

FRED WILBUR COLLECTION

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SIBLEY MUSIC LIBRARY

EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

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DESCRIPTION OF COLLECTION

Shelf location: M2B 6,6

Physical extent: 3 linear feet

Biographical Sketch



Photograph from Fred J. Wilbur's obituary, printed in The Penfield Press (December 24, 1964). From Fred Wilbur Collection, Box 2, Folder 22.

Frederick (Fred) J. Wilbur (*b.* August 11, 1870, Dowagiac, MI; *d.* December 16, 1964, Penfield, NY) was a civil engineer and prominent citizen of the Rochester area during the first half of the twentieth century. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1900 and subsequently moved to New York, first residing in Buffalo before settling in Rochester in 1910. Mr. Wilbur was known for his profound love of opera, particularly Wagner's works. Although he had no formal musical training, Mr. Wilbur spent many hours in the Sibley Music Library studying his favorite composers and pieces, particularly following his retirement in 1934. Over the years, he meticulously copied several operatic and orchestral scores and also made structural graphs of these works. Fred Wilbur died in 1964 at the age of 94. At the time of his death, he was survived by his wife, Mary, his son Henry Wilbur, and one grandson.

Provenance

The Fred Wilbur Collection was a gift to the Sibley Music Library.

Scope and Content

The majority of this collection contains sketches and graphs of operatic and orchestral music. The first series is comprised of Mr. Wilbur's analyses and copies of Wagner operas. These are followed by sketches and graphs of operas and orchestral pieces by several other composers. Also included in the collection are program books, articles and photos. The final series includes oversized formal copies of scenes from Wagner operas. As a whole, this collection offers a fascinating glimpse into one amateur's approach to score study in the early twentieth-century.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on the use of this collection, save for those of United States copyright law (where applicable).

Associations

RTWSC holds several collections that document musical life in Rochester during the early- and mid-twentieth century through preserved concert programs and clippings from newspapers and magazines. The department holds three local history scrapbooks, for example, which contain items relating to musical events in the Rochester area from 1904–1912, ca. 1900–1915, and 1871–1879, respectively, as well as similar scrapbooks compiled by other Rochesterians (i.e., Edith May Parks, Katy Schantz, Anna Walker Goss, and D. G. Hastings). The Eastman Theatre Scrapbooks contain press clippings relating to performances and motion picture screenings at the Eastman Theatre from 1920–1928, including materials related to the Metropolitan Grand Opera performances in Rochester and performances by the American Opera Company.

Given Mr. Wilbur's particular interest in Wagner's opera, the autographed Bayreuth Fans may also be of interest. Additionally, the Rare Books department houses several first edition scores of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century operas, including an 1845 imprint of *Tannhäuser* that was lithographed by the composer.

DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

The Fred Wilbur Collection is divided into four series as described below.

Series 1: Sketches and Graphs of Wagner Operas

This series includes rough and formal sketches and structural graphs of many operatic works by Richard Wagner. The sketches Mr. Wilbur produced are partial, reduced scores that appear to have been copied from published orchestral scores. These sketches present only select, prominent instrumental lines or motifs and vocal lines, similar in fashion to the simplified scores or “listening maps” that were included in several twentieth-century music appreciation textbooks. Many of these sketches were made on scrap tracing paper bearing a stationary heading for the State of New York Department of State Engineer and Surveyor, Western Division, Rochester. The structural graphs appear to denote the measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation, which Mr. Wilbur may have produced as a guide to identify which instrumental parts to copy for his sketches; some graphs also appear to contain references to recordings of the respective operas (e.g., label numbers).

Series 2: Sketches, Graphs, and Notes for Other Operatic and Orchestral Works

This series contains sketches, graphs, and listening notes on operas by composers other than Wagner, as well as selected orchestral works. Similar to the materials in Series 1, many of these items were made on scrap paper bearing stationary headings or other text on the reverse.

Series 3: Miscellaneous Items

This series includes concert programs, press clippings (including articles and photographs of singers), cast lists, and some items of ephemera.

Series 4: Oversized Items

This series contains oversized sketches and newspaper articles.

INVENTORY

Series 1: Sketches and Graphs of Wagner Operas

Box 1

- folder 1 Sketch of *Die Walküre* (Act II, Scene 1). Pencil, on tracing paper. 130 pp.
- folder 2 Sketch of *Die Walküre* (Act II, Scene 2). Pencil, on tracing paper. 85 pp.
- folder 3 Sketch of *Die Walküre* (Act II, Scene 3). Pencil, on tracing paper and two envelopes. 47 pp.
- folder 4 Sketch of *Die Walküre* Act II Scene 4). Pencil, on tracing paper. 60 pp.
- folder 5 Sketch of *Die Walküre* (Act II, Scene 5). Pencil, on tracing paper. 25 pp.
- folder 6 Graph of *Die Walküre* (Act II). Pencil. 36 pp. [Graphs appear to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation.]
- folder 7 Sketch of *Die Walküre* (Act III). Text, with English translation. Pencil and ink. 2 pp. Transcription of score. Pencil, on tracing paper. 117 pp.
- folder 8 Sketches and graphs of *Die Walküre* (Act III). 3 graphs, including 1 folded graph. Pencil. 3 pp. Transcription of score. Pencil. 35 pp.
- folder 9 Sketch of *Siegfried* (Prelude and Part I). Pencil. 46 pp.
- folder 10 Sketch of *Siegfried* (Interlude before Act III). Pencil. 34 pp.
- folder 11 Sketch of *Siegfried* (Part II). Pencil. 73 pp.
- folder 12 Notes on *Siegfried*. Pencil. 13 leaves.
Includes sketches of musical motifs and lists of themes/motifs.
- folder 13 Sketches and Graphs of *Götterdämmerung*. Pencil and ink. 72 leaves, total.
Includes notes pertaining to Wilbur's copying from scores, transcriptions from score on tracing paper, and graphs appearing to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation.
- folder 14 Wagner, Richard, and Lothar Windsperger. *Das Buch der Motive und Themen aus sämtlichen Opern und Musikdramen Richard Wagner's*. Vol. II (*Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Sigfried, Götterdämmerung, Parsifal*). Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, [s.d.]. Published thematic catalog. 56 pp. Accompanied by 3 leaves manuscript notes and sketches by Wilbur.

- folder 15 Sketch of “Ring Cycle” motifs. Pencil and ink, on tracing paper. 14 pp.
- folder 16 Sketches and graphs of *Tristan und Isolde* (Act III). Pencil. 108 leaves, total.
Includes transcriptions from score on tracing paper, graphs appearing to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation, and other notes.
- folder 17 Sketches of Isolde's Narrative. Pencil and ink. 55 leaves, total.
Includes sketches of motifs, translations of the text, transcriptions from score on tracing paper, and other notes.
- folder 18 Graphs of *Tristan und Isolde*. Pencil. 54 leaves.
Includes transcribed excerpts from score, graphs showing instrumentation and texture, notes of motifs, and other notes.
- folder 19 Graphs of *Die Meistersinger*. Pencil. 2 pp.
Graphs appear to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation.
- folder 20 Graphs of *Parsifal*. Pencil. 9 pp.
Graphs appear to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation, with some notes on motifs.
- folder 21 Graphs of *Journey to the Rhine* [from *Götterdämmerung*]. Pencil. 36 leaves.
Includes notes pertaining to Wilbur's copying from scores, graphs appearing to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation, and other notes.
- folder 22 Copies of the score of *Journey to the Rhine* [from *Götterdämmerung*]. Pencil, on tracing paper. 50 pp. Pencil, on scrap paper. 18 pp. Accompanied by pencil notes. 5 pp.
- folder 23 Unidentified Wagner sketch [Brünnhilde's immolation scene from *Götterdämmerung*?]. Pencil, on tracing paper. 18 pp.
- folder 24 Notes on Wagner opera performances. Pencil. 23 leaves with text.
- folder 25 Sketches of Wagner opera themes. Pencil and colored pencil. 53 pp.
Includes themes from *Siegfried* and *Die Walküre*.
- folder 26 *Magic Fire* graphs [from *Die Walküre*]. Pencil. 10 pp.
- folder 27 Graphs and other notes of various Wagner operas. Pencil. 35 pp.
- folder 28 Wagner texts. [Transcriptions of texts and translations from various opera scenes.] Pencil. 27 leaves.
- Box 2**
- folder 1 Formal sketch of *Die Walküre*, Act I. Pencil and colored pencil, leather bound volume. 86 pp.

folder 2 Formal sketches of *Die Walküre* [Act II, Scenes 3–4]. Pencil and colored pencil. 27 pp. of music.

folder 3 Formal sketches of “Magic Fire” scene from *Die Walküre* [Act III, end of Scene 3]. Pencil and colored pencil, bound. 11 pp.

Series 2: Sketches, Graphs, and Notes for Other Operatic and Orchestral Works

Box 2 [cont.]

folder 4 Sketches of *La Traviata*. Pencil. 40 pp.
Includes transcriptions from score, graphs appearing to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation, and other notes.

folder 5 Sketches and graphs to *Carmen* (Prelude to Act I). Pencil. 19 pp.
Includes graphs appearing to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation and transcriptions from score.

folder 6 Sketches and graphs of *Carmen* (Act II). Pencil. 19 pp.
Includes graph appearing to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation and annotated transcriptions from score.

folder 7 Sketches and graphs of *Carmen* (Act III). Pencil. 67 pp.
Includes transcription of text and translation, transcriptions from score, and graphs appearing to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation.

folder 8 Sketches and graphs of Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony (second movement). Pencil. 30 pp.
Includes transcription from score on tracing paper and 1 graph appearing to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation.

folder 9 Sketches and graphs of Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony (third movement). Pencil. 33 pp.
Includes transcription from score on tracing paper and 1 graph appearing to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation.

folder 10 Graphs of Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony. Pencil. 18 pp.
Graphs appear to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation.

folder 11 Notes and sketches of Brahms’s Second Symphony. Pencil. 36 pp.
Includes transcriptions from score on tracing paper and graphs appearing to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation.

folder 12 Sketches and graphs of Dvorak's Ninth Symphony. Pencil. 86 pp. Also in folder: *Rochester Civic Music News*, Vol. 25, No. 19 (January 5, 1954). 4 pp.
Includes transcriptions from score on tracing paper, graphs appearing to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation, and other notes.

- folder 13 Sketch of Sibelius' *The Swan of Tuonela*. Pencil. 21 pp.
Includes graphs appearing to denote measure-by-measure texture and instrumentation and transcriptions (including excerpts) from score.
- folder 14 Notes on various pieces and concerts. Pencil. 17 leaves.
Primarily pencil notes (text) on scrap and loose paper; includes one newspaper clipping.
- folder 15 Notes on assorted orchestral works. 12 items.
Small (4" x 5.25") loose notes (Brahms) or handmade booklets containing text descriptions of the music [similar to listening maps]. Works represented: Brahms, Symphony No. 4; Mozart, "Jupiter" Symphony; [Wagner], "Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine"; [Wagner], "Forest Murmurs"; [Wagner], "Fire Music"; [Tchaikovsky], *Romeo and Juliet*; Beethoven, Symphony No. 6; [Tchaikovsky], *1812 [Overture]*; [Debussy], [*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*]; [Tchaikovsky], *Sleeping Beauty Suite*; [Wagner], *Die Meistersinger*; [Strauss], *Til Eulenspiegel*.
- folder 16 Handouts on various compositions or musical topics. Typescript, with annotations in pencil. 9 pp.
Includes handouts on: music dramas of Wagner; Rimsky-Korsakoff, *The Great Russian Easter Overture*; Sibelius, Symphony No. 1; Debussy, *Iberia*; Sibelius, Symphony No. 2; composers of Russia; the orchestra [instrumentation and score order].
- folder 17 Miscellaneous notes and graphs. Pencil. 21 leaves.
- folder 18 Miscellaneous sketches (incomplete). Pencil and ink. 3 items (5 leaves).
Partial transcriptions and sketches; sources unidentified.
- folder 19 Miscellaneous sketches. Pencil, on tracing paper. 151 pp.
Unlabeled transcriptions; sources unidentified.

Series 3: Miscellaneous Items

Box 2 [cont.]

- folder 20 Metropolitan Opera rosters. 15 rosters (2 handwritten, 13 published); dated 1945–1959 (1 undated). 15 pp. Also in folder: 4 pp. notes.
Published rosters extracted from *Opera News*, with annotations in pencil and ink; sources unidentified.
- folder 21 Press clippings and iconography. 10 press clippings; dated 1938–1968. 2 printed line drawings depicting characters from Wagner's Ring Cycle, from unidentified source.
- folder 22 Additional press clippings (primarily photographs of Metropolitan Opera soloists and productions). 13 items; dated 1938–1940.
- folder 23 Fred Wilbur obituary. 1 press clipping (*Penfield Press*); dated December 1964. Also in folder: prayer card in memory of Fred J. Wilbur.

Box 3

folder 1 “Souvenir of Rochester.” Early-20th-century album of Rochester photos published by James Vick’s Sons, Rochester, NY. 32 pp.

folder 2 Programs from concerts and record albums. 9 concert programs; dated 1935–1948. 5 program booklets from recordings.

Recording booklets include: Beethoven, Symphony No. 7 (Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra); Franck, Symphony in D Minor (Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra); Strauss, *Ein Heldenleben* (Willem Mengelberg and the New York Philharmonic); Wagner, *Tristan and Isolde: Symphonic Synthesis* (Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra; M-154); Wagner, *Die Walküre*, Act II (M-582).

folder 3 Book of programs. Bound scrapbook (“Plays I Have Seen”) with pasted-in newspaper announcements of theatrical performances, photographs of performers, and programs, with some annotations. 165 pp. with content; 225 pp., total.

From performances dated ca. 1890–1909; primarily from Buffalo, NY, but also includes performances at theatres in Albany and Rochester.

folder 4 Book of programs. Leather-bound book (“Theatre Record and Scrapbook”) with pasted- and tipped-in newspaper clippings (e.g., announcements and reviews), photographs of performers, and programs, with some annotations. 162 pp., total (some blank).

From performances dated ca. 1890–1903; includes performances at theatres and opera houses in New York, Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana.

Series 4: Oversized Items

Box 4

folder 1 Wilbur's formal sketches of *Die Walküre*. Pencil and colored pencil. 37 leaves.
Includes drafts and fair copies of Wilbur’s sketches; see also Box 2, Folders 1–3.

folder 2 Wilbur's formal sketches of *Tristan und Isolde*. Pencil and colored pencil. 33 leaves.

folder 3 Handwritten roster of singers. Pencil. 1 p.
Possibly alphabetized roster of Metropolitan Opera soloists.

folder 4 *New York Times Magazine* (February 12, 1933), Section 6. Holdings comprise full section of paper. Contains Wagner article (“Wagner Remains the Colossus of Music”), pp. 4–5, 19.

folder 5 *Rochester Times-Union* (May 9, 1934), Music Section. Holdings comprise full section of paper.

Box 5

folder 1 Formal graphs of concert performances by the New York Philharmonic, General Motors, and the Metropolitan Opera; dated ca. 1934–1938. Pencil. Two oversized (rolled) charts.

Charts list date of concert, conductor and soloists, and repertoire performed.