

Guide to the Teresa Carreño Papers, 1862-1991 (bulk 1862-1920)

Biographical Note

Teresa Carreño was born in Caracas, Venezuela on December 22, 1853. She was the granddaughter of the Venezuelan composer Jose Cayetano Carreño. Her father, Manuel Antonio Carreño, was also a musician and composer. He was largely responsible for Teresa Carreño's early musical education and the documentation of the early years of her musical career.

When she was eight years old she was taken to New York where she studied with Gottschalk. Later, she also studied in Paris with Mathias and Anton Rubinstein. Her career was particularly successful in Germany where she lived and taught for over thirty years.

Throughout her life Carreño was recognized as a pianist, composer, conductor, and singer. She wrote many compositions for piano and one String Quartet in B minor. She also spent two years in Venezuela organizing and conducting an opera company in which she also sang.

Carreño died in New York on June 12, 1917.

The source for this brief biography is The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, vol. 3. (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980). See also Brian Mann's biographical sketch written for the 2003 Archives and Special Collections Library exhibit, [Teresa Carreño: Walküre of the Piano](#)

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Scope and Content Note

Includes musical manuscripts of Carreño and others, such as Edward Macdowell, Amy Beach and Teresita Carreño-Tagliapietra; literary manuscripts of Carreño; letters to and from Carreño and to and from Marta Milinowski, her biographer; and a variety of scrapbooks, diaries and other materials relating to Carreño's life and professional career; Among the correspondents are Frances Macdowell, Gioachino Rossini, Edward Grieg, and Ede Poldini. There are also many articles about Carreño and programs of her concerts.

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Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Teresa Carreño Papers, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Max Benjamin Valerio, October 1990. Last updated August 2002 by Sarah Canino.

Acquisition Information

Transferred from the Dickinson Music Library, Vassar College.

Custodial History

Vassar Professor of Music, Marta Milinowski, studied with Carreño and wrote the first biography of the musician, Teresa Carreño, "By the Grace of God," 1940. Her connection brought about the purchase of a large number of materials from the Estate of Teresa Carreño through the Peabody Fund. A letter from the assistant Music Librarian, Natalie Mestechin, of 9/17/43 notes: "On August 21, 1941 the Music Department made a purchase from the Estate of Theresa [sic] Carreño which included manuscripts, papers, photographs, music, costumes, etc., etc. and various books." In the mid-1950's selected materials were sent to the National Library in Caracas, Venezuela. At an unknown date other items were removed to the Special Collections Department of the Vassar College Libraries. In 1990, the materials that made up the Dickinson Music Library Carreño Collection at that time were researched and organized by Vassar Professor Brian Mann, assisted by Geoffrey Hills '91. His article, "The Carreño Collection at Vassar College," *MLA Notes*, 47 (1991), discusses the collection in detail as it existed at that point. Until 2002 the largest portion of the Teresa Carreño materials resided in the Dickinson Music Library. In 2002 all of the manuscript material and selected other materials were moved to the Special Collections Department of the Vassar College Libraries and integrated with the Carreño materials already housed there. In this process, separated parts were rejoined and additional materials came to light.

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