

Ira Gershwin Files from the Law Office of Leonard Saxe
Guides to Special Collections in the Music Division of the Library of Congress



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Collection Summary

Title: Ira Gershwin Files from the Law Office of Leonard Saxe

Span Dates: 1935-1967

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1948-1967)

Call No.: ML31.S28

Creator: Saxe, Leonard Spier, 1899-1968

Extent: 8,250 items

Extent: 34 containers

Extent: 14.25 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2010561020>

Summary: This collection consists primarily of correspondence and contracts related to the personal legal affairs of Ira Gershwin and the activities of the Rose Gershwin Testamentary Trust from 1935-1967. It includes royalty and copyright materials for well-known Gershwin shows and films, most notably *Porgy and Bess*. In addition, this collection contains financial documents related to the Rose Gershwin Estate, litigation materials, programs, and press clippings.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Alexandre, Emmanuel--Correspondence.

Breen, Robert S.--Correspondence.

Gershwin, Arthur, 1900-1981--Correspondence.

Gershwin, George, 1898-1937. *Porgy and Bess*.

Gershwin, Ira, 1896-1983--Autographs.

Gershwin, Ira, 1896-1983--Correspondence.

Gershwin, Ira, 1896-1983.

Gershwin, Ira, 1896-1983. Ira Gershwin files from the law office of Leonard Saxe. 1935-1967.

Gershwin, Leonore, -1991.

Gershwin, Rose.

Goldwyn, Samuel, 1879-1974.

Lazar, Irving, 1907-1993--Correspondence.

Saxe, Leonard Spier, 1899-1968--Correspondence.

Saxe, Leonard Spier, 1899-1968.

Organizations

Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers.

Chappell and Co.

Columbia Artists Management, Inc.

Gershwin Publishing Corporation.

New Dawn Music Corporation.

New World Music Limited.

On-Stage Productions.

Palestine Conservatory of Music and Dramatic Art.

T.B. Harms & Co.

Walden Records.

Subjects

Copyright--Performing rights--United States.

Lyricists--United States--Correspondence.

Theater--Law and legislation--United States.

Form/Genre

Financial records.
Legal correspondence.
Legal documents.

Provenance

Gift, Robert and Steven Saxe, 2000.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Processing History

The Ira Gershwin files from the law office of Leonard Saxe were processed in 2008 by Christopher Hartten and encoded for EAD by Janet McKinney in 2010.

Related Material

The Music Division holds the George and Ira Gershwin Collection (ML31.G38) and the Gershwin Trust Archive.

Copyright Status

Materials from the Ira Gershwin files from the law office of Leonard Saxe are governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.) and other applicable international copyright laws.

Access and Restrictions

The Ira Gershwin files from the law office of Leonard Saxe are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Music Division prior to visiting in order to determine whether the desired materials will be available at that time.

Certain restrictions to use or copying of materials may apply.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [item, date, container number], Ira Gershwin files from the law office of Leonard Saxe, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Ira Gershwin obtained the legal services of attorney Leonard Spier Saxe following the death of his mother, Rose Gershwin, on December 16, 1948. Saxe, a distant relative by marriage who owned an established general practice firm in New York City, provided personal legal counsel to Ira, Leonore, and Arthur Gershwin and managed their affairs with the Rose Gershwin Testamentary Trust from 1948-1968. Ira and Leonard also shared a close friendship and corresponded frequently about non-legal matters, including investments, vacations, and real estate opportunities. Leonard Saxe died in 1968.

Scope and Content Note

The Ira Gershwin Files from the Law Office of Leonard Saxe spans the period 1935-1967. The collection includes contracts, correspondence, handwritten notes, financial documents, memos, pamphlets, programs, clippings, and other materials related to Saxe's legal representation of Ira Gershwin and his involvement with the Rose Gershwin Testamentary Trust.

Saxe's efforts on behalf of Ira, Leonore, and Arthur Gershwin are recorded in extraordinary detail in a series of typescript logs entitled "Record of work done for the Gershwins." These entries contextualize the hundreds of handwritten notes that accompany many of the subject files and provide a thorough account of Ira's business affairs throughout the 1950's and 1960's. It is an invaluable tool, if not an ideal starting point, for navigating the contents of this collection.

Saxe arranged his office files principally by subject. His original folder headings have been used to organize the materials thematically by show title, organization, and other general categories. The subjects of these documents range from motion picture production contracts and copyright deposits to estate taxes and personal correspondence.

"Royalties and copyrights" contains documents pertaining to the licensing and revenues of compositions by George and/or Ira Gershwin. *Porgy and Bess* accounts for much of this material, primarily because its acclaimed international productions generated additional licensing agreements. "Litigation" includes materials specifically related to courtroom settlements, the most notable being *Breen vs. Goldwyn, Lazar*. The voluminous series entitled "Estate of Rose Gershwin" documents Saxe's actions as liaison to the Rose Gershwin Testamentary Trust, many of which are presented chronologically in his nineteen volume 'general file.' The remaining series, "Estate of Ira and Leonore Gershwin" and "Arthur Gershwin" describe personal affairs and litigation largely unrelated to musical compositions or royalties.

Organization of the Ira Gershwin Files from the Law Office of Leonard Saxe

The collection is organized in 6 series:

- [Record of Work Done for the Gershwins, 1948-1966](#)
- [Royalties and Copyrights, 1935-1967](#)
- [Litigation, 1953-1964](#)
- [Estate of Rose Gershwin, 1937-1967](#)
- [Estate of Ira and Leonore Gershwin, 1950-1963](#)
- [Arthur Gershwin, 1950-1966](#)

Description of Series

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	Girl Crazy
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