

Francis W. Richter collection, circa 1895-2017

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Richter, Francis W. (Francis William), 1888-1938
Title	Francis W. Richter collection
Dates	circa 1895-2017 (inclusive) 1895 2017 circa 1895-1938 (bulk) 1895 1938
Quantity	4.5 cubic feet, (3 document cases and 10 flat boxes)
Collection Number	Coll 584
Summary	The papers, photographs, and music scores of Francis W. Richter.
Repository	Oregon Historical Society, Davies Family Research Library Davies Family Research Library Oregon Historical Society 1200 SW Park Avenue Portland, OR 97205 Telephone: 503-306-5240 Fax: 503-219-2040 libreference@ohs.org
Access Restrictions	The collection is open to the public.
Languages	English, German

Biographical Note

Francis William Richter was born in 1888 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Frederick William and Carolina Lena F. Richter. The family moved to Portland, Oregon during Francis' childhood, and it was there that Frederick Richter, a violinist, served as musical director of Cordray's Theater Orchestra.

Although blind from birth, Francis Richter demonstrated considerable musical talent at a young age, and he became known in Portland for his ability to perform classical pieces and his own original work on the piano. In 1907, Mrs. Alma Rogers successfully led a fundraising effort to sponsor Richter's musical training in Vienna, and accompanied him during his 3 years of study in Europe. It was during this time that he mastered the use of a Braille machine to write text and music (he had previously composed works via dictation). After receiving a doctorate, Richter returned to Portland, and performed both locally and throughout the United States and Canada. He also taught piano, organ, and composition.

Following a brief marriage without children, he became reacquainted with his childhood friend Clara Rahn. The two developed a romance and married in September 1922. In 1924, the couple moved from Portland to Minnesota, where Richter continued to perform and teach, and served as the staff organist for Minneapolis radio station KSTP.

In 1938 Francis Richter and his wife moved to southern California with the intention that he would begin a career writing film soundtracks. However, Richter died suddenly on December 25, 1938 in Pasadena, California. He was buried at the Crystal Lake Cemetery in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Content Description

The collection primarily consists of sheet music written by Francis W. Richter. Included are the scores for Richter's comic opera "The Grand Nazar," his orchestral works "Symphonie in C Minor" and "Tone Pictures," and shorter works. The collection also contains the sheet music for other composers' works, including a braille transcription of Camille Saint-Saën's "The Swan." Additional materials in the collection include letters from Richter to his then-fiancée and future wife Clara Rahn, an account of Richter's 1929 trip to New York, concert programs, photographs, newspaper clippings, and scrapbooks.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

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Preferred Citation

Francis W. Richter collection, Coll 584, Oregon Historical Society Research Library.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in the following series:

- Series A: Biographical information
- Series B: Correspondence and personal accounts
- Series C: Musical scores
- Series D: Other papers and ephemera
- Series E: Photographs
- Series F: Scrapbooks

Acquisition Information

Lib. Acc. 29008.

Processing Note

Collection was processed by Susan Armitage.

Separated Materials

Francis W. Richter collection, circa 1895-2017
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv69107>

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series A : Biographical information , 1949-2017

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/1	Biographical sketch by Mary Sue Waser and Karen K. French	2017
1/2	Xeroxes and printouts concerning Richter	circa 2017
1/3	Student essay, "Francis Richter, the Musical Genius" English class paper by Willamette University student Ron Symons, whose grandmother had been Richter's neighbor. Includes a letter from Symons to Clara Rahn Richter.	1949 April 25- May 11

Series B : Correspondence and personal accounts , 1921-1938

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/4	Francis Richter, Diary of trip to New York Typed account by Richter about his trip to see a performance of Wagner's Ring Cycle.	1929 January
1/5	Letters from Richter to Clara Rahn	1921 July
1/6	Letters from Richter to Clara Rahn	1921 August
1/7	Letters from Richter to Clara Rahn	1921 September
1/8	Letters from Richter to Clara Rahn	1921 October- November
1/9	Letters from Richter to Clara Rahn	1922 January- April
2/1	Letters from Richter to Clara Rahn	1922 June-July

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1/10	Letters from Richter to Clara Rahn	1922 August
1/11	Letter from Richter to neice, re move to California	1938 November 23

Series C : Musical Scores , circa 1906-1920

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	Subseries 1 : Symphonie in C Minor	circa 1916
Box/Folder		
3/5	Orchestral score	
3/1	Principal violin score	
3/2-3/4	First violin scores	
4/1-4/3	Second violin scores	
4/4-4/6	Viola scores	
4/7-4/8	Cello scores	
5/1	Bass scores	
5/2	Flute and oboe scores	
5/3	Clarinet scores	
5/4	Bassoon/contrabassoon scores	
5/5	Trumpet scores	
5/6	French horn scores Cover of scores label instruments as "Corno I-II."	
5/7	Trombone and tuba scores	
5/8	Harp, timpani, and cymbal scores	

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	Subseries 2 : "The Grand Nazar"	circa 1906
Box/Folder		
6/1	Overture and songs Comic opera composed by Richter, with words by George L. Hutchin.	
6/2	First and second violin scores	
6/3	Viola and cello scores	
6/4	Bass scores	
7/1	Clarinet scores	
7/2	Oboe and bassoon scores	
7/3	Flute scores	
7/4	Trombone scores	
7/5	Cornet scores	
7/6	Horn scores	
7/7	Timpani scores	
	Subseries 3 : "Tone Pictures"	
Box/Folder		
8/1-8/2	First violin scores	
8/3-8/4	Second violin scores	
8/5	Viola scores	
8/6	Cello scores	
8/7	Basso scores	

Container(s)	Description	Dates
8/8	Flute scores	
8/9	Bassoon scores	
8/10	Clarinet scores	
8/11	Oboe scores	
8/12	Horn scores	
8/13	Trumpet scores	
8/14	Trombone scores	
8/15	Timpani and drum scores	
8/16	Harp score	
8/17	Conductor's score	
Box/Folder		
9/1	"Annie Rooney" scores	undated
9/2	"At the Shrine of the Rose"	circa 1920
9/3	March, "Don Quixote" Score for band.	undated
9/4	March, "Grotesque"	1910 November
9/5	"Memory"	circa 1912
9/6	"My Beloved"	undated
9/7	Overture, "Pilgrimage - Progress and Vision"	undated
9/8	"Quinlette"	undated
9/9	"Reponse a une Fluer pour Pinaforte"	undated
9/10	Waltzes, "Sounds from the Willamette"	undated

Container(s)	Description	Dates
10/1	Song arrangements	undated
Subseries 4 : Music by others		
<i>Box/Folder</i>		
10/2	Beethoven, Third Piano concerto scores	
10/3	Ede Poldini, "Marche Mignon" Transcribed by Richter for orchestra.	
10/4	Camille Saint-Saëns, "The Swan," piano score Transcription in braille by Richter.	
10/5	F. Waliczek, text "Herakles am Scheidewege"	1912
10/6	Miscellaneous sheet music by other composers	
10/7	German song texts	

Series D : Other documents and ephemera , 1912-1947

Container(s)	Description	Dates
<i>Box/Folder</i>		
10/8	Certificates from the American Guild of Organists	1918, 1919
1/13	Twin City Radio Weekly	1931 January 31
1/14	Memorial program for Dr. Franics Richter by Marjorie Ellis McCrady	1938 December 30
1/15	Memorial concerts	1940, 1947
1/16	Loose newspaper clippings	circa 1924-1938

Series E : Photographs , circa 1895-1938

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/17	Richter as a child	circa 1895-1898
Box 13	Richter as a child Glass-mounted photograph. Access to this item is restricted; facsimile in 1/17.	circa 1898
1/18	Concert program with photograph	1921
1/19, 2/2	Richter as a young man	circa 1907-1921
1/20	Richter as an older man	circa 1930-1938

Series F : Scrapbooks , circa 1898-1925

Contain newspaper articles, concert programs, photographs, etc.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
Box 12	Scrapbook	circa 1895-1909
Box 11	Scrapbook	1909-circa 1925

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Blind--Oregon--Portland

Composers--Oregon--Portland

Personal Names :

Richter, Francis W. (Francis William), 1888-1938--Archives

Richter, Francis W. (Francis William), 1888-1938--Photographs

Geographical Names :

Portland (Or.)--Composers

Form or Genre Terms :

Clippings (information artifacts)

Correspondence

Photographs

Printed ephemera

Scores

Scrapbooks

Sheet music

Other Creators :

Personal Names :

French, Karen K.

(creator)

McCrary, Marjorie Ellis

(creator)

Symons, Ron

(creator)

Waser, Mary Sue

(creator)

Finding aid prepared by Jeffrey A. Hayes
2017



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