

**Guide to the Joseph Boromé
Research and Writings on Opera, 1931 - 1976**

JPB 06-23

Music Division

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

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Descriptive Summary

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| Title: | Joseph Boromé Research and Writings on Opera |
| Collection ID: | JPB 06-23 |
| Creator: | Boromé, Joseph |
| Extent: | 1.67 linear feet (5 boxes) |
| Repository: | Music Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts |

Abstract: The Joseph Boromé Research and Writings on Opera consist primarily of the longtime City College professor's correspondence, research materials, and manuscript drafts of writings on opera and related topics in music history. The largest portion of the collection documents Boromé's efforts to do research for a proposed biography of the composer, Vincenzo Bellini; it also includes information that may be of interest to researchers studying the *bel canto* revival of the mid-twentieth century, as well as the economic aspects of nineteenth century opera performance history.

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

Joseph Boromé Research and Writings on Opera, JPB 06-23, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Custodial History

The Joseph Boromé Research and Writings on Opera were donated to the Music Division in installments from 1990-1995 by Joseph Boromé.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2007.

Related Materials

The Joseph Boromé Collection and Joseph Boromé Papers (SC MG 714) are held by the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library. The Joseph Alfred Boromé Papers (Native American Collection, #9164) are held by the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

Biographical Note

Joseph Alfred Boromé (1919-2002) was a longtime professor of history at City College in New York, who specialized in African American and Caribbean studies, but who also had other research interests, including library history and music history. Born in New York City, Boromé's parents were from the island of Dominica. He worked as a page at the Schomburg Library and received an associate's degree from City College in 1942. Boromé earned undergraduate and graduate degrees at Columbia University, where he also worked as a librarian from 1943 to 1950 (serving as head of the Burgess Library from 1949 to 1950). His master's thesis, *Popular Priced Opera in New York City: A History and Analysis*, was completed in 1945. Boromé was awarded fellowships from the Julius Rosenwald Fund and the American Council of Learned Societies in the late 1940s to undertake research on the nineteenth century librarian and historian Justin Winsor, the research topic of his doctoral dissertation. He also published a biography, *Charles Coffin Jewett* (1951), and was a reviewer for *Library Journal* and *New York History* magazine. Boromé served on the faculty of City College from 1950 to 1984 and compiled and edited the correspondence of such diverse figures as John Candler, Hiram Revels, and Toussaint Louverture. He also wrote extensively on Dominica and other Caribbean countries.

Scope and Content Note

The Joseph Boromé Research and Writings on Opera consist primarily of Boromé's correspondence, research materials, and manuscript drafts of published and unpublished writings on opera and related topics in music history. Among the files in the Opera and Related Subjects series is material on the nineteenth century impresarios Max Maretzek and Fernandino Palmo, as well as Boromé's graduate school thesis on the history of opera presentation in New York City. Also contained in this series are files with background material and manuscripts for program notes written by Boromé during the 1960s for various operas staged by the American Opera Society (the folder on *The Mother of Us All* includes some letters from its composer, Virgil Thomson).

The largest portion of the collection, however, documents Boromé's efforts to do research for a proposed biography of the composer, Vincenzo Bellini, as well as to find a potential publisher. Included are several manuscript drafts of what appear to be sections of the biography, as well as research and writings on individual Bellini operas. While English predominates throughout the collection, there is a significant amount of correspondence and research materials in Italian, as well as some items in French, German, Russian, and Spanish. Although the collection contains no personal material on Boromé, it does include information that may be of interest to researchers studying the *bel canto* revival of the mid-twentieth century, as well as the economic aspects of nineteenth century opera performance history.

Organization

The collection is organized into 2 series. They are:

Series I: Opera and Related Subjects, 1942-1975 and undated

Series II: Vincenzo Bellini Biography, 1931-1976 and undated

Series Descriptions

Series I: Opera and Related Subjects, 1942-1975 and undated

2 boxes

Arranged: Alphabetical

The Opera and Related Subjects series primarily contains materials pertaining to nineteenth century opera, including Boromé's master's thesis, as well as files on Max Maretzek and Fernandino Palmo. Also of note is an early term paper of Boromé's and class notes which may have formed the basis of the thesis. This series also includes files with correspondence, research materials, and manuscripts compiled in writing program notes on various operas, a proposed article on the Bolshoi Opera, and a review essay on performances attended by Boromé during a trip to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Among the items of interest is an exchange of correspondence between Boromé and Virgil Thomson, which concerns Boromé's program notes for a production of the Virgil Thomson - Gertrude Stein opera, *The Mother of Us All*, and includes four letters from the composer, as well as his corrections to Boromé's manuscript.

Series II: Vincenzo Bellini Biography, 1931-1976 and undated

3 boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical

The Vincenzo Bellini Biography series is mainly comprised of correspondence, research materials, and manuscript drafts for a proposed book about the composer. Notable correspondents include Sacheverell Sitwell and Walter Toscanini. Also included are separate files with similar materials on individual Bellini operas. Boromé published an article on *Beatrice di Tenda* and wrote program notes for a production of *I Capuleti e I Montecchi*.

| Box/Folder | Description |
|--|---|
| <u>Series I: Opera and Related Subjects, 1942-1975 and undated</u> | |
| Box 1 | |
| | Bolshoi Theatre and Opera article, 1963-1975 and undated |
| F. 1 | Correspondence, 1963-1975 |
| F. 2 | Manuscript drafts, undated |
| F. 3 | Research materials, 1963-1975 and undated |
| F. 4 | Max Maretzek research, 1967 and undated |
| | Opera program notes, 1958-1964 (American Opera Society.) |
| F. 5 | Massenet, Jules – <i>Hérodiade</i> , 1963-1964 |
| | Poulenc, Francis – <i>Dialogues des Carmélites</i> , 1958-1963 |
| F. 6 | Correspondence, 1963 |
| F. 7 | Research materials, 1958-1963 |
| F. 8 | Rossini, Gioacchino – <i>Semiramide</i> , 1964 |
| F. 9 | Thomson, Virgil – <i>The Mother of Us All</i> , 1963-1964 (Includes letters from Virgil Thomson.) |
| | Fernandino Palmo article, 1962-1964 and undated |
| F. 10 | Correspondence, 1962-1964 |
| F. 11 | Manuscript drafts, undated |
| F. 12 | Research materials, undated |
| Box 2 | |
| | <i>Popular Priced Opera in New York City</i> , 1942-1945 and undated (Master's thesis.) |
| F. 1 | Bound volume, 1945 (Carbon copy.) |
| | Columbia University class notes and term paper, 1942-1944 (Probable sources for thesis.) |
| F. 2 | Music 201, 1942-1943 (Taught by Richard S. Angell.) |
| F. 3 | <i>Opera in America</i> , 1944 (Includes bibliography and handwritten notes.) |
| F. 4 | Loose notes, undated (Removed from bound volume.) |
| F. 5 | Typescript with corrections, 1945 |
| F. 6 | <i>When Curtains Rise Behind the Iron Curtain</i> , undated (Carbon copy with corrections.) |
| <u>Series II: Vincenzo Bellini Biography, 1931-1976 and undated</u> | |
| Box 3 | |
| | Correspondence, 1960-1968 and undated |
| F. 1 | 1960-1961 |
| F. 2 | 1962 (Includes 23 March letter from Sacheverell Sitwell.) |
| F. 3 | 1963 |
| F. 4 | 1964-1968 |
| F. 5 | Undated |
| | Manuscripts, undated |
| F. 6 | Paris/London/Paris (1833-35) (Typescript with corrections.) |
| | Unidentified, undated |
| F. 7 | Outline (Pencil manuscript.) |
| F. 8 | Pages 1-14 (Typescript and carbon copy with corrections.) |
| F. 9 | Various pagination sequences (Carbon copy with corrections.) |
| | Operas, 1931-1976 |
| | <i>Beatrice di Tenda</i> , 1960-1963 and undated |
| F. 10 | Correspondence, 1960-1963 |
| F. 11 | Research materials, 1961 and undated |
| F. 12 | <i>Bianca e Fernando</i> , undated (Research notes only.) |
| | <i>I Capuleti e i Montecchi</i> , 1958-1968 and undated |
| F. 13 | Correspondence, 1963-1968 and undated |

Joseph Boromé Research and Writings on Opera

| Box/Folder | Description |
|-------------------|--|
| F. 14 | Manuscript draft, undated (Probably for program notes.) |
| F. 15 | Research materials, 1958-1967 and undated |
| Box 4 | |
| F. 1 | <i>Norma</i> , 1931-1963 and undated (Primarily research materials.) <i>Il Pirata</i> , 1959-1976 and undated |
| F. 2 | Manuscript draft, undated |
| F. 3 | Research materials, 1959-1976 and undated <i>I Puritani</i> , 1961-1966 and undated |
| F. 4 | Correspondence, 1961-1964 (Includes 1962 letter from Walter Toscanini.) |
| F. 5 | Manuscript drafts, undated Research materials, 1961-1966 and undated |
| F. 6 | 1961-1966 |
| F. 7 | Undated <i>La Sonnambula</i> , 1961-1968 and undated |
| F. 8 | Correspondence, 1962-1968 |
| F. 9 | Manuscript drafts, undated Research materials, 1961-1963 and undated |
| F. 10 | 1961-1963 |
| F. 11 | Undated <i>La Straniera</i> , 1956-1969 and undated |
| F. 12 | Correspondence, 1964-1969 and undated |
| F. 13 | Manuscript drafts, undated |
| F. 14 | Research materials, 1956-1969 and undated |
| Box 5 | |
| | Research, undated (Alphabetical, by author or topic) |
| | General |
| F. 1 | A-M |
| F. 2 | P-Y |
| F. 3 | Unsorted (Mainly photocopies.) |
| F. 4 | Bellini performance chronology |