



The New York Public Library Music Division

Guide to the

Alice Smith photographs

1980-1997

JPB 13-38

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2013

Summary

Creator: Smith, Alice

Title: Alice Smith photographs

Date: 1980-1997

Size: 2.47 linear feet (8 boxes)

Source: Donated by Dolores Wills in 1998.

Abstract: Alice Smith (? - ca. 1998), the daughter of a Viennese opera star, was a fan of music and musicians. The Alice Smith photographs (1980-1997) hold about 2,500 informal photographs of vocalists, instrumentalists, conductors, and composers taken backstage at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall.

Conditions Governing Use: For permission to publish, contact the Chief, Music Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Preferred citation: Alice Smith photographs, JPB 13-38. Music Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2013 Original order was preserved. No rehousing was necessary.

Creator History

Alice Smith (d. circa 1998) was the daughter of a Viennese opera star. She grew up around singers and musicians, and became friendly with them and their families. Later in her life, in the 1980s and 1990s, she lived in New York City, where she regularly attended performances at the Metropolitan Opera, Avery Fisher Hall, and Alice Tully Hall. She was routinely granted access to backstage areas and private receptions, where she took amateur photographs of vocalists, instrumentalists, conductors, and composers, many of whom she knew personally. Smith died in late 1997 or early 1998.

Custodial History

The collection was donated by Dolores Wills on behalf of Alice Smith's family.

Scope and Content Note

The Alice Smith photographs, dating from 1980 to 1997, consist of about 2,500 informal photographs taken at the Metropolitan Opera, Avery Fisher Hall, and Alice Tully Hall. A few were taken at Carnegie Hall. Most were taken backstage or at private social functions at the venues. The subjects are the vocalists, musicians, conductors, and composers featured at performances Smith attended. Most of the photographs bear identifications and dates on the back.

The majority of the collection (about 2000 images) consists of 3.5 inch square prints; they are in albums that hold 12 photographs each, and primarily date from 1980 to 1991. About 90 prints, dating from 1994 to 1997, range in size from 3 by 5 inches to 9 by 10 inches, and tend to be of higher quality than the prints from the 1980s. A second set of prints from the 1990s, numbering about 500, measure 4 by 6 inches, and are housed mostly in albums, though some prints are stacked in labeled and unlabeled paper envelopes. The collection also holds negatives for many of the prints, dating from 1982 to 1996; a small set of slides dating from 1983; two of Smith's datebooks (1994-1996); albums of personal photographs of Alice Smith's family and friends; and photographs of Lincoln Center staff.

The quality of the photographs is variable. Alice Smith was not a professional photographer, but many of the performers shown in these images knew her and display a comfortable familiarity with her in the informal environment of green rooms and receptions. Some of the photos are autographed by the subjects, or dedicated to Smith.

Among the musicians photographed in the 1980s are Jessye Norman, James Galway, Sanford Olsen, Barry McCauley, Chris Merritt, Vinson Cole, Alfredo Kraus, Richard Kasily, Luciano Pavarotti, Eve Queler, Carol Cranford, Grayson Hirst, Laurene Fox, David Del Tridici, Jacob Druckman, Judith Leclair, Mitsuko Uchida, Rebecca Boehm-Shaffer, Luther Henderson, the Canadian Brass, Wynton Marsalis, Miriam Fried, Norman Carol, Murray Perahia, Grant Johannesen, Van Cliburn, James Levine, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Jerome Lowenthal, Andre Laplant, Vladimir Viardo, Richard Hobson, Charles Neidich, Mariss Jansons, Ezra Laderman, Aaron Jay Kernis, Ying Huang, Jane Thorngren, Ion Marin, Gwyneth Jones, Carlos Feller, Manuel Lanza, Rudolf Buchbinder, Pierre Bartholomée, John Williams (the guitarist), Ravi Shankar, Carter Brey, Mischa Maisky, James De Preist, Gerard Poulet, Shlomo Mintz, Glenn Dicterow, Witold Lutoslawski, and David Sherry.

Musicians photographed in the 1990s include Carol Meyer, Warren Jones, Jonathan Welch, Catherine Robbin, Helmut Muller-Bruhl, Christopher O'Riley, Zdenek Macal, Bryn Terfel, Christopher Hogwood, Stan Olsen, Carol Vaness, Maria Spacagna, Vladimir Spivakov, Marie Plette, Karen Ashley, Francisco Araiza, Frederica von Stade, Andrew Davis, Sarah Chang, Falk Struckmann, Gil Shaham, Olli Mustonen, Simone Alaimo, Catherine Malfitano, Anne-Marie McDermott, Kerry McDermott, Maureen McDermott, Hong-Shen Li, June Anderson, Carol Webb, Ivan Moravec, Theodora Hanslowe, Hugh Wolff, Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, Claudio Scimone, Markella Hatziano, Susan Graham, Charles Wuorinen, Walter Fraccaro, Jeffrey Black, Valery Gergiev, Olga Trifonova, Robert McDuffie, Andrea Rost, James Galway, René Siebert, Julius Baker, Mindy Kaufman, David Shifrin, Carl St. Clair, Ljuba Kazarnovskaya, Cecilia Bartoli, and Jorge De La Vega.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged chronologically. Prints are arranged separately from negatives and slides.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Appointment books
Color negatives
Color photographs
Color slides

Occupations

Photographers

Container List

- b. 1 Negatives and Slides 1982-1996
- Prints
- b. 2 1980-1991
- b. 3 1980-1991
- b. 4 1993-1997
- b. 5 f. 1-3 1993-1997
- b. 6 f. 1 1993-1997
- b. 6 f. 2-18 1994-1997
- b. 7 f. 1-46 1994-1997
- b. 8 f. 1 1994-1997