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Music Division

Guide to the
Samuel Antek papers
1905-1975
JPB 11-13

Compiled by Veronica Garcia Rodriguez, Pratt Institute 2012, August 2011

Summary

Creator: Antek, Samuel, 1908-1958

Title: Samuel Antek papers, 1905-1975

Size: 3.94 linear feet (7 boxes, 3 other items)

Source: Donated by Lucy Antek Johnson, 2011

Abstract: Samuel Antek (1908-1958) was an orchestra conductor, musical director, violinist and author best known for his well-received memoir about the internationally famous orchestra conductor Arturo Toscanini, *This Was Toscanini*. The Samuel Antek papers (1937-1964) contain photographs, programs, clippings, correspondence and manuscripts for the Toscanini memoir and articles written about children's concerts and community orchestras.

Access: For permission to publish, contact the Chief, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Preferred citation: Samuel Antek papers, Music Division, The New York Public Library

Processing note

Processing consisted of foldering and arranging files.

Creator history

Samuel Antek (1908-1958) was born in Chicago, Illinois. He attended Chicago Musical College, where he studied violin under Leon Sametini. In 1924, Antek moved to New York City to study with Leopold Auer. Antek went on to study with Louis Persinger and Albert Spaulding at the Juilliard School and in 1936 debuted as a violinist at The Town Hall. Following his debut, Antek concertized extensively and received his first conducting opportunity on the General Foods Radio Hour which broadcasted symphonic, popular classics and operatic music.

In 1937, upon becoming first violinist for the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) Symphony Orchestra, Antek began his orchestral apprenticeship with Arturo Toscanini. He would remain with the NBC Symphony Orchestra until its cessation in 1954. In the 1940s, Antek also attended The Pierre Monteux School for Conductors and Orchestra Musicians in Hancock, Maine. The professional relationships forged with both Toscanini and Monteux would remain influential throughout his career.

Antek was invited by Toscanini to serve as conductor for coast to coast broadcasts of the NBC Symphony Orchestra. In the 1940s through 1950s, he guest conducted for orchestras in New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Chicago, Houston, and the Connecticut Symphony. During this time, Antek also conducted Young People's Concerts for the NBC Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra and New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. He held the position of musical director for the Young People's Concerts series in Buffalo and Philadelphia. The promotion of Young People's Concerts was important to Antek and as a result he published articles on the value of introducing symphonic music to children.

In 1947, Antek became the conductor and music director for the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO). As conductor of the NJSO, Antek received positive and notable reviews for his work and had become highly popular within the American music scene. He was also successful in the publication of several essays on his association with Toscanini. These essays were later compiled into the well-reviewed memoir, *This Was Toscanini*. Antek died in 1958 of a heart attack leaving the memoir to be published posthumously in 1963 with the aid of his wife, Alice Antek.

Scope and content note

The Samuel Antek papers (1937-1964) primarily consist of photographs, programs and clippings. His papers hold manuscripts and drafts for articles, some correspondence, ephemera and conducting materials, such as music books and conductor's batons. A considerable amount of the collection relates to Antek's memoir of Arturo Toscanini; therefore these materials have been organized into a separate series.

The collection's photographs document a mix of Antek's professional and personal life as many colleagues were also considered close friends. The folder containing photos taken by Antek from the NBC Symphony Orchestra's National Tour feature many candid shots of Arturo Toscanini. The collection includes an autographed photograph from Toscanini. The photographs feature many notable musicians from the 1940s and 1950s, for example the conductors Pierre Monteux and Dimitri Mitropoulos and the actor/musician Canada Lee.

The programs and clippings files chronicle Antek's professional career and reflect his extensive work as a guest conductor and supporter of children's concerts. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra file includes program information given directly to Antek depicting his daily concert schedule. These files contain press releases and advertisements relating specific orchestral engagements.

In the correspondence there is a telegram from Toscanini dating December 25 (no year provided) to Antek thanking him for his well wishes and reciprocating his satisfaction over their professional relationship. There is a telegram from Monteux (1952) expressing his willingness to help Antek as an honorary sponsor as well as a letter of recommendation to the Buffalo Symphony Orchestra (1945). While the correspondence file is mostly professional in nature there is exception in a condolence letter to Alice Antek, a Christmas greeting card to the Anteks' daughter Lucy and postcards sent to Alice and Lucy in 1967.

The articles written by Antek in Series I relate to his interests in children's concerts and the orchestra's value within community. There is a folder with a draft copy including Antek's notes for his well known article, "Children's Concerts."

Series I is arranged alphabetically by document type.

Series II is largely made up of drafts for the memoir, *This Was Toscanini* and include the edits done by Antek's wife, Alice. There is a draft of "Playing with Toscanini," the original article written by Antek in 1950 which is the forerunner for the memoir. The reviews in the collection demonstrate the favorable reception of the memoir as does the correspondence, which features a mix of fan mail and praise from Antek's colleagues. Series II is arranged alphabetically by document type.

Arrangement

The Samuel Antek papers are organized into the following series:

Series I: Professional Papers, 1905-1975

Series II: Toscanini Memoir Materials, 1950-1968

Key terms

Subjects

Conducting

Names

Antek, Samuel, 1908-1958

NBC Symphony Orchestra

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

Toscanini, Arturo, 1867-1957

Occupations

Concertmasters

Conductors (Music)

Special formats

Photographs

Container list

Series I: Professional Papers, 1905-1975

- b.1 f.1-5 Articles, 1950-1957, undated
 - Conducting Materials
- b.1 f.6-11 Music Books, 1905-1946, undated
- b.7 f.1-2 Music Books, 1905-1946, undated
- b.1 f.12 Program Notes, undated
- b.1 f.13 Sheet Music, undated
- b.1 f.14 Correspondence, 1940-1966, undated
- b.1 f.15 Ephemera, 1949-1967, undated
 - b.6 Ephemera, 1949-1967, undated
- b.2 f.1 Memorial Awards, 1959-1965
 - Photographs
 - b.2 f.2 1920s
 - b.2 f.3 1930s
 - b.2 f.4 1940s
 - b.2 f.5 1950s
 - b.2 f.6-7 Head Shots, circa 1924-1958
 - b.7 f.4 Head Shots, undated
 - b.2 f.8 NBC Symphony Orchestra, circa 1937-1954
 - b.2 f.9-10 NBC Symphony Orchestra National Tour, 1950
- b.2 f.11-12 New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, circa 1947-1958
 - b.2 f.13 New York Philharmonic, circa 1946
 - b.2 f.14 Performances, undated
 - b.7 f.5 Performances, undated
 - b.2 f.15 Publicity Shots, undated
 - b.2 f.16 Toscanini, Arturo, 1939-1940, undated
 - b.7 f.6 Toscanini, Arturo, 1939-1940, undated
 - b.2 f.17 Undated
- Programs and Newsclippings
 - b.3 f.1 General, 1947-1950s, undated
 - b.3 f.2-5 The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 1957-1958
 - b.3 f.6 The Houston Symphony Orchestra, 1955
 - b.3 f.7 NBC Symphony Orchestra, 1937-1954
 - b.4 f.1-3 NBC Symphony Orchestra, 1937-1954
 - b.8 f.1 NBC Symphony Orchestra, 1937-1954
 - b.4 f.4-6 The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, 1947-1958
 - b.5 f.1-2 The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, 1947-1958
 - b.5 f.3 New York City, 1936-1937, 1952-1955, undated
 - b.5 f.4 The Philadelphia Orchestra, 1954-1957
 - b.5 f.5 Toscanini, Arturo, 1940s-1975, undated
 - b.8 f.2 Toscanini, Arturo, 1970s-1975, undated
 - b.8 f.5 Yearbook, 1938 (NBC Symphony Orchestra)

Series II: Toscanini Memoir Materials, 1950-1968

- b.9 f.1 Articles, 1968
- Correspondence
- b.9 f.2 Antek, Alice, 1962
- b.9 f.3 Davenport, Marcia, 1962
- b.9 f.4 General, 1963-1964
- b.7 f.3 Cover Art, undated
- Drafts
- b.9 f.5-6 *Playing with Toscanini*, 1962, undated
- b.9 f.7-12 *This was Toscanini*, undated
- b.10 f.1-2 *This was Toscanini*, undated
- b.10 f.3 *To Play with Toscanini*, undated
- Publications
- b.10 f.4 "Playing with the Maestro", 1950 (*Saturday Review of Literature*)
- b.10 f.5 "Playing with the Maestro", 1951 (*Saturday Review of Literature*)
- b.10 f.6 "This Was Toscanini", 1963 (*Opera News*)
- b.10 f.7 "This Was Toscanini", 1966 (*Reader's Digest*)
- Publicity
- b.10 f.8 1962-1965, undated
- b.8 f.3 1962-1965, undated
- b.10 f.9 Photograph, 1966
- Reviews
- b.10 f.10 General, 1963, undated
- b.10 f.11 Applebaum, Samuel, *The Strad*, 1964
- b.8 f.4 Downes, Edward, *The New York Times Book Review*, 1963
- b.10 f.12 Haggin, B.H., *The Hudson Review*, 1964
- b.8 f.5 Haggin, B.H., *The New York Review of Books*, 1964
- b.10 f.13 Kipnis, Igor, *The American Record Guide*, 1964
- b.10 f.14 Kolodin, Irving, *Philharmonic Hall*, 1963-1964
- b.10 f.15 Luten, C.J., *Opera News*, 1964
- b.10 f.16 NBC Press Department, 1963