



## The New York Public Library Music Division

Guide to the

### **Albert Stoessel papers**

1907-1943

JPB 89-91

Processed by Angela Doane.

### **Summary**

**Creator:** Stoessel, Albert, 1894-1943

**Title:** Albert Stoessel papers

**Date:** 1907-1943

**Source:** The Albert Stoessel Papers were donated to the New York Public Library by his son, Frederic Stoessel, in 1988.

**Abstract:** The Albert Stoessel Papers trace the musical development and career of the New York conductor and composer Albert Stoessel. His correspondence and articles chronicle his early training as a violinist, and later interest in conducting and choral music in New York City and various New England summer music festivals.

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**Preferred citation:** The Albert Stoessel Papers, JPB 89-91, Music Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

**Processing note:** Processed by Angela Doane.

### **Related Materials:**

A clipping file on Albert Stoessel forms part of the Music Division's vast holdings of clipping files. A useful and informative supplement to the Albert Stoessel Papers, the file contains reviews of Stoessel's performances both on violin and as a conductor over the years, interviews, and biographical notices.

The New York University Archives also holds material on Albert Stoessel's years at the New York University Department of Music, years which are incompletely represented in this collection.

### **Creator History**

Albert Stoessel was born in St. Louis, Missouri on October 11, 1894. He studied music at the Berlin Hochschule as a pupil of Emanuel Wirth and Willy Hess. At 19 he began his professional playing career

with the Hess String Quartet, and toured as a violin soloist in Switzerland, Holland, and Germany. He returned to the United States in 1915 for a concert tour, appeared with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Symphony, and lived in Boston until 1917 while pursuing his career as a violinist and composer.

Stoessel enlisted in the United States Army in 1917, becoming a lieutenant in the 301st Infantry American Expeditionary Forces and leader of the regimental band at Camp Devens. Stoessel went to France in 1918 with the 76th Division as bandmaster of the 301st. He became Director of the AEF Bandmaster's School of Chaumont, France, organized by Walter Damrosch.

After his discharge in 1919, Stoessel performed as a soloist with the Boston Symphony and toured with Enrico Caruso's last tour. In 1921 he became the assistant conductor of the Oratorio Society of New York under Walter Damrosch. For seven years, beginning in 1923, he was the head of the New York University Music Department, from which he was awarded a master's degree in 1924. He left to become director of the departments of opera and orchestra at the Juilliard Graduate School of Music in 1931. He became conductor of the Worcester Festival of the Worcester (Massachusetts) County Musical Association in 1925, and conducted the Westchester Festival in White Plains, New York, from 1927 to 1933. Stoessel first began work with the Chautauqua Institution in 1921 as a conductor, and in 1929 he was appointed Musical Director.

Albert Stoessel composed the opera *Garrick* in 1936, wrote a treatise in 1919 entitled *The Technique of the Baton*, and composed a number of violin, piano, choral, and orchestra pieces. His wife, Julia Pickard Stoessel, had also been a violin student in Berlin. They were married June 27, 1917, and had two sons, Edward and Fredric.

It was while onstage conducting an orchestra for the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York, that Stoessel died of a heart attack on May 12, 1943.

## Scope and Content Note

The files in the collection contain personal and professional correspondence; drafts of articles, speeches, and musical programs; scores owned by Stoessel (often with his notes in the margins); miscellaneous scores composed by Stoessel; photographs; and memorials, professional biographies, and obituaries.

Stoessel's correspondence makes up the majority of the collection, much of it personal letters to Julia Pickard, whom he married in 1917. (One file of letters to her which are not from Albert Stoessel is included in the collection.) As Julia Pickard also was a trained violinist, Stoessel's letters to her are often musically oriented. These letters are also of professional interest as they reveal details of Stoessel's early career as a violinist, and the development of his interest in conducting during World War I. Meetings with some of the leading musical figures of the day, such as Walter Damrosch and André Caplet, are mentioned in these letters.

Stoessel's professional correspondence includes a file of seven letters from Walter Damrosch who functioned as Stoessel's conducting mentor. Stoessel was Damrosch's assistant conductor for the Oratorio Society of New York in the early 1920s. The majority of the professional correspondence relates to two subjects: a proposed position for Stoessel during World War II as a musical advisor in the Army Specialist Corps, and Stoessel's unsuccessful application to become conductor of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. Both these subjects occur in 1942-1943. Earlier correspondence is minimal, and only two letters exist in the collection pertaining to Stoessel's years at New York University.

A few handwritten manuscripts of articles and speeches are also contained within the collection, interesting for their insights into Stoessel's musical opinions. Conducting notes are apparent throughout Stoessel's two Bach scores from 1927 and 1943, offering comparisons in the evolution of his conducting style of these works. A number of his own compositions, including the full score of his opera *Garrick*, also exist within the collection.

The photographic series in the collection is primarily personal, including family and vacation pictures. Professionally, there is an inscribed photograph of Walter Damrosch, another of Eric Leinsdorf, Albert Stoessel conducting, and Stoessel and Julia Stoessel with the Chautauqua Choir. The biographical notices and extensive memorials after Stoessel's death help to organize and clarify the sequence of his career, and illuminate the influence he had on the various societies and schools with which he worked.

An interesting theme running through the collection is the emphasis on Stoessel's "American-ness" in composition and conducting. Stoessel's career flowered during the period in which American music was breaking away from European influence and imitation and finding its own path. The Albert Stoessel Papers are a valuable research tool on many fronts, as Stoessel played a significant part in the development of 20th century American music, was a prominent figure as a conductor, and was highly influential in music education, in composition, promoting and advocating choral music.

**Arrangement:** The papers and photographs in this collection represent the activities of Albert Stoessel from 1909 to 1943. The bulk of the collection falls between 1915 and 1919, and the entire collection traces his musical and personal life. Chronological arrangement has been used primarily, with some subdivisions by subject, because of the personal and professional information intertwined throughout much of the early correspondence, and the fragmentary nature of many of the papers.

## Key Terms

### Names

Stoessel, Albert, 1894-1943  
American Music Collection

## Container List

### Series 1: Personal Correspondence, 1914-1943

#### Outgoing Correspondence of Albert Stoessel, 1914-1943

- f. 1 1914. (1 letter.)  
In German.
- f. 2 1915 April-May (3 letters.)
- f. 3 1915 August-September (5 letters.)
- f. 4 1915 October-December (3 letters.)
- f. 5 1916. (3 letters.)
- f. 6 1917. (5 letters.)
- f. 7 1918 January-July (5 letters, 2 postcards.)
- f. 8 1918 July-August (6 letters.)
- f. 9 1918 September. (6 letters.)
- f. 10 1918 September-October (6 letters.)
- f. 11 1918 October-November (5 letters.)
- f. 12 1918 November-December (4 letters.)
- f. 13 1918 December. (4 letters.)
- f. 14 1919 January. (7 letters.)
- f. 15 1919 February-March (5 letters, one concert program.)
- f. 16 1919 March. (3 letters, 2 concert tickets.)
- f. 17 1919 April. (4 letters, American Express check notice.)
- f. 18 1919 April-May (5 letters.)
- f. 19 1919 May-June (6 letters.)
- f. 20 1924. (2 letters.)
- f. 21 1926. (1 letters.)
- f. 22 1932. (8 letters and one typed copy.)
- f. 23 1940, 1943. (5 letters (to his son Edward).)
- f. 24 Undated (14 letters and fragments.)  
Dating from before, during, and after World War I.
- f. 25 Undated (5 letters.)  
Dating from before, during, and after World War I.
- f. 26 Undated (5 letters.)  
Dating from before, during, and after World War I.
- f. 27 Envelopes n.d. (39 envelopes.)

#### Incoming Correspondence to Albert Stoessel, 1937

- f. 28 , Letter from Lady Duckworth. 1937 (1 letter.)

#### Incoming Correspondence of Julia Pickard Stoessel, 1907-1927.

- f. 29 1907-1927. (6 letters, 1 postcard.)

### Series 2: Professional Correspondence, 1919-1943

#### Outgoing Correspondence of Albert Stoessel, 1942-1943

- f. 1 Letter to Harold Spivacke 1942. (1 letter (ms. and carbon).)

Series 2: Professional Correspondence, 1919-1943 (cont.)

Outgoing Correspondence of Albert Stoessel, 1942-1943 (cont.)

- f. 2 Letters to Mrs. Brown 1943. (Ms. draft and carbon of different letters.)  
Regarding appointment to conduct Cleveland Orchestra.

Incoming Correspondence of Albert Stoessel, 1919-1943

- f. 3 Letters from Walter Damrosch 1919-1923. (7 letters.)
- f. 4 Letter from George Engles 1921 April 20., 1921 December 29., 1923 February 1., 1925 June 10. (4 letters.)
- f. 5 Letters regarding Eskine Girt presentation 1937. (7 letters.)
- f. 6 Letter from Helen Astor 1921 April 20., 1942 March 2., 1942 October 12. (3 letters.)
- f. 7 Copies of memoranda to Fowler Harper, .. 1942 February 1, 1941 February 3, 1942 February 5, 1942 May 19., 1942 June 11, 1942 June 16, 1942 July 1, 1942 July 2, 1942 July 10  
Includes contract from the Juilliard School of Music.
- f. 8 Letter from Joseph Knitzer, .. 1943 January 21, ca.] 1943 February 14, 1943 February 16, 1943 February 20, 1943 March 8, 1943 March 14, 1943 March 19, 1943 March 27  
Includes newspaper clipping.
- f. 9 Letter from Helen Brown, .. 1943 April 1, 1943 April 14, 1943 April 29, 1943 May 3, 1943 May 5, n.d.; probably April-May, n.d.; probably April-May, ca. 1943

Series 3: Literary and Musical Productions, 1918-1942

Program drafts, .. 1918

- f. 1 301st Infantry Band.

Notes and Statements.

- f. 2 Financial statement for Oratorio Society of New York, .. 1940-1942  
Handwritten fragment.

Manuscripts, Articles, Letters to Editor.

- f. 3 Early Christian Music, .. n.d, 1942  
Talk on Wagner's Ring des Nibelungen with excerpts from score written on music paper.  
Handwritten fragment. Handwritten fragment. Handwritten fragment. Handwritten fragment and complete carbon copy.

Series 4: Scores and Printed Material, 1919-1943

Programs and texts

- f. 1 Easter concert given by Headquarters Band, .. 1919 April 20, 1942  
Stoessel's signature on cover. Announcement.

Scores owned by Albert Stoessel.

- f. 2 *Bach Johann Sebastian, 1685-1750. Mass in B Minor, ed. by Frank Damrosch, .. c1899*  
Copy from the Oratorio Society of New York, with annotations by Stoessel, 1927.  
*Bach Johann Sebastian, 1685-1750. Mass in B Minor, ed. by Frank Damrosch, .. c1899*  
Marked by Stoessel, 1943.

Published scores composed by Albert Stoessel.

*Garrick*

Holograph scores by Albert Stoessel.

- f. 3 *Robin's fickle.*  
Holograph in pencil.  
*Minuet crinoline.*

Series 5: Photographs, 1909-[ca.1942]

Series 5: Photographs, 1909-[ca.1942] (cont.)

Individual photographs,. 1909-1942

- f. 1     Albert Stoessel playing violin, age 15. 1909
- f. 2     Albert Stoessel holding a violin. n.d.
- f. 3     Albert Stoessel in wicker chair 1915  
Photographic postcard addressed to Julia Pickard.
- f. 4     Albert Stoessel in United States Army uniform,. n.d.
- f. 5     Albert Stoessel holding a violin,. ca. 1910-1920
- f. 6     Albert Stoessel standing with a violin,. n.d.
- f. 7     Albert Stoessel,. ca.1925-1935
- f. 8     Albert Stoessel [in his early 30s],. ca.1920s
- f. 9     Albert Stoessel with chimpanzee at piano,. n.d.
- f. 10    Portrait of Albert Stoessel,. n.d.
- f. 11    Albert Stoessel conducting,. ca. 1941
- f. 12    Mounted program photograph of Albert Stoessel in front of portrait of Andrew Carnegie,. n.d.
- f. 13    Albert and Fredric Stoessel,. n.d.
- f. 14    Portrait of Julia Pickard Stoessel,. n.d.
- f. 15    Albert, Julia, Edward, and Fredric Stoessel at Chautauqua,. 1929
- f. 16    Albert, Julia, Edward, and Fredric Stoessel at Chautauqua,. 1929  
Different pose from no. 15.
- f. 17    Albert and Julia Stoessel with the Chautauqua Choir,. 1928
- f. 18    Julia Stoessel, Eleanor Roosevelt, and two unidentified women at Chautauqua,. late 1930s
- f. 19    Albert and Frederic Stoessel with Mrs. Thomas Edison and three unidentified people,. ca. 1941-1942
- f. 20    Walter Damrosch,. December 1935  
Inscribed to Albert Stoessel.
- f. 21    Eric Leinsdorf,. n.d.
- f. 22    Southeast view of Farges-Allichamps (Cher), Chateau de la Brosse,. n.d.  
(Postcard.)
- f. 23    North view of Farges-Allichamps (Cher), Chateau de la Brosse,. n.d.
- f. 24    Steamship,. n.d.
- f. 25    Schiller Day parade on Columbus, Ohio capital grounds,. 1905 May 7
- f. 26    Unidentified woman,. n.d.
- f. 27    Unidentified woman (same as in photograph no. 27) in front of a house,. n.d.

Photographic album.

- b. 8     Photographic album of Albert Stoessel's visit to Germany and Austria with Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Hutcheson and Oscar Wagner,. 1932

Series 6: Memorial Concert Programs, Professional Biographies, Obituaries, and Official Memorials, 1916-1943

Memorial Concert Programs, Professional Biographies, Obituaries, and Official Memorials, 1916-1943.

- f. 1     *Stoessel, Albert Problems in choral singing.*  
Stoessel's last article, from The Etude, July 1943, 440 (lacking continuation on p. 488).

Series 6: Memorial Concert Programs, Professional Biographies, Obituaries, and Official Memorials, 1916-1943.  
1943 Memorial Concert Programs, Professional Biographies, Obituaries, and Official Memorials, 1916-1943.

- (cont.)
- f. 1 *Stokes, Richard L. Young Stoessel, violinist, plays own compositions.*  
Review from the St. Louis Post Dispatch, Feb. 8, 1916.  
[FAKE UNITITLE]
  - f. 1 *McNaughton, Charles David. Albert Stoessel, American musician.*  
Abstract from McNaughton's doctoral dissertation, reprinted from Dissertation Abstracts.
  - f. 1 [Handwritten note with biographical information about Albert Stoessel.]
  - f. 2 *Albert Stoessel : conductor - composer.* after 1937  
Printed publicity brochure from Albion Adams, Stoessel's agent.
  - f. 2 *Smith, H. Augustine. Albert Stoessel and the New York Symphony Orchestra at Chautauqua,.* n.d.  
Typed carbon copy.
  - f. 2 *A Tribute to Albert Stoessel, resolutions of the Board of Government of the Worcester (Massachusetts) Country Musical Association,.* 1943 July 21
  - f. 2 *Concert by the Orchestra of the Juilliard School of Music in memory of Albert Stoessel 1894-1943,.* 1943 November 12  
Typed concert program.
  - f. 2 *Albert Stoessel funeral is held at St. Thomas,.* 1943 May 16  
New York Herald Tribune obituary.
  - f. 2 *Stoessel falls to stage and dies conducting at Arts Academy fete,.* 1943 May 13  
New York Times obituary.
  - f. 2 *Chautauqua tribute to Albert Stoessel : memorial concert in the amphitheater,.* 1943 July 27  
Extensive article in the Chautaugan Daily (supplement).
  - f. 3 *Memorial of Albert Stoessel 1894-1943 : proceedings of the Board of Directors of the Juilliard School of Music,.* 1943