

# **Guide to the Morton Baum Papers, 1938-1968**

**\*LPA Mss 1992-001**

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

## Contact Information

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## Descriptive Summary

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Morton Baum Papers</b>
<b>Collection ID:</b>	<b>*LPA Mss 1992-001</b>
<b>Creator:</b>	<b>Baum, Morton</b>
<b>Extent:</b>	<b>12.7 linear feet, 32 boxes</b>
<b>Repository:</b>	<b>The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts</b>

### Abstract:

Morton Baum was the chair of City Center's Finance Committee from 1943 to 1968. In the 1960s he became its managing director. City Center was responsible for presenting many of the most important dance, music, opera and drama companies in New York City during the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Baum was also instrumental in bringing that same quality of the arts to the newly-formed Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Inc.

The collection consists of administrative and financial material used in the creation and running of City Center. It also includes administrative and financial material about the creation of Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts.

## 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 Curator, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

### Preferred Citation

Morton Baum Papers, \*LPA Mss 1992-001, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

### Source

The Morton Baum Papers were donated to The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts in 1979 by Lester Baum.

### Processing Information

Original processing took place in 1985, with additions processed and cataloged in 2008.

## Biographical Note

Morton Baum was born in Manhattan on December 28, 1905. He graduated from Columbia College in 1925 and from Harvard Law School in 1928. He practiced law in partnership with his brother Lester in Manhattan.

Baum's public service began early in his career and continued throughout his life. From 1930 to 1934, he served as Assistant U.S. Attorney. In 1934 he became a New York City councilman and a special tax counsel to Mayor Fiorella La Guardia. He was a consultant to Mayor Lindsay's Commission on City Finances. Baum devised and introduced the current New York City sales tax system. Baum served on the finance committee of the Metropolitan Opera Association. In 1943 the New York City Center was incorporated. The opening performance was held on December 11, 1943 (the Mayor's birthday), featuring the New York Philharmonic. Newbold Morris became the chairman of the City Center, with Morton Baum as a member of the executive committee as well as chairman of the finance committee.

Before it became The New York City Center the building was name The Mecca Temple, built by the Shriner's in 1924. It was located on West 55<sup>th</sup> Street. The building was taken over by the City for non-payment of taxes. Mayor La Guardia and City Council President Newbold Morris decided that the City should utilize the building as a theater to provide "the best in entertainment at the lowest possible prices."

In the early 1960s Morton Baum was instrumental in securing the City Center as constituent member of the newly-formed Lincoln Center. City Center would control the New York State Theater into which the New York City Ballet moved in 1964. Baum was a member of the Lincoln Center board until his death.

In 1966, after the death of Newbold Morris, Morton Baum became the new chairman of the City Center. Morton Baum died on February 7, 1968, at age 62 of a heart attack

## Scope and Content Note

The Morton Baum Papers document the City Center for Music and Drama Inc. document the formation and administration from 1943 to 1968. City Center was responsible for presenting many of the most important dance, music, opera, and drama companies and events of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The papers include the administrative and financial records of the City Center and its many constituents, including The Metropolitan Opera, The New York City Ballet, The New York City Drama Company, The New York City Opera Company and many more. Also in the collection are materials about the organizing of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, including correspondence, financial material, annual reports and minutes from Board of Directors meetings, contracts, press releases, and writings about Lincoln Center. There are no personal materials in the collection.

## Related Materials

A typescript of an unpublished History of the New York City Center of Music and Drama, 1943-1966 drafted by Morton Baum is cataloged separately and located in the Jerome Robbins Dance Division (\*MGZMB 85-1040).

Heddy Baum, Morton Baum's wife, her collection (JPB 91-112) is located in the Music Division.

## Organization

The collection is organized into four series. They are:

- Series I: City Center for Music and Drama, Inc., 1940-1968
- Series II: Constituents, 1938-1968
- Series III: Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., 1956-1968
- Series IV: Oversized Material, 1955-1967

## Series Descriptions

### **Series I: City Center for Music and Drama, Inc., 1940-1968**

**12 Boxes**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series contains material about the formation and administration of the City Center for Music and Drama Inc. It includes correspondence, financial material, minutes from Board of Directors meetings, and press releases. There are also clippings, contracts, histories and chronologies. In addition, there is also material concerning the Friends of City Center organization. Grant applications and tax material is also included. Scrapbooks were created from clippings.

### **Series II: Constituents, 1938-1968**

**14 Boxes**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series contains material about constituent organizations that made their home at the City Center and later at Lincoln Center. The organizations are: American National Theatre and Academy, The Mecca Temple, the Metropolitan Opera, the New York City Ballet, The New York City Drama Company, the New York City Light Opera Company, the New York City Musical Theater Company, the New York City Opera Company, the New York City Symphony, the New York City Theatre Company, the New York State Theater, and the Repertory Theatre of Lincoln Center.

The material about each constituent varies widely. However, there are some things in common, including correspondence, financial material (including weekly statements), press releases, clippings, season schedules, tickets, brochures and programs. Various there is also tour schedules, writings, and grant applications.

### **Series III: Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., 1956-1968** **5 Boxes**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series contains material about the formation and administration of Lincoln Center for Performing Arts, Inc. It includes correspondence, financial material, annual reports and minutes from Board of Directors meetings. There are also clippings, contracts, press releases, histories and chronologies. Grant applications, festival schedules, sub-lease agreements and writings about Lincoln Center.

### **Series IV: Oversized Material, 1955-1967** **1 Box**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series contains blueprints of Mecca Temple which became City Center. There are clippings, including special tabloids from the New York Times from the opening of Lincoln Center. Information booklets, tear sheets and programs round out the material.

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Series I: City Center for Music and Drama, Inc., 1940-1968</b>	
Administrative, 1940-1967	
<b>Box 1</b>	
F 1	1940-1941
F 2	1943
F 3	1944
F 4	1946
F 5	1947
F 6	1949
F 7	1950
F 8	1951
F 9	1952
F 10	1953
F 11	1954
F 12	1955
F 13	1956
F 14	1957
F 15	1958
F 16	1959
F 17	1960
F 18	1961
<b>Box 2</b>	
F 1	1962
F 2	1963
F 3	1964
F 4	1966
F 5	1967
	Admissions Tax, 1956-1960
F 6	1956
F 7	1957
F 8	1958
F 9	1960
F 10	Agnes de Mille's outline for the formation of a permanent ballet company, 1944
	Attractions, 1947-1967
F 11	A – C, 1962-1968
F 12	American Ballet Theatre, 1947-1967
F 13	Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, 1947-1951
<b>Box 3</b>	
F 1	Bristol Ole Vic, 1965
F 2	Bunraku, 1966
F 3	Comedie Francaise, 1965
F 4	Compania Lirica Amadeo Vives, 1965
F 5	D – I, 1965-1966
F 6	Gilbert and Sullivan, 1965-1967
F 7	Grand Kabuki, 1960
F 8	Joffrey Ballet, 1965-1966
F 9	<i>La Lupa</i> , Anna Magnani, 1965
F 10	M—P, 1955-1967
F 11	Marceau, Marcel, 1958-1965
F 12	New York City Dance Theatre, 1947-1951
F 13	Piccolo Teatro di Milano, 1959-1960

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
F 14	<i>Porgy and Bess</i> , La Scala Program, 1955
F 15	R – Y, 1959-1967
F 16	Season of American Dance, 1966-1967
F 17	Board of Directors, 1943-1961
F 18	1943-1948
F 19	1950-1959
F 20	1961
F 21-22	Booking schedules, 1956-1963
<b>Box 4</b>	Brochures, festivals, programs 1961-1967
F 1	Buildings and lease, 1943-1953
F 2	By-laws, 1944
F 3	Chautauqua, 1957
F 4	Chronological history, ca. 1939-1950
F 5	Clippings, 1953-1968
F 6	1959-1968
F 7	1956-1967
F 8	1953-1959
F 9	1960-1967
F 10	Contracts, 1954
F 11	Correspondence, 1945-11968
F 12	1945
F 13	1948
F 14	1949
F 15	1951
F 16	1952
<b>Box 5</b>	1953
F 1	1954
F 2	1955
F 3	1956
F 4	1957
F 5	1958
F 6	1959
F 7	1960
F 8	1961
F 9	1962
F 10	1963
F 11	1964
F 12	1965
<b>Box 6</b>	1966
F 1	1966 Apr.
F 2	1967
F 3	1968
F 4	Early history, 1940-1953
F 5	Financial, 1944-1967
F 6	1944
F 7	1945
F 8	1946
F 9	1947
	1948

Box/Folder	Description
F 10	1949
F 11	1950
F 12	1951
F 13	1952
<b>Box 7</b>	
F 1	1953
F 2	1954
F 3	1955
F 4	1956
F 5	1957
F 6	1958
F 7	1959
F 8	1960
<b>Box 8</b>	
F 1	1961
F 2	1962
F 3	1963
F 4	1964
F 5-6	1965
F 7	1966
F 8	1967
	Friends of City Center, 1958-1968
F 9	1958
F 10	1959
<b>Box 9</b>	
F 1	1960
F 2	1961
F 3	1962
F 4-5	1963
F 6	1964
F 7	1965
F 8-9	1966
<b>Box 10</b>	
F 1-2	1967
F 3	1968
F 4	Greek Theatre Association, 1961
F 5	Halasz, Laszlo, 1946-1950
F 6	Hexter, George J., estate, 1967
F 7	Hurok Attractions, 1944-1945
F 8	HVAC, 1968
F 9	Kreste Affar, 1951
F 10	Leinsdorf, Erich, undated
F 11	Lincoln Center vs. City Center (controversy), 1961-1964
F 12	Motion Picture Association of America, undated
	Morris, Newbold, 1943-1967
F 13	1943-1966
F 14	Plaque, 1966-1967
F 15	Phoenix Theatre and admissions tax, 1960-1961
<b>Box 11</b>	
F 1	Photographs, undated
F 2	Press Releases, undated
	The Rockefeller Foundation, 1947-1949

Box/Folder	Description
F 3-4	1947
F 5	1949
	Scrapbooks, 1955-1968
F 6	Finances, ca. 1961-1962
F 7	Foreign country performing arts, 1958-1962
F 8	New York City performing arts, 1961-1968
F 9	New York State performing arts, 1962-1968
F 10	Opera, 1955-1968
F 11	Tickets, audiences, finances, 1958-1968
<b>Box 12</b>	
F 1	United States performing arts, 1960-1968
F 2	Shows, 1960
F 3	Untitled, undated
F 4	Wireless hearing units, 1964-1966
F 5	20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary correspondence, 1963
F 6	25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1967
	<b>Series II: Constituents, 1938-1968</b>
	American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA), 1948-1967
F 7	1948
F 8	1949
F 9	1960
F 10	1961
F 11	1962
F 12	1963-1965
F 13	1966-1967
	Board of Directors, 1963-1966
<b>Box 13</b>	
F 1	1963-1964
F 2	1965-1966
F 3	Conference invitations, 1949
F 4	Correspondence, 1952
F 5	Newsletters and programs, 1948-1949
F 6	<i>A Prospectus: For Surveying the Legitimate Theatre in the United States</i> , 1948, Apr.
F 7	Research material, undated
F 8	Steering committee, 1949
	Theatre committee, 1945-1968
F 9	1945-1947
F 10	1948
F 11	1949
F 12	1950
	Mecca Temple, 1962-1968
<b>Box 14</b>	
F 1	Administrative/financial, 1962-1968
F 2	Clippings, 1962-1968
F 3	Correspondence, 1962-1968
	Metropolitan Opera, 1936-1967
F 4	1936-1941
F 5	1958-1961
F 6	1962
F 7	1963
F 8	1964

Box/Folder	Description
F 9	1965
F 10	1966
F 11	1967
F 12	Undated, (press packet)
	Metropolitan Opera Association, 1940-1965
F 13	1940-1942
F 14	1943-1945 (taxes)
F 15	1946-1949
<b>Box 15</b>	
F 1	1950
F 2	1951
F 3	1952
F 4	1953
F 5	1955-1959
F 6	1960-1965
F 7	Metropolitan Opera building, 1965-1967
F 8	Metropolitan Opera Fund, 1940-1946
	Metropolitan Opera Touring Company, 1963-1967
F 9	1963-1964
F 10	1965
F 11	1966
F 12	1967
	New York City Ballet, 1948-1968
	The Ballet Society, 1948-1968
	Correspondence, 1948-1967
F 13	1948
F 14	1949
F 15	1950
F 16	1951
<b>Box 16</b>	
F 1	1952
F 2	1953
F 3	1954
F 4	1955
F 5	1956
F 6	1957
F 7	1958
F 8	1959
F 9	1960
F 10	1961
F 11	1962
F 12	1963
F 13	1964
F 14	1965
F 15	1966
F 16	1967
F 17	1968
F 18	Board of Directors, 1960-1961
F 19	The Ford Foundation, 1958-1967
F 20	Press releases, 1953-1967
	Contracts, 1951-1965
	Financial, 1948-1968

Box/Folder	Description
<b>Box 17</b>	
F 1	1948-1949
F 2	1950
F 3	1951
F 4	1952-1953
F 5	1953-1954
F 6	1955
F 7	1956-1957
F 8	1957-1958
F 9	1958-1959
F 10	1959-1960
<b>Box 18</b>	
F 1	1960 Fall – 1961 Spr.
F 2	1961 Fall – 1962 Spr.
F 3	1962 Tour
F 4	1962 Dec.
F 5	1963 Spr.
F 6	1963 Fall – 1964 Spr.
F 7	1964 Fall – 1965 Spr.
F 8	1964 year end report
F 9	1965 Fall – 1966 Sum.
F 10	1966 Fall – 1967 Sum.
F 11	1967 Fall – 1968 Spr.
F 12	1967-1968 weekly sub report
F 13	undated Weekly statements
<b>Box 19</b>	
F 1	1948-1958
F 2	1959-1968
F 3	General notes, 1949-1964 Repertories, tours, itineraries, 1948-1967
F 4	1948-1955
F 5	1956-1967
F 6	Season announcements, 1951-1961 Writings, undated
F 7	<i>Ballet: Civic or National: The American Problem</i> by Lincoln Kirstein, undated
F 8	<i>Changes and Improvements for New York State Theatre</i> , undated
F 9	<i>George Balanchine's A Mid-Summer's Night Dream</i> , 1966-1967
F 10	<i>A History of the New York City Ballet</i> by Morton Baum, undated New York City Drama Company, 1947-1967
<b>Box 20</b>	
F 1	1947-1949
F 2	1950-1952
F 3	1952
F 4	1965
F 5	1966
F 6	1967 New York City Light Opera Company, 1947-1968
F 7	1947-1948
F 8	1949

Box/Folder	Description
F 9	1950
F 10	1951-1952
F 11	1953
F 12	1954
F 13	1955
F 14	1956
<b>Box 21</b>	
F 1	1957
F 2	1958
F 3	1959
F 4	1960
F 5-6	1961-1962
F 7	1963
F 8	1964
<b>Box 22</b>	
F 1	1965
F 2	1966
F 3	1967-1968
	New York City Musical Theater Company, 1944-1967
F 4	1944-1947
F 5	1962-1964
F 6	1965 (Richard Rodgers)
F 7	1966
F 8	1967
	New York City Opera Company, 1942-1968
F 9	1942-1949
F 10	1950
F 11	1951
F 12	1951-1955 (Laszlo Halasz)
<b>Box 23</b>	
F 1	1952
F 2	1953
F 3	1954
F 4	1955
F 5-6	1956
F 7	1957
F 8	1958-1959
F 9	1960
F 10	1961
F 11	1962
F 12	1963
F 13	1964
F 14	1965
<b>Box 24</b>	
F 1-2	1966
F 3	1966-1968
	1967
F 4	Spring season
F 5	Fall season
F 6	Los Angeles tour
F 7	Undated
F 8	Analysis of receipts, 1958-1961

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
F 9	Clippings
F 10	Financial, 1940-1966 Ford Foundation, 1957-1967
<b>Box 25</b>	
F 1	1957
F 2	1958
F 3	1959
F 4	1960-1961
F 5	1962
F 6	1963
F 7	1964
F 8	1965
F 9	1966
F 10	1967
F 11	History, undated
F 12	New York City Opera Guild, 1967
F 13	Misc. New York City Symphony, 1944-1949
F 14	1944
F 15	1945
<b>Box 26</b>	
F 1	1946
F 2	1947-1949 New York City Theatre Company, 1948-1956
F 3	1948
F 4	1953
F 5	1954
F 6	1955
F 7	1956 New York State Theater, 1964-1968
F 8	1964-1965
F 9	1966 Aug. – Dec. 1967
F 10	Jan. –July
F 11	Sept.-Dec.
F 12	1966-1968 Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center, 1960-1967
F 13	Clippings, 1960-1962
F 14	1963
F 15	1964
F 16	1965
<b>Box 27</b>	
F 1	1966
F 2	1967
<b><u>Series III: Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, 1956-1968</u></b>	
F 3	Annual report, 1961 and 1963 Board of Directors, 1965-1968
F 4	1965
F 5	1966 1967
F 6	Jan. – June
F 7	Aug. – Dec.

Box/Folder	Description
F 8	1968
F 9	Budget, FY 1966-1967
F 10	Chorale groups, 1961-1964
F 11	Correspondence/clippings, 1956-1963
	1956-1957
F 12	1959
<b>Box 28</b>	
F 1	1960
F 2	1961
F 3	1962
F 4	1963
F 5	1964
F 6	1965
F 7	1966
F 8	1967
F 9	Educational program, 1966
	Festival, 1967-1968
F 10	1967
<b>Box 29</b>	
F 1	1967-1968
	Film festival, 1963-1968
F 2	1963-1965
F 3	1966-1968
F 4	Finance committee, 1965
	Finances, 1962-1966
F 5	1962-1963
F 6	1964
F 7	1965
F 8-9	1966
	Ford Foundation, 1959-1967
F 10	Application, 1959-1965
F 11	1966-1967
<b>Box 30</b>	
F 1	New York City appropriation, 1966
F 2	New York Foundation, 1963-1965
F 3	Old Dominion Foundation (report), 1965
	Philharmonic Hall, 1962-1968
F 4	Clippings, 1961-1966
F 5	1962
F 6	1962-1968
F 7	Budget FY1967-1968
F 8	Sources of funds to underwrite operations, 1966-1970
	Sub-lease agreement, 1964-1969
F 9	1964
F 10	1965
F 11	1966-1969
	Writings, 1962-1966
<b>Box 31</b>	
F 1	<i>The First Season, 1962-1963, The Second Season, 1963-1964</i>
F 2	<i>Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, 1962-1964</i>
F 3	<i>A Teacher's Guide to Lincoln Center, 1965-1966</i>
F 4	Vivian Beaumont Theater and Library and Museum of the Performing

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
F 5	Arts, 1965 Vienna Burg Theater, 1966-1967
	<b><u>Series IV: Oversized Material, 1955-1967</u></b>
<b>Box 32</b>	
F 1	City Center blue print, 1967 Clippings, 1955-1965
F 2	1955-1959 and 1965
F 3	1962
F 4	Philharmonic Hall information booklet, undated
F 5-6	Programs, 1959-1965
F 7	Tear Sheet, <i>The Grand Kabuki</i> , 1960