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O L L S C O I L L U I M N I G H

Ernest de Regge Papers

P16

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Ernest de Regge Papers

Identity Statement

Reference Code: P16

Title: Ernest de Regge Papers

Dates: c1928—1957

Extent: 1 box

Context

Name of Creator: Ernest de Regge (1901—1958)

Content & Structure

Scope and Content:

Ernest de Regge was a major influence in the development of Church Music in Ennis and the Diocese of Killaloe (1923-1958). He was an accomplished musician, organist and composer and much of his music was performed by the choir and broadcast on RTE. He was also instrumental in setting up the annual Church Music Festival, which was held in Ennis in the 1930's. Under the auspices of an tOireachtas he arranged Irish melodies for school choirs and received many national and international awards for his work.

Ernest de Regge, a Belgian was born in Overmere, Flanders in 1901 where his father was an elementary school teacher and organist. Ernest's musical talent was recognised at a young age and while still in elementary school he and his brother were given the opportunity of private classes under Jules De Groot, organist at the Cathedral in Ghent. His secondary school in Sint Niklaas prepared him not only for teaching but for also the position of church organist. He then enrolled in the prestigious conservatory, the Lemmens Institute in Malines (currently incorporated into the University of Louvain) where he studied composition, organ and Gregorian music. In 1922 he received the degree of Licentiate in Music claiming first place in composition, while his classmate, the world famous Flor Peeters, took the prize for organ.

From 1900, the Lemmens Music Conservatory in Malines had sent its organists and musicians to Ireland. Ireland had good, well-maintained organs, and a musical people, but lacked trained organists and musicians who could play them to the highest standard. There had been much sympathy in Ireland for Belgians suffering during the First World War, while the struggle for Irish Independence had created much interest and sympathy on the continent.

In 1923, Bishop Fogarty appointed him Music Professor at St. Flannan's College and organist-choirmaster in the Cathedral of SS Peter and Paul. The bishop's aim was to implement the instruction of Pope Pius X to simplify choir music. In St. Flannan's (a junior seminary), de Regge would be instructing future clergy of the Diocese of Killaloe in musical literacy and giving them a firm grounding in Gregorian Chant.

In the 1920s and 1930s he returned frequently to Belgium to continue his studies under the distinguished teacher of harmony and orchestration, Paul Gilson of Liege (recipient of the prestigious Prix de Rome award). They were collaborating in 1942 on de Regge's Piano Concerto when Paul Gilson died and it would appear that the work was never published. He also continued his studies in composition with Lodewijk Mortelmans, Director of the Antwerp Music Conservatory.

The Cathedral Choir had been associated with liturgy in the Cathedral for over 100 years (beginning in 1859 with another Belgian, Charles Louis "Mons" Nono). In the cathedral, de Regge created a showpiece choir, which was the envy of other dioceses. The choir, which often had over a hundred members, was a focal point for the young people of Ennis. The highlights of the church calendar were the Midnight Mass and the High Mass at Christmas,

Easter and, of course St Patrick's Day. Talented local singers received extensive training and in particular the voices of Eva Meehan (alto), Amby Costello (soprano), John Murphy, Aiden Tuttle (both tenor), Stephen Touhy, George Meehan (both bass) and Liam Walker (alto) were highlights of this era. Broadcasts on Radio Eireann included Sacred Concerts 1930, 1933, 1935, 1946 (Diamond Jubilee of Bishop Fogarty), and 1947 (Mass in honor of Blessed Oliver Plunket), in addition to concerts such as the An Tostal in 1953.

In the early 1930's, the new Irish Republic was very anxious to acquire and publish new Irish music through "An Gum" (the State publishing company). De Regge and Michael O'Siochfhradha (Sugrue), a primary school inspector based in Ennis and a skilled violinist and John McCormack Medal winning tenor took up that task. These two, together with Fr Joseph Rogers, Irish Professor at St Flannan's and Sr Mary Albeus of the Sisters of Mercy worked for several years adapting old Irish airs for school choirs (22 with commentaries in Irish). O'Siochfhradha and de Regge also published a textbook *The Rudiments of Music* (1953) in both Irish and English on the teaching of music as a subject for secondary schools.

De Regge composed almost 200 works for choirs of mixed voices, songs based upon English and Irish texts, masses, motets, piano and organ pieces. His profile grew as he won national competitions. He received the Composers Competition Milligan Fox medals in 1939, 1942 and 1946; Dr Annie Patterson Medals in 1943, 1953 for composition, and first prizes in An tOireachtas Ceol: 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, and 1956.

It was, however, impossible to support this growing family as a music teacher-organist and after entrepreneurial ventures into farming (chickens), importing cars (Borgward and Lloyd) he opened a jewelry shop in O'Connell Street Ennis and a music shop in Limerick. He combined his passion for collecting paintings and antiques with trips to the Dublin auction houses where he bought pianos for refurbishing and resale.

The night before the fateful auction at the historic Carmody's Hotel in Ennis, he quipped to Paddy Gill (his friend and choir manager) that he would buy de Valera's bed for him (Paddy was not a Dev supporter). Next day, on January 15, 1958, the floor collapsed during the furniture auction killing him and seven others, and injuring fourteen. That tragedy cast a shadow over the town for many months and years to come.

He is remembered for his great musical talent, his continued and infectious good humor, his zeal and above all his kindness. He was a second father to his students and young choir members and always nurtured their talents; money was never a barrier to someone who had talent. He had special time for those who had to emigrate, perhaps remembering his own times in the twenties, and often took time to write to them to help them through those first lonely weeks, usually in England.

Ernest de Regge had become an adopted son of Ennis, and as such had been taken to the town's heart. He had left his mark on the musical and social life of so many in County Clare and farther a-field.

Conditions of Access & Use

Access: Unrestricted access to most items. Box list below compiled by Ghislaine de Regge, 2011.

Full archival catalogue has not yet been prepared.

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SONGS IN IRISH, some PUBLISHED	Note: See Copac* for publication info under De Regge, Earnán: http://copac.ac.uk Note: Most of the following are archived at the Glucksman Library, UL	PUBISHER Aire Oideachais =AO	DATE	REMARKS
	I.Tri-hAmhráin Ghaedilge <i>Three Irish Songs</i> 1. Nbo na Leath Adhairce * (Copac #20, #21) 2. Pe nEirinn I 3. Uaill Ghuth an Aoibhnis <i>The Cry of Delight</i>	Manuscript Published (AO) Manuscript	1954	SATB
	II. Leabhar dAmhránta Gaedhealacha <i>Book of Irish Songs</i> 1. An Caol-Druimean Óg 2. An Maidrín Ruadh* (Copac #9) 3. A Phlur na gCuach 4. An Túirnín Lín 5. Nach Aoibhinn Do Sna nEiníni 6. An Páisdin Fionn* (Copac #10) 7. Uail Ghuth an Aoibhnis 8. Gleann Cam* (Copac #49, #50) 9. Leather Away the Wattle O! 10. An Carabhat	Manuscript with corrections Notes: pieces re-written and submitted Published (AO) Published (AO)	1936-1942	S1 S2 A1
	3. Eibhlín a Ruin	Manuscripts finished	1940	Piano version and also T B1 B2 + piano version
	4. Roisín Dubh (Piano and bass)	Manuscript finished		Piano and bass
	5. Donnchadh Ruadh i dTalamh-an Eisc Red Dennis in the Land of the Fishes	Manuscript finished Verses in Irish/English		Tenor and piano
	Two Gaelic songs for voice with the small Irish harp 6. Mar Mheath Uaim 7. Péarla an Bhrollaigh Bháin	Manuscript finished	1953	Voice and harp Dr. Annie Patterson Medal, Composer Competition (see Review sheet "Brian Boru")
	8. Maire Bheil-Atha-hAmrais		1939	SA Bass
	9. Tórramh an Bharaille (piano and voice)	Chomhchanta	1949	
	10. Deirin De			SA Prize 1944
	11. Cnocáinín Aerach Chill Mhuire (Piano)* Copac #31	First of three versions	1944 Publis hed	Voice and piano

	12. A Cheol-Chuit Mo Thire		1949	Two voices
	13. Fáinne Geal an Lae* (Copac #48) Bruach na Carraige Báine An Tuirnín Lin	Preliminary draft/ Revised '39	1932 1932	Piano and voice
	14. Beidh Aonach Amaireach Amrán A Phiobaire	Manuscript finished		Two voices
	15. As Truagh Gan Peata An Mhaoir Agum	Manuscript finished	1949	Two voices SA First Prize
	16. Sme Raiteachas Na Tarngreacht		1931	S1S2 A1 A2
	17. Original melody on Irish text for 3 equal voices (ex children)	Manuscript	1940	S1 S2 A
	18. Nach aoibh do Sna Hemini	Preliminary draft	1937	
	19. An Sprid	Preliminary draft, rev 1935	1931 1935	S1 S2 A1
	20. Gleann beag Laghach an Cheóil (SABass)	Manuscript	1939	First Prize 1939
	21. Seoladh na nGamhna sa bhFasach	Manuscript		For three voices
	22. Cronan na mBheach Fionn nua di cheapadh	Original unaccompan ied three part song (SSA) with Irish words suitable for school choirs		For three voices
	23. Ag an mBoithrin Buidhe *	Manuscript (Pub. Copac # 2 #3) 2 drafts	1937	S1 S2 A
	24. Suantraide	Manuscript		For three voices
	25. A Mhaire, a Ghradh	Manuscript Note: Published	1937	S1 S2 A1
	26. An Raibh tu ag an gCarraig?	Manuscript finished		SATB
	27. Raiteachas na Tairngreacht	Manuscript (Two versions)	1931	S1 S2 A1 A2
	28. Seaghan O Duibhir a Gleanna	Manuscript		S1 S2 A1
	29. Cailín na Gruige Donne	Manuscript w notes Gilson	1931	Three voices
	30. Dan-Moladh na Gaedhilge	Manuscript (Note: Published)	1932	Three voices
	31. Slán le Maig	Manuscript	1931	Three voices
	32. Aithrighe Sheaghain de nOrdha	Manuscript	1931	Three voices

	33. Sreath Tri Amhrán Gaedhilge Raiteachas na Tairngreacht (SATB) An Pairdín Fionn (T1, T2, B1, B2) An Coisre (T1 T2 B1 B2) A Mhaire a Ghradh (SATB) Pe nEirinn I (SATB)	Manuscript revised	1944	
	39. Uaill Guth an Aoibnis (S1 S2 A) 40. Seaghan O Duibhir a Gleanna (S1S2A) 41. An Cailín Deas Óg	Manuscript finished	1951?	Three voices
	42. An t-Uabhar ar dTuis	Manuscript (Note Published)	1936	Four voices
	43. An Caol-Druimean Og 44. Luibín na mBuclai 45. A Phlur na gCuach 46. Dan Mholadh na Gaedhilge	Manuscript /Note: Accepted for publication by Mac Liammoir	1946	Three voices
	47. Ar Eirinn ni Neosoinn ce hi* (Copac #17)	Manuscript Note: Included in book of 12 songs Published	1931	S1 S2 A
	48. Slíabh na mBan	Manuscript Note: Included in book of 12 songs	1931 1939	SAA
	49. Slán agus Beannacht le Buaidhreadh an gSaoghail	Manuscript finished		Three voices
	50. Ceanadus A tSloig (tenor and piano)	Manuscript finished		Tenor and piano
	51. Baboro	Manuscript		Voice and piano
	52. Dá amráin I geoír an guta agus cláirsig: An Ceárdinel Ceanadus A'tSlóigh	Manuscript finished	1941	First Prize Feis Ceoil 1941 Soprano and harp
	53, 54 ?			
	55. Tórramh an Bhairile	Manuscript finished #5 Chomhchant an		Tenor and piano
	56. Madean I mBeara	Manuscript preliminary work	1937	
	57. Cill Chais (2 versions)*(Copac #30)	Manuscript Manuscript finished	1932	Voice and harp S/A, T B

	58. An Cóisire (The Wedding)	Manuscript finished (3 drafts) W corrections by Gilson		Voice and piano Copac #34
	59. A Spailpín a Ruin	Preliminary draft Manuscript		
	60. A Spailpín a Ruin	Manuscript finished (2 versions)		Piano and soprano Piano and alto
	61. Mairin de Barra	Manuscript finished (2 versions)	1931	S1 S1 A2 Voice and piano
	62. Mo Theaghlach	Manuscript w. minor edits		Voice and piano
	63. An Cat agus an tEan	Manuscript finished		Melody only
	64. A Bhruinnillín Bheusach (2 versions)	Manuscript finished Manuscript incomplete	1946	Three voices Voice and piano
	65. An tLoncholnadh	Manuscript finished		Three voices
	66. Fáinne Geal an Lae (Copac #48)	Manuscript w corrections	1939	Soprano voices
	67. Mairín de Barra	Manuscript finished		Bass and piano
	68. A Ceol-Chruit Mo Tire	Manuscript finished (2 versions)	1938 1941	Piano and alto
	69. Droichead na Tuaire	Manuscript finished (3 versions) #21 Chomhchant ana	1935 1941 1946	Piano SA Piano and tenor
	70. Bi Meadhrach a Bhanba	Manuscript finished	1948	Tenor and piano First prize 1948
	71. Cronán na mBeach	Manuscript	1948	One voice
	72. Imithe	Manuscript finished		Voice and piano
	73. Cait ni Dhuibhir	Manuscript finished		Piano and voice
	74. Bríde	Manuscript finished		Voice and piano
	75. An Beinnsín Luachra (Bb, Eb)	Manuscript finished		Contralto and piano

	An Beinnsín Luachra (Ab, Bb, Db, Eb) Cailín Beag na Luachra (C#, F#, G#) Inghean an Phailitanig Droichead na Tuairne (Bb) (Copac #40) Inghean an Fhaoit O'n nGleann An Samhradh Cruaidh (F#)	Manuscript finished Manuscript finished Manuscript /corrections Manuscript/corrections Manuscript finished Manuscript finished		Voice and piano Voice and piano Voice and piano Voice and piano Voice and piano Voice and piano
	82. Sláinte na nGaoth	Manuscript preliminary work	1933	
	83. Irish song with piano accompaniment	Manuscript preliminary work		
	84. Fuinn na Smol	Manuscript preliminary work	1931	Voice and piano
	85. Na Rasanna	Manuscripts finished (3 versions)	1944 1946	T B1 B2
	86. Leather Away the Wattle O! (Words in Irish)		1947	T B1 B2
	87. An Cailín Deas Óg	Manuscript + judge's comments	1953	S1 S2 A Dr. Annie Patterson Medal, Composer Competition. See Review sheet "An Tostal 1").
	88. Ros Catha na Mumhan	Manuscript finished	1931 1934	Copious notes by Gilson/suggestions for piano sonata on Irish airs
	89. O Bhean a tige cian bhuaidhairt sin ort?	Manuscript w. corrections (two versions)	1931	3 voices
	90. Einín an Cheoil	Manuscript finished Published AO		3 voices (First Prize)
	91. Arrangement for 3 voices	Manuscript	1931	S1 S2 A1 (lessons)

				submitted to Gilson?)
	Arrangement for 4 voices	Manuscript	1931	
	Arrangement for 4 voices	Manuscript	1931	SATB
	Arrangement for 4 voices	Manuscript	1931	SATB
	92. Do Rinneadh Aisling Aerach	Manuscript Published AO	1935	Voice and piano Published 1939
	93. Ceithre Cinn d' Amhráin Ghaeilge	Published AO		SATB Ded to Canon Hamilton
	94. Ceithre hAmhráin Ghaeilge	Published AO		S1 S2, A. Ded to Helene Coppieters
	95. Ag Bun Ros na Coille	Published AO		Voice and piano
	96. Eoghan Cóir	Published AO		Voice and piano
	97. Uail-Ghuth an Aoibhnis	Published AO		Four voices
	98. Cnocáinín Aerach Chill Mhuire	Published AO		Voice and piano
	99. Thee Traditional Irish Cradle Songs: 1.Suantraidhe Eirinneach (Piano F#) 2.Suantraidhe (C# and F#) 3.Luasgughadh an chlai bháin (C#, F#)	Manuscript		Arranged and edited for the piano Piano (F#) Piano (C#, F#(second page created by Colman Pearce 10/2018). Second page created by Colman Pearce 10/2018
	100. An Carabhat (words in Irish)	Manuscript finished		Arrgmt of an Irish air for vocal solo competition # 108. Piano and soprano