



# The New York Public Library Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound

Guide to the

## **Mapleson Cylinders research files**

1938-1986

\*L (Special) 21-01

Processed by Rebecca Chandler in 2012. Additional materials incorporated by Jessica Wood in 2019-2022.

### **Summary**

**Title:** Mapleson Cylinders research files

**Date:** 1938-1986

**Size:** 2 linear feet (4 boxes)

**Source:** The collection was assembled by David Hall during the years 1962-1982, with additions from Don McCormick between 1982-1986, in the course of their respective tenures as Curator of the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound.

**Abstract:** The Mapleson Cylinders are a set of brown wax cylinder recordings of Metropolitan Opera rehearsals and performances, as well as home recordings of family members, that were recorded by Lionel Mapleson between 1901-1909 and acquired by the New York Public Library between 1939-1962. The cylinders were transferred to analog tape in 1981 and released as a five-LP set by New York Public Library in 1985. The Mapleson Cylinders research files collection includes correspondence among various previous owners of the cylinders, documentation of early attempts by the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, and others, to reformat them prior to the 1985 LP set. Also included are research notes of the New York Public Library's audio engineer Tom Owen who transferred the cylinders, as well as notes of Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound Curator David Hall conducted in preparation of the liner notes for the 1985 release.

**Preferred citation:** Mapleson Cylinders research files, Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Rebecca Chandler in 2012. Additional materials incorporated by Jessica Wood in 2019-2022.

### **Creator History**

Between 1939 and 1962, the Music Division of the New York Public Library acquired a collection of 124 brown wax cylinders recorded by Lionel Mapleson between 1901 and 1909. The recordings contained primarily performances and rehearsals by singers and orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera. Some

cylinders were re-recorded by Mapleson in 1909 with sounds of his children. In the late 1970s, David Hall, the Curator of the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound, along with the library's sound engineer, Tom Owen, Hall initiated a project to transfer the cylinders to magnetic tape. A custom cylinder machine was built by Art Shifrin and installed at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Between 1981-1985, Hall, Owen, and various other collaborators produced an LP boxed set, published by the New York Public Library in 1985.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged into four series: Mastering notes, Correspondence, Subject files, LP set files. These series maintain David Hall's arrangement of files, assembled during preparation for the Mapleson cylinders boxed set. Mastering notes includes photocopies of sheet music and librettos for the works performed on particular cylinders, with annotations used by engineer Tom Owen during the transfer of those cylinders to magnetic tape. The Correspondence series primarily includes letters written to and from the cylinders' previous owners and library staff. The Correspondence series also includes letters describing previous efforts to reformat the audio from the cylinders, the copyright status of the cylinders, as well as extant documentation of Lionel Mapleson and the singers with whom he worked. The Subject files series contains research files gathered by David Hall relative to specific primary sources on the cylinders. The LP set files include files specifically related to the production and release of the 1985 boxed set of LPs of Mapleson cylinder recordings. David Hall's folder titles were maintained.

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Phonograph records

### **Names**

Hall, David, 1916-2012

Mapleson, Lionel S.

## Container List

### Mastering notes

- b. 1 f. 1 L'Africaine 1981
- b. 1 f. 2 Aida
- b. 1 f. 3 Ave Maria, Gounod
- b. 3 f. 1 Carmen 1981
- b. 1 f. 4 Cavalleria Rusticana 1981
- b. 1 f. 5 Le Cid 1981
- b. 1 f. 6 Ernani 1981
- b. 3 f. 2 Faust 1981
- b. 1 f. 7 La Fille du Regiment 1982
- b. 1 f. 8 Götterdämmerung 1982
- b. 3 f. 3 Les Huguenots
- b. 1 f. 9 Lohengrin
- b. 1 f. 10 Lucia Di Lammermoor
- b. 1 f. 11 Manru 1983  
Includes letter from David Hall to John Stratton.
- b. 1 f. 12 Die Meistersinger
- b. 1 f. 13 Pagliacci
- b. 1 f. 14 Romeo et Juliette
- b. 1 f. 15 Siegfried
- b. 1 f. 16 Tannhäuser
- b. 1 f. 17 Tosca
- b. 1 f. 18 La Traviata
- b. 3 f. 4 Tristan und Isolde
- b. 2 f. 1 Die Walküre
- b. 3 f. 5 Die Zauberflöte  
Includes notes on 1940 Library of Congress transfer.
- b. 1 f. 19 General mastering notes

### Correspondence

- b. 2 f. 6 Aida Favia-Artsay 1981-1982  
Includes correspondence between David Hall and Aida Favia-Artsay regarding Favia-Artsay's collection of Mapleson cylinders.
- b. 2 f. 8 Ira Glackens and G.K. Bishop 1981-1984  
Includes correspondence between Ira Glackens, G.K. Bishop, and David Hall regarding the history of Mapleson and the cylinders.
- b. 2 f. 4 Mapleson Music Library 1981-1983  
Includes correspondence between David Hall, Peter Mapleson, Glendon Good, and George Laviolette regarding contents of the Mapleson Music Library.
- b. 2 f. 2 William Seltsam 1937-1984  
Primarily contains photocopied correspondence between William Seltsam, Phillip Miller, and Carlton Sprague Smith regarding 1939 acquisition of Mapleson cylinders from Seltsam. Also includes correspondence between David Hall and George Laviolette.

Correspondence (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 11 **Art Shifrin 1980**  
Includes correspondence between David Hall and Art Shifrin regarding the construction of a cylinder transfer machine to use for the Mapleson cylinders.
- b. 2 f. 3 **David Stratton 1981-1984**  
Includes correspondence between John Stratton and David Hall pertaining research on particular Mapleson cylinders.
- b. 2 f. 5 **William D. Whalen 1983**  
Includes correspondence between David Hall and William Whalen, the attorney for William Seltsam, regarding the the rights to publish the Mapleson Cylinders as an LP set.
- b. 2 f. 9 **Wilfried Zahn transfers 1978**
- b. 2 f. 10 **Photographs 1948, 1981**  
Includes correspondence related to search for photographs of Mapleson for potential publication in LP set.
- b. 2 f. 7 **Rights and Contracts 1969-1984**  
Includes correspondence between David Hall, Glendon Good, George Laviolette, Alfred J. Mapleson, and MCA Records regarding the copyright status of the Mapleson cylinders.
- b. 3 f. 6 **General correspondence 1938-1986**

Subject files

- b. 2 f. 17 **Beer boxes used for cylinder storage**  
Includes beer boxes used by Mapleson family to store cylinders up until their acquisition by NYPL in 1962.
- b. 4 f. 4 **Clippings 1938-1984**
- b. 2 f. 14 **Cylinder chronology 1983**
- b. 2 f. 12 **Dating and casting research notes 1984-1985**  
Includes David Hall's transcription of notes from Mapleson cylinder containers, as well as photocopies of the slips accompanying the cylinders.
- b. 4 f. 2 **Glackens-Bishop notebook**  
Includes photocopy and collation of Glackens-Bishop notebook.
- b. 4 f. 1 **Inventories 1984**  
Includes inventories collated by David Hall.
- b. 2 f. 13 **Jean de Reszke new transfer 1983**
- b. 2 f. 18 **Notated envelopes**  
Includes envelopes notated by David Hall that originally contained Mapleson's handwritten slips accompanying individual cylinders.
- b. 4 f. 5 **Original box maps 1960**  
Includes maps drawn by David Hall of cylinders' placement in original boxes.
- b. 2 f. 16 **Tape transfer reports 1981-1984**
- b. 3 f. 10 **Technical research files 1984**
  - b. 4 f. 3 Includes research materials both used and generated by Tom Owen for transferring wax cylinders.

Files related to LP set

- b. 3 f. 12 **Advance copies 1985**
- b. 2 f. 19 **Advertising 1984-1985, 1990**
- b. 3 f. 13 **Costs and budget 1984**
- b. 3 f. 14 **Design and booklet 1984**
- b. 2 f. 15 **Photographs**  
Includes reproduction photographs of George Bishop, William Seltsam, William Whalen, and Ira Glackens that were used for LP set booklet.

Files related to LP set (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 7    **Release party 1985**  
Includes documents related to the 1985 party celebrating the release of the LP set.
- b. 3 f. 8    **Press 1985-1986**  
Includes press announcing the 1985 release of the LP set.
- b. 3 f. 9    **Press release and advertisement 1985**  
Includes drafts of press release and advertisements for the LP set release.
- b. 3 f. 11   **Project proposal 1983**  
Includes David Hall's drafts of proposals to release the LP set.