

Guide to the Jeremy Commons Letters to Solange Bak, 1984-1994

JPB 06-29

Music Division

**The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
New York, New York**

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Jeremy Commons Letters to Solange Bak
Collection ID:	JPB 06-29
Creator:	Commons, Jeremy.
Extent:	.42 linear feet (1 box)
Repository:	Music Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Abstract: The Jeremy Commons Letters to Solange Bak partially document a ten-year correspondence between the music scholar and the descendant of the Italian opera composers, Federico and Luigi Ricci, who were among his subjects of study.

Administrative Information

Access

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

Publication Rights

For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Music Division.

Preferred Citation

Jeremy Commons Letters to Solange Bak, JPB 06-29, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Custodial History

The Jeremy Commons Letters to Solange Bak were donated to the Music Division in 1994 by Solange Bak.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2006.

Biographical Note

Music scholar Jeremy Commons is an authority on nineteenth-century Italian opera, perhaps best known for his association with the London-based Opera Rara record label. Commons taught English literature at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand for many years, specializing in the Augustan period, until his 1989 retirement allowed him to turn his attention full time to opera-related projects. Commons' varied research interests have included composers that range from the well known (Gaetano Donizetti) to the more obscure (Giuseppe Balducci). In addition to preparing informational booklets to accompany the Opera Rara anthology, *A Hundred Years of Italian Opera*, Commons has published numerous articles and written program notes for opera companies, including the Australian Opera and the San Francisco Opera. A former president of the New Zealand Opera Society, in recent years Commons has been involved with staging intimate "salon" operas under the auspices of Sirius Opera, including a 2006 performance of two works with libretti by Commons, *Mrs. Windemere* and *The Genteel Pigeons*.

Scope and Content Note

The Jeremy Commons Letters to Solange Bak consist of a set of letters from the opera scholar received by Bak over a ten-year period. Commons initiated the correspondence with Bak in 1984 after having been informed by a mutual friend during a research trip to Italy that Bak was a descendant of the composers, Federico and Luigi Ricci, who were among the many subjects he was researching. The earliest letters deal with information exchanged on the Ricci brothers. In addition to discussing Commons' research projects and his efforts to get the works of lesser-known composers, such as Giuseppe Balducci, recorded and performed, the letters also chronicle his extensive travels and offer a glimpse into the New Zealand concert and social scene. Along with the nine folders of letters, the collection includes some writings by Commons and other materials that were sent with the letters; these items have been filed in five folders after the letters. A few of the letters have had parts of the leaf excised.

Box/Folder Description

		Letters
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	1984
	2	1985
	3	1986
	4	1987
	5	1988-1989
	6	1990
	7	1991-1992
	8	1993-1994
	9	Biographical material, ca. 1985-1989
		Writings
		Articles
	10	<i>On rediscovering a forgotten composer, Giuseppe Balducci</i> , 1993 In <i>Early Music New Zealand</i> , volume 2, number 1.
	11	Various, 1990-1993 Includes photocopies of reviews, program notes and magazine articles.
		Books
	12	<i>A childhood in Te Aroha</i> , 1992
	13	<i>La corrispondenza fra Nicola Vaccaj e Girolamo Viezzoli</i> , 1993