

# VIRGIL FOX COLLECTION

MS 57

1938-2008

Finding aid prepared by Janeen Lamontagne  
June, 2022

Organ Historical Society Library and Archives

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## SUMMARY INFORMATION

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<b>Repository</b>	Organ Historical Society Library and Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Virgil Fox, 1912-1980
<b>Title</b>	Virgil Fox collection
<b>Date</b>	1938-2008
<b>Extent</b>	4 linear feet

<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	The collection consists of manuscripts, correspondence, printed materials, programs, photographs, videos, and items related to Virgil Fox.
<b>Provenance</b>	The collection was gathered by Virgil Fox and donated to the American Organ Institute Archives and Library at the University of Oklahoma in 2013. The collection was then transferred to the Organ Historical Society archives and library in 2020.

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## **BIOGRAPHY**

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Virgil Fox was born May 3, 1912 in Princeton, Illinois to Miles and Birdie Fox, a farming family. He showed musical talent at a young age and went on to study Organ in Chicago with Wilhelm Middelschulte (1863-1943), and in France with Louis Vierne (1870-1937) and Marcel Dupré (1886-1971). He received an artist's diploma in 1930 from the Peabody Institute of Music in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1946 Fox became the organist at Riverside Church in New York City and gained acclaim for his hymn accompaniments during Sunday service. He then began to tour full time around the United States in 1970, performing his famous "Heavy-Organ" concerts in non-traditional organ music venues. Fox toured with a custom four-manual Allen Organ. His Heavy Organ concerts were comprised exclusively of the works of Bach and were accompanied by "Revelation Lights", a live, large-scale light show, projected on a screen behind Fox at the organ. The performances attracted audiences in the thousands, bridging the gap between organ enthusiasts and the general public. Fox died from cancer in 1980 in Palm Beach, Florida.

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## **ARRANGEMENT**

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The Collection is arranged by genre format into 7 series. The manuscript series holds papers related to Fox's teaching, receipts for organ installations, and biographical writings on Fox. The correspondence series holds letters written to and from Fox concerning performances. The

printed material series contains calendars used by Fox, flyers and brochures made to promote his performances. The programs series contains programs for Fox's performances broken down by year from the 1930's until the 1980's. The photographs series holds family, candid, performance and studio portraits of Fox. The video series holds 6 VHS tapes with recordings from a live performance of Heavy Organ and Revelation Lights. The items series contains awards and commemorative plaques given to Fox throughout his career.

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## **CONTROLLED ACCESS HEADINGS**

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### **Genre(s)**

- Manuscripts
- Correspondence
- Printed material
- News clippings
- Photographs
- Programs (Publications)
- Video
- Awards

### **Personal Name(s)**

- Fox, Virgil (1912-1980)

### **Subject(s)**

- Church music—United States
- Church music—New York (State)—New York
- Organists—Biography
- Organ (Musical instrument)—History
- Organ (Musical instrument)—New York (State)—New York
- St. Thomas Church (New York, N.Y.)—Organs

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## COLLECTION INVENTORY

<b>Series 1: Manuscripts</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Organ Master Class Documents, documents that contain educational material Virgil Fox used to teach his students, including a repertoire list and “Basic Techniques” worksheet; undated	1	1
Writings about Virgil Fox, biographical information about Virgil Fox’s life and career. Also includes a transcript of a speech memorializing Fox after his death; 1967-1975, undated	1	2
Miscellaneous, includes an installation receipt, performance notes, an index of performance dates and locations, and an arrangement written by Louis Claude Daquin, “Noel (Final)”; 1950, undated	1	3
<b>Series 2: Correspondence</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Correspondence, includes invitations from Trinity Reformed Church and others, a memorandum from American Guild of Organists, a letter written by Virgil Fox to his students, a Western Union Telegram from Delta Omicron, a letter from the Board of Education of Frederick County concerning Virgil Fox’s visit and performance, a greeting card; 1958-1980, undated	1	4
<b>Series 3: Printed material</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Calendars, includes Virgil Fox’s calendars with appointment, meeting, and performance dates recorded; 1955-1965, undated	1	5
In memory of Virgil Fox, includes programs, psalms and speech transcripts from Virgil Fox’s memorial service, a document regarding the Virgil Fox Award in Organ Performance from the University of Southern California School of Music,	1	6

a brochure promoting the sale of Virgil Fox's recordings; 1980-1983		
Newsletters with articles or advertisements about Virgil Fox's performances and work; 1945-1982, undated	1	7
Magazine and article clippings on Virgil Fox; 1942-1989, undated	1	8
Newspaper clippings on Virgil Fox; 1930-1974, undated	1	9
Newspaper clippings on Virgil Fox; 1975-1980, undated	1	10
Organ specifications for the Congregation Emanu-el, Temple organ; 1956	1	11
Performance memorabilia, includes two tickets, a printed napkin, and an invitation to a Virgil Fox performance at Trinity Church in Pottstown Pennsylvania; 1957, 1963, undated	1	12
Philharmonic Hall publications on Virgil Fox; 1963-1970	1	13
Promotional flyers, brochures, and posters for Virgil Fox's performances; 1943-1970	1	14
Promotional flyers, brochures, and posters for Virgil Fox's performances; 1974-1980, undated	1	15

#### **Series 4: Programs**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Programs; 1932-1939	1	16
Programs; 1941-1946	1	17
Programs; 1947	1	18
Programs; 1948	1	19
Programs; 1949	1	20
Programs; 1950	1	21

Programs; 1951	1	22
Programs; 1952	1	23
Programs; 1953	1	24
Programs; 1954	1	25
Programs; 1955	1	26
Programs; 1956	1	27
Programs; 1957	1	28
Programs; 1958	1	29
Programs; 1959	2	1
Programs; 1960	2	2
Programs; 1961	2	3
Programs; 1962	2	4
Programs; 1963	2	5
Programs; 1964	2	6
Programs; 1965	2	7
Programs; 1966	2	8
Programs; 1967	2	9
Programs; 1968	2	10
Programs; 1969	2	11
Programs; 1970-1978	2	12
Programs; undated	2	13
Programs, other organists; 1980-2000, undated	2	14
Performance proposal programs; 1939-1970, undated	2	15

Souvenir Bravo programs; 1962-1971	2	16
Concert series programs; 1953-1954	2	17
Souvenir programs; 1950-1963	2	18
Souvenir programs; 1964-1972	3	1

#### **Series 5: Photographs**

#### **Box**

#### **Folder**

Family photographs; undated	3	2
Harrison House at Glen Cove "Close up On Bach" photographs; 1970	3	3
Performance photographs; 1967, undated	3	4
Snapshots of Virgil Fox and others including Liberace, Mike Douglas, Pierre Cochereau, David Frost, Roger Swan, Ed Sullivan, Evelyn Graham, Forrest Peterson, Donabelle Frey; 1938, undated	3	5
Studio portraits; undated	3	6

#### **Series 6: Video**

#### **Box**

#### **Folder**

Video tapes 1-5, Virgil Fox's Heavy Organ And David Snyder's Revelation Lights, Live performance; March 30, 1970	3	n/a
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#### **Series 7: Items**

#### **Box**

#### **Folder**

Founding Artist engraved nameplate From John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; 1973	3	n/a
Plaque from the American Guild of Organists; 1979	3	n/a
Award from the PLC Alumni Association; 1978	4	n/a

