



The New York Public Library  
Music Division

Guide to the

**Ira Arthur Hirschmann papers**

1934-1956

JPB 86-10

Processed by Martha Grutchfield.

## Summary

**Creator:** Hirschmann, Ira Arthur, 1901-1989

**Title:** Ira Arthur Hirschmann papers

**Date:** 1934-1956

**Source:** The papers were a gift of Ira Hirschmann in 1980.

**Abstract:** The Ira Hirschmann Papers provide information on the founding and activities of The New Friends of Music. Hirschmann's personal correspondence with famous musicians is included as well.

**Access:** Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult:  
<https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

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**Preferred citation:** The Ira Hirschmann Papers, JPB 86-10, Music Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Martha Grutchfield; machine-readable finding aid created by Robert Kosovsky.

### Related Materials:

Ira Hirschmann's memoirs (typescript and published versions) are cataloged separately. See CATNYP for more information, and items not related to music.

## Creator History

Ira Arthur Hirschmann was born in 1901. An American patron of the arts and department store executive, Ira Hirschmann founded the concert series New Friends of Music in 1936. Having been

instrumental in the first symphonic radio broadcast in 1924, he later founded the short-lived FM station WABF. In 1944 as Special Attaché of the State Department stationed in Ankara, Turkey, he helped to rescue Jewish refugees from Romania. During the 1930s and 1940s he also helped establish many musicians fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe. His friends included Arturo Toscanini, Artur Schnabel, and Fiorello LaGuardia to whom he suggested founding the High School of Music and Art. Ira Hirschmann's autobiography was published in 1994 as *Obligato: untold tales from a life with music*.

### **Custodial History**

Gift of Ira Hirschmann, 1980.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Ira Hirschmann papers deal chiefly with The New Friends of Music.

**Arrangement:** Works are arranged alphabetically by title.

### **Key Terms**

#### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Brochures  
Clippings  
Letters (correspondence)  
Press releases  
Programs  
Scripts

#### **Subjects**

Jewish refugees  
Musicians

#### **Names**

Hirschmann, Ira Arthur, 1901-1989  
Gilman, Lawrence, 1878-1939  
Klemperer, Otto, 1885-1973  
Mitropoulos, Dimitri, 1896-1960  
Schnabel, Artur, 1882-1951  
Serkin, Rudolf, 1903-1991  
American Music Collection  
New Friends of Music  
WABF (Radio station : New York, N.Y.)

## Container List

### Series 1: Correspondence

- f. 1 *Gilman, Lawrence. Letters to Ira Hirschmann*,. May 20, 1936-March 8, 1937 (5 letters, 1 postcard.)  
Discusses the activities of the New Friends of Music.
- f. 2 *Klemperer, Otto. Letters to Ira Hirschmann*,. 1935-March 28, 1969 (6 letters, 1 telegram.)  
Discussion topics include the New Friends of Music, Arturo Toscanini, the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Includes a signed program of Klemperer's performance of Beethoven's *Fidelio* at Covent Garden, March 24, 1969.
- f. 3 *Mitropoulos, Dmitri. Letter to Ira Hirschmann*,. September 29, 1951 (1 letter.)  
Refuses additional work "at this time."
- f. 4 *Schnabel, Artur. Letters to Ira Hirschmann*,. August 8, 1934-February 19, 1950 (17 letters (2 incomplete): 2 ALS, 1 TLS; the remainder photocopies.)  
Discusses music, the nature of society, and the New Friends of Music. 1 letter gives his reaction to a Toscanini concert broadcast from Salzburg.
- f. 5 *Serkin, Rudolf. Letter to Ira Hirschmann*,. 193? (1 letter.)  
In German. Sends condolences on death of Hirschmann's mother and says he will be in Salzburg in August to hear Toscanini.

### Series 2: Programs

- f. 6 *New Friends of Music. Programs*,. 1938-1952
- f. 7 *Carnegie Hall. Programs*,. 1940-1941
- f. 8 *New Friends of Music Programs*,. March 26, 1944-June 5, 1946
- f. 9 *Town Hall Programs*, . *Plaza Hotel Program*,. 1936-1956, January 12, 1933, 1936-1951

### Series 3: Scripts

- f. 10 *WJZ (Radio station) Scripts*,. 1940

### Series 4: Press releases

- f. 11 *New Friends of Music Press releases*.

### Series 5: Clippings

- f. 12 *New Friends of Music Clippings*.