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### Guide to the Collection of Lillian Evans Tibbs Materials

Columbia College Chicago

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# Columbia

COLLEGE CHICAGO

## CENTER FOR BLACK MUSIC RESEARCH COLLECTION

### The Lillian Evanti Collection, 1925-1963

#### **EXTENT**

1 box, .25 linear feet

#### **COLLECTION SUMMARY**

Lillian Evans Tibbs (1890-1967) was professionally known as Madame Lillian Evanti. She was a lyric soprano and numbered among the first black women to sing opera in a company in Europe. The collection materials include photographs of her in costume for various opera productions and a six-page manuscript of her autobiography prologue given as a speech in Chicago in 1963.

The collection contains photographs of Evanti in operatic roles and during visits to Berlin, Mexico and Brazil, plus 1 letter from Owen Dodson to Evanti thanking her for a donation of costumes to Howard University. There is also a typescript of the prologue to her autobiography "Where My Caravan Has Rested" with handwritten additions, given as a speech at Women's Day of the Century of Negro Progress Exposition in Chicago in 1963.

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Lillian Evans Tibbs (1890-1967) was professionally known as Madame Lillian Evanti. She was a lyric soprano and numbered among the first black women to sing opera in a company in Europe. Born in Washington, D.C., she attended Armstrong Manual Training School and Miner Teachers College and graduated from Howard University in 1917 after studying music where she also met her future husband Roy Tibbs. She traveled to Europe in the mid-1920s and made her professional debut in France in 1925 and toured Europe before returning to the United States to perform with the National Negro Opera Company in 1944.

#### **SCOPE & CONTENT/COLLECTION DESCRIPTION**

The collection contains photographs of Evanti in operatic roles and during visits to Berlin, Mexico and Brazil, plus 1 letter from Owen Dodson to Evanti thanking her for a donation of costumes to Howard University. There is also a typescript of the prologue to her autobiography "Where My Caravan Has Rested" with handwritten additions, given as a speech at Women's Day of the Century of Negro Progress Exposition in Chicago in 1963.

#### **ARRANGEMENT**

The materials are arranged by photographs then papers in rough chronological order

## **RELATED MATERIALS**

### *CBMR Sources*

Theodore Charles Stone Collection  
Helen Walker-Hill Collection  
Eileen Southern Colleciton  
Alton Augustus Adams Collection

### *External:*

[Lillian Evans Tibbs](#) images, Howard University  
[Lillian Evans Tibbs Travel Scrapbook](#), 1924-1930s, Smithsonian Insitution

## **ACQUISITION SOURCE**

Donation by Frances T. Matlock, 2004.

## **SUBJECT HEADINGS**

## **ACCESS STATEMENT**

Materials designated as restricted materials are housed in specially marked folders, otherwise the collection is open and available for research use.

## **RIGHTS STATEMENT**

United States copyright laws apply to the materials in this collection.

## **PREFERRED CITATION**

The Lillian Evanti Collection, Center for Black Music Research Collection, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

## **THE LILLIAN EVANTI COLLECTION INVENTORY:**

### **Photos:**

- Evanti as Lakme, Nice, France, 1925. Paris, Abel, [1925] (2 photos)
- Evanti as Violetta in La Traviata. Milan, Emilio Sommarva, [192?] (2 photos, in costumes from Act I and Act II)
- Evanti in the Tiergarten, Berlin, with lion cub. Undated.
- Evanti in Brazil. [1940?]
- Evanti in Mexico. Undated. Captioned: "A 'Hit' in Mexico."
- Evanti in the Aztec Gardens at the Pan American Union [1941?]
- Evanti at the Pan American Union "after a program of all Latin American songs." [1941?]
- Evanti "at home in a blue velvet gown." Washington, Scurlock Studios [undated].

### **Papers:**

Dodson, Owen. Typed letter to Lillian Evanti, 6 June, 1963.

Evanti, Lillian. Prologue. "Where My Caravan has Rested." Autobiography of International Concert and Opera Soprano Lillian Evanti. Undated. With annotations in ink. 6 leaves.