BRYAN, CHARLES FAULKNER
COLLECTION
PAPERS AND TAPES
1892-[1941-1955]-1978

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INTRODUCTION

The papers and tapes of Charles Faulkner Bryan were donated to Tennessee Technological University on July 14, 1981 by Mrs. Charles Bryan. The music scores were donated to Tennessee Technological University by Mrs. Bryan prior to January 1980. The collection consists of 6 linear feet, 9 reels, 2 oversized folders, and 1 oversized box of materials.

Charles Faulkner Bryan was born on July 26, 1911, near McMinnville, Tennessee. He attended Warren County Public Schools and graduated from McMinnville High School in 1930. His education in music began at the age of ten when he started studying piano under Mrs. Maimie Worley. Upon graduation from high school Mr. Bryan entered the Nashville Conservatory School of Music. In 1934 he graduated from the Conservatory with a Bachelor of music degree with certification in voice, piano, and public school music.

In 1935 Mr. Bryan was appointed as the director of the Music Department at Tennessee Polytechnic Institute (presently Tennessee Technological University) in Cookeville, Tennessee. He remained in this position until 1939. While at Cookeville Mr. Bryan began his extensive study of folk music, and his compositions began to reflect folk themes. During this time he and his wife, Edith Hillis Bryan, wrote and produced an operetta, “Rebel Academy.” He also developed techniques for teaching music in elementary and secondary schools. By the time he left Tennessee Technological University he had received a Bachelor of Science degree with majors in English and languages.

In 1939 Mr. Bryan accepted a teaching fellowship at George Peabody College for Teachers to teach choral music at the Peabody Demonstration School. In 1940 he received his Master of Arts degree in music education from Peabody.

For his thesis Mr. Bryan submitted the “White Spiritual Symphony”; this was the first time an original musical composition had ever been used as a thesis at Peabody.

In 1940 Mr. Bryan was appointed to direct the state music project of the Work Projects Administration. In 1941 he was placed in charge of the state programs of music, education, art, writers, recreation, and library projects. He was promoted to supervisor of these projects for the southeastern region in 1942. From 1942 to 1944 Mr. Bryan served as the Regional Consultant for Civilian Defense; in 1944 he returned to Tennessee as the Assistant State Director of Civilian Defense. Mr. Bryan's work in music was not neglected during his years of government service. In 1942 his “White Spiritual Symphony” was performed by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Eugene Goosens.

Mr. Bryan was granted the Guggenheim Fellowship in Music in 1945, but he decided to postpone the award for one year to further his education. From 1945 to 1946 he studied composition under the famous composer Paul Hindemith at Yale University. The resulting work of the Guggenheim award was the folk cantata, The Bell Witch, which premiered in April of 1947 at Carnegie Hall under the direction of Robert Shaw. The American “Folk Music,” a textbook written with Dr. George Pullen Jackson, was published in 1947.
In the fall of 1947 Mr. Bryan began teaching at George Peabody College for Teachers. While at Peabody he directed five summer operas and the high school choral music programs, traveled giving folk music lectures and concerts, worked in high school music festivals, and was active in the Tennessee Folklore Society. In 1950 Mr. Bryan and Brianerid Cheney collaborated in writing the musical, “Strangers in this World.” In 1950 he was awarded a Carnegie Grant which in 1952 resulted in the completion of his folk opera, “Singin' Billy,” written with Donald Davidson; this opera was one of his most important works.

In the summer of 1952 Mr. Bryan wrote and recorded the music for “Florida Aflame,” a musical about the Seminole Indians. In the fall he left Peabody to accept the position of music master at Indian Springs School for boys in Alabama. During the summer of 1954 Mr. Bryan and his wife made a trip to Europe, and he did some investigation into the origin of the dulcimer. on July 7, 1955, Mr. Bryan died of a heart attack at the age of 43.

During his career he had gained a national reputation as a composer, recitalist, and authority on folk music. Mr. Bryan is accredited with one hundred twenty-two works including fifty-five choral, ten instrumental, eight choral and instrumental, forty-one vocal solos, and eight essays. He had also acquired a collection of dulcimers, folk music, and folklore.

Mr. Bryan was married to Edith Inez Hillis on December 21, 1935. He and his wife had two children: Betty Lynn, born on March 17, 1941, and Charles, Jr., born on December 10, 1946.

The collection reflects Mr. Bryan's career as a composer, folklore collector, performer, and teacher. The collection includes correspondence, biographical and financial papers, newspaper clippings, programs, teaching notes, folk music and folklore collections, professional publications, composition scores and scripts, posters, photographs, and tapes.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

“The Bell witch Cantata”
“Florida Aflame”
Folklore and folk music
Guggenheim Fellowship
Indian Springs School
“Singin' Billy”
“White Spiritual Symphony”
Work Projects Administration
Yale University

Among the correspondents are:
Wilfred C. Bain
J. Robert Bradley
Donald Davidson
Joseph A. Fischer
Eugene Goosens
George Pullen Jackson
Woodrow Luttrell
Gladys Pitcher
Irving Wolfe
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Series I, Drawer 1, Correspondence 1935-1976.
This series contains the correspondence of Charles Faulkner Bryan including letters, postcards, telegrams, and memorandums. The correspondence reflects Mr. Bryan's work as a teacher, composer, performer, folklore collector, and officer in civil defense. Important topics are: White Spiritual Symphony, the Guggenheim Fellowship and Bryan's studies at Yale, his work with George Pullen Jackson, Florida Aflame, and Singin' Billy.
The material is arranged chronologically.

Series II, Drawer 2, Memorabilia 1925-1978.
Series II consists of memorabilia reflecting Mr. Bryan's activities and accomplishments throughout his career. This series includes newsclippings, performance and lecture programs, and a scrapbook. Oversized posters and photographs have been removed and are stored in oversized folders. A second scrapbook has also been removed and is stored in an oversized box. The material is arranged first alphabetically by the type of document and then chronologically.

Series III contains various papers including Mr. Bryan's notes on music, folklore, and his compositions; financial receipts, statements, insurance policies, and loans; lecture notes and teaching plans; research articles, journals, and bulletins dealing with music, education, or folklore; legal papers; biographical material including applications and educational records; and scripts of some of his compositions. The folders are arranged alphabetically according to the subject.

Series IV contains music scores by Mr. Bryan including compositions for chorus, orchestra and solo performances. The folders are arranged alphabetically according to title of the compositions.
Series V contains copies of recordings made at the Country Music Hall of Fame, Nashville, Tennessee, for inclusion in the Charles Faulkner Bryan Collection.

Non-Manuscript Material
Eleven photographs, four negatives, and five postcards relating to Mr. Bryan, his dulcimers, or his performances have been removed and are stored in an oversized folder. Oversized materials including two memorial certificates, an orchestra filing envelope, seven posters advertising performances or rehearsals, and a scrapbook dating from 1931-1949 have been removed and are stored in oversized folders.
CONTAINER LIST

Series I
Reel 1
Correspondence, 1935-1976. Series I consists of letters, telegrams, postcards, and memorandums reflecting the professional career of Charles Faulkner Bryan. The correspondence relates information concerning his work as a composer, teacher, performer, folklore collector, and civil defense officer. Important topics include: the performance of the “White Spiritual Symphony”; Bryan's receiving the Guggenheim Fellowship, his studies at Yale, and the composition of “The Bell Witch Cantata”; his work with Dr. George Pullen Jackson and their joint publication of the textbook, *American Folk Music*; the performances of “Florida Aflame”; and the creation and performance of “Singin' Billy,” a folk opera written with Donald Davidson. The series is arranged chronologically.

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Reel 2
Memorabilia, 1925-1978. This series consists of memorabilia reflecting Mr. Bryan's activities and accomplishments throughout his career. Series II includes newsclippings, performance and lecture programs, and a scrapbook. Oversized posters and photographs have been removed and placed in oversized folders. A second scrapbook has also been removed and is stored in an oversized box. The material is arranged alphabetically by the type of document and then chronologically.

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Subjects, 1892-1976, predominantly 1942-1955. Series III contains Mr. Bryan's notes on music, folklore, and his compositions; financial receipts, policies, and loans; his lecture notes and teaching plans; research papers and published journals and bulletins dealing with music or folklore; legal contracts; biographical material including applications and resumes; and scripts of his compositions such as Florida Aflame and Singin' Billy. The material is arranged alphabetically according to the subject.

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