



The New York Public Library
Music Division

Guide to the

Mary Jane Phillips-Matz collection

1948-1993

JPB 13-17

Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2014

Summary

Creator: Phillips-Matz, Mary Jane

Title: Mary Jane Phillips-Matz collection

Date: 1948-1993

Size: 22.7 linear feet (51 boxes)

Source: Donated by Mary Jane Phillips in 1993 and 2001.

Abstract: Mary Jane Phillips-Matz (1926-2013) was an American scholar and writer, noted for her many articles on opera and her biographies of composers Giuseppe Verdi and Giacomo Puccini, as well as her translations of opera libretti for the Metropolitan Opera. The Mary Jane Phillips-Matz collection consists mainly of research files and drafts of Phillips-Matz' biography of Verdi. Research files on Adelina Patti, Gian Carlo Menotti, Samuel Barber, and other topics and are also included.

Access: Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult: <https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

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Preferred citation: Mary Jane Phillips-Matz collection, JPB 13-17. Music Division, The New York Public Library

Processing note: Compiled by Diana Bertolini, 2014 This collection was partially processed in 1995.

Creator History

Mary Jane Phillips-Matz was born Mary Jane Phillips on January 30, 1926 in Lebanon, Ohio. Attending performances at the Cincinnati Summer Opera as a child inspired her lifelong passion for opera. She

studied medieval literature at Smith College and Columbia University. Phillips-Matz began contributing articles to the magazine *Opera News* during the 1940s, and continued to do so for the rest of her career. She also served as a contributing editor at *Opera News* for many years. Phillips-Matz often contributed program notes for the Royal Opera at Covent Garden and translated libretti for the Metropolitan Opera. She edited five volumes of the journal *The Word of Opera* in 1978 and 1979.

Phillips-Matz devoted several decades to researching and writing her major work, *Verdi: A Biography* (1993). Her other books included *Opera Stars in the Sun: Intimate Glimpses of Metropolitan Personalities* (1955), written with Susan Perl and Milton Cross; *Opera: Grand and Not So Grand* (1966); *The Many Lives of Otto Kahn* (1984); *Rosa Ponselle: American Diva* (a collaboration with Beverly Sills, 1997); *Puccini: A Biography* (2002); *Leonard Warren - American Baritone* (2003); and *Washington National Opera, 1956-2006* (2005).

Mary Jane Phillips-Matz was married to Charles Albert Matz Jr., with whom she had one son and two daughters. She died of congestive heart failure in Manhattan on January 19, 2013.

Scope and Content Note

The Mary Jane Phillips-Matz collection consists of research files on Giuseppe Verdi, Adelina Patti, Gian Carlo Menotti, Samuel Barber, and other topics. The bulk of the collection consists of Verdi research files, arranged by topic. Four topics, The Uttini and Verdi families, Giuseppina Strepponi, Emanuele Muzio, and the province Piacenza, are covered most thoroughly in these files. Many other topics are also present, though covered less extensively.

This collection documents Phillips-Matz' book *Verdi: A Biography* with copies and transcripts of Verdi's letters, usually annotated with Phillips-Matz' English translation and summary; family trees; biographies; articles; notes; copies of parish registers, census reports, tax records; and exhibition programs. Phillips-Matz' correspondence with archivists and other scholars is often included in her research files. In addition to illuminating Phillips-Matz' research process, this collection also documents the process of writing and editing a major scholarly work with multiple annotated drafts of the book. Unsorted notes Phillips-Matz kept while conducting her research are also present.

The Uttini family were Verdi's relatives on the maternal side. Both the Uttini and Verdi families are represented in this collection extensively with copies of family documents and correspondence with members of both families and with Phillips-Matz' notes on the families. Files relating to Verdi's second wife, the soprano Giuseppina Strepponi, cover her family in Italy and the United States, her conservatory training, early career, prime career, and relationship with Verdi with copies and transcripts of letters, documents, and articles.

The composer and conductor Emanuele Muzio was a protégé and lifelong friend of Verdi's. The extensive correspondence the two composers maintained over many years is represented here with copies and transcripts of their letters, often annotated by Phillips-Matz. Also of particular interest is an index Phillips-Matz created of the Verdi/Muzio correspondence, dating and briefly describing each letter. There is also a copy of a manuscript for Almerindo Napolitano's book, *Emanuele Muzio and Giuseppe Verdi*.

From 1848 to his death in 1901, Verdi lived in a villa in the village Sant'Agata in the city Villanova sull'Arda in the province Piacenza, a region his family had inhabited for generations. He composed many of his most famous works there and took an active role in local politics and civic concerns. His activities as a Piacenza land-owner and provincial council member are documented with copies of

articles, correspondence, and documents such as parish records, census reports, tax records, farm tenants' accounts, and pay books. Correspondence discusses such topics as hospitals, schools, churches, farm management, railroads, architecture, and Verdi's estate.

Other subjects covered in less depth in the Verdi research files include individuals such as Antonio Barezzi, Giovanni Duprè, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Ada Giachetti, Alessandro Lanari, Primo Levi, Donnino Mingardi, Francesco Luigi Morini, Giovanni Ricordi, Teresa Stolz, Margherita Tizzoni, Luigi Vestri, and Richard Wagner; and cities such as Bologna, Brescia, Busetto, Florence, Genoa, and Roncole. There are also files on Verdi's major works, such as *Aida*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Il Corsaro*, *Don Carlos*, *Ernani*, *Falstaff*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Macbeth*, *Otello*, *Stiffelio*, and *La Traviata*. In a few cases these files are arranged by format, such as biographies and contracts.

There is one microfilm reel containing materials pertaining to the opera *Elisabetta di Valois* (a historical figure who is also a character in Verdi's *Don Carlos*) by composer Antonio Buzzolla and librettist Francesco Maria Piave.

Materials collected or created by Phillips-Matz while conducting research on the nineteenth century soprano Adelina Patti document the singer's personal, professional, and family history. Phillips-Matz annotated copies of Patti's correspondence and other related documents from her and her family as well as articles and extracts discussing Patti's career. Manuscripts for Phillips-Matz' unpublished biography, titled *The Prima Donna as Goddess: A Life of Adelina Patti*, are also included. Three microfilm rolls containing Patti's correspondence and contracts, and the correspondence of her sister, Carlotta Patti, are held here.

During the late 1990s Phillips-Matz was working on a biography of composer Gian Carlo Menotti, a close friend of hers. This book was never published and perhaps never completed, but she collected research materials relating to Menotti's personal and professional life. These files include copies of Menotti's letters and telegrams from the 1920s through the 1940s to Rosario Scalerò, who had been Menotti's music professor at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Phillips-Matz also created chronological files on Menotti, documenting his life and career from the 1930s to 1994, consisting of copies of articles written on Menotti, brief biographies, and chronologies of his work. Research files on Menotti also contain materials pertaining to the life of Menotti's partner of 50 years, American composer Samuel Barber, most notably copies of Barber's letters to family members including his parents and his aunt and uncle, Louise and Sidney Homer, from 1929 to 1964.

Articles and Other Projects document Phillips-Matz' shorter form nonfiction writings with drafts of articles, notes, and research materials. The subjects covered here usually relate to the world of opera and to cities in Italy; and they overlap somewhat with the topics covered in her Verdi biography. Other individuals about whom she wrote included Nedda Casei, Francesco Cavalli, Gaetano Donizetti, Antonio Carlos Gomes, Jenny Lind, Angelo Mariani, and Giacomo Puccini. Topics covered include bel canto singing, black American theater, dynasties in music, Italian dance, and the Venice Theatre Festival. Copies and notes for a few articles by Phillips-Matz that do not concern music can be found in the other research topics. These articles cover topics in history and home organization.

There is one folder of personal items, which contains one letter, a draft of her will and three passport photographs.

Materials in this collection are in English and Italian.

Arrangement: This collection is arranged into the following four groups: Verdi: A Biography, Adelina

Patti, Gian Carlo Menotti, and Articles and Other Projects.

Key Terms

Occupations

Biographers
Music critics
Musicologists

Subjects

Biographies
Music -- 19th century -- History and criticism
Music -- 19th century -- Performance
Music -- 20th century -- History and criticism
Music -- Biography
Opera -- Italy -- 19th century
Opera -- Production and direction

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Correspondence
Research notes

Names

Barber, Samuel, 1910-1981
Homer, Louise, 1871-1947
Menotti, Gian Carlo, 1911-2007
Muzio, Emanuele, 1825-1890
Patti, Adelina, 1843-1919
Strepponi, Giuseppina
Verdi, Giuseppe, 1813-1901

Container List

- Verdi: A Biography* 1957-1993
Research Files 1957-1993
Alphabetical Files 1957-1991
- b. 1 f. 1-12 La Accademia Bussetana - Bartolini, Lorenzo 1972-1991
 - b. 2 f. 1-7 *La Battaglia di Legnano - Busseto* 1971-1989
 - b. 3 f. 1-17 *Buzzolla, Antonio - Ernani* 1957-1986
 - b. 4 f. 1-15 Escudier, Leon - Lanari, Alessandro 1959-1989
 - b. 5 f. 1-9 *Lear - Macbeth* 1958-1988
 - b. 18 f. 1-14 Maffei, Clara - Monti, Raffaele 1973-1989
 - b. 6 f. 1-7 Morini, Francesco Luigi- Piatti, Giulio 1974-1990
 - b. 7 f. 1-8 Piave, Francesco Maria - Roncole 1987-1990
 - b. 8 f. 1-16 *The Ronzani Ballet - La Traviata* 1965-1988
 - b. 9 f. 1-14 Trieste - Zobolli, Achille 1962-1978
- The Uttini and Verdi Families 1988
- b. 10 f. 1-8 1962-1988
 - b. 11 f. 1-6 1986-1989
 - b. 12 f. 1-10 1989-1993
- Emanuele Muzio 1981
- b. 13 Index of Letters
 - b. 14 f. 1-7 1981, undated
 - b. 15 f. 1 undated
- Giuseppina Strepponi 1978-1990
- b. 15 f. 2-8 1978-1990
 - b. 16 f. 1-7 1979-1989
 - b. 17 f. 1-4 1989
- Piacenza 1976-1992
- b. 17 f. 5-9 Carlo Bavagnoli-Communes and Parishes 1991
 - b. 19 f. 1-11 Communes and Parishes-Sant' Agata 1978-1992
 - b. 51 f. 1 San Martino in Olza
 - b. 20 f. 1-10 Sant' Agata 1990-1992
 - b. 21 f. 1-5 Uttini Family in Piacenza-Villanova Sull'Arda 1976-1992
- Verdi Chronology Notecards
- b. 21 f. 6-8 1831-1844
 - b. 22 f. 1-2 1845-1882
- Copies and Indices of Letters 1978-1993
- b. 22 f. 3-6 1978-1980
 - b. 23 f. 1-4 1979-1980
 - b. 24 f. 1-5 1980-1993
- Other Notes and Documents 1957-1989

Verdi: A Biography (cont.)

Research Files (cont.)

Other Notes and Documents (cont.)

- b. 25 f. 1-5 1959-1977
- b. 26 f. 1-3 1987-1989, undated
- Drafts 1990-1993
 - b. 26 f. 4-6 1990 April 25-1991 March 14
 - b. 27 f. 1-6 1991 March-1991 May 7
 - b. 28 f. 1-4 1991 May 21-1991 May 24
 - b. 29 f. 1-4 1992 March 6-1992 March 23
 - b. 30 f. 1-5 1992 July 17, 1992 December 30
 - b. 31 f. 1-5 1992-1993 June 22
- b. 32 f. 1-3 Bibliographies 1977-1984
- b. 45 r. 1 Microfilm 1979
- Adelina Patti 1974-1991
 - Chronological Files 1977-1990
 - b. 32 f. 4-13 1830s-1848
 - b. 33 f. 1-7 1849-1855
 - b. 34 f. 1-6 1856-1860
 - b. 35 f. 1-9 1961-1869
 - b. 36 f. 1-10 1870-1880
 - b. 37 f. 1-15 1881-1895
 - b. 38 f. 1-18 1896-1919
 - Notecards ca. 1980
 - b. 38 f. 19 1866-1867
 - b. 39 f. 1-5 1869-1885
 - Subjects 1974-1991
 - b. 40 f. 1-5 Articles - Barili Family
 - b. 41 f. 1-11 Bologna - New York during the Nineteenth Century
 - b. 42 f. 1-7 Notes - Photographs
 - b. 43 f. 1-4 Rome - Wales
 - b. 44 f. 5 Puerto Rico
 - b. 43 f. 5-7 Copies of Letters 1985-1990
 - b. 51 f. 2 Copies of Letters and Newspaper
 - b. 44 f. 1-4 *Drafts of The Prima Donna as Goddess: A Life of Adelina Patti* 1977, 1979
 - b. 45 r. 2-4 Microfilm Reels
- Gian Carlo Menotti ca. 1990-1997
 - Chronological Files 1990s
 - b. 46 f. 1-21 1930s-1979
 - b. 47 f. 1-23 1971-1997
 - b. 47 f. 24-26 Biographies and Articles 1990s
 - b. 48 f. 1 Letters from Menotti to Rosario Scalero 1997
 - b. 48 f. 2-3 Samuel Barber Letters to Family 1990s
 - Copies of letters originally written between 1929 and 1964.

Articles and Other Projects 1948-1990

- b. 48 f. 4-9 Abolitionism - Bologna 1968-1979
- b. 49 f. 1-17 Busseto - Italian Dance 1948-1984
 - b. 51 f. 3 Honors 1977
- b. 50 f. 1-19 Italian Dance - Voices 1951-1984
- b. 50 f. 20 Personal Items 1967-1990