Descriptive Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Frederick Block Papers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collection ID:</td>
<td>JPB 06-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator:</td>
<td>Block, Frederick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent:</td>
<td>14.5 linear feet (25 boxes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repository:</td>
<td>Music Division.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abstract

The Frederick Block Papers consist primarily of the scores for his music. They also include clippings, programs, correspondence, scripts and photographs.

Administrative Information

Access

Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

Publication Rights

For permission to publish, contact the Chief, Music Division.

Preferred Citation

Frederick Block Papers, JPB 06-21, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Custodial History

The Frederick Block Papers were donated to the Music Division in 2001 by the estate of Anny Nina Block.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2008.
Biographical Note

Frederick Block was born in Vienna on August 30, 1899. He displayed musical talent early and began studying piano and composition at age nine. Initially his parents discouraged him from pursuing a career in music, but after his return from military service in World War I, Block enrolled at the Vienna Conservatory. There he studied composition with Josef Bohuslav Foerster, and later with Hans Gál. The first public performances of his music took place in Vienna in 1922. Through that decade he became more known; his music was heard on radio broadcasts in Prague and Vienna in the late 20s and early 30s.

After first concentrating on smaller forms (string quartets, piano pieces, songs), Block began to write for orchestra and particularly for opera in the 30s. From 1933-1937 he wrote six operas: Platonow, Rauschgold, Samum, Fiore, America and Pan. In later years he composed two more, Schattenspiel and Esther. Block wrote his own libretti, and also tried his hand at writing plays, though none were produced. Samum was produced by the Slovak National Opera in 1936 in Bratislava (one performance was broadcast) and received good reviews and audience response.

Block’s career continued successfully until the Nazi invasion of Austria in 1938, after which he fled to London, where he married his wife. They remained there a year before moving to New York in June 1940. There Block found work as a composer, arranger and orchestrator for radio and music publishers. In 1942 he composed music for the film We Are The Marines. Aside from his commercial work, Block’s artistic output was prolific in the last period of his life. In his New York years he completed the opera Esther, three symphonies, four suites, a piano quintet and other chamber works, piano pieces and songs. Block died on June 1, 1945.
Scope and Content Note

The Frederick Block Papers consist mainly of the scores for Block’s music, almost none of which is published. The scores include operas such as *Samum* and *Rauschgold*; orchestral works such as Block’s three symphonies and the *Viennese Suite*; chamber music; piano, vocal and choral music; and arrangements of the work of other composers, including a setting of Mahler’s *Symphony No. 10* for four-handed piano. Many of the compositions have parts as well as scores. The Papers also include clippings, concert programs, a scrapbook, composition lists, correspondence, play scripts written by Block, and photographic portraits of the composer.

Organization

The collection is organized into three series. They are:

- **Series I: Scores, 1920-1944 and undated**
- **Series II: Professional Papers, 1922-1951**
- **Series III: Oversized Material, 1936-1944 and undated**

Series Descriptions

**Series I: Scores, 1920-1944 and undated**

Arrangement: Alphabetical 22 boxes

The scores are divided into chamber music, operas, orchestral music, piano music, vocal music and arrangements of music by other composers. Most of the scores are unbound ink or pencil manuscripts (bound scores are noted as such); occasionally there are printed scores, but almost none are published. Most of the scores have opus numbers on them; opus numbers for scores without them are derived from a biographical pamphlet in the collection (in Box 23, Folder 4). Some scores have opus numbers which do not match up to the list on that pamphlet.

The largest portion of the scores consists of Block’s eight operas. Each of them has at least the libretto and full orchestral and piano-vocal scores. Two, *Rauschgold* and *Samum*, have orchestral parts as well. Block’s chamber music includes string quartets, piano quartets and quintets, and sonatas for violin, oboe, clarinet and alto saxophone, among other works. The scores for the chamber music usually contain parts as well as full scores. His orchestral music includes four symphonies and several pieces for string orchestra or chamber orchestra. The piano works include a bound collection of early pieces (1927-1932), nocturnes, marches, a few works for four-handed piano and several untitled/unidentified pieces. Block’s vocal music consists primarily of songs and lieder for voice and piano, but also includes *Five Folksongs For Chorus* and three works for voice and orchestra. Block’s arrangements of other composers’ music include a version of Tchaikovsky’s *Dance Of The Sugar Plum Fairy* for four clarinets and transcription of Mahler’s incomplete *Symphony No. 10* for piano, four hands. This series also contains untitled sketches and orphan score pages.
Series II: Professional Papers, 1922-1951 1 box
Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series contains loose clippings and concert programs (some posthumous); a scrapbook containing many more clippings and concert programs from throughout Block’s career; a folder of biographical information, resumes and composition lists; four scripts for plays written by Block (one as co-author); and an article Block wrote for *Chord And Discord* about his transcription for piano of Mahler’s *Symphony No. 10*. There is also a folder of information about the Frederick Block Committee, which was founded by Block’s widow and friends to promote Block’s music following his death. It contains correspondence (some to or from his widow) and publicity material.

Series III: Oversized Material, 1936-1944 and undated 2 boxes
Arrangement: Alphabetical

The oversized material includes photographic portraits of the composer, two posters (one advertising a performance of Block’s opera *Samum*), and orchestral scores. The scores include five pieces by Block and two orchestral transcriptions of music by other composers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Fol</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Adagio For Strings</em>, undated</td>
<td>Full score.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Dance</em>, undated</td>
<td>For piano and unspecified instrument. Full score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Divertimento For Violin, Viola And Cello</em>, Op. 77, 1944</td>
<td>Full score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Impressions For Violin And Piano</em>, Op. 58, 1943</td>
<td>Full score and violin part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>Little Pieces For Flute And Piano</em>, Op. 68, 1943-1944</td>
<td>Full score and reproductions with markings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Piano Quartet</strong>, Op. 21, 1929</td>
<td>For piano, violin, viola and cello.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Full score.</td>
<td>Bound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td><em>Quintet In One Movement</em>, Op. 66, 1944</td>
<td>For string quartet and piano. Full score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td><em>Scherzo For Clarinet And Piano</em>, Op. 7, 1926</td>
<td>Full score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td><em>Sonata For Viola And Piano</em>, Op. 78, 1945</td>
<td>Full score and viola part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>Sonata For Violin And Piano</em>, Op. 28, 1928</td>
<td>Full score (bound) and violin part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td><em>Suite For Cello And Piano</em>, Op. 29, 1931</td>
<td>Full score (bound) and cello part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Suite For Clarinet And Piano</em>, Op. 73, 1944</td>
<td>Full score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Suite For Oboe And Piano</em>, Op. 69, 1944</td>
<td>Full score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Suite For Violin And Piano</em>, Op. 74, 1944</td>
<td>Full score and viola part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Two Trios For Violin, Cello And Piano</strong>, Op. 15 &amp; 16, 1927-1930</td>
<td>Full scores, bound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Violin and cello parts.</td>
<td>For Op. 15 only.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon. Full score.

**Untitled piece for string quartet and piano**, undated
Full score. Incomplete.

**Operas, 1933-1941 and undated**
All libretti by Block.

**America**, Op. 41, 1937-1940

- Libretto.
- Piano-Vocal Scores.
- Bound manuscript.
- Printed, unbound.

**Esther**, Op. 45, 1939-1941

- Libretto.
- Piano-Vocal Score.

**Fiore**, Op. 40, 1936

- Libretto.
- Bound.


- Libretto.
- Bound.

**Platonow**, Op. 37, 1933

- Libretto.
- Bound.


- Libretto, 1940
  - Bound and unbound copies, with notes.

**Prelude**

- Piano-Vocal Score, 1940
  - Bound.

- Full Scores, 1935 and undated
  - *The Road Of Life*, undated
  - Excerpt.
  - Complete Full Score, 1935

**Parts, 1934**

- *Das Lied Van Wes Und Strasse*
- *Der Clown*
- *Prater-Musik*
Shooting Booth Figures
Furious Dance
The Pantomime Of Dream

Libretto.
Based on play of same name by August Strindberg.
Piano-Vocal Score.
Bound.

Full Score.
Bound.
Parts.
Strings.
Woodwinds.
Brass.
Percussion.

Schattenspiel, Op. 43, 1940
Libretto.
Piano-Vocal Score.
Bound.
Full Score.
Bound.
Arrangements Of Excerpts.
For piano and string quartet. Full scores and parts.

Menuett
Harlequin

Unidentified, undated
Incomplete conductor score.

Orchestral Music, 1927-1944 and undated
Allegro For Strings, undated
Parts only.

Animal Suite For Small Orchestra, Op. 47, 1941
Piano reduction score and parts.

Ballet Suite, undated
Full score.
Concerto Sinfonico, Op. 11, 1927
Full score. Bound.
Ouverture, Op. 1, undated
Full score.
Sommer-Symphonie, 1932
Partitur
Full score.
Auszug
Piano reduction.

Sonnenaufgang, Op. 65, 1943
Full score.
Symphony No. 1, Op. 55, 1943
Full and Piano Reduction Scores.
Parts.
Woodwinds.
Brass.
Strings.
Harp, Piano And Percussion.

Symphony No. 2, Op. 57, 1943
Full and piano reduction scores.
Symphony No. 3, Op. 70, 1944
2 Sketches.
3 Full Score.
   Negative photostat reproduction.
Parts.
4 Woodwinds.
5 Brass.
6 Violins I & II.
7 Viola, Bass, Harp & Percussion.

Viennese Suite, Op. 44, 1940-1941
17 Notes.
   Describing programmatic themes.
2 Full Score.
   Bound.
3 Parts.
4 Unidentified, undated
   Parts only.

Piano Music, 1922-1944 and undated
5 Aphorisms, Op. 56, 1942-1943
6 Bagatelles, Op. 48, 1942
   Bound.
7 Humoresques, Op. 59, 1943
8 Intermezzo And Burleske, Op. 34, 1932
   Bound.
9 Inventions For Two Voices, Op. 72, 1944
10 Klavierwerke, 1927-1932
   Bound. Includes opus numbers 10, 14, 17, 22, 27 and 36.
11 Kleine Musick, Op. 4, 1922
   Bound.

March Of Time Suites, 1942
18 Notes.
2 No. 1, Op. 53
3 No. 2, Op. 54

   See also orchestral score in Box 24, Folder 6.
4 Sketches.
5 Score.
6 Marches, Op. 63, 1942-1944
   For piano, 4 hands.
7 Miniatures, Op. 49, 1942
8 Nocturnes, Op. 60, 1943
9 Pieces For Children, undated
   One piece only.
10 Scherzo, Op. 25, 1931
12 Sonatina, Op. 76, 1944
13 Three Melodies From Mozart's Time, Op. 50, 1942
14 Vorspiel, undated
   Manuscript also contains pages 1 and 2 of a choral piece.

Unidentified, 1931 and undated
15 Untitled, 1931
16 Untitled Manuscript, with sketches, undated
17 Untitled Piece.
   Possibly not composed by Block. Contains dedication to Block.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td><strong>Abendlied</strong>, undated</td>
<td>For voice and piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Brothers, Let Us For Freedom Fight</strong>, undated</td>
<td>For voice and piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Chinese Songs</strong>, Op. 64, 1943</td>
<td>For voice and piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Choral Arrangements For Mixed Chorus</strong>, Op. 52, 1942</td>
<td>Manuscript and published versions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Das Nasoben</strong>, undated</td>
<td>For voice and piano. Lyrics by Christian Morgenstern.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Der Wiesenbach</strong>, undated</td>
<td>For voice and piano. Lyrics by Christian Morgenstern.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Erster Schnee</strong>, undated</td>
<td>For voice and piano. Lyrics by Christian Morgenstern.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Five Folksongs For Chorus</strong>, Op. 35, 1932</td>
<td>Full score. Parts for one song only.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Lied In Der Nacht</strong>, undated</td>
<td>For voice and piano. Lyrics by O.T. Bierbaum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>Lieder</strong>, 1920-1931</td>
<td>Bound book of lieder. Includes opus numbers 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 18, 20, 25 and 30-33.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Livlandisches Volkslied</strong>, undated</td>
<td>For voice and piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Pygmalion, Ein Nachstuck In Einem Akt</strong>, Op. 5, 1931</td>
<td>For voice and orchestra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td><strong>Standchen</strong>, undated</td>
<td>For voice and piano. Lyrics by J. Vrchlicky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Tief Von Fern</strong>, undated</td>
<td>For voice and piano. Lyrics by R. Dehmel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Traumwald</strong>, undated</td>
<td>For voice and piano. Lyrics by Christian Morgenstern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Wei Be Tauben</strong>, undated</td>
<td>For voice and piano. Lyrics by Christian Morgenstern.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8 Untitled Piece for Chorus and Keyboard, undated
   Incomplete full score.
9 Untitled Lieder Set, Op. 4, undated
   Lyrics by Christian Morgenstern.

Arrangements Of Music By Other Composers, undated
   See also Oversized Material.
10 Dance Of The Sugar Plum Fairy from The Nutcracker by P.I. Tchaikovsky, undated
   For four clarinets. Score.
11 Hungarian March from The Gay Hussars by Emmerich Kalman, undated
   For piano.

22 1 March from The June Bride by Edmund Eysler, undated
   For piano.
2  The Seamstress by Modest Mussorgsky, undated
   For piano.
3  Symphony No. 10 by Gustav Mahler, undated
   For piano, 4 hands. Bound. See also article in Box 23, Folder 6.
4-5 Sketches, undated
6 Orphan Score Pages, undated

Series II: Professional Papers, 1922-1951 and undated

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Box</th>
<th>Fol</th>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Clippings, 1936-1950 and undated</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Frederick Block Committee, 1945-1951 and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Group formed by Block's widow and friends to promote his music after his death. Contains correspondence and some publicity material.</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Programs, 1936-1950 and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Resumes And Composition Lists, 1942 and undated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Includes pamphlet with biography of Block and composition list, with opus numbers.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Scrapbook, 1922-1938</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contains clippings, posters and programs.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Writings, 1927-1941 and undated</td>
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<td>Article, 1941</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mahler's Tenth in Chord And Discord, Vol 2, No. 1, Dec. 1941. See score in Box 22, Folder 3.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Scripts, 1927-1939 and undated</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Die Erweckung Des Steines, undated</td>
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<td>See also score in Box 19, Folder 8.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Der Turm Zu Babel, 1939</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Grettir, undated</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>By Block and Rudolf Felmayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tilottama Ein Tanzspiel, 1927</td>
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</table>

Series III: Oversized Material, 1936-1944 and undated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Fol</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Photographs, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Three photographs of Block, two small, one large.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Posters, 1936 and undated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Samum, 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Two posters advertising performances of the opera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Advertisement, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advertisement for exhibition of Block's manuscripts, sometime after his death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Scores, 1941-1944 and undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Animal Suite, Op. 47, 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For small orchestra. Full score.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dream, undated
For orchestra. Incomplete full score.

Marches, Op. 53, 1942
For orchestra. Full score. See also piano score in Box 18, Folders 4-5.

Slavic Melody: Adagio For Chamber Orchestra, Op. 67, 1944
Full score and piano reduction.

Suite For Small Orchestra, Op. 54, 1942
Full score.

Transcriptions, undated
Kiss Waltz by Johann Strauss
For orchestra. Sketches, notes and full score.

Red Army Song by Knipper
For orchestra. Full score.

Separated Material
Published Piano Transcriptions And Arrangements By Block

Bach, J.S.
Toccata And Fugue In D Minor. New York: Century, 1942.


Kabalevsky, Dmitri

Moussorgsky, Modeste
Frederick Block Papers


Music At The Fair from The Fair Of Sorochinsk. New York, Edward B. Marks, 1943.


Nessler, Victor E. It Was Not To Be from Der Trompeter von Sakkingen. New York: BMI, 1941. (Arrangement for band with strings.)


Prokofieff, Sergei

Danse Populaire from Romeo And Juliet, Op. 75. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1941.


Rachmaninoff, Sergei


Rimsky-Korsakoff, Nicolai


Cortège De Noces from Coq d’ Or. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1942.


Festival At Bagdad from Scheherazade. New York: Century, 1943.


Shostakovich, Dmitri

Allegro from Symphony No. 1. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1941.


Polka from L’Age D’Or. New York: Century, 1943.

Polka from The Bolt. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1941.


Scherzo from Symphony No. 5. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1942.

Smetana, Bedrich

Furiant from The Bartered Bride. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1941.

Polka from The Bartered Bride. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1941


Stravinsky, Igor


Berceuse And Finale from L’oiseau De Feu. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1941.
Chant Du Rossignol from Rossignol. New York, Edward B. Marks, 1941.
Chez Petroushka from Petroushka. New York, Edward B. Marks, 1941.

Danse De La Foire from Petrushka. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1941.

Danse Infernale from L’oiseau De Feu. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1941.
Marche Chinoise from Le Chant Du Rossignol. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1941.


Scherzo (Jeuex Des Princesses) from L’oiseau De Feu. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1941.

Supplications from L’oiseau De Feu. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1941
Tourneys Of Rival Tribes from Le Sacre Du Printemps. New York: Edward B. Marks, 1941.

Tchaikowsky, Peter


Waltz from Serenade For Strings. New York: Century, 1942.


Music By Other Composers (Not arrangements)
Bach, J.S. *Air* from *Orchestral Suite No. 3*. Arr. by F. Mittler. Part for cello or bassoon, to go with play-along recording.