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Guide to the
Leon Kirchner papers
1939-2009
JPB 11-14

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, November 2011

Summary

Creator: Kirchner, Leon, 1919-2009

Title: Leon Kirchner papers, 1939-2009

Size: 12.72 linear feet (40 boxes)

Source: Donated by Leon Kirchner.

Abstract: The Leon Kirchner papers document the career of the composer, conductor and pianist from the 1950s to the early 2000s. They include scores and sketches, correspondence with important musical figures, writings, programs, clippings, photographs and posters.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

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Processing note
Processing consisted of foldering and arranging correspondence, and foldering and arranging scores.

Creator history
Leon Kirchner (1919 - 2009) was an American composer, pianist and conductor. Born in Brooklyn, NY, to Russian Jewish immigrants, his family moved to Los Angeles when he was nine years old. He studied with Ernst Bloch while attending the University of California at Berkeley. Bloch recommended Kirchner to Arnold Schoenberg, who became Kirchner's primary mentor and influence; he also studied with Roger Sessions. Kirchner was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1948, after which he taught at the University of Southern California until 1954, when he was awarded a professorship at Mills College. In 1961 he was recruited by Harvard University, where he remained until his retirement in 1989. There, he founded and conducted the Harvard Chamber Orchestra, which grew out of a course Kirchner taught combining musical analysis with performance. Kirchner was an annual participant for many years in the Marlboro Music Festival.
Among his works are two piano concertos; three piano sonatas; four string quartets; two trios for piano, violin and cello; an opera, Lily, based on Saul Bellow's *Henderson, the Rain King*; and several pieces for orchestra including Music for Orchestra, N.Y. Connotations, Music for Cello and Orchestra, and Music for Flute and Orchestra. Kirchner's String Quartet No. 3 was the first composition with electronics to win the Pulitzer Prize. He continued composing until his death at home in New York City.

Sources:


Scope and content note
The Leon Kirchner papers document the career of the composer, conductor and pianist from the 1950s to the early 2000s. They include published and unpublished scores and sketches, many with corrections and annotations, documenting the creation of most of his output; correspondence from many prominent figures including Aaron Copland, Rogers Sessions, Arnold Schoenberg, Darius Milhaud, Richard Franko Goldman, Virgil Thomson, Yo-Yo Ma, Dmitri Mitropoulos and Saul Bellow; Kirchner's writings about his work; concert programs from throughout his career, including many for the Harvard Chamber Orchestra; clippings from throughout his career; photographs; and posters.

The collection also contains audio and video recordings. The video recordings consist of a half-hour documentary of Kirchner at the Marlboro Music Festival, ca. 1976, in its original 16mm print, a beta transfer, and a DVD transfer; and a VHS recording of a performance of Kirchner's *For Solo Cello* by Bion Tsang with the Omsk Philharmonic Orchestra. The audio recordings include 32 CD-Rs of the Harvard Chamber Orchestra under Kirchner's direction from 1980 to 1993. Performances of Bach, Mozart, Handel, Brahms, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bruckner, Shostakovich, Beethoven, Haydn, Mahler, Paul Hindemith, Roger Sessions and Arthur Berger are held here. One CD-R contains performances by the Marlboro Music Festival orchestra in 1971 and 1972 under Kirchner's direction performing music by Webern and Hindemith. There is also a CD-R of Kirchner's second piano concerto, performed by Marc-André Hamelin, under Kirchner's direction, with the Harvard Chamber Orchestra and the Philadelphia orchestra in 1988.

Inquiries regarding audio/visual materials in the collection may be directed to the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound (rha@nypl.org). Audio/visual materials will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

Arrangement
The Leon Kirchner papers are organized into the following series:

Series I: Personal Files, 1942-2009
Series II: Scores, 1939-2008
## Key terms

### Names
- Adams, John, 1947-
- Amram, David
- Associated Music Publishers
- Babbitt, Milton, 1916-2011
- Bellow, Saul
- Berger, Arthur, 1912-2003
- Berio, Luciano, 1925-2003
- Bernstein, Leonard, 1918-1990
- Boston Philharmonic Society
- Boston Symphony Orchestra
- Broadcast Music, Inc.
- Cage, John
- Copland, Aaron, 1900-1990
- Del Tredici, David
- Eldridge, William
- Feldman, Morton, 1926-1987
- Finney, Ross Lee, 1906-1997
- Fromm Music Foundation
- Fromm, Paul, 1906-1987
- G. Schirmer, Inc.
- Goldman, Richard Franko, 1910-1980
- Harvard Chamber Orchestra
- Harvard University
- Kirchner, Leon, 1919-2009
- Laredo, Jaime
- Lieberson, Peter, 1946-2011
- Ma, Yo-Yo, 1955-
- Mercury Music Corp.
- Milhaud, Darius, 1892-1974
- Mills College
- Mitropoulos, Dmitri, 1896-1960
- Ozawa, Seiji, 1935-
- Perlis, Vivian
- Schoenberg, Arnold, 1874-1951
- Serkin, Peter, 1947-
- Sessions, Roger, 1896-1985
- Shifrin, Seymour, 1926-1979
- Spivakovsky, Tossy, 1907-1998
- Stein, Leonard
- Steinberg, Russell
- Stern, Isaac, 1862-1932
- Tcherepnin, Ivan
- Trampler, Walter
- University of Buffalo
- University of California (1868-1952)
- University of Chicago

### Occupations
- Composers
- Conductors (musicians)
- Pianists
Special formats
Black-and-white photographs
Clippings (information artifacts)
Color photographs
Contracts
Military records
One-sheet posters
Personal correspondence
Programs (documents)
Scores
Series I: Personal Files, 1942-2009
25 boxes. This series contains correspondence, clippings, programs, publishing files, Kirchner's writings, commission and performance contracts, posters, photographs and military records.

Kirchner filed most of his correspondence alphabetically under the heading of "Correspondence", but letters also appear under other headings such as Commissions, Former Students, Publishing, and Guest Appearances.

Under the heading of Correspondence, the largest files are those for Paul Fromm and Harvard University. The Fromm files contain personal letters from Fromm as well as official correspondence from the Fromm Music Foundation. The Harvard files contain personal and official letters from colleagues and administrators at the university, and departmental memos and correspondence pertaining to the Harvard Chamber Orchestra. The files for the Boston Philharmonic Society and the Boston Symphony Orchestra document Kirchner's involvement and work with both organizations. Other correspondents include Roger Sessions, Arnold Schoenberg, Richard Franko Goldman, David Amram, Ned Rorem, Peter Serkin, Isaac Stern, Virgil Thomson, Walter Trampler, the Continuum music ensemble, Marlboro Music, Mills College, the University of California, Luciano Berio, Leonard Bernstein, John Cage, Aaron Copland, Morton Feldman, Milton Babbitt, Ross Lee Finney, Leonard Stein, Yo-Yo Ma, Darius Milhaud, Dmitri Mitropoulos, Vivian Perlis and Tossy Spivakovsky. Though letters from Kirchner can be found throughout the correspondence files, most are filed under his name. Additional correspondence from some composers is in a file Kirchner maintained for Former Students. Correspondence from Janet Baker-Carr contains a transcript of an interview with Kirchner.

Clippings are in two divisions, one for the Harvard Chamber Orchestra and one for general clippings. They extensively document Kirchner's career from 1949 until his activities slowed in the mid-2000s, and consist primarily of concert previews and reviews. The concert programs are also divided into groupings for the Harvard Chamber Orchestra and general programs, which document performances in which Kirchner was either pianist or conductor, or in which his music was performed. The programs extensively document Kirchner's career from the 1940s onward and include performances by orchestras, chamber groups and soloists across the country.

Publishing files contain correspondence and contracts with Kirchner's publishers, Associated Music Publishers (later bought by G. Schirmer), and Mercury Music, as well as with the rights organization BMI. They also contain correspondence with the Pulitzer Prize committee.

Two of Kirchner's compositions, *Lily* and *Of Things Exactly As They Are*, have files of correspondence relating to them. These are filed in this series under Compositions. Other information on his compositions can be found in the Discography file, which lists compositions and recordings.

Kirchner's writings include his program notes for each of his string quartets and for *Music for Orchestra*; speech and lecture notes for instructional and public occasions; and essays on musical and non-musical topics.

The Guest Appearances file contains correspondence and contracts with performing ensembles and organizations that engaged Kirchner as conductor or commissioned compositions from him.
Photographs document Kirchner from the 1950s to late in his life and include solo portraits as well as group photographs. There are also pictures of Kirchner with Aaron Copland, Seiji Ozawa, Yo-Yo Ma, Darius Milhaud and Jaime Laredo, among others. Photographs of other people consist of autographed pictures of Milhaud and Dmitri Mitropoulos, a portrait of Arnold Schoenberg, and a photo of Gertrude Kirchner with John Kenneth Galbraith.

The posters primarily advertise performances by the Harvard Chamber Orchestra, but also include occasions on which Kirchner was featured as guest conductor or composer.

The file for Kirchner's 70th Birthday Celebration contains birthday notes and cards and the program for the concert held in his honor, on which music composed for him was played. See also scores by other composers in Series II.

b.1 f.1 70th Birthday Celebration, 1988-1989
Clippings
General
b.1 f.2 1949-1959
b.1 f.3-7 1959-1995
b.2 f.1 1959-1995
b.2 f.2-6 1970s-2000s
b.3 f.1-3 Harvard Chamber Orchestra, 1964-1991
b.3 f.4 Commissions, 1960-1994
Compositions
Lily, 1976-1977
b.4 f.1 Correspondence
b.4 f.2-5 Libretto Drafts
b.5 f.1 Of Things Exactly As They Are, 1997
Correspondence
b.5 f.2-3 A, 1948-1993
b.5 f.4 Academy of Arts and Letters, 1951, 1998, 2009
b.5 f.5 American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1963-2008
b.5 f.6-8 B, 1948-2005
b.5 f.9 Boston Philharmonic Society, 1968-1972
b.6 f.1 Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1959-1996
b.6 f.2-3 C, 1949-1995
b.6 f.4 Chamber Music Society of Baltimore, 1958-1961
b.6 f.5 Cole, Toby, 1963-1970
b.6 f.6 Continuum, 1969-1999
b.6 f.7-8 D, 1952-1989
b.6 f.9 E, 1941-1975
Series I: Personal Files (cont.)

Correspondence (cont.)

- b.7 f.1 F, 1946-2000
- b.7 f.2 Ford Foundation, 1958-1975
- b.7 f.3-4 Fromm, Paul / Fromm Music Foundation, 1953-1980
- b.7 f.5-6 G, 1946-2003
- b.7 f.7 Goldman, Richard Franko, 1950-1966
- b.8 f.1 H, 1948-2007
- b.8 f.2-4 Harvard University, 1957-2001
- b.8 f.5 I, 1957-2003
- b.8 f.6 J, 1948-1999
- b.8 f.7-8 K, 1946-2008
- b.9 f.1 Kirchner, Leon, 1955-2007
- b.9 f.2 L, 1950-2009
- b.9 f.3-4 M, 1948-1996
- b.10 f.1 Mills College, 1954-1962
- b.10 f.2 N, 1959-2003
- b.10 f.3 O, 1953-1993
- b.10 f.4 P, 1947-2009
- b.10 f.5-6 R, 1946-2009
- b.10 f.7 Ross, Gilbert, 1955-1958
- b.10 f.8 S, 1946-2009
- b.11 f.1-3 S, 1946-2009
- b.11 f.4 Sessions, Roger, 1948-1973
- b.11 f.5 Shapiro, Jean, 1948-1959
- b.11 f.6-7 T, 1946-1993
- b.12 f.1 U-V, 1949-2008
- b.12 f.2 University of Buffalo, 1958-1959
- b.12 f.3 University of California, 1942-1979
- b.12 f.4 University of Chicago, 1960-1974
- b.12 f.5 W, 1951-2008
- b.12 f.6 Y-Z, 1958-2008
- b.12 f.7 Yale University, 1974-1985
- b.12 f.8-10 Unidentified, 1946-2009
- b.13 f.1 Discography, ca. 2008
- b.13 f.2 Former Students, 1978-2002
- b.13 f.3-4 Guest Appearances, 1983-1993
- b.13 f.5 Military Records, 1943-1946

Photographs

- b.13 f.6 Leon Kirchner, 1950s-2000s
Series I: Personal Files (cont.)

Photographs (cont.)

b.14 f.1  Leon Kirchner, ca. 1950
b.15 f.1  Kirchner with Others, 1950s-2000s
b.15 f.2  Other People, 1950s-1980s
b.16 f.1  Posters, 1961-2009

Programs

General

b.17 f.1-3  1940s-1970s
b.18  1980s
b.19  1980s
b.20  1990s
b.21  1990s
b.22  1990s
b.23  1990s
b.17 f.4  2000s
b.24 f.1  2000s
b.24 f.2  Undated
b.24 f.3-4  Harvard Chamber Orchestra, 1964-1994

Publishing

Associated Music Publishers / G. Schirmer, Inc.

b.24 f.5  1961-1965
b.25 f.1-2  1966-2007
b.25 f.4  Mercury Music Corporation, 1950-1959
b.25 f.5  General, 1961-2001
b.25 f.6  Pulitzer Prizes, 1977-1993
b.25 f.7-8  Writings, 1968, 1995
Series II: Scores, 1939-2008
15 boxes. The scores are in two divisions: those by Kirchner and those by other composers. Kirchner's work is arranged alphabetically by title. Most of his major works are present, including String Quartets 1, 3 and 4; the two piano concertos; the three pianos sonatas; the Sonata Concertante, the orchestral works Music for Orchestra (I and II), N.Y. Connotations, Music for Cello and Orchestra and Music for Flute and Orchestra; the opera Lily (based on Saul Bellow's *Henderson The Rain King*); smaller ensemble pieces such as Toccata for Strings, Solo Winds and Percussion; and solo works for piano, cello, and violin. Also among the scores is a folder of exercises Kirchner did for Arnold Schoenberg in 1939, and annotated by Kirchner in 1993.

The score files include varying combinations of sketches, manuscript scores and parts, and publisher proofs and final published versions, often containing written corrections and annotations. Notes with each composition or folder specify exact content. The series also contains two boxes of unfinished sketches, and two folders of orphan score or part pages.

The scores by other composers consist primarily of pieces written by friends and former students in honor of Kirchner's birthdays, mostly for his 70th, for which a celebratory concert was held (see also 70th Birthday Celebration in Series I). These include short pieces by David Del Tridici, Ivan Tcherepnin, Arthur Berger (who also wrote a birthday piece for Kirchner's wife, Gertrude), William Eldridge, Russell Steinberg and Peter Lieberson. The 70th birthday scores were gathered in a decorated gift box for presentation to Kirchner. This gift box is in box 32. The one non-birthday related score is *Lament for Oedipus* by Seymour Shifrin, which is autographed to Kirchner.

By Kirchner

b.15 f.3  *Combatimento di Tancredi et Clorinda*
For voice and piano. Full score manuscript.

b.15 f.4  *Concerto for Violin, Cello, Ten Winds and Percussion*, 1960
Manuscript (incomplete), and published score, violin and cello parts, all with notes and corrections.

b.14 f.2  *Dawn*, 1943
For chorus and keyboard. Words by F. Garcia Lorca. Full score and choral part.

b.15 f.5  *Dialogues for Piano and Orchestra*
Published score and parts with notes. Also contains arrangement for seven brass.

b.15 f.6  *Duo for Violin and Piano*, 1947
Full score manuscript and reproduction with notes

b.15 f.7  *Duo No. 2 for Violin and Piano*, 2001-2003

b.15 f.8-9  Manuscript Scores

b.14 f.3  *Fanfare for Brass Trio*, 1965
For two trumpets and horn. Score and parts. Also contains arrangement for seven brass.

b.14 f.4  *Fanfare III*, 2000
For trumpet, horn, trombone and tuba. Sketch and score.
Series II: Scores (cont.)
By Kirchner (cont.)

b.26 f.2  
Five Pieces for Piano, 1985  
Reproduction of published score with notes.

b.26 f.3  
Flutings for Solo Flute and Optional Percussion, 2007  
From the opera Lily. Annotated manuscript and published score.

b.26 f.4  
For Arthur Berger On His 80th, 1992 (For piano. Manuscript reproduction.)

b.26 f.5  
For Cello Solo, 1986 (Manuscript)

b.26 f.6  
For My Dearest Russel On His 70th!, 2000 (For piano. Manuscript reproduction)

b.26 f.7  
For Violin Solo, 1985  
Reproduction of copyist score, with notes

b.26 f.8-9  
Illuminations, 1986  
For three trumpets, two horns, three tenor trombones and bass trombone. Sketches, score manuscript and published score and parts

b.26 f.10  
Interlude, 1989  
For piano. Manuscript and reproduction with corrections

b.26 f.11  
Interlude II, 2003  
For piano. Manuscript reproduction and publishing proofs with corrections

Lily, 1970-1977 (Opera. Music and libretto by Kirchner.)

b.26 f.12-13  
Sketches

b.27 f.1-4  
Sketches

Scores in Progress

b.27 f.5  
Piano-Vocal

b.14 f.5-6  
Full Score

Final Scores

b.28 f.1  
Full Score

b.28 f.2  
Parts (Cello, flute, horn and oboe only)

b.28 f.3  
Vocal Score (Published, with notes)

b.25 f.9  
Vocal Score  
Reproduction of published score, with notes

Music for Cello and Orchestra, 1996-2003 (See also sketch in box 35, folder 10)

b.27 f.6  
Sketch

b.29 f.1  
Full Scores (Publication proofs with corrections)

Music for Flute and Orchestra

b.29 f.2  
Sketches, manuscript score and published full score

b.29 f.3  
Revised Editions, 1993, 1999 (Full scores and flute parts)

Music for Orchestra, 1969-1970

b.30 f.1  
Published Score

Parts

b.27 f.7  
Woodwinds and Brass

b.31 f.1  
Piano and Percussion

b.31 f.2-3  
Strings
Series II: Scores (cont.)
By Kirchner (cont.)

xxMusic for Orchestrayy (cont.)
Parts (cont.)

b.32
Corrections

b.30 f.2 Music for Orchestra II, 1990 (Published scores with notes)
b.30 f.3 Music for Twelve, 1985
For flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, horn, trombone, piano/celeste, violin, viola, cello
and bass. Manuscript score

b.16 f.2 N.Y. Connotations, 1988
For orchestra. Manuscript scores, with corrections
Of Things Exactly As They Are, 1996
For soprano solo, baritone solo, chorus and orchestra

b.31 f.4 Sketches
Full Scores

b.30 f.4 Manuscript

b.31 f.5 Corrected Manuscript Reproduction

b.33 f.1 Corrected Published Scores

b.34 f.1 Piano Concerto No. 1, 1953 (Corrected manuscript reproduction)
Piano Concerto No. 2
Full Scores

b.33 f.2 First Edition, 1985 (Published, with notes)
b.33 f.3 Revision, 1988 (Published)
b.33 f.4 Reduction Score for Two Pianos (Reduction by Mark Pevsner)

b.34 f.2 Piano Sonata No. 1, 1950
Manuscript and published scores with corrections and notes
Piano Sonata No. 2

b.33 f.5 Publishing Proofs with Corrections, 2002
b.34 f.3 Publishing Proofs with Corrections, 2003-2008


b.34 f.4 Sketch
b.35 f.1 Manuscript and Publishing Proof
b.36 f.1-2 Manuscript and Publishing Proofs

b.35 f.2 Prelude (For piano. Manuscript)
b.35 f.3 A Rhapsodic Valse For My Dear Friend Mark (For piano. Manuscript reproduction)
b.35 f.4 The Runner
For voice and piano. Text by Walt Whitman. Manuscript and reproduction with notes

b.35 f.5 Schoenberg Studies, 1939, 1993
b.36 f.3 Sonata Concertante, 1990
Reproduction of published violin part with bowings and fingerings by Eudice Shapiro

b.35 f.6 String Quartet No. 1 (Manuscript score and parts)
String Quartet No. 3, 1969 (For string quartet and electronic tape)

b.36 f.4 Sketch and score
b.36 f.5 Parts (Violin II and viola only)
Series II: Scores (cont.)
By Kirchner (cont.)

String Quartet No. 4, 2006-2008
b.35 f.7 Manuscript (Incomplete)

Published Scores
Drafts with corrections and final version with parts

String Trio (1961-1963), 1963 (For violin, viola and cello. Manuscript)
b.37 f.2

Toccata for Orchestra (Manuscript)
b.35 f.8

Toccata for Strings, Solo Winds and Percussion, 1955 (Manuscript)
b.37 f.3

Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello, 1954
Manuscript and published scores and parts with notes

Trio No. II for Piano, Violin and Cello
b.35 f.10

Sketches, 1992
Also contains sketch for Music for Cello and Orchestra

Scores, 1993
Manuscript and publication proofs, with notes

Triptych (For violin and cello)
b.38 f.4

Sketches

Manuscript Reproduction

The Twilight Stood, 1981-1992
For voice and piano. Text by Emily Dickinson

Sketches and Manuscript Score

Publishing Proofs

Sketches, undated
Titled

Les Adieux
b.38 f.3

Suite for Orchestra
b.38 f.4

Untitled
b.39 f.5-11

Untitled
b.39 f.1-5

Untitled
b.37 f.6

Orphan Score Pages
b.39 f.6

Orphan Score Pages
b.37 f.7

By Other Composers

Kirchner Birthday Tributes
Some scores are manuscripts, others are computer prints

60th, 1979

A Birthday Greeting for Leon Kirchner on the Occasion of His 60th by David Del Tridici (For voice and piano)
b.39 f.7

Happy Birthday #60 by Ivan Tcherepnin (For piano)
b.39 f.8

70th, 1988-1989

Eight Views for Piano by John Clement Adams
b.39 f.9

Encore Encore for Leon by Ivan Tcherepnin
For two unspecified instruments and piano
b.39 f.10
Series II: Scores (cont.)
By Other Composers (cont.)
Kirchner Birthday Tributes (cont.)
70th (cont.)

b.39 f.11  Fantasy for L.K. by Hsueh-Yung Shen (For vibraphone and marimba)

b.39 f.12  Homage by Eric Sawyer (For piano)

b.39 f.13  Impromptu for Cello and Piano by John Thow

b.39 f.14  Leomezzo! by Russel Steinberg (For piano)

b.39 f.15  Leon 70 ("Flutings" from Billy) by William Eldridge (For flute)

b.40 f.1   Leon K by David Del Tridici, Text by Joel Conarroe (For voice and piano)

b.40 f.2   A Little Night Music by Peter Lieberson (For piano)

b.40 f.3   Little Overture by Tison Street (For piano (four hands))

b.40 f.4   Little Piece for Piano by David Myska

b.40 f.5   Sea by David Patterson (For piano)

b.40 f.6   Sephardic Lament by Joel Kabakov (For cello and piano)

b.40 f.7   Special K Variations by Robert Ceely (For piano)

b.32 f.1   Gift Box

b.40 f.8   For Leon At 75 by Arthur Berger, 1994 (For piano)

b.40 f.9   Prelude In E by Ned Rorem, 1997 (For piano, for Kirchner’s 78th birthday)

b.40 f.10  A Birthday Greeting to Gertrude by Arthur Berger, 1989 (For piano. Written for Kirchner’s wife)

b.40 f.11  Lament for Oedipus by Seymour Shifrin, 1955
For women's voices, string quartet and piano