

**The New York Public Library  
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center  
Music Division**

Guide to the

**League of Composers/ISCM records**

1906-2009 (bulk 1923-2009)

JPB 11-5

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, January 2012

## **Summary**

**Creator:** International Society for Contemporary Music

**Title:** League of Composers/ISCM records, 1906-2009 (bulk 1923-2009)

**Size:** 7.98 linear feet (20 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Claire R. Reis (1970), the Estate of Claire R. Reis (1978), and the International Society for Contemporary Music (2011).

**Abstract:** The League of Composers / International Society for Contemporary Music records contain the papers of the League's co-founder and first Executive Director, Claire Raphael Reis; the records of both the League of Composers and the United States section of the ISCM before their 1954 merger; and the post-1954 records of the combined League/ISCM.

**Access:** Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

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**Preferred citation:** League of Composers/ISCM records, JPB 11-5. Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

**Processing note:** Processing consisted of ordering files and foldering loose papers. The 2011 ISCM donation was united with the 1970 and 1978 donations of Claire R. Reis and her estate. These earlier collections (the Claire R. Reis collection, the League of Composers collection, and the ISCM collection) were previously cataloged under \*MNY-Amer. Copies of the card catalog records for these collections are linked to on the collection page in the portal. Letters in the collection from Arnold Schoenberg have been microfilmed under call number \*ZZ-23448.

## Creator history

The League of Composers was co-founded in 1923 in New York by Claire Raphael Reis and several contemporary composers. Conceived as an alternative to the International Composers' Guild, the League's mission was to promote the composition and performance of contemporary music. By 1954, the League had commissioned 110 works by outstanding American and European composers (including Aaron Copland, Bela Bartók and Samuel Barber), sponsored American stage premières of Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, *Oedipus Rex* and *The Wedding*, and presented some of the first radio broadcasts of contemporary music sponsored by the Pan American Association of Composers. It also gave concerts and receptions honoring Arnold Schoenberg, Paul Hindemith, Darius Milhaud and other composers who had recently immigrated to the United States. Its quarterly *Modern Music* (1924–1946) contained critical reviews of new works and articles by leading composers. The executive directors of the League were Reis (1923–1948) and Copland (1948–1950).

The International Society for Contemporary Music was founded in 1922 after the Internationale Kammermusikaufführungen Salzburg, a festival of modern chamber music held as part of the Salzburg Festival. It was intended to help break down national barriers and personal interests and publicize and promote contemporary music 'regardless of aesthetic trends or the nationality, race, religion or political views of the composer'. These aims were to be pursued through annual music festivals in different countries. The first (1923) was restricted to chamber music; in 1924 and 1925 separate chamber and orchestral festivals were held, and from 1926 the festivals included various genres. The society's activities were also promoted by the autonomous national sections, numbering 46 in 1995. Each country is represented by one section.

From its inception the ISCM was plagued by internal disputes concerning its purpose and operation. There was conflict between those countries that felt that it should promote avant-garde music (principally Germany before 1933 and Austria and Czechoslovakia before 1938) and those that considered any contemporary music to be worthy of the society's interest (principally France, Great Britain and the USA). Despite the internal weaknesses of the society, the pre-war ISCM festivals were most significant as forums for leading contemporary composers, providing the occasions for important premières and performances of music by Webern, Berg, Hindemith, Schoenberg, Stravinsky and others.

The League of Composers merged with the United States section of the ISCM in late 1954. The combined organization continued to sponsor performances of music by contemporary composers such as William Schuman, Henry Cowell, Virgil Thompson, John Cage, Jacob Druckman, Elliot Carter, Milton Babbitt, Charles Wuorinen, and others. In 1976, it helped organize the World Music Days Festival in Boston. The ISCM continues to sponsor an annual National Composers Competition, recordings of contemporary music and an annual concert series in New York.

Claire Raphael Reis (1888–1978) was a music promoter and author. Born in Brownsville, Texas, she was educated in France, Germany, and New York. In 1912 she founded the People's Music League of the People's Institute in New York, an organization that provided free concerts for immigrants and public schools. She became licensed as a kindergarten music teacher and adapted Montessori teaching methods to music. In 1914, she helped establish the Walden School.

In addition to co-founding the League of Composers, Reis was its executive director for twenty-five years. In 1955 she published *Composers, Conductors and Critics*, which describes events and people from her experience in the League. She also wrote several articles, two catalogs for the International Society for Contemporary Music, and *American Composers of Today* (1947; revised and enlarged as *Composers in America: Biographical Sketches*, 1977). She was secretary of the board of directors of the New York City Center of Music and Drama. Reis helped found the Women's City Club and was a member of the advisory board for the Work Projects Administration. She served on the advisory committee of music for the 1939 New York World's Fair, and she was appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt to the New York Committee on the Use of Leisure Time. Among the awards she received were the National Association of American Composers and Conductors award for outstanding service (1945–1946); the Laurel Leaf award of the American Composers Alliance (1963); a scroll from Mayor John V. Lindsay acknowledging her assistance in founding the City Center (1968); and the New York City Handel Medallion for "her outstanding contributions and dedicated efforts for cultural achievement" (1969).

Sources:

Rita H. Mead. "League of Composers." In Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/16180> (accessed January 6, 2012).

Anton Haefeli and Reinhard Oehlschlägel. "International Society for Contemporary Music." In Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/13859> (accessed January 6, 2012).

Donna P. Parker, "Reis, Claire Raphael," Handbook of Texas Online (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fre51>), accessed January 06, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

### Scope and content note

The League of Composers / ISCM records contain the papers of Claire Raphael Reis, the records of both the League of Composers and the United States section of the ISCM before their 1954 merger, and the post-1954 records of the combined League/ISCM.

The Reis papers contain biographical information; correspondence with composers and musicians including Aaron Copland, Serge Koussevitsky and Darius Milhaud; personal photographs and a scrapbook; and subject files and writings describing Reis's activities with the League of Composers, the People's Music League of the People's Institute and the Women's City Club of New York.

The League of Composers and ISCM records (pre-merger) document the history of both organizations through correspondence, concert and festival programs, clippings, board reports and other internal correspondence. The correspondents include George Antheil, Bela Bartok, John Cage, Elliott Carter, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, Paul Hindemith, Charles Ives, Serge Koussevitsky, Wallingford Riegger, Erik Satie, Arnold Schoenberg, Roger Sessions, William Grant Still, Igor Stravinsky, Virgil Thomson, and Anton Webern, among many other important figures.

The League of Composers / ISCM records cover the history of the merged organization from 1954 to the 2000s. They contain programs, clippings, correspondence, grant applications and associated correspondence, publicity materials, meeting minutes, concert production files, general files and issues

of the organization's newsletter, the *ISCM Bulletin*. Correspondents include Gunther Schuller, Roger Sessions, Hugo Weisgall, George Perle, Louis S. Karchin and Geoffrey Kidde.

## Arrangement

The League of Composers/ISCM records are organized into the following series:

Series I: Claire Raphael Reis Papers, 1906-1978

Series II: League of Composers Records (Pre-ISCM Merge), 1923-1966

Series III: International Society for Contemporary Music Records (Pre-League of Composers Merge), 1923-1966

Series IV: ISCM / League of Composers Records, 1954-2009

## Key terms

### Names

Antheil, George, 1900-1959  
Barber, Samuel, 1910-1981  
Bartók, Béla, 1881-1945  
Berg, Alban, 1885-1935  
Blitzstein, Marc  
Bloch, Ernst, 1885-1977  
Britten, Benjamin  
Cage, John  
Carter, Elliott, 1908-  
Casella, Alfredo, 1883-1947  
Castro, Juan José, 1895-1968  
Chávez, Carlos, 1899-1978  
Coolidge, Elizabeth Sprague, 1864-1953  
Copland, Aaron, 1900-1990  
Cowell, Henry, 1897-1965  
Falla, Manuel de, 1876-1946  
Ganz, Rudolph, 1877-1972  
Ginastera, Alberto, 1916-1983  
Goossens, Eugene, 1893-1962  
Gruenberg, Louis, 1884-1964  
Harris, Roy, 1898-1979  
Hindemith, Paul, 1895-1963  
Howe, Hubert S.  
International Society for Contemporary Music  
Ives, Charles, 1874-1954  
Karchin, Louis S.  
Kidde, Geoffrey, 1963-  
Klemperer, Otto, 1885-1973  
Koussevitzky, Serge, 1874-1951  
League of Composers (U.S.)  
Levi, Paul Alan  
Lindsay, John V. (John Vliet)  
Malipiero, Gian Francesco, 1882-1973  
Martinu, Bohuslav, 1890-1959

### Occupations

Composers  
Impresarios  
Musicians

### Events

ISCM World Music Days

Milhaud, Darius, 1892-1974  
New York City Center  
Ormandy, Eugene, 1899-1985  
Ornstein, Leo, 1892-2002  
People's Institute (New York, N.Y.). Music League  
Perle, George, 1915-2009  
Piston, Walter, 1894-1976  
Porter, Quincy, 1897-1966  
Prokofiev, Sergey, 1891-1953  
Rathaus, Karol, 1895-1954  
Reiner, Fritz, 1888-1963  
Reis, Claire R. (Claire Raphael)  
Riegger, Wallingford, 1885-1961  
Rodzinski, Artur, 1892-1958  
Rosenfeld, Paul, 1890-1946  
Satie, Erik, 1866-1925  
Schoenberg, Arnold, 1874-1951  
Schuller, Gunther  
Schuman, William, 1910-1992  
Sessions, Roger, 1896-1985  
Still, William Grant, 1895-1978  
Stokowski, Leopold, 1882-1977  
Stravinsky, Igor, 1882-1971  
Thomson, Virgil, 1896-1989  
Walter, Bruno, 1876-1962  
Webern, Anton, 1883-1945  
Weinberg, Henry, 1931-  
Weisgall, Hugo  
Women's City Club of New York

**Special formats**

Black-and-white photographs  
Clippings (information artifacts)  
Commercial correspondence  
Contracts  
Periodicals  
Personal correspondence

## Container list

### **Series I: Claire Raphael Reis Papers, 1906-1978** (4 boxes)

This series documents the life and activities of Claire Rafael Reis through a biographical file, correspondence, photographs, a scrapbook, subject files, and writings.

The biographical file contains short typed biographies, resumes and clippings. The correspondence includes letters from Benjamin Britten, Carlos Chavez, Aaron Copland, Alberto Ginastera, Serge Koussevitsky, Darius Milhaud, Paul Rosenfeld and William Schuman.

The photographs are of Reis, her family and her piano teacher. The scrapbook has clippings and programs documenting Reis's life from her school years as a pianist to her involvement in the People's Music League and the League of Composers.

The subject files hold correspondence, clippings, programs and flyers. Topics include Reis's books; a 70th birthday tribute she organized for Aaron Copland; the composers Benjamin Britten, Louis Gruenberg and Leo Ornstein; the People's Music League; the New York City Center of Music and Drama; the Women's City Club of New York; Mayor John Lindsay, and the New York Public Library. The New York Public Library file contains correspondence with the Library and with Lincoln Center regarding a 1964 exhibition of League of Composers correspondence.

Among the writings are typed notes for *Composers, Conductors and Critics*, typed notes from meetings of the Women's City Club, typed and manuscript notes on Peoples' Music League projects, an essay titled "Introduction To An Era In Contemporary Music," several typed notes on various League of Composers issues, notes on a meeting of the National Music Council, an essay titled "Radio and Education," and a written draft of an essay about the earliest plans for City Center. The writings files also contain lists of articles written by Reis, a list of League founders, and lists of letters donated to the Library.

- b.1 f.1 Biographical, 1923, 1933, 1952-1969
- Correspondence
- b.1 f.2-58 A - St, 1915, 1930-1978
- b.2 f.1-6 S - W and unidentified, 1933-1974
- b.2 f.7 Photographs, 1906-1913
- b.2 f.8 Scrapbook, 1905-1935
- Subject Files
- b.2 f.9 *American Composers Of Today*, 1930-1959
- b.2 f.10 Britten, Benjamin, 1977
- b.2 f.11 *Composers In America*, 1938-1977
- b.2 f.12-23 Copland, Aaron, 70th birthday tribute, 1970
- b.2 f.24 Gruenberg, Louis, 1927, 1964
- b.2 f.25 Lindsay, John V., 1964-1973
- b.2 f.26 New York City Center of Music and Drama, 1967-1969
- b.2 f.27 New York Public Library and Lincoln Center, 1940, 1964-1977
- b.3 f.1 Ornstein, Leo, 1916, 1973-1976
- b.3 f.2 The People's Music League of the People's Institute, 1912-1922
- b.3 f.3 Women's City Club of New York, Inc., 1952-1959

**Series I: Claire Raphael Reis Papers, 1906-19...** (cont.)

- b.3 f.4-5 Writings and Notes, 1914-1970s
- b.4 f.1-3 Writings and Notes, 1914-1970s

**Series II: League of Composers Records (Pre-ISCM Merge), 1923-1966**

(5 boxes)

This series contains the records of the League of Composers, dating mostly from 1923 to 1955. The papers primarily hold concert programs and correspondence, but also include clippings, Board reports and internal memos. One file documents a 1941 tour sponsored by the League. The programs are organized by concert season and document every season from 1923-1924 to 1954-1955.

Most of the correspondence is with Claire Reis. Correspondents include George Antheil, Samuel Barber, Béla Bartók, Alban Berg, Marc Blitzstein, Ernst Bloch, John Cage, Alfredo Casella, Juan Jose Castro, Carlos Chavez, Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, Manuel de Falla, Rudolph Ganz, Eugene Goossens, Louis Gruenberg, Roy Harris, Paul Hindemith, Charles Ives, Otto Klemperer, Serge Koussevitsky, G. Francesco Malipiero, Bohuslav Martinu, Darius Milhaud, Eugene Ormandy, Walter Piston, Serge Prokofiev, Fritz Reiner, Wallingford Riegger, Artur Rodzinski, Erik Satie, Arnold Schoenberg, William Schuman, Roger Sessions, William Grant Still, Leopold Stokowski, Igor Stravinsky, Virgil Thomson, Bruno Walter, and Anton Webern. Some correspondence dates up to 1966, but the majority is from before the 1954 ISCM merger. League-related correspondence can also be found in Series I.

- b.4 f.4 Board and Internal Reports, 1935, 1948-1952
- b.4 f.5-9 Clippings, 1923-1954
- Correspondence, 1923-1966
- b.5 f.1-74 A - F
- b.6 f.1-73 G - M
- b.7 f.1-73 N - W
- Programs
- b.8 f.1-16 Seasons 1-16, 1923-1939
- b.9 f.1-17 Seasons 17-32 and undated, 1939-1955
- b.9 f.18 Tour, 1941

**Series III: International Society for Contemporary Music Records (Pre-League of Composers Merge), 1923-1966** (1 box)

This series holds the records of the U.S. section of the ISCM, from its founding in 1922 to just before its 1954 merge with the League of Composers. The records consist primarily of correspondence but also contain clippings and concert programs, files documenting festivals produced by the Society (mostly programs), and general papers, which include the U.S. section's certificate of incorporation. The clippings and program files on foreign ISCM sections also contain correspondence with those sections.

The letters in the correspondence files are mostly to Dorothy Lawton, Secretary of the U.S. section. Correspondents include Elliott Carter, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, Henry Cowell, Eugene Goossens, Serge Koussevitsky, G. Francesco Malipiero, Quincy Porter, Karol Rathaus, Arnold Schoenberg and Roger Sessions.

- b.9 f.19      General
  - Clippings and Programs
    - United States Sections and Chapters
      - b.9 f.20-21      1920s-1930s
      - b.9 f.22-23      1940s
      - b.10 f.1      1950-1954 and undated
    - Foreign Sections
      - b.10 f.2      Austrian, 1951
      - b.10 f.3      British, 1931, 1940
      - b.10 f.4      Egyptian and Dutch, 1940, 1943
      - b.10 f.5      French, 1949
      - b.10 f.6      German, Hungarian, Palestinian, Japanese, Swiss and Yugoslavian, 1930, 1940
- b.10 f.7-78      Correspondence, 1930-1943
- b.11 f.1-2      Festivals, 1922-1948

**Series IV: ISCM / League of Composers Records, 1954-2009** (10 boxes)

This series documents the League of Composer's merger with the U.S. section of the ISCM in 1954 and the combined organization's history up to 2009; the bulk of the records date from the mid-1960s to the 1990s. The records include correspondence, clippings, concert programs, grant applications and associated correspondence, publicity materials, meeting minutes, and issues of the organization's newsletter, the *ISCM Bulletin*.

Among the ISCM activities documented by the collection are the production of the 1976 ISCM World Music Days Festival in Boston; the organization's New York concert series; the composer and piano competitions; the development program; and the general work promoting contemporary music and composers both in the United States and abroad.

Concert production files include performer and venue contracts; publicity material such as press releases, flyers and subscription brochures; subscription lists and program copy. Development files contain grant applications and correspondence regarding the management and execution of awarded grants. Funding agencies include the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and private foundations. The World Music Days Festival files contain correspondence with venues, performers, sponsoring companies, and other national ISCM sections; contracts; publicity and press correspondence; and logistical information regarding equipment, transportation, hotel accommodations, catering and event management. Piano and composition competition files contain correspondence from contestants and lists of repertoire entered in the competitions.

The World Music Festival file holds programs for German and Dutch festivals.

The general files contain board meeting minutes and correspondence related to all other topics in the series. The 1954 file contains the by-laws of the League of Composers and papers outlining its merger with the U.S. section of the ISCM. Files from 1978-1979 contain histories of the combined organizations. Composers and other figures with correspondence in this series include Gunther Schuller, Roger Sessions, Henry Weinberg, Hugo Weisgall, George Perle, Hubert S. Howe, Jr., Paul Alan Levi, Louis S. Karchin and Geoffrey Kidde.

General

- b.11 f.3 1954
- b.11 f.4-9 1961-1971
- b.12 f.1-6 1974-1979
- b.13 f.1-6 1980-1993
- b.14 f.1 ASCAP/BMI, 1976, 1993-1994

Clippings and Programs

- b.14 f.2 1954-1969
- b.14 f.3 1970s
- b.14 f.4 1980s
- b.14 f.5 1990s
- b.14 f.6-7 2000-2009 and undated

**Series IV: ISCM / League of Composers Records... (cont.)**

- b.15 f.1-2      Composer Competition, 1977-1992
- Concert Production
- b.15 f.3-5      1969-1973
- b.15 f.6-7      1978-1979
- b.16 f.1-2      1993-1994
- Development
- b.16 f.3      Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 1989
- b.16 f.4      Benefits, 1985-1992
- b.16 f.5      Ditson Fund, 1986-1989
- b.16 f.6-7      National Endowment for the Arts, 1982-1993
- New York State Council on the Arts
- b.16 f.8      1970-1978
- b.16 f.9-12      1983-1993
- b.17 f.1-2      General, 1974-1992
- b.17 f.3      First International Conference on Computer Music, 1976
- b.17 f.4      *ISCM Bulletin* Issues, 1969-1980
- b.17 f.5      ISCM International Conference, 1970
- b.17 f.6      ICSM International Correspondence, 1979, 1992-1994
- b.17 f.7      Meet The Composer, 1977-1978
- b.17 f.8      Membership Lists, 1960-1970
- b.17 f.9      *Modern Music*, 1965-1977
- b.18 f.1      New England Conservatory Chorus Tour, 1976
- b.18 f.2      New York State Board of Social Welfare, 1976-1977
- b.18 f.3      Piano Competition, 1975
- b.18 f.4      Publicity, 1969-1970
- b.18 f.5      Scores Received in 1960, 1960
- World Music Days Festival, Boston, MA, 1975-1977
- b.18 f.6      Belwin-Mills
- b.18 f.7      Boosey and Hawkes
- b.18 f.8      Boston Symphony Orchestra
- b.18 f.9      C.F Peters Corp.
- b.18 f.10      Canadian Music Council
- b.18 f.11      Concert Management
- b.18 f.12      European Broadcasting System
- b.18 f.13      Exhibitions
- b.18 f.14      Follow-up Correspondence
- b.18 f.15      Fromm Music Foundation
- b.18 f.16      Fundraising
- b.18 f.17      G. Schirmer Inc.

**Series IV: ISCM / League of Composers Records...** (cont.)

World Music Days Festival, Boston, MA, 1... (cont.)

- b.18 f.18 Hall Bookings and Ticketing
- b.18 f.19 International Correspondence
- b.19 f.1-2 Journalists
  - b.19 f.3 Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund
  - b.19 f.4 Miscellaneous Performing Groups
  - b.19 f.5 National Sections
  - b.19 f.6 National Public Radio
  - b.19 f.7 Press Releases
- b.19 f.8-10 Programs
- b.19 f.11 Proposal
- b.19 f.12-15 Publicity
  - b.19 f.16 Radio Project
- b.19 f.17-18 Receptions
- b.20 f.1 Schuller, Gunther
- b.20 f.2 Sponsors
- b.20 f.3 String Quartets
- b.20 f.4 Supporting Committees
- b.20 f.5 Theodore Presser Company
- b.20 f.6 Travel
- b.20 f.7 University of Iowa
- b.20 f.8 Visitor Hotel Reservations
- b.20 f.9 WGBH
- b.20 f.10-13 General
  - b.20 f.14 World Music Festival, 1955-1970
  - b.20 f.15 Work Study, 1991-1993