



The New York Public Library
Music Division

Guide to the

Jean Stein files on Rudolf Von Oertzen and Friedelind Wagner

1951-1959

JOB 14-01

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2014

Summary

Creator: Stein, Jean

Title: Jean Stein files on Rudolf Von Oertzen and Friedelind Wagner

Date: 1951-1959

Size: .21 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Donated by Jean Stein in 2007.

Abstract: The Jean Stein files on Rudolf Von Oertzen and Friedelind Wagner date from 1951 to 1959. They mainly document the aborted 1959 production of Von Oertzen's opera *The Odyssey* in Shreveport, Louisiana, as well as the friendship of Friedelind Wagner and Jean Stein.

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: Jean Stein files on Rudolf Von Oertzen and Friedelind Wagner, JOB 14-01. Music Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Compiled by Matthew Snyder, 2014 Original order was maintained. Some papers were rehoused.

Creator History

Rudolf Von Oertzen (1910-1990), a German composer, was born in Neuhaus, Mecklenburg. A professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg, Von Oertzen was the winner of the 1956 Schiller prize from the West German government for his oratorio *Hiob*. Among his other compositions were an opera, *The Odyssey*, a symphony, cantatas, lieder for vocalist and orchestra, chamber music,

and instrumental concerti.

Friedelind Wagner (1918-1991) was the granddaughter of Richard Wagner. An opera director who was long associated with the Bayreuth Festspielhaus, she was set to cast and direct a production of Rudolf Von Oertzen's opera *The Odyssey* in Shreveport, Louisiana, before the production was cancelled.

Jean Stein, a resident of Shreveport, met Friedelind Wagner around 1950 and became friends with her. It was through that friendship that John Shenaut, the Music Director of the Shreveport Symphony Society, contacted Rudolf Von Oertzen to propose a production of *The Odyssey*.

Custodial History

The Rudolf Von Oertzen portions of the collection were presumably given to Jean Stein by Friedelind Wagner. Jean Stein held the collection until she donated it to the Music Division in 2007.

Scope and Content Note

The Jean Stein files on Rudolf Von Oertzen and Friedelind Wagner date from 1951 to 1959. They document the aborted production of Von Oertzen's opera *The Odyssey* by the Shreveport (Louisiana) Symphony Society, as well as the friendship of Stein and Wagner.

The files on Von Oertzen hold correspondence (some in German) between Von Oertzen and John Shenaut, the Musical Director of the Shreveport Symphony Society, who in 1957 proposed a production of *The Odyssey* in Shreveport. The project eventually collapsed in 1959. Also present are Von Oertzen's notes on the resources necessary for the production, a publicity brochure listing Von Oertzen's compositions, a 1952 photograph of Von Oertzen with Arthur Rubinstein, and an undated photograph of Von Oertzen and his wife.

The file on Friedelind Wagner primarily contains letters from Wagner to Stein dating from 1951 to 1959, the last few of which discuss the attempted production of *The Odyssey* in Shreveport. It also holds a photograph of Wagner with Stein and her children, and two clippings from April 1959, one picturing Wagner with Stein, and the other picturing Wagner working on the opera.

Arrangement: The collection is in two divisions: Rudolf Von Oertzen's correspondence and photographs, and Friedelind Wagner's letters to Jean Stein.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Black-and-white photographs
Clippings
Commercial correspondence
Personal correspondence

Occupations

Composers

Musicians
Theater directors

Subjects

Opera -- Production and direction

Geographic Names

Shreveport (La.)

Names

von Oertzen, Rudolf, 1910-1990

Wagner, Friedelind, 1918-1991

Shreveport Symphony Orchestra

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-2 Von Oertzen, Rudolf
- b. 1 f. 3 Wagner, Friedelind