

GUIDE
TO THE
JEAN BERGER
COLLECTION

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Music Library

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BIOGRAPHY OF JEAN BERGER

Jean Berger, composer and conductor, was born in Hamm, Germany, September 27, 1909. The son of Orthodox Jews, he grew up in Alsace-Lorraine and attended the universities of Heidelberg and Vienna. He studied musicology with Egon Wellesz and Heinrich Bessler, and received his PhD in musicology in 1931 from Heidelberg.

After serving briefly as assistant conductor at the Darmstadt Opera (1932-1933), he was forced to flee Nazi Germany in 1933. He moved to Paris, France, and studied composition and orchestration with Louis Aubert and Pierre Capdevielle. He also conducted Les Compagnons de la Marjolaine, a mixed choir, while in Paris. In 1937, his choral work *Le sang des autres* won first prize at an international competition in Zurich.

For several years Berger toured Europe and the near East as pianist and concert accompanist. In Brazil, he was assistant conductor and coach at the Teatro Municipal and also taught for two years at the Conservatorio Brasileiro de Musica in Rio de Janeiro.

In 1941, he moved to the United States and became a citizen in 1943. During the war he served with the U.S. Army and produced foreign language broadcasts for the Office of War Information. In addition, he toured with the USO Camp Shows in all theatres of war. Subsequently, he spent two years as arranger, accompanist, and coach with the CBS and NBC networks.

He served on the faculty of Middlebury College in Vermont beginning in 1948 and then moved to the University of Illinois as assistant professor of music from 1959-1961. From 1961-1968, he joined the music faculty at the University of Colorado. In 1964 he founded the John Sheppard Music Press in Boulder, and later Denver, Colorado. As a musicologist, he has edited several 17th century works and has written on the Italian composer, Giacomo Perti.

Berger's compositions have been extensively performed by leading choral and orchestral organizations in Europe and the United States. His choral works constitute the bulk of his compositions, where he avoids an academic style, preferring a pragmatic blend of Franco-German folk music, South American melody and rhythm, and polyphonic modality. *Brazilian Psalm* (1941) has entered the standard American choral repertory, and it remains Berger's most popular composition.

Jean Berger died May 28, 2002, in Denver, Colorado.

**Guide to the
Jean Berger
Collection**

Series I: Music arranged alphabetically by title

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Series II: Scrapbooks

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Scrapbook 1935 – 1970

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Scrapbook 1971 – 1976

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Scrapbook 1976 – 2002

Series III: Personal Papers

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- Fd 1 Photos – Berger, Jean and Family
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- Fd 3 Programs, Flyers, Posters 1951 – 2002
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- Fd 7 Writings – About Jean Berger
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Series IV: Student Dissertations and Theses

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- Book 1 Linne, Mary Jane. "An Analysis of Three Fables by Jean Berger: a work appropriate to Middle School Choral Education." University of Montana, Master of Music Education, 1986.
- Book 2 MacNeill, Roger. "Secular Choral Chamber Music in America since 1950, as represented by the music for this genre by Samuel Adler, Jean Berger, Eugene Butler, and Kirke Mechem." University of Northern Colorado, Doctor of Arts, 1986.
- Book 3 Shuman, Philip L. "A Stylistic Analysis of Selected Solo Vocal Works by Jean Berger." University of Northern Colorado, Doctor of Arts, 1989.
- Book 4 Smith, Merrie Melanie. "Jean Berger: His Life and Musical Compositions for the Solo Voice—a Performance Project." University of Maryland, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2001.

Series V: Audio/Visual Material

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Video

- Video 1 "Cherry Tree Carol," Dec. 17, 1989
- Video 2 "Stories, a chamber opera" by Michael Kallstrom
- Video 3 "Recital of Psalms and Alleluias" by Billye Brown Youmans, Soprano, Jan. 31, 1999.
- Video 4 "Jean Berger Concert" with Jean Berger (commentary) and members of Zeta Zeta Chapter of Delta Omicron Intern'l. Music Fraternity (pianist), Mar. 18, 1986, First Plymouth Congregational Church, Denver, CO.

Reel-to-Reel Tape

- Tape 1 "Double Concerto" (Martineau?) possibly Berger a performer.

DAT Tape

- Tape 2 Berger/Debussy/Grieg/Hebert, et al by Jeff Foote, Nov. 8, 1995.

Series V: Audio/Visual Material (cont.)

Box 40 (cont.)

Compact Disc (CD)

- CD 5 “Homage to Jean Berger” University of Colorado, Grusin Music Hall,
September 27, 1998. Includes the following:
- Remarks by Daniel Sher, Dean
 - From Portugal: Apalpei o lado esquerdo
Chamas me tua vida
Bailemos nos tre
 - Tres Canciones: Ninguno Cierre Las Puertas
Ay Triste, Que Vengo
Ya Cantan Los Gallos
 - Villanescas: Madrecica
Mariquita
Callejon
Despechado
 - Two Vocalises
 - Amoretti: He that loves a rosy cheek
My love is like to ice
Fain would I love
Face that should content me wonderous well
I prithee send me back my heart

Artifacts

Pied Piper figurines (3 figurines and mirror)