



The New York Public Library Music Division

Guide to the

Mitch Miller papers

1921-2003 [bulk 1962-1986]

JPB 14-31

Compiled by Robyn Hjermsstad, 2014

Summary

Creator: Miller, Mitch

Title: Mitch Miller papers

Date: 1921-2003 [bulk 1962-1986]

Size: 13.73 linear feet (38 boxes)

Source: Donated by The Mitch Miller Foundation, 2013.

Abstract: Mitch Miller (1911-2010) was an American musician and conductor. The collection dates from 1921 to 2003 (bulk: 1962-1986) and documents Miller's television show, *Sing Along With Mitch*; his conducting; and other professional endeavors. The collection contains correspondence, scores, photographs, scrapbooks, programs, and promotional materials.

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Creator History

Mitch Miller (1911-2010) was an American musician and conductor. A native of Rochester, New York, Miller played with the Rochester Philharmonic and the Syracuse Orchestra upon graduating from the Eastman School of Music in 1932. Soon after, he moved to New York City where he was a freelance oboist with symphonic and popular music orchestras, including Alec Wilder's Octet, the Saitenberg Symphony Orchestra, the Budapest String Quartet, and the CBS Symphony Orchestra. In 1934, he toured nationally with George Gershwin, and later played in the orchestra for *Porgy and Bess* during the production's original Broadway run.

Miller was one of the most influential figures in the American popular music industry through his work as a recording artist, record producer, and Artists and Repertoire executive. From 1948 to 1950, Miller worked at Mercury Records, first as a classical music producer, then as head of Artists and Repertoire.

In 1950, Miller moved to Columbia Records, where he worked as a record producer, recording artist, and director of Artists and Repertoire until the late 1960s. During his tenure at Columbia, Miller discovered and promoted many performers, including Frankie Laine, Rosemary Clooney, Tony Bennett, Jo Stafford, Johnny Mathis, Frank Sinatra, Patti Page, and Guy Mitchell. Miller began recording at Columbia in 1950 with the company's house band. Among his best known songs are "The Yellow Rose of Texas," "The Children's Marching Song," and two marches from the 1957 film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. He also recorded songs for *The Guns of Navarone* and *The Longest Day*. Miller's success as a recording artist brought him to television, and in 1961, *Sing Along With Mitch* aired on NBC. The show featured Miller conducting an all-male chorus who sang popular and patriotic songs, prompting viewers at home to sing along using lyrics displayed on the television screen. The show also showcased dancers and singers, such as Leslie Uggams and the Quinto Sisters. After the show was canceled in 1964, Miller and his chorus toured nationally and internationally for several years.

From the 1970s through the 1990s, Miller conducted hundreds of classical and popular concerts for symphony orchestras across the United States, Canada, and Great Britain, such as the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He was principal conductor for the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and the Buffalo Philharmonic. In 1987, Miller conducted a Gershwin concert with the London Symphony Orchestra, pianist David Golub, and singer Gail Nelson.

Miller received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000. Mitch Miller died in New York City in 2010.

Scope and Content Note

The collection dates from 1921 to 2003 and contains *Sing Along With Mitch* files; concert files; alphabetical files; photographs; scrapbooks; and scores. The bulk of the collection documents the financial and business functions of *Sing Along With Mitch*, and Miller's conducting from the 1970s to the 1980s. Documentation of Miller's work with Columbia Records is limited to photographs and scrapbooks.

Sing Along With Mitch files document the show's production, promotion, reception, and business and financial aspects. The files contain correspondence, performer contracts, show indexes, song lists, production materials, schedules, and financial records, such as budgets, financial worksheets, and performer payment records. Correspondence discusses news releases, advertising, show ratings, and the alteration of the show's airtime. Fan letters are also present, as well as several complaints from viewers regarding Miller's decision to feature singer Leslie Uggams on his show. There is an abundance of performer and staff agreements and contracts, including those drafted by the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) and Miller's business, All American Features. Production materials include song lyrics, scripts, musical selections lists, and music publisher cue sheets. Also present is a comprehensive set of records that document NBC's *Mitch Miller Special*, which aired in January 1981. Included is promotional material, such as announcements, articles, and press releases; program planning documents such as budgets, correspondence, resumes, and merchandise use agreements; and production and performance materials, such as scripts, shooting schedules, costume inventories, prop requirements, a press list, and the time schedule for air. Business and financial materials are primarily composed of financial worksheets, which document production expenses and performer salaries for individual show episodes between 1961 and 1964. Financial records dated after 1964 generally report residual payments to performers for show repeats. Material for a *Sing Along With Mitch* 1963 concert tour includes tour agendas, budgets, and memoranda containing information on production and travel requirements. Researchers interested in other *Sing Along With Mitch* concert

tours should consult the Concert files.

Concert files are arranged alphabetically by orchestra name and cover Miller's conducting career in the United States, primarily from the 1970s to the 1990s. These files vary in terms of their contents, though they typically contain correspondence, programs, reviews, and other promotional materials.

Correspondence primarily concerns event planning for individual concerts, full seasons, and special programs. Promotional material consists of announcements, press releases, concert and season programs, and newspaper articles. Some orchestras are represented only through publicity material, such as the Sacramento Symphony Players, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, Brevard Music Center, and the Utah Orchestra. Among the more robust files are those for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. Files for the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra document Miller's long-standing relationship with the company through correspondence; rehearsal and concert schedules; and presentations given to the board of directors. The letters discuss program planning in Rochester, Christmas benefit shows, Miller's contributions, and the activities of the board of directors. Rehearsal and concert schedules for the Rochester Philharmonic are also present. Additional information concerning concerts may be found in the appointment books, publicity files, and programs that precede the alphabetical run of concert files.

Alphabetical files document a wide range of Miller's projects and professional commitments, including and in addition to his work as a conductor and musician, such as fundraising; benefit concerts; album publicity; appearances; films; theater productions; and his relationships with friends and colleagues at various musical organizations. The files contain correspondence, speeches, interview transcripts, biographies, articles, reviews, performers' resumes, scripts, and administrative documents, such as budgets, invoices, and advertising schedules. Correspondence is mostly professional in nature and consists of letters of recommendation, event and program announcements, donation requests, and general communications during projects. Annotated drafts and final versions of speeches were created for a variety of audiences, such as the American Federation of Advertising, the National Association of Broadcasters, and the Songwriters Hall of Fame. Miller's first Broadway production, *Here's Where I Belong*, is well represented through scripts and production planning documents.

The majority of the scores in the collection consist of published, annotated scores for classical and popular songs, arranged alphabetically by composer. While almost entirely undated, these scores were most likely annotated during the bulk of Miller's conducting career between the 1970s and the 1990s. Among the more heavily annotated scores are those for George Frideric Handel's *Water Music*. Scores for Mozart's *Flute Concerto No. 2 in D Major* are accompanied by manuscript sketches. There is also a manuscript score for Alec Wilder's *Air for Flute and Strings*. Printed scores for popular songs from the 1950s are also present. Arranged by Glenn Osser, these scores were most likely used while Osser and Miller worked together at Columbia Records during the 1950s. Boston Pops scores consist of a complete set of printed scores for a concert Miller conducted in 1979. The scores are arranged by part and include titles such as *Four Leaf Clover*, *Home on the Range*, *America the Beautiful*, *Irish Melody*, and *Tiptoe through the Tulips*. A manuscript score for *Hava Nagila* is also present.

Photographs in the collection document numerous aspects of Miller's career, including his work at Columbia Records, his conducting, and many special events he attended. Conducting photographs were taken by photographers such as David Gahr, Dennis Huls, and Barnett Gallagher. Other photographs taken by Gallagher depict Miller aboard the USS Northampton for his reception of an honorary cruiser skipper membership certificate in 1960. Columbia Records photographs include rehearsal photographs and headshots of performers such as John Mathis, Guy Mitchell, Frankie Laine, Tony Bennett, and Doris Day. Photographs of rehearsals for *Here's Where I Belong* were taken by photographer Sandra Weiner and depict Miller with other production staff, such as Jules Fisher, Michael Kahn, and choreographer Tony Mordente; and actors, such as Nancy Wickwire, Casper Roos, and Paul

Rogers. Photographs of Miller at a political event were taken by photographer Lawrence Fried. Photographs of performances and rehearsals of Sing Along With Mitch concerts and television recordings depict Miller, Leslie Uggams, and other performers. Glass slides and negatives of song lyrics are also present.

Scrapbooks document Miller's work for Columbia Records, Sing Along With Mitch, and to a limited extent, his career as an oboist. There are three scrapbooks that hold newspaper clippings, articles, letters, and press releases about Miller's work for Columbia Records as a recording artist, record producer, and head of Artists and Repertoire. Their respective dates are 1951 to 1956, 1952 to 1956, and 1956 to 1960. The two scrapbooks from 1962 were compiled by Milburn McCarty Associates, Inc., a publicity company, and contain articles and newspaper clippings about Sing Along With Mitch. A photocopy of a scrapbook originally dating from 1939 to 1960 documents Miller's career as an oboist, his fundraising activities, and his work for Columbia Records.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged into the following categories: Sing Along With Mitch Files; Concert Files; Alphabetical Files; Photographs; Scrapbooks; and Scores.

Key Terms

Subjects

Concert television programs
Conducting
Popular music -- 1961-1970

Occupations

Conductors (Music)

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photographs
Scores
Scrapbooks

Titles

Sing Along With Mitch

Names

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

Container List

Sing Along With Mitch

Contracts

- b. 1 f. 1-10 1959-1970
- b. 2 f. 1-5 1963-1969
- b. 24 f. 6-7 1965
- b. 2 f. 6-12 Correspondence 1960-1979

Financial Records

- b. 3 f. 1-11 1961-1972
- b. 25 f. 1-5 1961-1963
- b. 26 f. 1-3 1963-1964

Mitch Miller Special

- b. 3 f. 13-24 1980-1981
Includes contracts, correspondence, and business records.
- b. 4 f. 1-14 1980-1981
Includes production materials, schedules, and song lists.
- b. 5 f. 1-8 Production Materials 1959-1980s
Includes song lyrics, scripts, musical selections lists, and music publisher cue sheets.

Promotion and Publicity

- b. 5 f. 9-15 1959-1983
- b. 26 f. 5 1961
- b. 24 f. 5 1962
- b. 5 f. 16 Ratings 1963-1966
- b. 6 f. 1-2 Schedules 1961-1965
- b. 6 f. 3-5 Show Indexes 1961-1979
- b. 6 f. 6-8 Tours 1962-1965
- b. 26 f. 4 Tours 1965
Japanese program

Concert Files

- b. 6 f. 9 Appointment Books 1972-1978
- b. 7 f. 1-4 Appointment Books 1978-2000
- b. 7 f. 5-7 Programs 1965-1984
- b. 8 f. 1-6 Programs 1980-2000
- b. 8 f. 7-8 Publicity 1958-1985
- b. 9 f. 1-2 Publicity 1967-1996
- b. 9 f. 3 Alabama Symphony Orchestra 1983
- b. 9 f. 4-5 Astrulias Orchestra 1993-1995
- b. 9 f. 6 Baltimore Symphony Orchestra 1982
- b. 9 f. 7-8 Boston Symphony Orchestra 1971-1997
- b. 9 f. 9 Brevard Music Center 1997
- b. 9 f. 10 Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra 1989-1991

Concert Files (cont.)

- b. 9 f. 11 Charleston Symphony Orchestra 1984
- b. 9 f. 12 Chicago Symphony Orchestra 1976-1995
- b. 10 f. 1 The Cleveland Orchestra 1977
- b. 10 f. 2 Denver Symphony Orchestra 1972-1989
- b. 10 f. 3-5 Detroit Symphony Orchestra 1978-1996
- b. 10 f. 6-7 Edmonton Symphony Orchestra 1971-1987
- b. 10 f. 8 Fort Wayne Philharmonic 1982
- b. 10 f. 9 Italian Tour With David Golub 1983
- b. 10 f. 10 Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony 1987-1989
- b. 10 f. 11-12 London Symphony Orchestra 1986-1993
- b. 10 f. 13 Maryland Symphony Orchestra 1986
- b. 10 f. 14 Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra 1973-1992
- b. 10 f. 15 Minnesota Orchestra 1977
- b. 11 f. 1-2 New Jersey Symphony Orchestra 1988-1995
- b. 11 f. 3 Oregon Symphony Orchestra 1990s
- b. 11 f. 4-5 Pittsburgh Orchestra 1979-1992
- b. 11 f. 6-10 Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra 1973-1990
- b. 11 f. 11 Sacramento Symphony Players 1985
- b. 11 f. 12-13 Syracuse Symphony Orchestra 1984-1993
- b. 12 f. 1 Tucson Symphony Orchestra 1977-1978
- b. 12 f. 2 Utah Orchestra 1985
- b. 12 f. 3 Vancouver Symphony Orchestra 1981-1983
- b. 12 f. 4 Virginia Philharmonic 1983

Alphabetical Files

- b. 12 f. 5 A 1971-1999
- b. 12 f. 6-7 All American Features 1961-1963
- b. 12 f. 8 B 1979-2001
- b. 12 f. 9-11 Biographical Material 1954-1993
- b. 12 f. 12 Brusta and Roy Resumes 1991
- b. 12 f. 13 C 1975-1999
- b. 12 f. 14 Chicago White Sox 1966
- b. 13 f. 1 Cisek, Richard 1988-1996
- b. 13 f. 2 Clippings 1967-1985
- b. 13 f. 3 Coffin, Thomas E 1961
- b. 13 f. 4 Columbia Records 1950-1962
- b. 13 f. 5-6 Correspondence 1959-2000
- b. 13 f. 7 E 1982-2002
- b. 13 f. 8 Eastman School of Music Yearbook 1932
- b. 13 f. 9 Eastman School of Music 1986-2005
- b. 13 f. 10 F 1982-2002
- b. 13 f. 11 *Forests of the Night* 1965

Alphabetical Files (cont.)

- b. 13 f. 12 French Discography 1994
- b. 13 f. 13 G 1973-2002
- b. 13 f. 14 Gail Nelson Publicity 1990
- b. 13 f. 15 Gershwin CD Publicity 1985-1988
 - b. 14 f. 1 Gershwin Reviews 1988-1990
- b. 24 f. 4 Gordo Comics 1954-1955
- Here's Where I Belong*
- b. 14 f. 2-7 1965-1968
- b. 15 f. 1-3 1966-1968
- b. 36 f. 2-3 1967
 - Scores
- b. 15 f. 4 Kaplan, Mark 1994
- b. 15 f. 5 *The Longest Day* 1962
- b. 15 f. 6 Mitch Miller Music 1995-2002
- b. 15 f. 7 Music Marathons 1978
- b. 15 f. 8 Naldi, Ronald 1992
- b. 15 f. 9 National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences 1985-1999
- b. 15 f. 10-11 Oral History Transcripts 1977, 1986
 - b. 15 f. 12 Paganini and Wieniawsky 1989
- b. 16 f. 1-3 *Paris and Helen: A Love Story for Today* 1980s
Alternate title is *Paris and Helen: A Love Story in Blank Verse*.
- b. 24 f. 1 Posters 1962-1982
- b. 16 f. 4 *Racketty Packetty House* 1966
- b. 16 f. 5 S 1975-1991
- b. 16 f. 6-7 Speeches 1956-1966
- b. 17 f. 1-2 Speeches 1958-1996
 - b. 17 f. 3 Sundgaard, Arnold 1964-1965
 - b. 17 f. 4 The White House 1993-1998
 - b. 17 f. 5 Wilder, Alec 1951-1981

Scores

Annotated Scores

- b. 27 f. 1-6 Adinsell-Handel 1970s-1990s
- b. 17 f. 7-14 Beethoven-Mottl 1970s-1990s
- b. 28 f. 1-5 Listz-Milhaud 1970s-1990s
- b. 29 f. 1-8 Mozart-Rossini 1970s-1990s
- b. 18 f. 1-9 Mozart-Williams 1921-1990s
- b. 30 f. 1-8 Saint-Saëns-Tschaikovsky 1970s-1990s
- b. 31 f. 1-7 Tchaikovsky-Wilder 1970s-1990s

Boston Pops

- b. 21 f. 5 1979
- b. 32 f. 2-6 1979
- b. 33 f. 1-6 1979

Scores (cont.)
Boston Pops (cont.)

- b. 34 f. 1-4 1979
- b. 35 f. 1-5 1979
- b. 36 f. 1 1979
- b. 17 f. 6 Glenn Osser Arrangements 1950s
Various parts for the following titles: Yesterday, Out Here on My Own, Tie A Yellow Ribbon, I Only Have Eyes for You, Tenderly, Come On-a My House, and I Can't Stop Loving You.
- b. 32 f. 1 Glenn Osser Arrangements 1950s
Conductor part for Put on a Happy Face.
- b. 24 f. 2 Hava Nagila Manuscript Score 1960s

Photographs

- b. 19 f. 1 1974-2003
- Columbia Records
- b. 37 f. 2 1950s
- b. 19 f. 2 1950s, 1980
- b. 21 f. 6 1959
Photograph album
- b. 19 f. 3-4 Conducting 1960s-1980s
- Headshots and Portraits
- b. 19 f. 5-6 1962-1986
- b. 24 f. 3 1960s
- b. 37 f. 1 1960s
- b. 19 f. 7 *Here's Where I Belong Rehearsals* 1968
- b. 37 f. 5-6 *Here's Where I Belong Rehearsals* 1968
- b. 19 f. 8 Hollywood Bowl 1995
- b. 19 f. 9 Japan Tour 1965
- b. 20 f. 1 Other Individuals 1954, 1994
- b. 20 f. 2 Sing Along With Mitch 1961-1972
- b. 37 f. 3 Sing Along With Mitch 1964
- b. 38 f. 1 Slides and Negatives 1960s
- b. 20 f. 3-4 Special Events and Concerts 1956-1981
- b. 20 f. 5 USS Northampton 1960
- b. 37 f. 4 USS Northampton 1960

Scrapbooks

- b. 21 f. 1-3 Photocopied Scrapbook undated
Original scrapbook dates from 1939 to 1960.
- b. 21 f. 4 1951-1956
- b. 22 f. 1-2 1952-1956
- b. 22 f. 3-4 1956-1960
- b. 23 f. 1-2 1962 January-July
- b. 23 f. 3 1962 July- November