

# **Guide to the Lorenzo Alvary Papers, 1919 - 1992**

**JPB 06-16**

## **Music Division**

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

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## Descriptive Summary

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Lorenzo Alvary Papers</b>
<b>Collection ID:</b>	<b>JPB 06-16</b>
<b>Creator:</b>	<b>Alvary, Lorenzo</b>
<b>Extent:</b>	<b>8 linear feet (14 boxes)</b>
<b>Repository:</b>	<b>Music Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts</b>

**Abstract:** This collection contains materials related to the Metropolitan Opera's basso singer Lorenzo Alvary. In addition to the many photographs and clippings, there are several legal documents, correspondence and production materials relating to his co-production with Salvador Dali of *The Spanish Lady* and *The Roman Cavalier*.

## 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 Chief, Music Division.

### Preferred Citation

Lorenzo Alvary Papers, JPB 06-16, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

### Custodial History

The Lorenzo Alvary Papers were donated to the Music Division in 2005 by Alison Macheras, Trustee of the Lorenzo Alvary Estate.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2007.

## Biographical Note

Lorenzo Alvary (1909 – 1996) was a prolific singer and producer of many operas in the United States. Alvary was born in Hungary and studied law at the University of Budapest, but he quickly abandoned his law career to study music in Milan and Berlin. He first sang for the Vienna Staatsoper, but joined the Metropolitan Opera in 1942, where he remained on the roster for over twenty seasons. His most memorable roles are Baron Ochs in *Rosenkavalier*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, and Leporello in *Don Giovanni*. Alvary was known for his elaborate costumes and for always playing characters that were less than attractive. He also sang for the San Francisco Opera. In 1972, he became the artistic director for the Miami Opera Guild and he received critical praise for his work with the company. Alvary started his own radio show entitled *Opera Topics*, which he hosted from 1964 – 1986. He went on to produce the surrealistic opera, *The Spanish Lady and the Roman Cavalier*, with Salvador Dalí.

As well as a career in the United States, Alvary had great international success. He went on to sing in over sixty operas in South America and Europe. Alvary appeared in many solo recitals with such directors as Bruno Walter and Arturo Toscanini.

## Scope and Content Note

This collection contains professional material related to the bass singer Lorenzo Alvary, which includes artwork, biographical data, correspondence, press material, and photographs. The large series of operas consists of publicity material, such as clippings, photographs, and programs. His famous operas were *Rosenkavalier*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Don Giovanni*. The largest set of papers relate to his opera, *The Spanish Lady and the Roman Cavalier*, which was co-produced with the surrealist artist Salvador Dalí. The legal papers found within his professional papers relate to the patent of the name for this radio show *Opera Topics* that Alvary hosted for over twenty years. There are three boxes of oversized material. There is no personal material within the collection.

## Organization

The collection is organized 4 series. They are:

Series I: Correspondence, 1937 - 1991

Series II: Professional Material, 1935 - 1992

Series III: Operas, 1919 - 1989

Series IV: Oversized Material, 1961 – 1962, undated

## Series Descriptions

### **Series I: Correspondence, 1937 - 1991**

**1 Box**

**Arrangement: Alphabetical**

This series contains correspondence related to Alvary's professional career. The correspondence includes letters from the Bel Canto Opera, The New Jersey State Opera, and the Organizzazione Internazionale Concerti.

### **Series II: Professional Material, 1935 – 1992**

**3 Boxes**

**Arrangement: Alphabetical**

The professional material covers such aspects of Alvary's career as an adjudicator and radio host of *Opera Topics*. There includes biographical data used for press releases, music score, programs, notes, and photographs. The legal papers relate to Alvary's concern over the patent of the name *Opera Topics*.

### **Series III: Operas, 1919 - 1989**

**7 Boxes**

**Arrangement: Alphabetical**

This series highlights Alvary's career as an opera singer. All shows include clippings, photographs, and programs. Of notable mention is the opera, *The Spanish Lady and the Roman Cavalier*, co-produced by Salvador Dali. Materials in this production include artwork, and legal papers (1964 –1965).

### **Series IV: Oversized Material, 1961 – 1962, undated**

**3 Boxes**

**Arrangement: Alphabetical**

This series contains original artwork by Salvador Dali, posters, photographs, and a music score.

**Series I: Correspondence, 1937 - 1991**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	Ada, 1955
	2	Austrian National Tourist Office, 1937
	3	Bel Canto Opera, 1985 - 1991 (Includes clippings, press releases, and programs.)
	4	Bianca, undated
	5	Canfalonieri, Giulio, 1954 - 1966, undated (Includes biographical data.)
	6	Carolina, 1951 - 1961
	7	Danise, 1959, undated
	8	Gibson, Barbara, 1955
	9	Gutman, John, undated
	10	Lord Harewood, 1991 - 1993 (Includes clipping, profile on Harewood.)
	11	Indiana University - School of Music, 1984
	12	Milanov, Zinka, 1989
	13-14	New Jersey State Opera, 1994 - 1995
	15	The New York Singing Teacher's Association, 1989
	16	Organizzazione Internazionale Concerti, 1955
	17	Page, Tim, 1987
	18	The Standard Hour and School Broadcast, 1947
	19-20	Unidentified, undated

**Series II: Professional Material, 1935 - 1992**

Adjudications

Citta Di Ercolano

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
2	1-5	Correspondence, 1984 - 1992
	6	List of Contestants, 1991, undated (Annotations)
		Concurso Internacional de Canto Francisco de Andrade
	7-11	Correspondence, 1984 - 1989
	12	Photographs, 1986 - 1989
		International Vocal Contest
	13-17	Correspondence, 1981 - 1984
	18	Clippings, 1972 - 1982
	19	Music List, 1972 - 1982
	20-22	Photographs, 1972 - 1982
	23	Biographical Data, undated (Includes professional career information. This information was used for publicity material.)
	24-25	Clippings, 1935 - 1957, undated (Folder 21 are photocopies of a scrapbook. These clippings were collected by Alvary spanning his career as a singer.)

		Concerts
	26-32	Clippings, 1958 - 1984
	33	Photographs, 1958 (Includes postcards.)
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
3	1-12	Programs, 1941 - 1963, undated
		Legal Papers
	13-18	Correspondence, 1964 - 1986 (These documents concern Alvary's radio program <i>Opera Topics</i> . Patent information concerning the name <i>Opera Topics</i> . Includes some papers concerning health and financial matters.)
	19	Amendment, 1965 (Includes correspondence.)
	20-22	Contracts, 1935 - 1970 (Radio show.)
	23	Supplemental Register, 1965 (Radio show.)
	24	Music Score, undated (National Anthem <i>O Canada</i> .)
	25	Notes, undated (Acting Exercises.)
	26	Programs, 1964 - 1989, undated ( <i>Wozzeck</i> , <i>Un Ballo In Maschera</i> , <i>Andrea Chenier</i> , <i>Antony &amp; Cleopatra</i> , <i>Die Frau Ohne Schatten</i> .)
	27-30	Press Material, 1935 - 1972, undated
		Radio Show
	31	Correspondence, 1964 - 1986
	32	Clippings, 1970
	33	Inventory of Programs, 1984 - 1986
	34	Photographs, undated
	35	Press Release, undated
	36	Promotional Material, undated (Press release, biography.)
		Photographs
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
4	1	Autographed Photos, 1944 - 1945 (Includes Giuuppe Danise.)
	2	Concerts, 1942, undated
	3-5	Portraits, undated (Costume photos.)
	6-11	On-stage Performances, undated
	12	Self-Portraits, undated
	13-14	With Friends, 1955 - 1957, undated

**Series III: Operas, 1919 - 1989**

*Adriana LeCouvreur*

(Authors: Eugene Scribe, Gabriel Legouve)

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
5	1	Clippings, 1969 - 1971
	2	Photographs, undated
	3	Programs, 1962 - 1969
	4	<i>Il Barbiere di Siviglia</i> - Photographs, undated (Author: Gioachino Rossini)
		<i>Boris Gudounov</i> , 1956 (Author: Modest Mussorgsky)
	5-7	Clippings
	8-9	Photographs
		<i>Carmen</i> (Author: Georges Bizet)
	10	Clippings, 1958 - 1959, undated
	11	Photographs, 1958 - 1959
		<i>Le Coq d'Or</i> , 1955 (Author: Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov)
	12	Clippings
	13-14	Photographs
		<i>Così fan tutte</i> (Author: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart)
	15-16	Correspondence, 1957
	17	Contract, 1957
	18-20	Clippings, 1955 - 1958
	21-23	Photographs, 1957 - 1958
	24	Programs, 1957 - 1958
		<i>Il Crescendo</i> (Author: Giulio Confalonieri)
	25	Correspondence, 1954 - 1966
	26	Clippings, 1954
	27	Program, 1954 (Photocopy.)
	28	Notes, 1954
		<i>Don Giovanni</i> (Author: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart)
	29-30	Clippings, 1955 - 1959
	31-32	Photographs, 1955 - 1959
	33	Programs, 1959
		<i>Don Pasquale</i> (Author: Gaetano Donizetti)
	34	Photographs, undated
		<i>Falstaff</i> , 1948 (Author: Charles Gounod)



<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
6	1	Clippings
	2	Photographs
		<i>Faust</i>
		(Author: Richard Strauss)
	3	Clipping, 1952
	4	Photographs, undated
		<i>Frau</i>
		(Author: Charles Gounod)
	5-11	Correspondence, 1976 - 1988, undated
	12-16	Clippings, 1954 - 1978
	17-18	Photographs, undated
	19-20	Programs, 1919 - 1978
	21	Publicity Material, undated
		(Alvary biographical note. )
		<i>Gianni Schicchi</i>
		(Author: Giacomo Puccini)
	22-23	Clippings, 1958, undated
	24	Photographs, 1949 - 1958
		<i>L'Italiana in Londra</i>
		(Alternate title: <i>The Italian Girl in London</i> . Author: Domenico Cimarosa)
	25	Correspondence, 1957 - 1958
	26	Script Material, undated
	27	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> - Clippings, 1955
		(Author: Gaetano Donizetti)
	28	<i>Macbeth</i> - Clippings, 1957
		(Author: Giuseppe Verdi)
	29	<i>Manon Lescaut</i> - Clippings, 1956
		(Author: Daniel- Francois-Espirit Auber)
		<i>Pelleas and Melisande</i>
		(Author: Arnold Schoenberg)
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
7	1	Clippings, 1953 - 1954, undated
	2	Photographs, 1953 - 1954
		(Includes negative.)
		<i>La Perichole</i>
		(Author: Jacques Offenbach)
	3	Clippings, 1965 - 1971
	4	Programs, 1965 - 1966
		<i>The Portugese Inn</i> , 1954
		(Author: Luigi Cherubini)
	5-11	Correspondence
	12-13	Clippings
	14	Photographs

15	Programs
16	Publicity Material
	<i>Queen of Spades</i>
	(Author: Peter Tchaikovsky)
17	Clippings, 1966 - 1967
18	Programs, 1965 - 1966
	(Annotations. Authors: Charles Gounod)
	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
	(Author: Charles Gounod)
19	Clippings, 1967 - 1968
20	Photographs, 1967 - 1968
21	Programs, 1968
	<i>Rosenkavalier</i>
	(Author: Richard Strauss)

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
8	1-3	Correspondence, 1957, undated
		Clippings
	4	1946 - 1949
	5	1951 - 1954
	6	1955
	7	1956
	8-11	1957
	12-14	1958
	15-16	1959
	17	1965
	18	1992 - 1993
	19	undated
	20-23	Photographs, 1947 - 1957
	24	Negatives, 1955 - 1957
	25-26	Programs, 1956 - 1966

*The Spanish Lady and the Roman Cavalier*

(Music by Alessandro Scarlatti, idea and original artwork by Salvador Dali.)

Correspondence

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
9	1	Bainsot, Alvary, undated
	2	Castese, Francois, 1963
	3	d'Auriac, Rene, 1961
	4	Dali, Salvador, 1960 - 1962
		(Financial agreement for watercolors.)
	5	Guerlain (Parfumer Distillateur), 1962
	6	Harold Holt LTD., 1962
	7	Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1974
	8	Miami Museum of Modern Art, 1973
	9	Morse, Elanor & Reynolds, 1993 - 1996, undated

10	Organization Artistique Internationale, 1962 - 1964
11	Organizzazione Rapporti Internazionali Artistici, 1962
12	Penne, Edmonds, Morton, Taylor, and Adams Counsellors at Law, 1964 - 1965 (Legal papers concerning lawsuit by Dali. Photocopies and originals. French and English.)
13	La Reine Gala, 1960
14	Rhallys, Pierce, 1962
15	San Francisco Opera Association, 1954 - 1959
16	Societe Artistique des Champs-Elysees, 1961
17	Stein Roe & Farnham, undated
18	Theatre Royal de la Monnaie, 1962 - 1964, undated
19	Utudjian, Armand, 1964 (Written in french.)
20	Artwork, undated (Designs by Salvador Dali for opera. Includes 2 booklets of his work, which are unrelated to the show.)
21	Biographical data of Composer Alexander Scarlatti. Clippings
22-23	1954
24	1961
25-40	1961-1962 (Regarding part II - "Gala" performace. )
41	1962
42	1989 (Includes list of newspapers which printed articles about the show.)
<u>Fol</u>	
1-11	Photographs, 1962 (Folder 1 includes list of photographs.)
12	Negatives, 1962
13-14	Press Releases, 1961 - 1962
	Production Material
15	Contract, undated (In French.)
16	Designs for Show, undated (Notes on preparing soap bubbles. Includes sketches.)
17	Estimation for Costumes, undated
18	Financial Estimates for Show, undated
19	Legal Papers, 1964, undated (Written in French with annotations, some photocopies. Lawsuit by Salvador Dali.)
20	Notes, undated
21-22	Programs, 1961 - 1962
23	Scrapbook, 1961 (Photocopy of original.)

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
11	1	<i>Tannhauser</i> - Photographs, 1958 (Author: Richard Wagner)
		<i>Tosca</i> (Author: Giacomo Puccini)
	2	Correspondence
	3	Clippings, 1959 - 1971
	4	Photographs, 1965
	5	Programs, 1965 - 1970

**Series IV: Oversized Material, 1961 – 1962, undated**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
12	1-3	Artwork, undated (Record case for the <i>Spanish Lady and the Roman Cavalier</i> . Artwork by Salvador Dali, Photographs of Dali artwork, plus costume designs for two productions, unknown.)
13	1-2	Photographs, undated (Costume photographs of Alvary in <i>Don Pasquale</i> and 3 other unknown productions.)
14	1	Posters, 1961 – 1962 (2 posters for the <i>The Spanish Lady and the Roman Cavalier</i> .)
	2	Music Score, undated (Orchestral score for <i>Ora Satanica</i> .)