

Ethel L. Voynich Papers

Guides to Special Collections in the Music Division of the Library of Congress



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**Music Division, Library of Congress
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Contact information:

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/perform.contact>

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<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/eadmus.mu010020>

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Collection Summary

Title: Ethel L. Voynich Papers

Span Dates: 1828-1948

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1935-1948)

Call No.: ML31.V75

Creator: Voynich, E. L. (Ethel Lillian), 1864-1960

Extent: approximately 800 items ; 14 containers ; 6.0 linear feet

Language: Material principally in English

Location: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Ethel Lillian Voynich (1864-1960) was a social activist, novelist, translator, and composer. Voynich's musical compositions, based principally on sacred or poetic texts, are represented by holograph manuscript scores, sketches, lyric sheets, printed music, and notes. The remaining materials consist of subject files on musicological topics, research materials, and a handful of programs.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Chomiński, Józef M.

Gurney, Ivor, 1890-1937.

Voynich, E. L. (Ethel Lillian), 1864-1960--Archives.

Voynich, E. L. (Ethel Lillian), 1864-1960--Manuscripts.

Voynich, E. L. (Ethel Lillian), 1864-1960.

Voynich, E. L. (Ethel Lillian), 1864-1960.

Voynich, E. L. (Ethel Lillian), 1864-1960. Musical works. Selections.

Subjects

Music--Manuscripts.

Form/Genre

Programs (Documents)

Administrative Information

Provenance

Gift, Anne M. Nill, 1961.

Custodial History

Ethel Voynich bequeathed her belongings to Anne M. Nill in 1943, seventeen years prior to her passing. Some sources suggest Anne was manager of Wilfred Voynich's bookstore in Soho Square, London, in the early 1900s. In 1914, Wilfred allegedly brought Anne, then a secretary, to New York to help with a new store that he had established. Ethel remained in England at the time, but later joined them in New York in 1920. Other sources claim that Anne, born in Buffalo, New York in 1894, was an American citizen who made her professional acquaintance with Wilfred Voynich in New York City circa 1921. Anne and Ethel developed a lasting friendship, with Anne providing editorial assistance for Ethel's later writings.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Processing History

The Ethel L. Voynich Papers were processed and the finding aid coded for EAD by Thomas P. Barrick in 2010.

Copyright Status

Materials from the Ethel L. Voynich Papers are governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.) and other applicable international copyright laws.

Access and Restrictions

The Ethel L. Voynich Papers are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Music Division prior to visiting in order to determine whether the desired materials will be available at that time.

Certain restrictions to use or copying of materials may apply.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item, date, container number], Ethel L. Voynich Papers, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Ethel Lillian Voynich (1864-1960) was a social activist, novelist, translator, and composer. Born May 11, 1864, in County Cork, Ireland, Ethel Lillian Boole was the youngest of the five daughters of George Boole (1815-1864) and Mary Everest Boole (1832-1916). George Boole was an eminent mathematician whose theories (Boolean Logic) were instrumental to the development of modern technologies, including digital recording and the Internet. Mary Boole was an eccentric mathematician, teacher, and writer whose books on teaching mathematics to children became milestones in education. Despite their strong intellectual background, George and Mary lived in acute poverty and sent Ethel to live with her uncle, Charles Boole, in Lancashire. The years of physical abuse from Charles that followed eventually became the basis for her 1901 novel, *Jack Raymond*.

At the age of eighteen, Ethel traveled to Berlin and enrolled in the Hochschule der Musik in an effort to pursue her childhood love of music. Her studies of piano and composition from 1882-1885, however, were overshadowed by her newfound interest in revolutionary literature and political activism. Inspired by the plight of Russian prisoners under Tzarist rule, Ethel moved to St. Petersburg in 1887, where she made ends meet teaching English and music, dedicating any remaining time to helping suffering prisoners and peasants. After two years of committed charitable, revolutionary activity, Ethel returned to London, where she made the acquaintance of Polish patriot, antiquarian, and bibliophile Wilfred Michael Voynich, then a Russian fugitive. The two lived together and worked on various revolutionary endeavors for many years, eventually marrying in 1902.

During this period, Ethel established herself as both a writer and a translator of Russian literature into English. Her first published translation, *Stories from Garshin*, was released in 1893, followed by *The humor of Russia* (1895), and *Nihilism as it is* (1895). Her most famous novel, *The Gadfly* (1897), was later made into a film in the Soviet Union with a score by Dmitiri Shostakovich. Ethel remained musically active as well, becoming a member of the Society of Woman Musicians, an organization founded by composer Marion Scott in 1911. Through Scott, she established a close relationship with composer and war poet Ivor Gurney, an inspirational force behind her literary and musical compositions. Following her immigration to New York City around 1920, Ethel began intensive studies in composition and orchestration. These contributed to her creation of a variety of sacred vocal and instrumental works in the 1920s, including *Babylon, Jerusalem*, and *Epitaph in Ballad Form*.

In March 1930, husband Wilfred Voynich, by now an established New York bookseller, passed away from respiratory illness. Ethel moved in with his secretary and shop manager Anne M. Nill shortly thereafter, and the pair lived together for nearly thirteen years in Manhattan. Ethel continued to write, translate, and compose. Her last work, *Put Off Thy Shoes*, was published in 1945. The remainder of her life was spent reaping the rewards of her signature best-seller, *The Gadfly*, a work that had, unbeknownst to her at the time, single-handedly established Ethel's reputation as an American literary hero in the Soviet Union. Royalties from the novel and its derivative films enabled her to live a robust intellectual life until her death in 1960 at age ninety-six.

Scope and Content Note

The Ethel L. Voynich Papers span the period 1835 to 1948, with the majority of the materials dating from 1928-1948. Voynich's musical compositions, based principally on sacred or poetic texts, are represented by holograph manuscript scores, sketches, lyric sheets, and notes. Works are arranged alphabetically by title, with sources of texts identified if possible. The remaining materials consist of subject files on musicological topics and a handful of programs. Included is documentation of Voynich's studies with musicologist Josef Chominski, work done at the Pius X School of Liturgical Music in New York, research conducted at the New York Public Library, and her associations with notable Gloucester composer-poet Ivor Gurney.

Organization of the Ethel L. Voynich Papers

The Ethel L. Voynich Papers are organized in three series:

- Music, 1916-1948
- Subject Files, 1937-1941
- Miscellany, 1835-1946

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-12	<u>Music, 1916-1948</u>
BOX 6, 13-14	<u>Subject Files, 1937-1941</u>
BOX 6, 14	<u>Miscellany, 1835-1946</u>

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-12	Music, 1916-1948
	Babylon (voices, chorus, orchestra)
BOX-FOLDER 12/1	Manuscript full score
BOX-FOLDER 7/1	Manuscript full score
BOX 11	Photocopied manuscript full score
BOX-FOLDER 7/2	Manuscript short score
BOX-FOLDER 7/3	Sketches and notes
	Blue Bunny's book (voice, piano)
BOX-FOLDER 1/1	Manuscript piano-vocal score Laid in: sketches and lyric sheets
	Blue Bunny's influenza blues (voice, piano)
BOX-FOLDER 1/2	Manuscript piano-vocal score
	Bunny dance (piano)
BOX-FOLDER 1/3	Sketch
	Come near (voice, piano)
BOX-FOLDER 1/4	2 manuscript piano-vocal scores
	The crossroads (voices, band)
BOX-FOLDER 1/5	Manuscript full score Laid in: sketches and notes
	Cubby lion's childhood (voice, piano)
BOX-FOLDER 1/6	3 manuscript piano-vocal scores Laid in: sketches
	Desire in Spring (voice, piano)
	Music: Ivor Gurney; text: Francis Ledwidge
BOX-FOLDER 1/7	Manuscript piano-vocal score in the hand of I. Gurney Inscribed from Gurney to Voynich
	Ego sum pastor bonus (voices)
	By Waclaw Szamotulski
BOX-FOLDER 1/8	Photocopied copyist manuscript vocal score Musical analysis in pencil
	Epitaph in ballad form (voices, orchestra)
	Text: Francois Villon
BOX-FOLDER 8/1	3 manuscript full scores Laid in: sketches and lyric sheets
BOX-FOLDER 8/2	Photocopied manuscript full score
	Five Elizabethan songs. Sleep (voice, piano)
	By Ivor Gurney
BOX-FOLDER 1/9	Printed piano-vocal score Inscribed from Gurney to Voynich
	Give ear, o ye heavens (voices, 8 parts) <i>see also I sing of a maiden</i> Text: Deuteronomy 32:1,2

Music, 1916-1948

Container

Contents

BOX-FOLDER 1/10	Manuscript vocal score Laid in: sketches The golden net (voices) see also Who is this? Text: William Blake
BOX-FOLDER 2/1	4 manuscript vocal scores
BOX-FOLDER 2/2	3 photocopied manuscript vocal scores Laid in: lyric sheets I sing of a maiden (women's voices, 8 parts) see also Give ear, o ye heavens Text: traditional, 15th century
BOX-FOLDER 8/3	Manuscript vocal score Laid in: sketches I sing of a maiden (women's voices, 16 parts) see also Give ear, o ye heavens Text: traditional, 15th century
BOX-FOLDER 8/3	Manuscript vocal score Laid in: lyric sheet Jerusalem (voices, chorus, orchestra) Text: traditional hymn
BOX-FOLDER 2/3	Manuscript full score
BOX-FOLDER 9/1	Manuscript full score Laid in: lyric sheets and notes
BOX-FOLDER 2/4	Manuscript full score Movements I and II only
BOX-FOLDER 9/2	Manuscript full score Movement V only On cover: Re-written 1923
BOX-FOLDER 9/3	Photocopied manuscript full score Annotations
BOX-FOLDER 9/4	Photocopied manuscript full score Annotations
BOX-FOLDER 2/5	Manuscript short score
BOX-FOLDER 2/6	Manuscript piano-vocal score Miscellaneous movements
BOX-FOLDER 2/7	Sketches
BOX-FOLDER 3/1	Sketches Jerusalem (women's voices, orchestra) Text: traditional hymn
BOX-FOLDER 2/8	Manuscript short score On title page: Piano and vocal score Lenten is come (women's voices, piano) Text: traditional
BOX-FOLDER 3/2	Printed piano-vocal score proof Little lamb (voice, piano) Music: Mary Wilkes; text: William Blake
BOX-FOLDER 9/5	Photocopied manuscript piano-vocal score Laid in: notes Little suite (woodwinds, harp)
BOX-FOLDER 3/3	Manuscript score and parts Laid in: sketches

Music, 1916-1948

Container

Contents

BOX-FOLDER 9/6	Manuscript score Laid in: notes Man octapartite (voices, double chorus, strings) Text: Irish traditional
BOX-FOLDER 3/4	Sketches and lyric sheets Mass in B Minor By J.S. Bach
BOX-FOLDER 4/1	Printed score Annotations Bound, personalized copy O mortal folk (chorus) Text: Stephen Hawkes
BOX-FOLDER 4/2	Manuscript vocal score
BOX-FOLDER 4/3	Manuscript vocal score Laid in: lyric sheets On Wenlock Edge (voice, strings, piano) Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams; text: Alfred Edward Houseman Transcribed by Ivor Gurney
BOX-FOLDER 4/4	Manuscript vocal score in the hand of I. Gurney Unfinished Our lady sings (double chorus) Text: Jerusalem, my happy home
BOX-FOLDER 4/5	Printed vocal score Annotations Pinky's Declaration of Independence (song for the 4th of July)
BOX-FOLDER 4/6	Manuscript lead sheet The riders: symphonic cantata in 4 movements
BOX-FOLDER 4/7	Manuscript full score
BOX-FOLDER 5/1	Manuscript full score
BOX-FOLDER 5/2	Parts Saltaire tunes
BOX-FOLDER 5/3	Manuscript lead sheets Laid in: postcard and crayon drawing from 1937 September 4-8 visit to Saltaire, NY So shuts the marigold (voices) Text: William Browne of Tavistock
BOX-FOLDER 5/4	3 manuscript vocal scores The submerged city: cantata for solo baritone, mixed choir, and orchestra Text: Aleksey Stepanovich Khomyakov
BOX-FOLDER 10/1	Manuscript full score Laid in: sketches and lyric sheet
BOX-FOLDER 10/2	Manuscript full score
BOX-FOLDER 10/3	Manuscript full score
BOX-FOLDER 10/4	Manuscript full score Incomplete
BOX-FOLDER 10/5	Manuscript short score On cover: Piano score Tollite portas (Lift up your heads) (voices) Text: William Byrd

Music, 1916-1948

Container

Contents

BOX-FOLDER 5/5	Manuscript vocal score (English)
BOX-FOLDER 5/5	Manuscript vocal score (French)
	Unwelcome (voice, piano)
	Text: Mary Coleridge
BOX-FOLDER 5/6	2 manuscript piano-vocal scores
	Victimae paschali laudes (voices, organ)
BOX-FOLDER 5/7	Manuscript score for voice and organ
	Wilfred's birthday song
BOX-FOLDER 5/8	Manuscript lead sheet
	Who is this? <i>see also</i> The golden net
BOX-FOLDER 5/9	Manuscript vocal score
	Laid in: lyric sheet
	Unidentified
BOX-FOLDER 5/10	Sketches
BOX 6, 13-14	Subject Files, 1937-1941
BOX-FOLDER 6/1	Chominski, Josef Michal, 1937-1941
	E.L. Voynich's notes from studies with Chominski
BOX-FOLDER 13/1	Folk songs: Czeck
BOX-FOLDER 13/2	Folk songs: Polish
BOX-FOLDER 13/3	Folk songs: Russian
BOX-FOLDER 13/4	Folk songs: Ukranian
BOX-FOLDER 13/5	Folk songs: other than Slavonic
BOX-FOLDER 13/6	Military music
BOX-FOLDER 6/2	Musical diagrams: relationships to intervals
BOX-FOLDER 14/1-2	Pius X School of Liturgical Music
BOX-FOLDER 14/3	Polyphony: evolution of
BOX-FOLDER 14/4	Polyphony: France, Netherlands, Germany, Spain
BOX-FOLDER 6/3	Primitive, exotic, ancient music
BOX-FOLDER 14/5	Theoretical studies, nature, primitive
BOX 6, 14	Miscellany, 1835-1946
BOX-FOLDER 14/6	Gurney, Ivor
	Clippings
	Programs
BOX-FOLDER 14/7	Miscellaneous programs, 1932-1946
BOX-FOLDER 6/4	Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, 1835 July 3
	Performers include Maria Taglioni, Guilietta Grisi, and others