



CLARA THOMAS ARCHIVES

**Inventory of the
Ernesto Vinci fonds**

Inventory #F0439

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F0439 - Ernesto Vinci fonds

Fonds/Collection Number: F0439

Title: Ernesto Vinci fonds

Dates: 1898-1999

Extent: 4.9 m of textual records
ca. 0.3 m of photographs : b&w and col. ; 28 x 35 cm or smaller

**Biographical Sketch/
Administrative History:** Ernesto Vinci (1898-1983), teacher and singer, was born in Gnesen, Prussia (now a part of Poland) as Ernst Wreszynski. Raised as a Reform Jew by father Adolf Wreszynski and mother, Anna Kalinski, he used the surname Wygram professionally during his time in Germany and in Milan, Italy. The evidence is that the surname Vinci was adopted as a professional name in Italy and was used to distinguish his singing persona from his medical career in North America. It is doubtful that he used the names Vinci or Wygram to disguise a Jewish background, since all early correspondence and documents, including immigration records, bear his given name. However, his son was unaware of his Jewish heritage until 1999. Vinci was educated in Berlin (medical degree, 1924) and in Milan (second medical degree, 1933). He began voice training as a medical student and by 1936 was employed as a professional baritone in Italy and Switzerland. In 1939 he emigrated to Canada and took a position with the Halifax Ladies College and Conservatory of Music. In 1945 he joined the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, and the Royal Conservatory of Music, later adding the Banff School of Fine Arts to his teaching schedule. In his capacity as a voice teacher, Vinci trained some of the best-known singers in Canadian opera (Portia White, Joan Maxwell, Andrew MacMillan, Patricia Rideout). He introduced opera to Alberta and Nova Scotia and he was responsible for programming opera for servicemen during World War II. He retired from the University of Toronto and the Royal Conservatory in 1979 and moved to Shediac, New Brunswick. He died in Moncton in November, 1983.

Scope and Content: The fonds mainly documents Ernesto Vinci's career as a singer and his activities as a voice teacher at the Halifax Ladies College and Conservatory of Music, the University of Toronto, and at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Records found from 1999 onwards are of the more personal variety and include personal and family correspondence between Vinci and his wife, and Vinci and his parents and parents-in-law, and other relatives during the 1930s as they tried to escape Germany. There is some correspondence regarding Vinci's efforts to sponsor his sister-in-law and niece after the Second World War.

S00146	Correspondence
S00147	Diaries and memoranda
S00148	Music publications
S00149	Recitals and lecture notes
S00150	Letters and reports
S00151	Faculty of Music, University of Toronto
S00152	Scrapbooks
S00153	Photographs
S00154	Biographical material
S00155	Programmes of musical concerts
S00156	Programmes, reports, catalogues
S00157	Performances, concerts, exams

Custodial History: The records in accession 1999-074 were found by Vinci's son, Thomas, in the family cottage and arranged by him prior to donation. The records in accession 2007-044 were found on the family property in Shediac, New Brunswick in 2007. The records in accession 2010-054 were found in the family garage in Shediac, New Brunswick in August 2009.

Location of originals: Originals of some family correspondence in accession 2010-054 remain with donor Thomas Vinci.

Language of material note: Much of the material in accession 2010-054 is in German. There is also material

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in Italian and Spanish.

Restrictions on Access and Use: No restrictions on access.

Finding Aid: File lists available.

URL of Finding Aid: <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/fonds/ON00370-f0000439.htm>

Accruals: The fonds comprises the following accessions: 1981-004, 1999-074, 2001-064, 2007-044, 2010-054. No further accruals are expected.

Immediate source of acquisition: Accession 1981-004 donated by Ernesto Vinci in 1981. Accessions 1999-074, 2001-064, 2007-044, and 2010-054 donated by Ernesto Vinci's son, Thomas Vinci, in 1999, 2002, 2007 and 2010 respectively.

Provenance Access Points: Vinci, Ernesto, 1898-1983, pseud.

Date of creation: 2002/04/08

Date of last revision: 2011/03/11