

**Guide to the Mrs. Lionello Perera Papers, 1888-1966
(Bulk dates, 1930-1965)**

JPB 06-11

Music Division

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

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	Mrs. Lionello Perera Papers
Collection ID:	JPB 06-11
Creator:	Perera, Carolyn Allen
Extent:	3 linear feet (4 boxes)
Repository:	Music Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
Abstract:	The Mrs. Lionello Perera Papers document her interests in Verdi, and chamber music concerts during the 1930s-1960s.

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

Mrs. Lionello Perera Papers, JPB 06-11, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Custodial History

Carolyn Allen Perera bequeathed the Mrs. Lionello Perera Papers to the Music Division in 1966.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2006.

Biographical Note

Carolyn Allen Perera was born on November 16, 1883, in New York City (12 East 64th Street). She first heard the violin at the age of three and a half years, and this early influence led her to not only play the instrument, but also devote part of her life to exposing children to music. Her family encouraged cultural pursuits, and enabled her to attend many operas and concerts during her childhood. In 1904 she married Lionello Perera, an Italian banker who befriended the family when Carolyn was nine years old. She adopted his Italian heritage, and with his help, learned to speak the language fluently.

The Pereras were involved with several different welfare and social service organizations, including the Italian Welfare League, which Carolyn founded in 1920 to aid Italian immigrants. This work allowed her to meet Arturo Toscanini, who was on tour with the La Scala Orchestra. A strong friendship developed over the years, and led to Carolyn's involvement as one of the founders of the Toscanini Memorial Archives at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

During a crippling bout of arthritis in 1950, from which doctors feared she wouldn't recover, Toscanini gave Carolyn a biography of the Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi. This book proved to have a healing effect, and launched her new interest as a collector of Verdiana. Her collection grew to include letters to and from Verdi, photographs, and rare editions of his work. In 1960 she and Walter Toscanini (Arturo's son) created an exhibit of their collections for display at the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Ohio).

She remained an active patron of music until her death on September 24, 1966. More of her life's adventures can be read about in her autobiography, *Now It Should Be Told*, self-published in honor of her eightieth birthday in 1963.

Scope and Content Note

The Mrs. Lionello Perera Papers document select activities of a New York City patron of music, primarily from 1930 to 1965. The emphasis of the collection is on concerts attended by Mrs. Perera, and her main subject of interest, Giuseppe Verdi. The collection does not contain any of her work with welfare agencies, such as the Italian Welfare League; there is only scant evidence of her violin performances, and her involvement with music schools.

Organization

The collection is organized into three series. They are:
Series I: Personal Papers, 1891-1966, undated
Series II: Verdi Materials, 1888-1966, undated
Series III: Oversized Materials, 1898-1963, undated

Series Descriptions

Series I: Personal Papers, 1891-1966, undated

.75 linear feet (1.5 boxes)
Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series consists of materials saved by Mrs. Perera that document the performing arts aspects of her life. Many of the programs found here are for musicians whom she knew personally, and likely hosted at her home. The program for *Oklahoma!* includes a note “with Toscanini,” meaning that he was her guest at this production. Also of note is her self-published autobiography, *Now It Should Be Told*, which details significant events in her life.

Series II: Verdi Materials, 1888-1966, undated

.75 linear feet (1.5 boxes)
Arrangement: Alphabetical

The contents of this series reflect Mrs. Perera’s strong interest in the Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi. However, these materials are mostly from secondary sources, such as newspapers, or programs and libretti from productions of his work. There is some data related to her primary Verdiana collection, but none of the actual items. Of note are the folders of correspondence, one of which is with Walter Toscanini, who was also a collector of Verdiana. Two folders document exhibits of their combined collections.

Series III: Oversized Materials, 1898-1963, undated

1.5 linear feet (1 box)

Arrangement: Alphabetical

This series contains three folders of oversized Verdi-related materials.

Box/Folder	Description
Series I: Personal Papers, 1891-1966, undated	
<u>Box</u> 1	<u>Fol</u>
	Clippings
1	Personal, 1960-1965, undated includes clippings saved for unidentified reasons
2	Wagner, Siegfried, 1930 Aug. 5 pages from a Bayreuth, Germany publication honoring Wagner on his death
	Correspondence
3	General, 1938-1962
4	Toscanini, Arturo, 1947 one ms. letter; blank postcard with portrait of Toscanini
	Libretti
5	Boito, Arrigo. <i>Mefistofele</i> , and <i>Nerone</i> , 1924, undated both published by in Milan, by G. Ricordi; Italian language
6	Menotti, Gian-Carlo. <i>The Saint of Bleecker St.</i> , 1955
7	Perera, Carolyn A. <i>Now It Should Be Told</i> , North Conway, NH: The Reporter Press, 1963 autobiography; originally submitted to the Toscanini Memorial Archive, and inscribed by Nina Perera Collier
	Programs
	Individual performers
	most programs feature multiple performers; organized by soloist or other featured performer
8	B-L, 1913-1965
9	M-W, 1914-1964
10	Bartok, Bela, 1955 memorial concert at Columbia University; includes clippings
11	Cliburn, Van, 1958 Apr.-May one program, multiple clippings
12	Flonzaley Quartet, 1927-1929
13	Fuchs, Joseph, and Lillian, 1954-1960 violinists, often part of larger chamber groups
14	Horowitz, Vladimir, 1940-1966 includes clippings
15	Martinelli, Giovanni, 1963 tribute program for his 50th anniversary onstage at the Metropolitan Opera; clippings and text of speech
16	Menuhin, Yehudi, 1932-1959 includes clippings
17	Morini, Erica, 1921; 1955-1965, undated includes one clipping from 1963
18	Musicians Symphony Orchestra, 1932-1933 benefits for unemployed musicians; include clippings for April 10, 1933 concert with Paderewski
19	Novaes, Guiomar, 1960-1962
20	Perole String Quartet, 1930-1942 three items, one is a brochure about the Quartet
21	Quartetto Italiano, 1960-1961 one program, and 15th anniversary booklet - inscribed
22	Rubinstein, Artur, 1957-1966 three programs, and one tribute concert
23	Serkin, Rudolf, and Peter, 1956-1965

Mrs. Lionello Perera Papers

24		Toscanini, Arturo, 1926-1957 includes clippings, other tribute material
25		Wagner, Richard, 1930-1940 productions, including <i>Parsifal</i> and <i>Das Rheingold</i>
<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	Liberty Loan Committee-sponsored event at Metropolitan Opera, 1918 Sept.
2	1	27 featuring address by President Wilson
	2	Library of Congress Festival of Chamber Music, 1933 Apr. includes clipping
		Orchestras
	3	B-W, 1953-1965 includes other performance groups
	4	Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1962-1965
	5	New York Philharmonic, 1961-1962 various conductors, including Wallenstein, Torkanowsky, Bernstein; clippings for Wallenstein
	6	Philadelphia Orchestra, 1929; 1960
	7	Other, 1923; 1935; 1963 includes dedication of Theodore Roosevelt's birth place; 100th anniversary of Samuel Clemens's birthday
	8	Personal, 1920-1926; 1937 Mrs. Perera listed as violinist; Henry Street Settlement event
		Theater
	9	Bernhardt, Sarah, 1891; 1910 <i>Theodora</i> , and <i>Judas</i>
	10	General, 1935-1960 includes <i>Oklahoma!</i> , Zeffirelli's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
	11	<i>Hamlet</i> , 1936 Oct. 8-9 with John Gielgud at Empire Theatre; includes clipping of opening night review
	12	Publications, 1929-1965 includes <i>Music in Germany</i> (Berlin, 1929); <i>Center</i> (vol. II, no. 4, Oct. 1955); <i>Citta di Milano</i> (no.72, Dec. 12, 1955)
	13	Toscanini Memorial Archive materials, 1965 includes minutes from committee meeting, letter from David Sarnoff

Series II: Verdi materials, 1888-1966, undated

14		Card file, undated books and items given to NYPL by Mrs. Perera; includes librarian's notes
		Clippings
15		Article on unpublished Verdi correspondence from <i>Corriere della Sera</i> (Milan), 1926 Jan. 27 folder includes note to David Sarnoff
16		English language, 1951-1964, undated
17		Italian language, 1942-1965, undated many from 1963, the 150th anniversary of Verdi's birth; three Dutch clippings in back
		Correspondence
18		Instituto di Studi Verdiani, 1965 includes letter from <i>The Musical Quarterly</i> re: articles about Verdi
19		Matz, Mary Jane, 1954-1965 includes draft of research plan
20		Toscanini, Walter, 1955-1965 primarily regarding Verdi

Mrs. Lionello Perera Papers

Exhibits

- items from Mrs. Perera's and Walter Toscanini's collections
- 21 Brandeis University, 1964
- 22 The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton Co., 1960
- 23 General, undated
includes untitled catalog of items likely in Mrs. Perera's collection; letter from the Italian Home for Musicians, a trust founded by Verdi

Libretti

- 24 *Aida*, undated
poor condition, cover missing, annotated dramatis personae
- 25 *Un Ballo in Maschera*, 1954 (includes clippings - reviews of production)
- 26 *Don Carlo*, New York: Fred Rullman, Inc., 1950 (published for Metropolitan Opera)
- 27 *Falstaff*, New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1963 (published for Metropolitan Opera)
- Box Fol
3 1 *Macbeth*, New York: Fred Rullman, Inc., 1941; c.1960
New Opera Co. production; includes clipping with ad for production
- 2 *Nabucco*, New York: Fred Rullman, Inc., 1960
published for Metropolitan Opera
- 3 *Othello*, New York: Fred Rullman, Inc., 1955-1963
annotated dramatis personae page - with two different casts/performances noted
- 4 *Rigoletto*, New York: Fred Rullman, Inc., undated
poor condition; missing Act II; folder includes a German publication about the opera
- 5 *Simon Boccanegra*, New York: Fred Rullman, Inc., 1931
English translation by Frances Winwar
- 6 *La Traviata*, Boston: Oliver Ditson Co., 1888
cover torn off, but included

Opera News

- all issues contain Verdi feature articles
- 7 Seven issues, 1954
articles written by Mary Jane Matz
- 8 Seven issues, 1958-1959
Jan. 20, 1958 issue includes image loaned by Mrs. Perera
- 9 Six issues, 1961; 1963-1964
- 10 Two issues, 1964
Dec. 19, 1964 issue contains letter to editor from Mrs. Perera; folder includes two letters from Elena Harris about issues

Programs

- 11 General, 1956-1966
- 12 *Macbeth*, 1958-1959
includes Italian production in Trieste, clippings from Met production, and Carnegie Hall program notes
- 13 *La Scala - Rivista Dell' Opera*, 1954 Mar.
[A Review of Opera]; poor condition, and incomplete - pages 17-25 only
- 14 Scrapbook items, 1951-1965
correspondence, programs, postcards, two photos, clippings; all originally loose in a scrapbook

Series III: Oversized Materials, 1898-1963, undated

- Box Fol
4 1 *RadioCorriere*, 1963 Oct. 27-Nov. 2
weekly magazine with Verdi on cover and feature article; folder includes related article from television magazine
- 2 *Scena Illustrata*, 1898
illustrated publication on Verdi; poor condition - handle with care

3 *Verdi*, by Ezio Colombo, undated
 color publication on glossy newsprint