

DOROTHEA DIX LAWRENCE  
COLLECTION  
Special Collections 1999.3

RUTH T. WATANABE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
SIBLEY MUSIC LIBRARY  
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*(Left) Dorothea Dix Lawrence in costume as Aida during San Carlo Opera Tour, Philadelphia, PA (1934). Photograph attributed to Je Te Winburn; (Right) Dorothea Dix Lawrence in costume as Marguerite from Gounod's Faust; costume by Filomena Pangona (ca. 1930s). Photographs from Dorothea Dix Lawrence Collection, Box 1, Folder 8 (photos 2 and 4, respectively).*

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## DESCRIPTION OF COLLECTION

Shelf location: M3A 3, 4

Physical extent: .50 linear feet

### Biographical Sketch



*Dorothea Dix Lawrence at her home in Plainsfield, NJ (1940).  
Photograph attributed to Mattie Edwards Hewitt, from  
Dorothea Dix Lawrence Collection, Box 1, Folder 8.*

Dorothea Dix Lawrence, American soprano and folklorist, was born on 22 September 1899 in New York City. She studied voice for a time at Barnard College, and her teachers and coaches included Ernst Knoch, Cesare Stunai, Henry Russell, and Katherine Opdycke. In 1929, Lawrence made her operatic debut with the Quebec Opera Company in Montreal, appearing as Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust*. In the 1930s and 1940s, she appeared regularly in opera and concert performances, including in roles with the San Carlo Opera Company and the Cosmopolitan Opera Company and in concerts in Chicago, Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Salt Lake City, and major cities across Europe. Lawrence also frequently performed on radio and television broadcasts and, on 12 October 1940, was the soloist for the first radio broadcast from the United States to Admiral R. L. Byrd's expedition in the Antarctic.

During the 1930s, Lawrence developed a passionate interest in American folk music and folklore. She began collecting songs, particularly from residents of the Pine Barrens of New Jersey and the Zuni Indians of New Mexico, which she incorporated into her performing repertoire and radio broadcasts. In 1939, she created the radio program *Primer of American Music*, a series of 27 weekly broadcasts sponsored by the Philadelphia Board of Education, and

she also starred, produced, and directed an 8-week summer program for WNYC entitled *Folk Musicians*. Eventually, Lawrence reworked the content she produced for her radio programs to create the *Folklore Music Map of the United States* in 1945. The map, which was a collaboration between Lawrence and the woodcut artist and illustrator Harry Cimino (1898–1969) was widely distributed in American schools, and it became the basis for Lawrence’s lecture-recitals in the and a published volume of folksongs, *Folklore-Songs of the United States* (New York: Dorothea Dix Lawrence Folklore Society, 1959). Between 1940 and her retirement in 1970, she presented hundreds of recitals and lectures on American music across North America and Europe; the repertoire often included American Indian songs in their original language and various folksongs from all over North America alongside art songs by well-established American composers (e.g., Farwell, MacDowell, and Gershwin). In the early 1950s, she also presented papers on Zuni music at conferences in England and Austria. She was a member of the National Committee of the National Folkfestival USA and the Folklore Society of Great Britain and North Ireland, and, in 1952, she was made a fellow of the Royal Anthropological Society of Great Britain. In 1958, she founded her own folklore society, which bore her name.

Dorothea Dix Lawrence died on 23 May 1979 in Plainfield, New Jersey.

### **Provenance**

The Dorothea Dix Lawrence Collection was a gift to the Sibley Music Library from Lawrence’s son, Mr. Morgan Lawrence. The collection arrived at the library during the winter of 1999–2000.

### **Scope and Content**

The collection contains personal documents and ephemera relating to the life and career of Dorothea Dix Lawrence, including one monograph of folk songs collected by Lawrence.

An early version of this finding aid also listed a biography of Lawrence as having been added to the collection (Muriel Frances, *Dorothea Dix Lawrence* [New York: George F. Briegel, 1959]), but that item is not currently present in the collection.

### **Restrictions**

No restrictions pertain to the Dorothea Dix Lawrence Collection, save for those which may be applicable under the statutes of United States copyright law.

### **Associations**

The Sibley Music Library holds the collections of several other prominent twentieth-century sopranos, including Josephine Antoine and Jan DeGaetani.

Elsewhere, the Library of Congress holds a small collection (4 boxes, 2 linear feet) of Dorothea Dix Lawrence's papers, consisting of correspondence, photographs, writings, press clippings, performance scores, and other items that document Lawrence's career as an opera singer and folklorist.

## DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

### **Series 1: Personal Documents**

This series consists of personal documents, ephemera, and a published folksong collection compiled by Dorothea Dix Lawrence. The items are organized in folders according to material type: correspondence, programs, articles, clippings, photographs, etc. The bulk of the loose documents are enclosed in plastic sheets.

# INVENTORY

## Series 1: Personal Documents

### Box 1

- folder 1 Correspondence.  
Facsimile of letter from Arthur Farwell to Dorothea Dix Lawrence. 1 letter; dated July 31, 1942. 1 p.  
Facsimile of letter from Jennings Randolph (US Senate) to Jon W. Newsom (Assistant Chief, Music Division, Library of Congress) pertaining to Dorothea Dix Lawrence's passing. 1 letter; dated October 2, 1979. 1 p.  
Also in folder: facsimile of certificate of achievement awarded by the NYC-USO-Joint War Appeal to Dorothea Dix Lawrence in recognition of her performance during its 1942 fund-raising effort; dated July 4, 1942. 1 p.
- folder 2 Recital programs, 1937-1955.  
14 concert programs and facsimiles, including 1 duplicate program; dated November 1937–October 1955; 1 undated.
- folder 3 Lecture-recital programs, 1940-1954.  
13 lecture-recital programs, facsimiles, and flyers, including 4 duplicate programs; dated December 1940–August 1954.
- folder 4 Publicity materials, 1948–1953.  
5 facsimiles of publicity circulars and flyers pertaining to Dorothea Dix Lawrence's professional activities; dated 1948–1953; 2 undated.
- folder 5 Publicity materials on the *Folklore Music Map of the United States*.  
3 facsimiles of publicity circulars advertising the *Folklore Music Map* by Dorothea Dix Lawrence; 3 undated.
- folder 6 Press clippings and reviews, 1937–1965.  
18 facsimiles of press clippings and concert reviews; dated December 1937–October 1965.
- folder 7 Original articles [by Dorothea Dix Lawrence].  
“Mapping Music,” *The Philadelphia Forum* (September 1946): 11–12.  
Facsimile of front cover of journal and article. 3 pp., total.  
“The Song Heritage of a Forgotten Folk,” *Musical Courier*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (August 1955): 5, 30. Facsimile of front cover of journal, table of contents, and article. 4 pp., total.  
“Musical Symbolism of the Indians,” *Music Journal* (March 1956): 13.  
Facsimile of article. 2 copies. 1 p., each.



folder 8

Photographs, 1931–1957. 27 items:

1. Dorothea Dix Lawrence in costume by Filomina Pongone, Philadelphia Opera House (March 11, 1931); attributed to Jay Te Winburn. 1 b/w photograph [original], 7.75" x 9.5".
2. Dorothea Dix Lawrence in costume as Aida, San Carlo Opera Tour, Philadelphia (1934); attributed to Jay Te Winburn. 1 b/w photograph [original], 7.5" x 9.5".
3. Dorothea Dix Lawrence in costume as Manon [appears to be same costume as in photo 1], from press clipping in *New York Herald Tribune* (July 1, 1938). Facsimile of press clipping. 1 p.
4. Dorothea Dix Lawrence in costume as Marguerite (Gounod's *Faust*), costume by Filomena Pangoni; undated [ca. 1930s]. 1 b/w photograph, 8" x 10".
5. Dorothea Dix Lawrence greeted by Western Union employees and representatives of the B&O upon her arrival in Philadelphia, from press clipping (1940). Reprint of b/w photograph and caption on photo paper, 8.5" x 8".
6. Duplicate of photo #5.
7. Dorothea Dix Lawrence at concert sponsored by General Electric Co. (October 12, 1940). 1 b/w photograph [reprint], 8" x 10".
8. Publicity circular with photograph of Dorothea Dix Lawrence, for performance sponsored by the Hudson Motor Co./NBC network (December 1940). Facsimile of front of b/w circular, reprinted on photo paper; 8" x 10". Annotation on reverse lists concert information.
9. Dorothea Dix Lawrence at home in Plainsfield, NJ (1940); attributed to Mattie Edwards Hewitt. 1 b/w photograph [original], 8" x 10". Typescript caption affixed to reverse of photo.
10. Dorothea Dix Lawrence at home in Plainsfield, NJ (1940); attributed to Mattie Edwards Hewitt. 1 b/w photograph [original], 8" x 10". Typescript caption affixed to reverse of photo.
11. Dorothea Dix Lawrence in profile, from press clipping (June 1, 1943). Reprint of b/w photograph and caption on photo paper, 8.5" x 11".
12. John Evans (baritone, Chicago Opera Co.), Florence Naubeneer(?) (coloratura soprano, New York City Opera Co.), Dorothea Dix Lawrence, Lt. Governor of NJ, and Carmela Ponselle at "Variety Concert" with Plainfield Symphony Orchestra (August 19, 1947). Photocopy of b/w photograph, 8.5" x 11". 2 copies.
13. Dorothea Dix Lawrence on arrival in Tucson, AZ, being greeted by Tucson mayor Mr. R. Hitt and representatives from the University of Arizona's Women's Association (November 28, 1950). 1 b/w photograph [original], mounted, 8" x 10".
14. Dorothea Dix Lawrence publicity photograph (1950). 1 b/w photograph [reprint], printed on copier paper, 8" x 10".
15. Andre Segovia, Margaret Mitchell, Thomas Grosso, Ruston Wadia, Mrs. Henry Hadley, and Dorothea Dix Lawrence, at luncheon hosted by

- Lawrence in Plainfield, NJ (1950); attributed to Harold G. Morse. 1 b/w photograph [original], 8" x 10".
16. Dorothea Dix Lawrence with Carmela Ponselle, Charlotte Peegie, Louise Steward Powers, Arthur Farwell, Gertrude Liebman, Rose Dirman, Virginia Scofield, and William Bradell at gala farewell for Lawrence on RMS Mauretania (January 6, 1952). 1 b/w photograph [reprint], 5" x 7".
  17. Duplicate (enlargement) of photo #16. 1 b/w photograph [reprint], 8" x 10".
  18. Dorothea Dix Lawrence upon departure from NY aboard the Mauretania (January 6, 1952). 1 b/w photograph [reprint], 7" x 10".
  19. Duplicate of photo #18.
  20. Dorothea Dix Lawrence, backstage at Mozart-Saal, Vienna, Austria (March 3, 1953). 1 b/w photograph [reprint], 8" x 10".
  21. "Foto-copy from original oil painting of Miss Lawrence" [depicts pose in photo #20]. 1 color image, printed on copier paper, 8.5" x 11".
  22. Dorothea Dix Lawrence on opening night of the "Mon Coeur" Kabaret, Copenhagen, Denmark (July 4, 1954). 1 b/w photograph [original], 3.5" x 5.5".
  23. Duplicate (enlargement) of photo #22. 1 b/w photograph [reprint], printed on copier paper, 5.75" x 8.5".
  24. Photograph of exterior of Dorothea Dix Lawrence's house in Plainfield, NJ; photograph taken 1971. 1 color photograph, 5" x 7".
  25. Concert flyer with photograph of Dorothea Lawrence (detail from publicity photo from same shoot as photo #15) for November 6, 1953, concert. Facsimile of flyer, printed on photo paper, 8" x 10".
  26. Publicity flyer announcing performance by Dorothea Lawrence at Mozart-Saal, March 4, 1953. Facsimile of flyer, printed on photo paper, 8" x 10".
  27. Duplicate of photo #26. Also in sleeve: facsimile of concert schedule for Wiener Konzerthausgesellschaft (February–March 1953). 1 p.

folder 9

Biographical summaries.

- "Biography: Dorothea Dix Lawrence—Soprano." Facsimile of typescript biography documented by Morgan Lawrence; dated November 1, 1979. 6 pp.
- "Biography: Dorothea Dix Lawrence, Soprano, Concert Artist, Authority on Americana and American Folklore." Facsimile of typescript biography prepared by ML [Morgan Lawrence]; dated October 23, 1979. 6 pp.
- Facsimiles of biographical entries for Lawrence from *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* (1986) and *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 8th ed. (1992). 2 pp.

- folder 10 Magazine articles.  
Dorothea Dix Lawrence, "People of the Pine Barrens," *The Geographical Magazine*, Vol. 25, No. 10 (February 1953): 534–538. Holdings comprise full issue of magazine.  
"Speaking of Pictures ... These Are Old Christmas Cards" [photo spread of Victorian-era Christmas cards from collections of Samuel Golden and Dorothea Dix Lawrence], *Life*, Vol. 5, No. 24 (December 12, 1938): 6–7. Holdings comprise full issue of magazine.
- folder 11 Sheet music: *Spring Song of the Robin Woman*.  
Cadman, Charles Wakefield. *Spring Song of the Robin Woman*. From "Shanewis." For high voice and piano. Text by Nelle Richmond Eberhart. Boston: White-Smith Music, 1918. 9 pp. Signature of Dorothea Lawrence on front cover of score.
- folder 12 Sheet music: *Morning*.  
Speaks, Oley. *Morning (Le Jour)*. For high voice and piano. Words by Frank L. Stanton; French version by Suzanne d'Astoria Jackowska. New York: G. Schirmer, 1931. 5 pp. Signature of Dorothea Lawrence on front cover of score.
- folder 13 *Folklore-Songs of the United States*.  
Words and music collected by Dorothea Dix Lawrence. Words and music arranged by Walter L. Rosemont. New York: Dorothea Dix Lawrence Folklore Society, 1959. 133 pp. Volume no. 2, inscribed by Morgan L. Lawrence, Dorothea Dix Lawrence, and Walter R. Rosemont.