

THE RENEE VAN DEWATER COLLECTION

Papers, 1919-1983
(Predominantly, 1971-1983)

5 linear feet

Accession Number 1240
L.C. Number MS

The papers of Renee Van Dewater were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in May of 1985 by Renee Van Dewater herself and were opened for research in February of 1989.

Renee Van Dewater was born in Poland and later moved to the United States. She met her husband, John Van Dewater, in New York at the New School for Social Research. She lived in Detroit, Michigan for more than twenty years and now resides in New York.

The papers of Renee Van Dewater reflect her work with the Friends For Orchestra Hall, 1977-1983, and the International Institute, 1968-1978. As a volunteer for the Friends For Orchestra Hall, she served as the President of the Friends For Orchestra Hall and the Chairman of Volunteers for Save Orchestra Hall, Inc. During this time the restoration of Orchestra Hall was begun and the concert series, Praeludium, and the Daytime Performance series were established under her leadership.

At the International Institute, Renee Van Dewater served on the Member Council, the Board of Directors, and as the Curator of the Hall of Nations. She was the consultant in the cultural enrichment program for schools and responsible for the Talk and Tour program.

She has also worked as a volunteer for the City of Detroit in the area of community affairs with the United Foundation and the United Negro College Fund. She was awarded the Heart of Gold Award for her work in 1982 by the Women for the United Foundation and the Central Business District Association.

Orchestra Hall opened, October 23, 1919, under the concertmaster Ossip Gabrilowitsch and was the home of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra until 1939, when it was abandoned due to financial difficulties. It was designed by Charles Howard Crane for the symphony and was known for its impeccable acoustic technology. During this period it was visited by musicians as Pablo Casals, Arthur Rubinstein, Sergei Rachmaninoff, George Gershwin, Enrico Caruso, and Igor Stravinsky, among others who acclaimed its superior sound. The Detroit Symphony moved to the Masonic Temple in 1939, leaving the hall vacant until 1941, when it was reopened as, Paradise Theatre, a jazz and vaudeville center. Jazz musicians as Lionel Hampton, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Billy Holiday, and Dizzy Gillespie, were among many who performed there until 1951 when it closed again.

During the 1950's-1970, it was vacated with the exception of a brief history of use as a church and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's recording session under conductor Paul Paray. It lay in disrepair and was slated for demolition when the group, Save Orchestra Hall, Inc., was formed on September 17, 1970 and later gained possession of the building in 1972. The National Register of Historic Buildings accepted Orchestra Hall in 1971 and with the assistance of the volunteer membership organization, Friends For Orchestra Hall, restoration was begun in 1976. The work of these groups insured the preservation of Orchestra Hall to it's present state and regained the historical significance of the hall in the musical world.

The International Institute is a Torch Drive Agency, receiving United Foundation funds distributed through United Community Services. It's current location in Detroit, opened in 1951, although the institution itself dates from 1919, under the National Board of the YMCA. It's primary purpose is to provide assistance to immigrants, to create community awareness of foreign cultures, and to establish programs in the area of ethnic education.

Important subjects covered in the collection are:

- Detroit Board of Education Ethnic Studies
- Detroit Symphony Orchestra
- Friends For Orchestra Hall
- Ossip Gabrilowitsch
- International Institute
- Orchestra Hall
- Paradise Theatre
- Save Orchestra Hall, Inc.

An index to subjects and correspondents will be found on p. 12.

Contents

10 manuscript boxes

Series I, Orchestra Hall-Paradise Theatre, 1919-1980; Box 1:

Correspondence, programs, and clippings covering the history of Orchestra Hall and Paradise Theatre. Also detailed material on Ossip Gabrilowitsch and the early years of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject and then chronologically.

Series II, Friends For Orchestra Hall, 1960-1983; Boxes 1-5:

Subseries A: Office Files, 1960-1983, Boxes 1-5: Material covers the office files of Friends For Orchestra Hall as correspondence, financial records, and membership. Files on fundraisers as the Die Fledermaus Ball, the Rosenkavalier Ball, Adopt-A-Seat program, and committee work to assist Save Orchestra Hall, Inc. are included. Of special interest are the files relating to membership and the restoration of Orchestra Hall. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject and then chronologically.

Subseries B: Save Orchestra Hall, Inc., 1979-1982, Box 5: Correspondence, financial records, minutes, by-laws, and clippings of the organization in their goal to preserve Orchestra Hall. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject and then chronologically.

Series III, Concert Series, 1979-1983; Boxes 5-6:

These files are organized by concert series and cover the musical history under the Friends For Orchestra Hall. Correspondence, contracts, clippings, and programs relating to the concerts are included. Files are arranged alphabetically and then chronologically by series.

Subseries A: Daytime Performance Series, 1979-1984, Boxes 5-6: The Daytime Performance Series was funded in part by the Friends For Orchestra Hall and the Junior League of Detroit. The series was created for the Detroit area school children, senior citizens, and the handicapped. Material consists of correspondence, programs, and proposals for the series.

Subseries B: General Concert Material, 1978-1983, Box 6: Correspondence, clippings, and programs from various concerts outside of the Daytime Performance and Praeludium series at Orchestra Hall. Material on Karl Haas and the Viennese Classics.

Subseries C: Praeludium Series, 1979-1983, Box 6: Correspondence, press releases, clippings, financial records, and programs relating to the series.

Series IV, International Institute, 1944-1978; Boxes 7-10:

The papers of the International Institute consist of material corresponding to Renee Van Dewater's work at the organization as the Project Director and as the Curator for the Hall of Nations.

Subseries A: Administration Files, 1944-1978, Box 7: Correspondence, membership, and committee files for the International Institute. Material on the history of the organization in the United States and Detroit. Files on the Hall of Nations, Friends of the International Institute, and on exhibitions held at the Institute.

Subseries B: Bicentennial Events, 1975-1977, Boxes 7-9: Correspondence, relating to the events held at the International Institute during the Bicentennial year. Exhibitions, schedules, and material from the Smithsonian On Tour are included.

Subseries C: Ethnic Studies, 1968-1977, Boxes 9-10: Material relating to the Detroit Board of Education, Ethnic Heritage Study Program. Correspondence, committee notes, teaching materials, and program proposals. Talk and Tour correspondence, reports, and class materials are of interest in the area of foreign studies.

Subseries D: United Foundation Award, 1974, Box 10: Award given to Renee Van Dewater for the 1974 Torch Drive.

Non-manuscript Material:

One videocassette from Orchestra Hall

Approximately 61 boxes of slides from the International Institute and Orchestra Hall

One cassette tape of "Adventures in Good Music, Karl Haas, Live from Orchestra Hall", January 27, 1981

One cassette tape of Mexico, International Institute

One reel by reel tape of Serge Kerval, International Institute

One reel by reel tape of Smithsonian On Tour, "Old Ways in the New World and African Disapora"

Approximately Fifty photographs from the International Institute and Orchestra Hall

80 photographs of the restoration of Orchestra Hall, 1979-1982, by John Van Dewater

Blueprints from Orchestra Hall

Totebag from Orchestra Hall

Two numbered brass chair tags from Orchestra Hall

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Series I
Orchestra Hall-Paradise Theatre, 1919-1980
Box 1

Correspondence, programs, and clippings on the history of Orchestra Hall and Paradise Theatre. Files are arranged alphabetically by subject and then chronologically.

Box 1

1. Orchestra Hall; Correspondence and programs, 1919-1932
2. " ; Programs and clippings, 1931-1938
3. Paradise Theatre; Clippings, c. 1941-1980

Series II
Friends For Orchestra Hall, 1960-1983
Boxes 1-5

This series which contains material relating to Renee Van Dewater's activities in the Friends For Orchestra Hall and Save Orchestra Hall, Inc. is divided into two subseries.

Subseries A: Office Files, 1960-1983, Boxes 1-5:

Correspondence, minutes, by-laws, financial records and membership ledgers of the Friends For Orchestra Hall.

Subseries B: Save Orchestra Hall, Inc., 1979-1982, Box 5:

Papers relating to the formation of the group and material on the financial, funding, and general history of the preservation of Orchestra Hall.

Subseries A: Office files, 1960-1983, Boxes 1-5:

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4. Adopt-A-Seat Program, 1978-1979
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6. " ; Row Directory, July 1983
7. Anniversary Celebration, 1979-1980
8. Annual Appeal Apology, 1983
9. Board of Directors; Biographical, 1979-1983
10. " ; Minutes, 1978
11. " ; Minutes, 1979
12. " ; Minutes, 1980
13. " ; Minutes, 1981
14. " : Minutes, 1982-1983
15. Brahms Festival, April 10-26, 1980
16. Bylaws, 1979, 1982-1983

Box 2

1. Clippings, 1960-1983
2. Committees, 1982-1983
3. Correspondence, 1978-1983
4. Die Fledermaus Ball, November 15, 1982
5. Donors, 1977-1980
6. Detroit Council For The Arts; Daytime Performance, 1982
7. Financial, 1971-1979
8. " , 1980-1981
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11. Foundations, 1979-1982
12. Ossip Gabrilowitsch Recording, 1978-1979
13. Hall Use, 1979-1983
14. Junior League, 1980
15. Membership, 1979-1982

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1. Membership; Ledger, December 22, 1977 - April 20, 1979
2. " ; Ledger, April 20, 1979 - May 13, 1980
3. " ; Ledger, May 13, 1980 - October 20, 1981

Box 4

1. Membership; Ledger, November 20, 1981 - January 6, 1983
2. " ; Ledger, January 4, 1983 - January 17, 1984
3. Memorials, 1980-1981
4. Michigan Council For The Arts, 1980-1983
5. Orchestra Hall Notes, 1979-1982
6. Papers of Incorporation, 1982-1983
7. Press Releases, 1979-1980
8. Programs, 1980
9. Rosenkavalier Ball, 1978-1981
10. Speakers Bureau
11. Special Events, 1978-1982

Box 5

1. State of Michigan License, 1983
2. Stationary, 1979
3. Stratford, 1978
4. Treasures and Trash, 1982
5. University of Michigan, 1980
6. Ushers, 1982-1983
7. Volunteers, 1978-1981
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Subseries B: Save Orchestra Hall, Inc., 1979-1982, Box 5:

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15. History, 1980
16. Minutes, 1979-1982

Series III
Concert Series, 1979-1983
Boxes 5-6

This series covers material from the concerts held at Orchestra Hall and other related papers on musical performances. The series is divided into three subseries:

Subseries A: Daytime Performance Series, 1979-1983, Boxes 5-6:

Material related to the Daytime Performance Series as programs, correspondence, reservations, and proposals for the concerts.

Subseries B: General Concert Material, 1978-1983, Box 6:

Concert material from Orchestra Hall and other musical information outside of the other series in the collection.

Subseries C: Praeludium Series, 1979-1983, Box 6:

Correspondence, financial records, biographical material, and programs from this series at Orchestra Hall.

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17. Acts Without Words
18. Appeal Letter
19. Back to Bach, 1983
20. Leon Bates, 1982
21. Brio Trio
22. Budget, November 1981 - January 1983
23. Cinderella, 1983
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1. Detroit Symphony Percussion Ensemble, 1982
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5. Misha Mishakoff, 1983
6. Music Performance Trust Funds, 1982-1983
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14. Concert Flyers, 1979-1983
15. Karl Haas, 1982
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Subseries C: Praeludium Series, 1979-1983, Box 6:

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21. Nathan Milstein, 1979-1982
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25. Gyorgy Sandor, 1979-1981
26. James Tocco, 1980
27. Barry Tuckwell, 1980-1981

Series IV
International Institute, 1944-1978
Boxes 7-10

This series consists of four subseries relating to the business files of the organization, the records of the bicentennial year, ethnic studies, and the United Foundation Award presented to Renee Van Dewater.

Subseries A: Administrative Files, 1944-1978, Boxes 7-10:

Administrative files of the organization under Renee Van Dewater covering areas as correspondence, membership, programs, and exhibitions held at the Hall of Nations.

Subseries B: Bicentennial Events, 1975-1977, Boxes 7-9:

Files relating to activities at the International Institute during the bicentennial year. Correspondence, ethnic literature, schedule of events, and extensive exhibition material.

Subseries C: Ethnic Studies, 1968-1977, Boxes 9-10:

Detroit Board of Education, Ethnic Heritage Program material and ethnic studies records from the International Institute. Talk and Tour correspondence, reports, and class materials under Renee Van Dewater at the Institute.

Subseries D: United Foundation Award, 1974, Box 10:

Award from the United Foundation for the 1974 Torch Drive given to Renee Van Dewater.

Subseries A: Administrative Files, 1944-1979, Boxes 7-10:

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11. International Vignettes, 1977
12. Long-Range Planning Committee, 1973-1977
13. Melting Pot
14. Membership, 1970-1971
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16. Exhibitions; Chinese Painting, 1975
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