LYDA BAGRIANSKY GEIST AND EDWIN GEIST COLLECTION, 1919-2013
2013.503.2

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
Washington, DC  20024-2126
Tel. (202) 479-9717
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Descriptive summary

Title: Lyda Bagriansky Geist and Edwin Geist collection

Dates: 1919-2013

Accession number: 2013.503.2

Creator: Zerner, Rosian Bagriansky

Extent: 5 boxes, 2 oversize folders (3 linear feet)

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW, Washington, DC 20024-2126

Abstract: Manuscript musical scores, biographical documents, newspaper articles, photographs, correspondence, concert programs, and audio recordings and video recordings of performances of the work of composer Edwin Geist. The collection largely consists of original and copied manuscript musical scores of Geist’s work, as well as recordings and documents from performances of Geist’s works between 1973 and 2012. The material in this collection was assembled by Rosian Bagriansky Zerner, the niece of Edwin Geist, and her father, Paul Bagriansky, whose sister was married to Geist.

Languages: German, English, Lithuania, Russian

Administrative Information

Access: Collection is open for use, but is stored offsite. Please contact the Reference Desk more than seven days prior to visit in order to request access.

Reproduction and use: Collection is available for use. Material may be protected by copyright. Please contact reference staff for further information.

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Lyda Bagriansky Geist and Edwin Geist collection (2013.503.2), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

https://collections.ushmm.org
Acquisition information: Gift of Rosian Zerner, 2013

Custodial history: These materials were collected by Rosian Zerner, and included material given to her by her father, or acquired by her during her participation in events to commemorate Geist between 2000 and 2013. However, the musical scores of Geist’s works came from two different sources: the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin and the Lietuvos Teatro, Muzikos ir Kino Muziejos (Lithuanian Theatre, Music, and Cinema Museum) in Vilnius. Originals that were on deposit at the former institution were transferred to Zerner in early 2014, and she in turn donated them to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Originals held by the latter institution were collected by the conductor Juozas Domarkas and later placed at that institution, and remain there, with copies provided to Zerner.

Existence and location of originals: Although most of the material in this collection is original, the copied musical scores listed in section II.b. of the inventory (“Copies: Lithuania”) are held by the Lietuvos Teatro, Muzikos ir Kino Muziejos,
Vilnius g. 41
LT-01119 Vilnius, Lithuania
Tel.: (8 5) 2622406
Web: http://www.ltmkm.lt/
E-mail: ltmkm@takas.lt

Related archival materials: The Lyda Bagriansky Geist and Edwin Geist collection is a component of the Rosian Zerner collection (2013.503), which also contains the Bagriansky family papers (2013.503.1), which contains material from Geist’s brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Paul and Gerta Bagriansky, and his niece, Rosian Bagriansky Zerner. A copy of Geist’s book about Lithuanian folk music, Antikes und Modernes im Litauischen Volkmusik, can be found in the USHMM Library.

Accruals: Accruals may have been received since this collection was first processed, see archives catalog at collections.ushmm.org for further information.

Processing history: Brad Bauer, September-November 2014

Biographical note

Edwin Ernst Moritz Geist (1902-1942) was a German composer, originally from Berlin, who moved to Kaunas, Lithuania after he was expelled by the Nazis from the Reichsmusikkammer (Reich Music Chamber) in 1937. After arriving in Lithuania, Geist married the pianist Lyda Bagriansky, in 1938, and experienced his most productive period as a composer during the next several years, creating the opera "Die Heimkehr des Dionysos" (1934-1939), "Kleine Deutsche Totenmesse" (1940), and "Kosmischer Frühling" (1941). Geist also became interested in the study of Lithuanian folk music, and in 1940 published Antikes und Modernes im Litauischen Volkmusik (Kaunas: Pribacis, 1940). After the German invasion of Lithuania in 1941, Geist and his wife Lyda were imprisoned at the Ninth Fort in Kaunas, where Geist was held until he was released through the intervention of friends in March 1942. Geist sought to obtain the release of Lyda, but he was rearrested several months later and was shot on 10 December 1942. After learning of his death, Lyda took her own life as well. Geist's music was rediscovered in Lithuania in the 1970s, and "Die Heimkehr des Dionysos" had its premiere in Vilnius in 2002. His works have been performed in Germany, Lithuania, and the United States in the years since.
**Scope and content of collection**

The collection consists largely of material about Geist that was collected by his brother-in-law, Paul Bagriansky, in the 1970s, and his niece, Rosian Bagriansky Zerner, in the 1990s and 2000s, as well as musical scores of Geist’s works. Included are copies of biographical documents about Geist, including articles about Geist that had appeared in publications in the Soviet Union in the 1970s, and which Paul Bagriansky translated, as well as materials compiled by Geist’s biographer, Reinhard Kaiser, in the 2000s. Also included are concert programs, fliers, and photographs related to the performance of Geist’s works in Lithuania, Germany, and the United States between 2002 and 2012. The one original document from Geist—in addition to the musical scores—is a postcard that he sent in August 1941 to his aunt, Else Bormann, who at the time was staying in Marquartstein, Bavaria. Geist alludes to his work as a composer, which has taken over all other writing at this time, and notes that Lyda was working on “Lietukis” now that the two had finished their summer vacation.

The largest component of this collection is the selection of musical scores of Geist’s work, which originated from two sources. Earlier compositions had been held until recently by the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz), and were returned to Rosian Zerner in 2013, who then donated them to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The remaining scores are copies of those that had been obtained by Lithuanian composer Juozas Domarkas, and which he donated to the Lithuanian Museum of Theatre, Music and Cinema (Lietuvos Teatro, Muzikos ir Kino Muziejos) in Vilnius. The scores are arranged according to provenance, with the original scores from Berlin arranged separately from the copies of material held in Lithuania. A third series of scores, duplicates from the previous two sets of scores, were likely copied for performances between 2002-2008, and also contain some transcriptions of the scores completed in that latter year. The scores from Berlin and Lithuania are largely arranged in chronological order by year of composition, with the scores from Berlin also containing the identification numbers used by the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

In addition to the scores, the collection contains sound recordings and DVD recordings of performances of Geist’s work, from the first performance conducted by Juozas Domarkas in Vilnius in 1973, to performances of his work in the United States between 2008 and 2013. Also included are recordings of radio interviews in Germany with Geist’s biographer, Reinhard Kaiser.

**System of arrangement**

The collection is arranged in three series: I. Biographical and Performances, II. Scores, and III. Sound recordings and moving image materials. The second series (Scores) is further divided into three subseries: A. Manuscript (Berlin), B. Copies (Lithuania), and C. Performances, 2002-2008.

**Indexing terms**

*Personal names*
Geist, Edwin, 1902-1942.

*Topical headings*
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Lithuania--Kaunas.
Jewish composers--Lithuania.
Jewish composers--Germany.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Lithuania--Kaunas.
Songs, German.
Songs, Lithuanian.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Geographical headings
Kaunas (Lithuania)
CONTAINER LIST

I. BIOGRAPHICAL AND PERFORMANCES

1 1 Archival documents about Geist (copies and correspondence with archives), 2000
   Articles about Geist
   1 2 The Unfinished Song [translation from Russian by Paul Bagriansky of an
   article about Edwin Geist that originally appeared in Pravda in
   1976
   1 3 I Live in You [translation from Russian by Paul Bagriansky of an article about
   Edwin Geist that appeared in Komsomolskaia Pravda, 1978
   1 4 Biographical material about Geist
   1 5 Books about Geist by Reinhard Kaiser, reviews and publicity, 2002-2004
   1 6 Diary: “Tagebuch für Lyda,” photocopy of manuscript, 1942
   1 7 Donation of photographs by Paul Bagriansky to 9th Fort Museum, Kaunas, 1994
   Performances
      1 8 News clippings about Geist
      1 9 Photographs
      1 10 Programs and tickets
      1 11 Boston: Italian National Holocaust Remembrance Day, January 2008
      1 12 Boston: Goethe Institut and Brandeis University, October 2008
      1 13 Boston: Irving Fine Society Singers and Ensemble, 2008-2009
      1 14 Other: Berkeley, CA; Seattle; Frankfurt am Main, 2009-2012
      1 15 Play about Geist: “Slishu muziku” (“I Can Hear Music”), by Jokūbas Skliautauskas and
         Mikolas Jackevičius, 1979-1988. Partial Russian text, with English translation of
         full text.
      1 16 Photographs of Edwin Geist and Lyda Bagriansky Geist, circa 1938-1841
      1 17 Postcard sent by Geist to his aunt, Else Bormann, August 1940

II. SCORES
A. Manuscript (Berlin)

2 1 Faustmusik, Entwürfe, 1919: Handwritten short score, 12 sheets (55 MS 128)
   Gesänge nach Goethes Faust für Chor und Orchester, 1928-1929: Handwritten
   Score, 8 sheets (55 MS 129): Ich heisse der Mangel, Die
   Nacht scheint tiefer, Neige, neige du Ohnegleiche.
   OS 1 Gesänge nach Goethes Faust, “Die Nacht scheint tiefer,” für Chor und
   Orchester, circa 1929: Handwritten score, 11 pages (55 MS 130)
   OS 2 Gesänge nach Goethes Faust, “Die Nacht scheint tiefer,” für Chor und
   Orchester, circa 1929: Handwritten score, 11 pages (55 MS 130)
2 2 Lieder, für Gesang und Klavier, 1940: Manuscript, 8 sheets. “Als es vor Jahr,”
   “Seeballade,” “Dynamik des Frühlings” (55 MS 131)
2 3 Lieder, für Gesang und Klavier, 1939: Manuscript, 5 sheets. “Schwerer Abend,”
   “Gebet,” “Würzel trägt Stamm” (55 MS 132)
2 4 Die Heimkehr des Dionysos, 2 Gesängstücke aus dem ersten Akt, 1934: “Gebet
   Der Apolloneia,” “Teiresias’ Ode an Dionysos” (55 MS 133)
2 5 Die Heimkehr des Dionysos, 1938: Handwritten piano score, 73 sheets
   (55 MS 134)
2 6 Die Heimkehr des Dionysos, 1939: “Tanzpantomime,” arranged for piano, Manuscript, 6 sheets (55 MS 135)

2 7 Die Heimkehr des Dionysos, undated: “Ode des Teiresias,” handwritten piano Score, 5 sheets (55 MS 136)

2 8-9 Die Heimkehr des Dionysos, circa 1940: “Tanzpantomime,” 37 handwritten vocal and instrumental parts, 2 folders (55 MS 137)

B. Copies (Lithuania)

3 1 Adagio für Streichquartett, undated

3 2 Tagesanbruch, 1928

3 3 Ferdinand Meyer, April 1933: “Chor der Toten,” “Schusterlied”

3 4 Der seltsame Abend, May 1933

3 5 Vier Orchesterlieder, January 1936, May-June 1940: “Ich finde dich in allen diesen Dingen” (words: Rainer Maria Rilke), “Schwerer Abend” (words: B. Rutkūnas), “Seeballade” (words: B. Rutkūnas), “Frühlingsdynamik” (words: Benediktas Rutkūnas)

3 6 Apollonisch-dionysische Tanzpantomime, 1939

3 7 Kleine deutsche Totenmesse (Requiem), für Orchester, Sopran- und Tenorsolo, Knabenstimmen und gemischten Chor, September 1940

3 8 Kleine deutsche Totenmesse (Requiem), Piano excerpts, September 1940

3 9 Antaeos overture, sketches, November 1940

3 10 Antaeos, eine Konzert und Ouverture, April-May 1941

3 11 [Aus Litauen?], Introduction and finale, June 1941

3 12 Kosmischer Frühling, aus “Das Tanzlegendchen,” “Bearbeitung für Klavier allein,” February 1942

3 13 Kosmischer Frühling, “aus ‘Das Tanzlegendchen,’ für Violine, Violoncello, und Klavier als Trio bearbeitet,” July 1942

3 14 Fragments, unidentified

Scores (photocopied, smaller format)

Die Heimkehr des Dionysos.

4 1 Duplicate of opera, piano, vocal score; separated by piece. 55 MS 133

4 2 Full piano score, master.

4 3 Libretto

4 4 Ode des Teiresias. 55 MS 136

4 5 Tanzpantomime, orchestra parts. 55 MS 137

4 6 Tanzpantomime, piano transcription. 55 MS 135

4 7 Drei Lieder. Full score plus transcription of “Abbild.”

4 8 Ich finde dich in allen diesen Dingen. Copy plus transcription.

4 9 Thebaner Chor. Transcription

4 10 Kosmischer Frühling. Photocopies.

4 11 Das Tanzlegendchen. Notes and themes.

4 12 Three Lithuanian songs. Piano score, English translation of text.

https://collections.ushmm.org
Faustmusik. Handwritten short score, transcription. 55 MS 128
Gebet. Opera vocal, versions paired with “Arioso” and “Ode to Teiresias.”
Gesänge nach Goethes Faust, für Chor und Orchester. 55 MS 129.
Gesänge nach Goethes Faust, für Chor und Orchester. “Die Nacht scheint tiefer.” 55 MS 130
Der seltsame Abend.

III. Sound recordings and moving image materials (Not Digitized)
“Edwin Geist.” Arno Nadel, hr 2 Kultur, Hessischer Rundfunk. 18 April 2010. CD
“Geben Sie meine Frau frei!” Reinhard Kaiser, hr 2 Kultur, Hessischer Rundfunk, 22 January 2012. CD
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