

Guide to the Alexis Kudisch and Bella Weinberg Papers, 1893-1998

JPB 06-45

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: | Alexis Kudisch and Bella Weinberg Papers |
| Collection ID: | JPB 06-45 |
| Creator: | Kudisch, Alexis and Weinberg, Bella Kudisch |
| Extent: | 3 linear feet (6 boxes) |
| Repository: | Music Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts |

Abstract: Alexis Kudisch (1878-1947) was a concert violinist, born and trained in Russia, who moved to New York City and pursued a symphonic career. He eventually led his own string quartet, working around the United States. Bella Kudisch Weinberg (1912-2002) was Kudisch's oldest child. The bulk of the collection consists of background material, notes and drafts of *A Musical Odyssey*, her unpublished book about her father's life and career.

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, Music Division.

Preferred Citation

Alexis Kudisch and Bella Kudisch Weinberg Papers, JPB 06-45, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Custodial History

The Alexis Kudisch and Bella Weinberg Papers were donated to the Music Division in 1998 by Bella Kudisch Weinberg.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2006.

Biographical Note

Alexis Kudisch was born Avraam Kudish in Kiev, Russia on December 18, 1878. He was a musical prodigy and eventually pursued his education at the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music. In 1910, he left Russia because of religious persecution and made his way to the United States, settling in New York City. Shortly after his arrival, he met an opera singer named Manya and married her three days later. They had three children, the oldest of whom was Bella.

By this time, Kudisch had changed his first name to Alexis and altered the spelling of his last name. Kudisch earned his living as a concert violinist, playing with symphony orchestras large and small in the New York area. In the 1920s, he formed his own string quartet, and found success both locally and on tour. When the Great Depression gripped the nation, Kudisch, like so many musicians, was frequently unemployed. After years of struggling, Kudisch saw a revival of his career in the 1940s, as he became concert-master for several important ballet troupes. He died in 1947, after returning from a lengthy national tour.

Bella Kudisch, later Bella Kudisch Weinberg, had studied for a musical career as a cellist, but she was discouraged by her father's situation during the Depression. She maintained her interest in the arts however, as a painter until her death in 2002. A *Musical Odyssey* was her means of connecting her father's art to his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Scope and Content Note

The Alexis Kudisch and Bella Kudisch Weinberg Papers are largely related to the unpublished manuscript, *A Musical Odyssey* by Weinberg. The book describes her father's life and career, as well as her own experience growing up in a musical family. There are many drafts of the various parts of the book, but most of the drafts are undated. Furthermore, there are some draft pages whose intended place in the book is unclear. The collection also includes research material for the book, some original documentation from Kudisch's career and copies of personal items, such as Kudisch's Russian birth certificate and musical certification. Finally, there is a series of scores, mostly consisting of pieces composed or arranged by Kudisch.

Organization

The collection is organized into 3 series. They are:

- Series I: *A Musical Odyssey*, 1993-1998; Undated
- Series II: Professional Records, 1893-1998
- Series III: Scores, 1930-1943; Undated

Series Descriptions

Series I: *A Musical Odyssey*, 1993-1998; Undated **1.5 linear feet [3 boxes]**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series contains various drafts of the unpublished book, *A Musical Odyssey*, as well as the final known version of the manuscript. In addition, there are handwritten notes and research materials leading up to that final version. Most of the material is undated, making it difficult to chart the evolution of the various segments of the book.

Series II: Professional Records, 1893-1998 **.5 linear feet [1 box]**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series includes material from the career of Alexis Kudisch himself, such as clippings, copyright documents, programs and touring schedules, but the bulk of the series is comprised of material from after Kudisch's death. There are inventory lists of his papers, as well as correspondence and other documents related to *A Musical Odyssey*.

Series III: Scores, 1930-1943; Undated **1 linear foot [2 boxes]**

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series primarily contains musical scores of pieces composed or arranged by Alexis Kudisch.

Series I: A Musical Odyssey, 1993-1998; Undated

Drafts

| <u>Box</u> | <u>Fol</u> | |
|------------|------------|--|
| 1 | 1 | Complete, Undated |
| | | General (Sections including more than one chapter or part) |
| | 2 | 1993-1996 |
| | 3 | 1997 |
| | | Part One |
| | 4 | 1997 |
| | 5-6 | Undated |
| | 7 | Part Two, Undated |
| | 8 | Part Three, Undated |
| 2 | 1 | Part Four, Undated |
| | 2 | Part Five, Undated |
| | 3 | Part Six, Undated |
| | 4 | Part Seven, Undated |
| | 5 | Unidentified, Undated |
| 3 | 1-2 | Final Layout, 1998 |
| | 3-4 | Final Version, 1998 |
| | 5-6 | Notes, Undated |
| | 7 | Research, Undated |

Series II: Professional Records, 1893-1998

| <u>Box</u> | <u>Fol</u> | |
|------------|------------|--|
| 4 | 1 | Clippings, 1942; 1955-1956; 1981; 1996; Undated |
| | 2 | Copyright Registrations, 1942 (For <i>The U.S.O.</i> and <i>Marching to Victory</i> , two songs by Kudisch) |
| | 3 | Correspondence, 1928-1998; Undated |
| | 4 | Documents, 1893-1908 (Birth certificate and other official records in Russian) |
| | 5 | Drawing--Leopold Auer, 1926 (By S. Pevsner) |
| | 6 | Funeral Prayer Book, 1953 (From the New Montefiore Cemetery) |
| | 7 | Genealogy Application Form, Undated (JewishGen Family Finder) |
| | 8 | Inventories--Donations and Loans, 1955-1998; Undated (Inventories of Kudish materials donated to libraries and lent to museums) |
| | 9 | Lyrics, Undated (Lyrics to songs with music by Alexis Kudisch) |
| | 10 | Outline--Opera, Undated (Unfinished opera project) |
| | 11 | Photographs, 1928; Undated |
| | 12 | Programs, 1922-1993; Undated (23 pieces) |
| | | Publicity |
| | 13 | Artists / Authors, 1968; Undated |
| | 14 | Kudisch / Weinberg, 1922; 1982-1995 (One flier for Alexis Kudisch and numerous fliers and biographies of Bella Kudisch Weinberg) |
| | 15 | Resume, Undated (Alexis Kudisch) |
| | | Scrapbooks |
| | 16 | 1921-1930 |
| | 17 | 1928-1930 |

- 18 Touring Schedule, 1946-1947
- 19 Tree Planting Certificate, Undated
- 20 Writing Techniques, 1986-1996
- 21 Writings, 1988; Undated (Pieces by Bella Kudisch Weinberg)

Series III: Scores, 1930-1943; Undated

| <u>Box</u> | <u>Fol</u> | |
|------------|------------|--|
| 5 | 1 | Bach, Johann Sebastian-- <i>Nun Danket Alle Gott</i> , Undated (Arranged by Alexis Kudisch; Orchestral score) |
| | 2 | Chopin, Frederic-- <i>E Flat Major Nocturne</i> , 1942 (Arranged by Alexis Kudisch; String quartet; Piano) Kreutzer, Rodolphe |
| | 3 | <i>Etude No. 8</i> , Undated (Arranged by Alexis Kudisch; Violin score) |
| | 4 | <i>Etude No. 13</i> , Undated (Arranged by Alexis Kudisch; Violin score) |
| | 5 | <i>Etude No. 23</i> , Undated (Arranged by Alexis Kudisch; Violin score) |
| | 6 | <i>Etude No. 26</i> , Undated (Arranged by Alexis Kudisch; Violin score) |
| | | Kudisch, Alexis |
| | 7 | <i>Bridal March</i> , 1936 (From <i>The Little Gipsy</i> ; Orchestral scores; piano-vocal score; piano score signed by all musicians; violins; viola; cello) |
| | 8 | <i>Burlesque</i> , 1935 (Piano-vocal score) |
| | 9 | <i>Cadenzas to the Viotti Concerto No. 23</i> , 1943 (Violin score) |
| | 10 | <i>Fantasia Elegiaque con Variation</i> , Undated (Piano-violin score) |
| | 11 | <i>Just a Little Dance</i> , Undated (Piano-vocal score) |
| | 12 | <i>Let's All Be Happy</i> , 1946 (Adapted from Baranski; Orchestral score; violins; cello; bass; accordion; percussion) |
| | 13 | <i>Menuetto</i> , 1940 (Orchestral score; string quartet scores; piano score) |
| | 14 | <i>Prelude Orientale</i> , Undated (String quartet score) |
| | 15 | <i>Radio Themes of the American String Quartette</i> , Undated (String quartet score) |
| | 16 | <i>Reminiscences of My Childhood</i> , Undated (String quartet score) |
| | 17 | <i>Russian Serenade</i> , Undated (String quartet score) |
| | 18 | <i>Serenade Romantique</i> , 1930 (String quartet score) |
| | 19 | <i>Violin Cadenza to Orpheus Overture</i> , Undated (Violin score) |
| 6 | 1 | Kudisch, Alexis and Dont-- <i>Etude--Caprice</i> , 1942 (Violin-piano score) |
| | | Kudisch, Alexis and Kudisch, Rosa |
| | 2 | <i>A Cat Against the World</i> , Undated (Piano-vocal score) |
| | 3 | <i>Cinderella</i> , Undated (Piano-vocal score; string quartet score) |
| | 4 | <i>The Clown</i> , Undated (Piano-vocal score) |
| | 5 | <i>Marching to Victory</i> , Undated (Piano-vocal score) |
| | 6 | <i>My Sacred Childhood</i> , Undated (Piano-vocal score) |
| | 7 | <i>Tango Habanera</i> , 1936 (Piano-vocal score) |
| | 8 | <i>The U.S.O.</i> , 1942 (Piano-vocal score) |
| | 9 | Kudisch, Alexis and Nevin-- <i>The Rosary</i> , 1939 (String quartet score) |
| | 10 | Kudisch, Alexis and Rand, W.B.-- <i>The World</i> , Undated (Piano-vocal score) |
| | 11 | Kudisch, Alexis and Safernoff-- <i>'Twas Long Ago</i> , Undated (Piano-vocal score) |
| | 12 | Kudisch, Alexis and Treitel, Syjay-- <i>From Sunup to Moondown</i> , 1943 (Piano-vocal score) |
| | 13 | Kudisch, Alexis and Zimbalist, Efrem-- <i>Hebrew Song and Dance</i> , 1940 (String quartet score) |

- 14 Kudisch, Alexis and Anonymous--*The Three Old Ladies*, Undated (Piano-vocal score)
- 15 Mendelssohn-Bartoldy, Felix--*Wedding March*, Undated (Arranged by Alexis Kudisch;
String quartet score; violins; viola; cello)
- 16- Ravel, Maurice--*Bolero*, Undated (Arranged by Alexis Kudisch; Orchestral score and
17 parts)
- 18 Unidentified--*Tango Argentine*, Undated