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Guide to the Ernst Levy Papers 1919-2004



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.LEVYE
Title	Levy, Ernst. Papers
Date	1919-2004
Size	9.75 linear feet (8 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract Ernst Levy (1895-1981), composer and professor of music at the University of Chicago (1951-54). Papers include musical scores and many significant written academic works, including a French manuscript of his book *A Theory of Harmony*. Public and biographical items include an extensive radio broadcast interview, late interest and news articles mentioning Levy and significant correspondence, biographical information, catalogs of released recordings and copies of catalogued records from European libraries.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Levy, Ernst. Papers, [Box#, Folder#], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Ernst Levy was a prolific composer and arranger of music, author and piano virtuoso. He served on the faculty at the University of Chicago from 1951 to 1954. .

Levy was born in Basel, Switzerland November the 18th, 1895. He studied with Raoul Pugno, Egon Petri and Basel Conservatory mentor and colleague Hans Huber. In Basel Levy taught extensively, becoming Huber's successor of the virtuoso class at the Conservatory in 1917.

Moving to Paris in 1925, Levy continued to teach and perform, and in 1928 founded the first major chorus in Paris, the Choeur Philharmonique, who premiered performances and recordings of notable works by Brahms and Liszt.

For political reasons, Levy moved to Boston in 1941, teaching at the New England Conservatory of Music until 1945. The next twenty five years were spent teaching piano and composition, conducting choral and orchestral works, all the while composing an impressive amount of work, many included in this collection. In addition to his time in Boston and Chicago; he spent time at Bennington College in Vermont (1946-51), at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1954-59) and the Brooklyn College of the City University of New York (1959-66). Levy then retired from teaching, returning to Switzerland in 1966.

Levy became well known and is remarkable in his innovative approach and interpretations of musical works, in addition to his integration of art, science and philosophy into the performance and composition of musical works.

Levy died on April 19th, 1981 in Morges, Switzerland at the age of eighty-five.

Scope Note

Series I of the Ernst Levy papers contain public and biographic items, including correspondence and an interview during his final years (1979-81), biographical notes and essays, and copies of French and German catalogues of his works.

Levy's academic career produced a number of writings and lectures, many of which are collected in Series II. An original and copy of one of his major publications in French – A Theory of Harmony, published posthumously in 1985, is also included here.

Series III of the Ernst Levy papers consist of a significant number of musical compositions, mostly in original score format, from his first string quartet in 1919 to his final sonatas in 1980. Many works contain notes by the composer - typed and attached to the inside front or back cover of the work, usually discussing the nature of the work or performance notes. Most works are original, bound scores kept as reference copies by the composer. A few are published copies, a few appear as copies or photocopies of originals, and a few are handwritten original scores.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Subject Headings

- Levy, Ernst, 1895-
- Composers
- Piano Music

INVENTORY

Series I: Public and Biographical

Box 1

Folder 1

Public and biographical documents

- University of Chicago Concert Program, 1952
- French newsletter Musique, 1971
- Swiss news article from Basler Zeitung, 1980

Box 1

Folder 2

Interview with Bernard Falciola, 1980

Box 1

Folder 3

Public and biographical documents

- Final living correspondence with Morgan and Schubel, 1979-1981
- Correspondence with Thuring Bram (German), 1981
- Photocopy of Newspaper Article Mentioning Levy and Morgan, 1982

Box 1

Folder 4

Public and biographical documents

- Opus One (record label) release catalog and record jacket notes, 1983
- Richmond Symphony concert program with biographical note, 1994
- Compact disc release notes and biographic essays, 1997
- Correspondence with Ward Marston (record label), 1997-2004
- Correspondence with Wolfgang Rathert, 2004

Box 1

Folder 5

Public and biographical documents

- Catalogue of written and musical works (French), undated
- Photocopies of card catalogue of works (German), undated

Series II: Writings and Lectures

Box 1

Folder 6

Notes on the 10th and 11th symphonies, 1944, 1949

Box 1

Folder 7

"A New Pythagorean Investigation of Harmony", 1944

Box 1

Folder 8

"How A Composer Works" (multiple drafts), 1944

Box 1

Folder 9

"The Elizabethan Ayre", 1949

Box 1

Folder 10

"Medieval Proportion Canons" (draft), 1954

Box 1

Folder 11

"The Birth, Growth and Shaping of Musical Ideas" (draft and final), 1954

Box 1

Folder 12

"Changes of Style Since Bach", 1954

Box 1

Folder 13

"Formative Forms and Forming Principles", 1957

Box 1

Folder 14

Writings, 1965, undated

- "Definitions" article in *Musique* (French Conservatory of Music), 1965
- Academic outline of course "The Symphony for Musical Illiterates", undated
- "On the Concept of Variation" academic treatise, undated

Box 2

Folder 1

A Theory of Harmony, 1985

- Original French manuscript
- Copy of French manuscript

Series III: Musical Compositions

Box 3

Folder 1

String Quartet One, 1919

Box 3

Folder 2

Compositions, 1918-1948

- "Schlafe du" (song), 1918
- "Jetzt brennen deine heissen Kusse" (song), 1918
- Sonata for Violin and Piano (published sheet music), 1932
- Cantata on Ecclesiastes, 1945
- "Pastorale", 1946
- Four Folk Songs from Switzerland, 1946
- "Fanfares" (score), 1947
- Cantata No. 2 (two copies), 1948
- "Hear Ye Children" (three copies), 1948

Box 3

Folder 3

Eleventh Symphony, 1949

Box 3

Folder 4

Cantata No. 3, 1950

Box 3

Folder 5

Twelfth Symphony, 1951

Box 4

Folder 1

Compositions, 1952

- Divertimento for Clarinet and Piano, 1952
- Theme and Transformations for Clarinet and Piano, 1952

Box 4

Folder 2

First Trio for Violin, Viola and Violoncello (2 copies), 1953

Box 4

Folder 3

Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, 1953

Box 4

Folder 4

Sonata for Horn and Piano, 1953

Box 4

Folder 5

Dreizehnte Symphony, 1955

Box 4

Folder 6

Suite for Viola or Violoncello, 1956

Box 5

Folder 1

Third Suite for Orchestra, 1957

Box 5

Folder 2

Compositions, 1957-1958

- Suite for Orchestra, 1957
- Trio Fantasy, 1958

Box 5

Folder 3

Compositions, 1959-1960

- Fourth Suite for Orchestra, 1959
- Suite for Violin, 1960

Box 5

Folder 4

Second Trio, 1960

Box 5

Folder 5

Compositions, 1960

- "Summer Music", 1960
- "Meditatio", 1960

Box 5

Folder 6

Compositions, 1961-1962

- Second Sonata for Violin and Piano, 1961
- Third Sonata for Violin and Piano, 1962

Box 6

Folder 1

Compositions, 1962

- Sonatina for Violin and Piano, 1962
- Second Sonatina for Violin and Piano, 1962

Box 6

Folder 2

Fourteenth Symphony, 1962

Box 6

Folder 3

Compositions, 1963

- Suite for Two Violas (2 copies), 1963
- Trio for Clarinet, Violincello and Piano, 1963

Box 6

Folder 4

"Gandamus" including premiere program, 1964-65

Box 6

Folder 5

Compositions, 1964-1965

- Third Sonatina, 1964
- Fourth Sonatina, 1964
- Sonata for three violin parts, 1965

Box 6

Folder 6

Compositions, 1966-1968

- Troisieme Trio a Cordes, 1966
- "Le Desir des Justes", 1968
- "Chanson Triviala", 1968
- Motet for Mixed Choir, 1968

Box 7

Folder 1

Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano, 1968

Box 7

Folder 2

A Musical Gathering, 1969

Box 7

Folder 3

Second Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano (2 copies), 1970

Box 7

Folder 4

Sonata Strofica, 1970

Box 7

Folder 5

Compositions, 1971

- Deux Hymnes de Pierre-Yves Emery, 1971
- Sonata Accompagnata por il Violino, 1971

Box 7

Folder 6

- Compositions, 1974
- Partita, 1974
 - Cantante Six, 1974

Box 7

Folder 7

- Compositions, 1975
- Concerto sur "Aupres de ma blonde" pour Trmpette, 1975
 - Threnodie pour Alto, Violoncelle et Orgue, 1975
 - Sonnwenden, 1975

Box 8

Folder 1

- Compositions, 1977
- Sonata for Two Violins and Piano, 1977
 - Cantante Nine, 1977

Box 8

Folder 2

- Compositions, 1978
- Intermezzo Idilliaco, 1978
 - Quatrieme Trio a Cordes, 1978
 - String Quartet Four, 1978

Box 8

Folder 3

- Compositions, 1978
- Abendlied for Mattias Claudius, 1978
 - String Quartet Five, 1978

Box 8

Folder 4

- Compositions, 1979
- Sonate pour Alto et Piano, 1979
 - Li T'ai Po's Answer, 1979
 - Trio for Violine, Cello and Klavier, 1979

Box 8

Folder 5

- Compositions, 1980
- Sonata Accompagnata per Fagotto, 1980
 - Eins und Alles, 1980
 - Sonata for Ten, 1980

Box 8

Folder 6

- Compositions, undated
- Bulow, undated
 - "Quietly Flowing", undated