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Philip T. Bezanson Papers

1946-1980

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An influential educator and composer, Philip Bezanson helped guide the Department of Music at UMass Amherst through its period of rapid expansion in the late 1960s and early 1970s. After graduate study (PhD 1954) and appointment to the faculty at the University of Iowa, Bezanson was brought to UMass in 1964 to become Head of the Music Department and helped to expand and reorient the program, recruiting an increasingly accomplished faculty, including his former student Frederick Tillis.

The Bezanson papers include materials relating to the development, performance, and publication of much of Bezanson's musical work, including scores and parts for 46 of his 47 instrumental and vocal compositions. The collection also includes a sampling of correspondence, programs and posters for performances, papers relating to the development of the opera *Golden Child* and his collaboration with Paul, the score of the opera *Stranger in Eden* (libretto by William A. Reardon), and one sound recording.

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Background on Philip T. Bezanson

A native of Athol, Massachusetts, Philip T. Bezanson (1916-1975) graduated from Yale University School of Music in 1940. Following military service during World War II, he enrolled in the graduate program in musical composition at the University of Iowa studying under David Stanley Smith, Richard Donovan and Philip Greely Clapp. Bezanson joining the faculty at Iowa in 1948, three years prior to completing his PhD, and rose through the ranks quickly thereafter, becoming head of the program in musical composition in 1954 and earning promotion to full professor in 1961.

As UMass Amherst launched into its period of rapid growth in the 1960s, Bezanson was hired by President John Lederle to oversee the reformation and growth of the Department of Music. Named head of the Music Department in 1964, he helped guide the increasing professionalization and expansion of the department until 1973, when he returned to full-time teaching. He died in 1975 at the age of 59.

Bezanson was active as a composer, particularly from 1946 through 1975, and he received several awards, including the prestigious Fromm Foundation award for his piano sonata in 1953. He also received a number of commissions, notably in 1953 from Dimitri Mitropoulos for a piano concerto, and in 1960 for the score to the opera "*Golden Child*", which was performed on national television on the Hallmark Theatre. In addition to his activities as a composer and teacher of music, Bezanson was active in the Music Teacher's National Association.

Bezanson received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1971 and a Distinguished Alumni Award from Yale in 1974. The Bezanson Recital Hall in the Fine Arts Center of the University of Massachusetts Campus is named in his honor.

Scope of collection

Materials relating to the development, performance, and publication of a number of Bezanson's compositions, including scores and parts for 46 of his 47 instrumental and vocal compositions, correspondence, programs and posters for performances of his works, papers relating to the development of the opera *Golden Child*, on which he collaborated with Paul Engle and which was performed on national television, score of the opera *Stranger in Eden*, with libretto by William A. Reardon, and other papers.

Sound recordings for Bezanson's works can be found in the University Archives, Record Group 185. Others exist and are shelved among the holdings in the Music Library, W.E.B. Du Bois Library.

Voice and instrumental parts for at least one of Dr. Bezanson's works are in the Music Library of the University of Iowa.

Arrangement

This collection is organized into two series:

Series 1. Papers, 1951-1980

Series 2. Scores, 1946-1975

Series descriptions

Series 1. Papers

1951-1980

This series is arranged topically, and the folders are filed alphabetically by topic, except for the inventory folder, filed first, and miscellaneous materials, filed last.

Includes clippings of newspaper articles about performances of Dr. Bezanson's works and some correspondence relating to performances, publication or copyrights of his works. In a few cases, he drafted replies on the versos of incoming letters. In addition, there are programs and posters for musical performances which included one or another of Dr. Bezanson's works,

and material relating to several of his vocal works, most notably the opera *Golden Child* and its earlier version, *Western Child* in which he collaborated with the poet Paul Engle. These materials include several versions of the libretto and show some of the development of that text. Included also are an early synopsis of the opera's plot, sketches of its melody lines, and schedules for its rehearsal prior to its television performance.

Two fragments of musical revisions, detached from unknown scores, and thirteen unlabeled music notebook sheets are in folder 20. Two oversized items are filed as the first two items' in box 2.

Materials relating to the late Professor Howard M. Lebow, and the scholarship fund in his name, and to the second concert to benefit that fund, have been either removed to the Lebow and scholarship files of the Archives or destroyed.

Series 2. Scores

1946-1975

Titles have been standardized as much as possible, favoring the cover page version, and are listed in alphabetical order.

The earliest of the 47 scores in this series dates from 1946, and most of the 37 scores for which there is an indication of the date were completed over the 25-year period from 1951 through 1975. The ten undated works appear to have been written between 1946 and 1956. One of the composer's works, *Saint Judas*, is known to have been retained by the donor. Two lists of the composer's works (see Series I, folder 7), one chronological and the other analytical and incomplete, vary somewhat in the titles given the works, and both often vary from the name given on the cover page of the score itself.

The series contains eleven works with vocal parts, including two operas. The lyrics for four of the works, including one of the operas, were provided by Paul Engle. Lyricists and sources of lyrics for vocal works are: the Bible (11), William Blake (8, 37), Paul Engle (20, 26, 28, 36; See also Series 1), Keith Gunderson (8), Robert Herrick (8), Joseph Langland (22), Abraham Lincoln (21), Christopher Marlowe (44), and William Reardon (38).

Although most of the scores are in the form of copies photoreproduced from holograph scores, there are nine holographs and three published scores in this series. Many scores include more or less extensive annotations, presumably those of the composer. Doubtless many of them were meant only to clarify or to emphasize musical points for the benefit of the performer or conductor, but there are a number of instances of changes in musical lines, and there are several instances of rather extensive revisions of music which were reproduced and pasted or attached by transparent tape over the text to be revised.

Citations show the most complete and standard name of the work, its date and performance time where found, and, for vocal works, the name of the lyricist; under each title the kinds of scores and instrumental parts or reductions and the number of copies of each part in the Papers are listed. There are some 389 copies of scores and parts in the collection, and additional photocopies of parts. Where appropriate, indications of the composer's changes and annotations are noted. Unless otherwise indicated, all parts are reproduced from holograph scores.

Voice and instrumental parts for "Song of the Cedar" are in the Music library of the University of Iowa.

Inventory

Series 1. Papers

1951-1980

Inventory

Box 1: 1

Biographical: Vita, clips

1959-1964

Box 1: 2

Biographical: Clips

1965-1975

Box 1: 3

News Releases

1954-1973

Box 1: 3A

Copyrights, contracts

1956-1962

Box 1: 4
Correspondence: General musical
1956-1964

Box 1: 5
Correspondence: American Composers' Alliance
1960-1964

Box 1: 6
Lists of works
1946-1975

Box 1: 7
Programs and posters
1956-1964

Box 1: 8
Programs and posters
1964-1980

Box 1: 9
Works: Requiem for the State University of Iowa Dead
1956

Box 1: 10
Works: Golden Child - rehearsal schedule
1960

Box 1: 11
Works: Golden Child - libretto no. 1
1960

Box 1: 12
Works: Golden Child - libretto no. 2
1960

Box 1: 13
Works: Golden Child - libretto revisions
1960

Box 1: 14
Works: Golden Child - libretto, mimeo
1960

Box 1: 15
Works: Western Child - vita [1856], correspondence, libretto and music
1960

Box 1: 16
Works: Western Child - libretto no. 1
1959, 1960

Box 1: 17
Works: Western Child - libretto no. 2
1959, 1960

Box 1: 18
Works: Dies Domini Magnus (Great Day of the Lord)
1971

Box 1: 19
Works: fragments, unlabeled
n.d.

Box 1: 20
Miscellaneous
n.d.

Box 1: 21
Poster for concert of "Friday, April 25
n.d.

Box 2: 22
Certificate of appointment to Massachusetts Council on Arts and Humanities
1966-1967

Box 2: 23
Series 2. Scores

1946-1975

Anniversary overture for concert band (for the 75th anniversary of the State University of Iowa Concert Band). 7 minutes 30 seconds. Full score, annotated.

1956

Box 2: 1

Brass sextet. Three movements. 6.8 minutes, or 8-9 minutes. Full score and parts for 2 trumpets, 2 horns, 2 trombones. Full score gives one time, and one of the parts, another.

c. 1974

Box 2: 2

Capriccio concertante. Three movements. 16 minutes. Full score (annotated) and parts for 1st flute and piccolo, 2nd flute, 1st oboe, 2nd oboe, 1st bassoon; 2nd bassoon, 1st clarinet, 2nd clarinet, bass clarinet, 1st horn, 2nd horn, 1st trumpet, 2nd trumpet, 1st trombone, 2nd trombone, bass trombone, timpani, snare drum, and triangle, xylophone, 4 bass- 6 cello- 5 viola, 8 1st violin, and 8 2nd violin. For first movement only, 2 full scores and parts for 3 bass, 5 cello 3 viola-, 8 1st violin and 8 2nd violin (annotated). 80 parts in all.

1967

Box 2-3: 3

Children's suite for piano, [for?] James Stratton. Five movements. Score.

ca 1946

Box 3: 4

Church sonatina for organ. Three movements. 12 minutes. Holograph score, annotated.

1946

Box 3: 5

Concertino for oboe and string orchestra. 7 minutes. Full score and part for piano.

1969

Box 3: 6

Concerto for piano and orchestra, to Dimitri Mitropoulos. Three movements. 22 minutes. Full score and parts for piano, 1st flute, 2nd flute, piccolo, 1st oboe, 2nd oboe, 1st clarinet, 2nd clarinet, bass clarinet, 1st bassoon, 2nd bassoon, contra bassoon, 1st horn, 2nd horn, 3rd horn, 4th horn, 1st trumpet, 2nd trumpet, 3rd trumpet, 1st trombone, 2nd trombone, 3rd trombone, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum/cymbal, 9 1st violin, 9 2nd violin, 6 viola, 6 cello and 4 bass. All parts annotated. 60 parts in all.

1952 (revised, 1960)

Box 3: 7

Contrasts for voice and piano. Lyrics by Robert Herrick, Keith Gunderson and William Blake. 5 minutes. Full score, 2 copies. Both copies annotated.

1966

Box 4: 8

Cyrano de Bergerac overture. 6.5 minutes. Full score and parts for 2 1st flute, 2nd flute, piccolo, 1st oboe, 2nd oboe, 1st clarinet, 2nd clarinet, 1st bassoon, 2nd bassoon, 1st horn, 2nd horn, 3rd horn, 4th horn, 1st trumpet, 2nd trumpet, 3rd trumpet, 1st trombone, 2nd trombone, 3rd trombone, tuba, timpani, 8 1st violin, 8 2nd violin, 6 viola, 5 cello, 5 double bass. Nearly all parts are annotated. 55 parts in all.

n.d.

Box 4: 9

Dance Scherzo for small orchestra. Full score.

n.d.

Box 4: 10

Dies Domini Magnus. Text from the Bible. 7 minutes 20 seconds. Full score and part for piano.

1971

Box 4: 11

See also Series I, folder 19.

Diversion for brass trio. Three movements. 9 minutes. Full 1967 score and parts for trumpet, horn, trombone.

1967, 1968

Box 4: 12

Divertimento for eight wind instruments. Three movements. Full Holograph score and parts for flute, oboe, 1st clarinet, 2nd clarinet, 1st horn, 2nd horn, 1st bassoon, 2nd bassoon.

n.d.

Box 4: 13

Divertimento for organ, brass and timpani. Two movements. 9 minutes. Full score and parts for 1st trumpet, 2nd trumpet, 1st trombone, 2nd trombone, timpani.

1966

Box 5: 14

Duo for cello and piano. Three movements. 12 minutes 30 seconds. Full score and part for cello.

1965

Box 5: 15

Fantasy, fugue and finale for string orchestra. Three movements. 12 minutes. Full score and parts for 4 1st violin, 4 2nd violin, 3 viola, 3 cello, 2 bass. All parts annotated.

1951

Box 5: 16

Five miniatures for clarinet and cello. 6 minutes. Full score.

1969

Box 5: 17

Four bagatelles for violin and piano. 8 minutes 30 seconds. Full score and part for violin.

1969

Box 5: 18

Four pieces for Carol for piano. Full score.

n.d.

Box 5: 19

Golden child (opera in 3 acts). Text by Paul Engle. Act I: full scores for scenes 1 and 2, parts for voices for scene 1, and for scene 2. Act II: full score and part for voices. Act III: full score and part for voices. 8 parts in all. Also loose photocopies of voice parts. Some parts annotated. Western child (earlier version of Golden child). Full score showing some of the revisions.

1960

Box 6-7: 20

See also Series I, folders 11-18.

Great day of the Lord:

Box 6-7

See **Dies Domini Magnus**

Homage to great Americans:

Box 6-7

See **Woodwind quintet**

Memory. Text by Abraham, Lincoln. (For UMass Chamber Singers). 7 minutes. Full score, full holograph score and parts for 1st horn, 2nd horn, 3rd horn, 4th horn, 1st violin, 2nd violin, cello.

1975

Box 7: 21

Morning, noon, evening. Text by Joseph Langland. (For UMass Chorale). Full score for choir a cappella.

1966

Box 7: 22

Petite suite for woodwind septet. 7 minutes. Full score, holograph score.

1973

Box 7: 23

Piano trio. 14 minutes. Full score and parts for violin, cello.

1964

Box 7: 24

Prelude and dance for brass sextet. (Score and parts published by Interlocken Press). 7.5 minutes. Full score and parts for 1st trumpet, 2nd trumpet, horn, 1st trombone, 2nd trombone, tuba.

1961

Box 7: 25

Requiem for the University of Iowa dead. Text by Paul Engle. 6 minutes. Score.

1955

Box 7: 26

See also Series 1, folder 15.

Rondo-prelude for orchestra. 8 minutes. Full score, annotated.

1954

Box 8: 27

Seven songs from the word of love. Text by Paul Engle. (Robber, Cornered, Night scene, Grass, Fight, City and Felon). 15 minutes. Full score.
1956
Box 8: 28
Sextette for woodwinds and piano. 15 minutes. Full score and parts for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn.
1956
Box 8: 29
Sinfonia concertante. (Commissioned by the School of Music, University of Iowa, for the dedication of the Philip Greely Clapp Recital Hall). 14 minutes. Full score.
1971
Box 8: 30
Sonata for piano. 15 minutes. 2 copies of full score and holograph score, both annotated.
1951
Box 8: 31
Sonata for violin. Full score and part for violin.
n.d.
Box 8: 33
Sonata for violin and piano, No. 2. 15 minutes. Full score and part for violin. Annotated.
1953
Box 8: 34
Sonatina for clarinet and piano. 12 minutes. Full score, holograph score and part for clarinet (2 versions). Clarinet parts are annotated.
1955
Box 8: 35
Song of the Cedar. Text by Paul Engle. 30 minutes. Holograph full score and camera-ready piano and vocal score.
1958
Box 9: 36
Songs of innocence, six texts by William Blake. 15 minutes. Full score and parts for voice and piano, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, 1st horn, 2nd horn, double bass, 4 violins, 2 violas, cello.
1959
Box 9: 37
Stranger in Eden. Text by William Reardon, in 3 acts. 3 hours, 15 minutes. Act I: voice. Act II: full score and part for voice. Act III: full score and part for voice. Instrumental parts for 1st flute, 2nd flute and piccolo, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, 1st horn, 2nd horn, 1st trumpet, 2nd trumpet, 1st trombone, 2nd trombone, percussion, timpani. Also camera-ready copies of voices for Act I, Act II and Act III. 27 parts in all.
1963
Box 10-12A-D: 38
String quartet No. 1. Published by Theodore Presser. Published full score and parts for 1st violin, 2nd violin, viola, cello. Also processed copies of parts for 1st violin, 2nd violin, viola, cello.
1962
Box 13: 39
String quartet in C. Full score and parts for 1st violin, 2nd violin, viola, cello.
n.d.
Box 13: 40
String trio. 12 minutes. Full score and parts for 2 violin, 2 viola, 2 cello. One copy of each part is annotated. Holdings include both original and copy of score.
1953
Box 13: 41
Symphony in B. Holograph score.
n.d.
Box 14: 42
Symphony No. 2. Full score.
n.d.
Box 14: 43
That time may cease and midnight never come. Text by Christopher Marlowe. Full score and parts for voice and piano.
1968
Box 14: 44
Three pieces for piano, for John Simms (prelude, rondo, sonatina in one movement). Score and holograph score for prelude and rondo; score for sonatina.

n.d.
Box 14: 45
Trio for clarinet, horn and piano. 10 minutes 30 seconds. Full score and parts for clarinet, horn. Annotated.
1966
Box 14: 46
Woodwind quintet: homage to great Americans. In four movements: Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Paine, George Washington. 20 minutes. Full score and parts for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn. Annotated.
1958
Box 14: 47
Woodwind quintet: In three movements. Parts for flute, oboe, clarinet in Bb, bassoon, and horn in F.
n.d.
Box 14: 48

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Lillian Bezanson, 1975.

Related Material

Sound recordings for Bezanson's works can be found in the University Archives, Record Group 185. Others exist and are shelved among the holdings in the Music Library, W.E.B. Du Bois Library. (Use the Library Catalog to locate titles.). Voice and instrumental parts for at least one of Dr. Bezanson's works are in the Music Library of the University of Iowa.

Processing Information

Processed by W. B. Cook, Jr., November 1981.

Language:

English

Acknowledgments

Encoding funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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Cite as: Philip T. Bezanson Papers (RG 40/11 Bezanson). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

Bezanson, Philip T., 1916-1975.
Composers--Massachusetts.
University of Massachusetts Amherst--Faculty.
University of Massachusetts Amherst. Department of Music.

Contributors

Bezanson, Philip T., 1916-1975 [main entry]

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