

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

Guide to the

The Bohemians collection

1907-2008 (bulk 1920-1987)

JPB 11-15

Compiled by Philip Heslip, September 2011

Summary

Creator: Bohemians (New York Musicians' Club)

Title: The Bohemians collection, 1907-2008 (bulk 1920-1987)

Size: 8.69 linear feet (14 boxes)

Source: Donated by the Bohemians between 1984 and 2008

Abstract: The Bohemians (New York Musicians' Club) is an organization made up of distinguished New York City musicians and music lovers that organizes dinners and chamber concerts for its members, supports young artists, and honors notable musicians. The collection consists of bylaws, membership lists, letters, financial records, meeting minutes, photographs, programs, and menus for the club spanning 1907 to 2008. Also present are some items documenting the Musicians Foundation Inc., an affiliated tax-exempt charitable organization that provides support to professional musicians in need.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required. Inquiries regarding audio materials in the collection may be directed to the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound (rha@nypl.org). Audio materials will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

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

Preferred citation: The Bohemians collection, Music Division, The New York Public Library

Processing note

Collection rehoused and organized into series by document type.

Related collections

Inventory of Clipping Files (Subjects) [ca. 1895-]. Music Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Creator history

The Bohemians (the New York Musicians' Club) was founded in 1907 by virtuoso pianist Rafael Joseffy (1852-1915). Joseffy and a group of fellow classical musicians incorporated the club the following year, and in 1914 created the Musician's Foundation Inc., a charitable organization that provides emergency

financial support to professional musicians in need. The club's stated purpose is to "further the cause of music and the interests of musicians, to advance the careers of young musicians, to support the philanthropic Musicians Foundation," and to foster fellowship among musicians. Initially, the Bohemians was a men-only club made up of classical musicians, composers, and music lovers. At first, the Bohemians limited its size to 50 members, and by 1956 it had raised the limit to 600. Also by the mid-1950s, the group allowed women members to join. The club's membership has included many of the most prominent musicians and music lovers in New York, such as Avery Fisher, Dorothy Delay, Gilda Glazer, Jascha Heifetz, Serge Koussevitsky, Eugene Ormandy, and Virgil Thomson, among many others.

Membership privileges include attendance at their annual meeting and monthly meetings, held between October and May, which consists of dinner, a concert, and a reception, and admittance to other special events. Meetings have taken place at various Manhattan venues, including the Waldorf Astoria, the Liederkrantz Foundation, the Harvard Club, the Biltmore, the Lotos Club, and the Kozciuszko Foundation. The club is currently in operation and is managed by elected officers, a board of directors, and artistic advisors.

Source: "The Bohemians," accessed August 16, 2011, <http://the-bohemians.org>

Scope and content note

The Bohemian's collection documents the club's activities between 1907 and 2008, and is made up of bylaws and membership lists, membership files, letters, financial records, meeting minutes, photographs, programs, and dinner menus. The collection also contains some material related to the Musicians Foundation, Inc., the group's nonprofit charity that supports professional musicians in need.

Arrangement

The The Bohemians collection are organized into the following series:

- Series I: By-laws and Membership Lists, 1924-1985
- Series II: Clippings, 1947-1996
- Series III: Correspondence, 1907-1997
- Series IV: Financial Records, 1971-2008
- Series V: Meeting Minutes , 1907-1980
- Series VI: Musician's Foundation Inc., 1947-1992
- Series VII: Photographs, ca.1950-1983
- Series VIII: Programs and Menus, 1910-2008
- Series IX: Miscellaneous Items and Ephemera , 1971-1984

Key terms

Subjects

Charity organization.

Names

Bohemians (New York Musicians' Club)
Williams, Brent, tenor.

Occupations

Composers
Musicians
Singers

Special formats

Bylaws
Clippings (information artifacts)
Concert programs

Financial records
Letters(correspondence)
Meeting minutes
Membership lists
Menus
Photographs

Container list

Series I: By-laws and Membership Lists, 1924-1985 (4 boxes)

The By-laws and Membership Lists series is comprised of copies and drafts of the club's by-laws, member lists, membership information, and dues records. Present are 22 printed by-laws and member list booklets that span 1924 to 1985. These volumes contain lists of active members, associate members, and death dates for past members. The membership dues records (1946-1984) are card files containing various membership details such as name, address, years of paid dues, and year of the member's death. Occasionally, newspaper obituaries accompany the cards. The files are organized by last name and grouped into member types including honorary life members, active members, non-residential active members, associate members, and non-residential associate members.

- b.1 By-Laws and Member Lists, 1924-1985
 - b.1 f.1 Draft, 1958
 - b.1 f.2 Members Ships - General
 - Member Lists
 - b.1 f.3 1971-1972
 - b.1 f.4 1993-2000
 - Membership Dues Files, 1946-1984
- b.2 Honorary Life Members, Active Members, and Non-Resident Active
- b.3 Non-Resident Associate and Active Memembers A-D
- b.4 Active Members D-Z
- b.5 Honorary Life Members and Active Members

Series II: Clippings, 1947-1996 (2 folders)

The Clippings series contains miscellaneous newspaper clippings regarding press for the Bohemian's club and newspaper obituaries of Bohemians club members.

- b.7 f.1 Obituaries
- b.7 f.2 Publicity

Series III: Correspondence, 1907-1997 (1 box)

The Correspondence series contains letters relating to the operation of the club. The bulk of the letters are to and from Brent Williams, secretary of the Bohemians during the 1970s and 1980s. These concern meeting management, booking artists for concerts, and recommending new members. Williams' outgoing letters are retained photocopies, many of which are to prominent artists requesting attendance at club meetings. Other item types include letters from artist management companies and thank you notes from members and honorees. Notable contributors include Claudio Arrau, Avery Fisher, Joseph Fuchs, Jascha Heifetz, Ed Koch, Isaac Stern, and Virgil Thompson. The series also contains folders devoted to the following contributors or topics: Paul Doktor (1982), Hugo Grunwald (1956), Harvard Club of New York (1948-1958), Myra Hess regarding "Ladies' Night" (1955), Isidor Phillipp (undated), and Beryl Rubinstein (1948). Additionally, the series holds membership resignation letters from 1949 to 1960.

General

- b.7 f.3 1907-1966
 - b.7 f.4 1970-1972
 - b.7 f.5 1973-1978
 - b.7 f.6 1981-1987, 1997
- #### Individuals and Corporations
- b.7 f.7 Doktor, Paul

Series III: Correspondence (cont.)

Individuals and Corporations (cont.)

- b.7 f.8 Grunwald, Hugo
- b.7 f.9 Harvard Club
- b.7 f.10 Hess, Myra, 1955
- b.7 f.11 Phillipp, Isidor
- b.7 f.12 Rubinstein, Beryl and Clyde Burrows

Resignations

- b.7 f.13 1949-1950
- b.7 f.14 1953-1954
- b.7 f.15 1955-1956
- b.7 f.16 1957
- b.7 f.18 1959-1960
- b.7 f.17 1958-1959

Series IV: Financial Records, 1971-2008 (1 box)

The Financial Records series collects the treasurer reports from 1971 to 2008. These reports document the club's account balance, itemized income receipts, itemized expenditures (disbursements), assets, and membership tallies. The treasurer produced these reports several times each year and some years have almost monthly reports.

Treasurer Reports

- b.8 f.1 1971-1973
- b.8 f.2 1974-1976
- b.8 f.3 1980-1983
- b.8 f.4 1984-1985
- b.8 f.5 1986-1989
- b.8 f.6 1990-1996
- b.8 f.7 1997-2008

Series V: Meeting Minutes , 1907-1980 (3 boxes)

The Meeting Minutes series consists of the Bohemians's minutes for their monthly meetings, annual meetings, and special meetings from 1907 through 1980. The minutes, kept by the club secretary, document the club's finances, membership and membership nominations, reports on the death of members, board of directors and officer elections and turnover, program planning, and other business activities. Of note is a bound volume of minutes documenting the first years of the club (1907-1923), which includes an early draft of the by-laws.

- b.9 1907-1923
- b.10 f.1-2 1923-1931
- b.10 f.3-4 1931-1937
- b.10 f.5-6 1937-1944
- b.10 f.7-8 1944-1949
- b.11 f.1 1949-1954
- b.11 f.2 1954-1959
- b.11 f.3-4 1959-1970

Series V: Meeting Minutes (cont.)

- b.11 f.5 1970-1972
- b.11 f.6 1972-1975
- b.11 f.7 1976-1978
- b.11 f.8 1979-1980
- b.12 f.1 1982-1983

Series VI: Musician's Foundation Inc., 1947-1992 (1 box and 2 folders)

The Musicians Foundation Inc. series contains miscellaneous items relating to the Bohemian's non-profit charity, which "helps professional musicians by providing emergency financial assistance in meeting current living, medical and allied expenses." Items include letters, newspaper clippings, tax forms, meeting minutes, benefit concert programs, annual appeals, and financial reports for the years 1980 and 1983. Also present is a box of card files of assistance recipients. The files contain funding details, reasons for assistance, and, occasionally, letters from recipients describing their hardships and requesting aid.

- b.12 f.2 General
- b.12 f.3 Applications
- b.6 Recipient Files

Series VII: Photographs, ca.1950-1983 (2 folders)

The Photographs series holds 12 photographs of Bohemians members and 7 publicity shots of performers who gave concerts for the club. Most of the member images were taken at the Bohemian's 75th anniversary celebration (1982). The publicity photographs depict Jorge Bolet, Nathan Milstein, and Bidú Sayão.

- b.12 f.4 Bohemian Members
- b.12 f.5 Publicity Shots

Series VIII: Programs and Menus, 1910-2008 (2.5 boxes)

The Programs and Menus series consists of the programs for the Bohemians club's monthly, annual, and special meetings from 1910 to 2008. Monthly programs contain lists of new membership candidates, concert performers, and pieces performed. The annual and special meeting programs additionally include menus for the night's meal, and lists the administration of the Bohemians and the Musicians Foundation Inc.

Many of the early programs contain prints or photographs of the night's honorees. These include: Engelbert Humperdinck (1910); Leopold Godowsky (1913); Ferruccio Busoni (1915); Kneisel Quartet (1917); Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge (1919); Alma Gluck-Zimbalist and Efram Zimbalist (1919); Sergei Rachmaninoff (1919); Harold Bauer (1920); Rubin Goldmark (1921); Moriz Rosenthal (1923); Willem Mengelberg (1925); Albert Spalding (1926, 1950); Flonzaley Quartet (1928); Serge Koussevitzky (1929); Arthur Bodanzky (1930); Edward Johnson (1936); Sam Franko (1937); Joseph Hofmann (1937); Kirsten Flagstad (1938); Theodore E. Steinway (1939); Fritz Kreisler (1940); Albert Spalding (1949); Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York 1842-1942 (1942); and Walter W. Naumburg (1949) among others.

- b.12 f.6 1910-1923
- b.12 f.7 1924-1930
- b.12 f.8 1930-1938

Series VIII: Programs and Menus (cont.)

- b.13 f.1 1938-1945
- b.13 f.2 1946-1948
- b.13 f.3 1949-1955
- b.13 f.4 1956-1963
- b.13 f.5 1964-1970
- b.14 f.1 1970-1977
- b.14 f.2 1978-1982
- b.14 f.3 1983-1986
- b.14 f.4 1987-1995
- b.14 f.5 1996-1998
- b.14 f.6 1998-1999
- b.14 f.7 2000-2008

Series IX: Miscellaneous Items and Ephemera , 1971-1984

The Miscellaneous items and Ephemera series contains a metal plaque (1971), two undated programs, membership application cards, text of an address given by Paul Manship at Julliard School, and a score of Happy Birthday to You, duet for violin in the styles of Paganini, Ernst, and Wieniawski, for Nathan Milstein's 80th birthday.

- b.14 f.8 General
- b.14 f.9 Happy Birthday Score for Nathan Milstein