan Fickénscher

Unit Date 1923

Container Oversize I-19 (Box)

Scope and Content

Contents: 1. Abschied, (Farewell); 2. Bienchen summ herum, (Bees); 3. Drei Röselein, (Three Rosebuds); 4. Der holde Mai, (Maytime); 5. Das Vöglein, (The Messenger); 6. Frühlingsbotschaft, (Cuckoo); 7. Gott weiss es, (God knows); 8. Der Gänsedieb, (The Lusty Robber)

The Brass Band

Unit Date 1907-1911

Container Oversize I-19 (Box)

Das Herz am Rhein

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-19 (Box)

Faery Song. Words by Edith Cruzan Fickénscher

Unit Date 1912

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

A Fairy's Love Song. Setting of one of the "Songs of the Hebrides"

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

Compositions for Voice and Piano

Unit Date ca. 1900-1912, n.d.

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

Scope and Content

Contents: 1. Am Abend, (At Evening); 2. Erster Kuss, (The First Kiss); 3. Deutung, (Revealings); 4. Gefunden, (Found); 5. Mondnacht, (Moonlight); 6. Hochsommer, (Midsummer); 7. Busse, (Penitence). (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 published as: Five Compositions for Voice and Piano)

In the Gloaming, ("Americana"). Dedicated to Robert Septimus Pace, Jr.

Unit Date 1954, n.d.

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

Mein Herz ist im Hochland. Poem by Robert Burns

Unit Date 1952

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

Smile Na Sae Sweet, My Bonnie Babe. Ancient Air from Johnson's Museum

Unit Date 1946

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

Star Spangled [Banner]

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

Verrufene Stelle, (Horror's Realm)

Unit Date 1922

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

Waltz. By Howald Bailey

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

When I Am Dead My Dearest

Unit Date 1941-1942

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

Where Go the Boats? (Wohin führen die Boote?). Words by Robert Louis Stevenson

Unit Date 1923, n.d.

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

The Wind (Der Wind). Words by Robert Louis Stevenson

Unit Date 1923, n.d.

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

Miscellaneous

Joy

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

Viola d'Amour

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

Music for the "Polytone" (see Box 3)

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)

Various untitled

Unit Date n.d.

Container Oversize I-20 (Box)