

Max Rudolf Papers

Guides to Special Collections in the Music Division of the Library of Congress



Music Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2011

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Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/eadmus.mu011010>

Processed by the Music Division of the Library of Congress

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Music Division, 2011
Revised 2012 January

Collection Summary

Title: Max Rudolf Papers

Span Dates: 1922-1993

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1945-1992)

Call No.: ML31.R85

Creator: Rudolf, Max, 1902-1995

Extent: approximately 4,500 items

Extent: 22 containers

Extent: 11.5 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English and German.

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/2011570506>

Summary: Max Rudolf was a German-born American conductor and music educator. He is best known for his work with the Metropolitan Opera, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and the Curtis Institute of Music. The collection contains Rudolf's extensive correspondence with prominent 20th century musical figures, Metropolitan Opera annual files documenting his years with that organization, and a few photographs.

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

Barber, Samuel, 1910-1981--Correspondence.
Bing, Rudolf, 1902-1997--Correspondence.
Dallapiccola, Luigi, 1904-1975--Correspondence.
Dello Joio, Norman, 1913-2008--Correspondence.
Diamond, David, 1915-2005--Correspondence.
Dorati, Antal--Correspondence.
Gould, Glenn--Correspondence.
Leinsdorf, Erich, 1912-1993--Correspondence.
Levin, Ira, 1958--Correspondence.
Levine, James, 1943-2021--Correspondence.
Menotti, Gian Carlo, 1911-2007--Correspondence.
Ormandy, Eugene, 1899-1985--Correspondence.
Rudolf, Max, 1902-1995--Archives.
Rudolf, Max, 1902-1995--Correspondence.
Rudolf, Max, 1902-1995--Photographs.
Rudolf, Max, 1902-1995.
Rudolf, Max, 1902-1995.
Schuller, Gunther--Correspondence.
Schuman, William, 1910-1992--Correspondence.
Serkin, Rudolf, 1903-1991--Correspondence.
Stern, Isaac, 1920-2001--Correspondence.
Szell, George, 1897-1970--Correspondence.
Walter, Bruno, 1876-1962--Correspondence.

Organizations

American Symphony Orchestra League.
Curtis Institute of Music.
Metropolitan Opera (New York, N.Y.)
Metropolitan Opera (New York, N.Y.)

Subjects

Conductors (Music)
Music teachers.
Music--United States--20th century.
Opera companies--New York (State)--New York.

Titles

Max Rudolf correspondence, 1922-1993

Form/Genre

Articles.
Clippings (Information artifacts)
Contracts.
Correspondence.
Photographic prints.
Programs (Documents)
Promotional materials.
Scripts (Documents).

Provenance

Purchase, Music Division, 2009.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Processing History

The Max Rudolf Papers were processed by George Kipper, Patrick Domico, and Christopher Hartten in 2011. Christopher Hartten coded the finding aid for EAD format in August 2011. George Kipper expanded and revised the finding aid in November 2011 to include additional materials.

Related Material

The [Serge Koussevitzky Archive \(ML31.K66\)](#) contains correspondence between Koussevitzky and Rudolf. The [Nicolas Slonimsky Collection \(ML31.S6\)](#) contains a variety of biographical research materials on the conductor.

Copyright Status

Materials from the Max Rudolf Papers 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 Max Rudolf Papers 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], Max Rudolf Papers, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Max Rudolf (1902-1995) was born in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, on June 15, 1902. He began musical studies at age seven, learning piano, organ, cello, and trumpet. He began to compose at age eleven, and at thirteen, commenced professional musical studies with Bernard Sekles, remaining with this teacher for the next six years. Rudolf attended Frankfurt University and the Hochschule für Musik from 1921-1922, making his conducting debut in March 1923 at Freiburg in a production of Johann Strauss's opera *Die Fledermaus*. During the following years 1924-1929, he familiarized himself with standard operatic repertory while holding down posts at the Städtisches Theater (Freiburg) and at Darmstadt. Rudolf then became principal conductor of the German theater in Prague from 1929-1935, where he became acquainted with George Szell. He also appeared as guest conductor with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (1929-1930). From 1935-1940, Rudolf resided in Göteborg, Sweden, while holding positions as choral director for the Orchestral Society and the Swedish Broadcasting Company.

He left Europe in October 1940, travelling east across Russia, Japan, and the Hawaiian Islands, finally arriving in San Francisco. He initially secured a position teaching conducting and score reading at the Music Department of the Y.M.C.A. College in Chicago, later moving to New York in December 1943, where he was eventually engaged by the New Opera Company for a production of Offenbach's operetta *La Vie Parisienne*. Rudolf became a naturalized American citizen in 1945. In the fall of 1945, Rudolf was hired as an assistant conductor with the Metropolitan Opera, his debut being the Gala Program Annual Benefit Concert on January 13, 1946. He served as both a conductor for the organization from 1946 to 1958 and as its assistant manager from 1950-1958. He held the post of music director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra from 1958-1970 and signed on as musical director for the Cincinnati May Festival from 1963-1970.

Rudolf joined the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music in 1970, serving as head of the conducting and opera departments until 1973, after which time he returned to the Metropolitan Opera for an additional two seasons (1973-1975). Earlier, Rudolf had also returned to New York to participate in two historically significant Metropolitan Opera events: the Old Metropolitan Opera House Gala Farewell (April 16, 1966) and Rudolf Bing's Gala Farewell (April 22, 1972).

Throughout the 1970s, he served as artistic advisor to the Dallas, Detroit, and New Jersey Symphony Orchestras, and continued to make regular guest appearances with several major American orchestras and opera houses well into his eighties. He rejoined the faculty of the Curtis Institute in 1983 and continued as an emeritus member until his death on February 28, 1995. In addition to his work as conductor and pedagogue, Rudolf recorded extensively and authored the conducting textbook *The Grammar of Conducting* (1950) that received further revisions in 1969, 1981, and 1995.

Scope and Content Note

The Max Rudolf Papers span the period 1922-1993, with the majority of materials dating from his professional period in the United States, 1945-1992. The collection is arranged in three series: Correspondence, 1922-1993; Photographs, 1952 and undated; and Metropolitan Opera Annual Files, 1946-1975.

Rudolf corresponded with many pre-eminent 20th century composers, conductors, vocalists, instrumentalists, musicologists, music critics, individuals responsible for the management of American orchestras and operatic companies, and many other well-known individuals in non-musical fields. Topics of correspondence include much discussion on the art of conducting, matters of musical interpretation, contemporary composers and their compositions, performers, programming, and other musical matters.

The collection contains extensive correspondence with conductors Antal Dorati (15 letters), Rafael Kubelik (7 letters), Erich Leinsdorf (14 letters), Eugene Ormandy (86 letters), George Szell (over 200 letters), Fritz Reiner, Leopold Stokowski, William Steinberg, Bruno Walter, and many others. Rudolf corresponded with prominent composers, including Samuel Barber, Luigi Dallapiccola, David Diamond, Norman Dello Joio, Percy Grainger, Hans Werner Henze, Paul Hindemith, Gian Carlo Menotti, Gunther Schuller, and William Schuman. He also exchanged communications with major performers

such as Roberta Peters, Risë Stevens, Richard Tucker, Isaac Stern, Glenn Gould, Byron Janis, Igor Kipnis, Leonard Rose, and Rudolf Serkin. Additional letters with various directors, producers, and administrators of opera companies and orchestras are present as well, highlighted by substantial communications with Metropolitan Opera management, especially Rudolf Bing (39 letters). Rudolf corresponded with musicologists H.C. Robbins Landon and Paul Henry Lang as well. Rudolf's tenure at the Curtis Institute of Music and his affiliation with the American Symphony Orchestra League are also well documented. Many letters are accompanied by carbon copies of Rudolf's replies. Clippings, reviews, and other inserts are often found among the letters, as are occasional photographs enclosed by the correspondent.

Rudolf's Metropolitan Opera annual files represent the years he was active with that organization: 1946-1958 and 1973-1975, as well as individual appearances made in 1966 (Gala Metropolitan Opera House Farewell) and 1972 (Rudolf Bing's Gala Farewell). Each annual file includes operatic programs (often annotated by Rudolf), Metropolitan Opera annual publications, contracts, correspondence, itineraries, travel-related expense bills, articles, clippings, radio broadcast scripts, press releases, rehearsal schedules, and other miscellaneous documents. Preservation photocopies of Metropolitan Opera broadside programs (1949-1958 seasons) and original broadsides (1973-1974 season) are filed separately due to format considerations. The Photographs series contains a handful of photographs of Rudolf alone and with other musicians.

Organization of the Max Rudolf Papers

The Max Rudolf Papers are organized in three series:

- [Correspondence, 1922-1993](#)
- [Photographs, 1952 and undated](#)
- [Metropolitan Opera Annual Files, 1946-1975](#)

Description of Series

Container

Series

BOX 1-14

Correspondence, 1922-1993

Correspondence with prominent 20th century composers, conductors, performers, musicologists, music critics, managers of major American orchestras and opera companies, and others. Reviews, clippings, photographs, or other material may accompany correspondence.

Arranged alphabetically by name of individual, organization, or subject, and chronologically therein.

BOX 14

Photographs, 1952 and undated

Miscellaneous images of Rudolf alone or with other people.

Arranged by subject.

BOX 15-22

Metropolitan Opera Annual Files, 1946-1975

Metropolitan Opera publications (i.e. brochures, booklets, annual statements of operations, other business reports), articles, clippings, correspondence, miscellaneous documents (contracts, official papers, invitations, etc.), photographs, programs (regular season performances and annual spring tour, often annotated by Rudolf), radio broadcast scripts, press releases, rehearsal schedules, itineraries, and travel-related expense bills. Preservation photocopies of broadside programs covering seasons 1949-1958 and original broadsides for the 1973-1974 season are housed separately in Box 22.

Arranged chronologically, and alphabetically by type of material or subject therein.

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