Finding Aid to Eric A. Gordon's Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein Collection, 1850-2011 Coll2012.121

Finding aid prepared by Loni Shibuyama
Processing this collection has been funded by a generous grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.
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Title: Eric A. Gordon's Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein Collection

Identifier/Call Number: Coll2012.121

Contributing Institution: ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 6.0 linear feet. 5 archives boxes + 1 archive binder box + 1 archive flat box.

Date (bulk): Bulk, 1980-1991

Date (inclusive): 1850-2011

Abstract: Correspondence, playbills, programs, clippings, photographs, notes, grant proposals and other research material collected for the book, *Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein* (St. Martin's Press, 1989), by Eric A. Gordon. An American composer and gay man, Marc Blitzstein is perhaps most well-known for his 1937 musical, *The Cradle Will Rock*. The collection includes materials documenting Blitzstein's musical works, as well as correspondence files between biographer Eric A. Gordon and Blitzstein's family, friends and collaborators.

creator: Gordon, Eric A., 1945-

Biography on Marc Blitzstein

Marc Blitzstein was born in Philadelphia, March 2, 1905. At the age of 6, he played his first solo piano recital in public; at 16, he performed a piano concert with the Philadelphia Symphony. He went on to study with teachers such as Nadia Boulanger in Paris. While in Europe, Blitzstein came to be influenced by modernists like Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill.

Upon returning to the United States, he began writing his own political operas, notably the pro-union musical, *The Cradle Will Rock* (1936), and *No For An Answer* (1940). The same year in which *The Cradle Will Rock* was produced, Blitzstein's wife, Eva Goldbeck, died after three years of marriage.

In 1942, Blitzstein enlisted in the Air Force and spent three years in the military. Out of this experience came his Airborne Symphony (1946). After the Air Force, Blitzstein wrote for films and theater, including *Regina*, *Juno*, and adaptations of *Mother Courage* and *The Threepenny Opera*. He was commissioned to compose an opera based on the Sacco and Vanzetti case of the 1920s. He completed two acts and outlined a third when, while on vacation in Fort-de-France, Martinique, Blitzstein got into a physical confrontation with three merchant seamen and subsequently died of a brain injury on January 22, 1964.

Source: Box 3, folder 30, Eric A. Gordon Collection on Marc Blitzstein, Coll2012-121, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California

Biography on Eric A. Gordon

Born in 1945, Eric A. Gordon is a graduate of Yale University, and holds both an M.A. (in Latin American studies) and a Ph.D. (in history) from Tulane University. In the 1980s, he worked as a publicity manager for the music publishing house of G. Schirmer. Beginning in 1995, Gordon was the director of the Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring, Southern California District. A member of the National Writers Union, he served on the board of the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, on the Western Region Administrative Committee of the Jewish Labor Committee, and on the editorial advisory board of *Jewish Currents* magazine. In the late-1970s, Gordon began his research for a biography on American composer Marc Blitzstein, *Mark the Music*, which was published in 1989. In addition to *Mark the Music*, Gordon is the co-author of *Ballad of an American* (Scarecrow Press, 1997), as well as hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles.

In 2012, Eric Gordon continues to live in Los Angeles, CA.

Source:
(last accessed October 25, 2012.)

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open to researchers. There are no access restrictions.

Conditions Governing Use

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Acquisition Information

Donated by Eric A. Gordon, April 12, 2011.

Preferred Citation

[Box/folder #, or item name] Eric A. Gordon's *Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein* Collection, Coll2012-121, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California
Processing Information
Collection processed by Kyle Kaplan and Loni Shibuyama, November 2012.

Scope and Contents
The collection comprises correspondence, playbills, programs, clippings, photographs, notes, grant proposals and other research material collected for the book, Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein (St. Martin's Press, 1989), by Eric A. Gordon. An American composer and gay man, Marc Blitzstein is perhaps most well-known for his 1937 musical, The Cradle Will Rock, his opera Regina, as well as his adaptation of The Threepenny Opera. The Marc Blitzstein Resource Material Series includes photocopied and original materials documenting Blitzstein's life and musical works. The bulk of the Correspondence and Research Series includes correspondence (and related notes) between biographer Eric Gordon and Blitzstein's family, friends and collaborators. The Publication Records Series includes grant proposals, photographs, promotional material, permissions and other administrative records in the publication and promotion of Gordon's biography on Blitzstein.

Separated Materials
Following items have been separated from the collection:
The Making of "From Walls to Roses" [sound recording], produced by Eric A. Gordon, 1978. (1/4 in. open reel audiotape)

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Blitzstein, Marc
Gay and lesbian writers
Gay composers
Gay musicians
Jewish gay men
Musical theater
Opera

Marc Blitzstein resource material Series 1. 1905-2011
Physical Description: 3.0 linear feet.
Series Description
This series comprises playbills and programs, photographs, clippings, notes, manuscripts, correspondence, flyers, an FBI report and photocopies of Blitzstein's personal papers, compiled by Eric Gordon, documenting Blitzstein's life (1905-1964) and creative works. Materials document Blitzstein's compositions, theatrical and concert productions (contemporary and posthumous), his activism in the Jewish community, his interpersonal relationships, his political activities and his murder in 1964. In particular, this series includes annotated photographs of Blitzstein throughout his life.
Arrangement
Photographs and a file about Marc Blitzstein's parents have been placed at the end of this series. The remaining files are arranged chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 1 1905-1914 1905-1987
Chronology of activities, compositions and writings; miscellaneous contracts, letters, royalties 1905-1983

Box 1, Folder 3
Research outline notebook circa 1905-1989

Box 1, Folder 4-5 1920s 1924-1987
Physical Description: [2 folders]

Box 1, Folder 6
Piano Sonata (1927) 1979-1981

Box 1, Folder 7
Traveling Salesman 1929

Box 1, Folder 8
Guggenheim fellowships 1929-1940

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Box 1, Folder 9-22 1930s 1930-1988
Physical Description: [14 folders]

Box 1, Folder 23  
Cain (1930) 1930-2008
Box 1, Folder 24  
Piano Concerto (1931) 1931-1988
Box 1, Folder 25  
Surf and Seaweed (1931) 1931-1980
Box 1, Folder 26  
The Condemned 1932-1933
Box 1, Folder 27  
Orchestra variations 1934-1988
Box 1, Folder 28  
Eva Goldbeck 1935-1936
Box 1, Folder 29  
Send for the Militia--Parade (1935) 1935-1988
Box 1, Folder 30  
Chesapeake Bay Retriever (1936) 1984-1985
Box 1, 

Folder 31-42  
The Cradle Will Rock 1936-2001
Physical Description: [4 folders]

Box 1, Folder 35  
The Cradle Will Rock (1937) 1936-2000
Box 1, Folder 36  
Box 1, Folder 37  
The Cradle Will Rock (1960) 1960
Box 1, Folder 38  
The Cradle Will Rock recording (1964-5) 1964-1965
Box 1, Folder 39  
The Cradle Will Rock TV 1983-1986
Box 1, Folder 40  
The Cradle Will Rock film 1984-1988
Box 1, Folder 41  
The Cradle Will Rock (Recklinghausen) 1984
Box 1, Folder 42  
The Cradle Will Rock (London) 1985
Box 1, Folder 43  
I've Got the Tune 1937-1970
Box 1, Folder 44  
Mercury Theater Julius Caesar and Danton's Death (1937) 1937-1981
Box 1, Folder 45  
Theater Arts Committee 1939
Box 2, Folder 1-5  
1940s 1940-1989
Physical Description: [5 folders]

Box 2, Folder 6  
Valley Town 1941-1981
Box 2, Folder 7  
Federal Theater Project AAA Plowed Under 1941-1987
Box 2, Folder 8-9  
World War II 1942-1989
Physical Description: [2 folders]

Box 2, Folder 10  
Native Land 1942-1989
Box 2, 

Folder 11-12  
No For An Answer (1942) 1942-2002
Physical Description: [2 folders]

Box 2, Folder 13  
No For An Answer (1989) 1988-1989
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Folder 14-16  
Airborne Symphony 1943-1991
Box 2, Folder 14  
Airborne Symphony (1946) 1943-1945
Box 2, Folder 15  
Airborne Symphony (London, 1986) 1986
Box 2, Folder 16  
Airborne Symphony (Seattle, 1991) 1990-1991
Box 2, Folder 17  
Box 2, Folder 18  
The Guests (1949) 1949-1987
Box 2, 

Folder 19-34  
Regina 1949-2000
Box 2, Folder 19  
Regina (1949) 1949-2000
Box 2, Folder 20  
Regina (92nd St. Y, 1952) 1952
Box 2, Folder 21  
Regina (New York City Opera, 1953) 1953
Box 2, Folder 22  
Box 2, Folder 23  
Regina (recording) 1958-1959
Box 2, Folder 24  
Regina (Encompass, NY, 1977) 1977
Box 2, Folder 25  
Regina (Detroit, 1977) 1977
Box 2, Folder 26  
Regina (Colorado, 1980) 1980

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<td>The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny 1958-1970</td>
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<td>1960s 1960-1981</td>
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<td>Italy 1960-1961 1960-1987</td>
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<td>Composers’ Showcase, April 28, 1985 1985-1988</td>
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<td>Soho Rep Blitzstein Evening 1987-1988</td>
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Physical Description: [6 folders]

Physical Description: [3 folders]

Physical Description: [2 folders]

Physical Description: [2 folders]

Physical Description: [2 folders]

Physical Description: [2 folders]

Physical Description: [3 folders]

Physical Description: [1 oversize folder]

Physical Description: [2 folders]

Physical Description: [1 oversize photograph]

General Physical Description note: [1 photograph: b&w.]
Photographs circa 1850-1964
General Physical Description note: [74 photographs: b&w, col.]

Correspondence and research Series 2. 1921-1992
Physical Description: 2.5 linear feet.
Series Description
This series comprises correspondence, interview notes, clippings and other material related
to Eric A. Gordon's research for his book, Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc
Blitzstein. The bulk of the material is Gordon's correspondence with individuals who knew or
worked with Blitzstein.
Arrangement
This series is arranged alphabetically by correspondent's last name.

Box 4, Folder 1  A 1979-1989
Box 4, Folder 2-3  B 1958-1989

Box 4, Folder 4  Bernstein, Leonard 1946-1990
Box 4, Folder 5-6  C 1979-1992

Box 4, Folder 7  Curtis, Mina 1938-1968
Box 4, Folder 8-9  D 1979-1989

Box 4, Folder 10  Davis (Christopher, Josephine, and Stephen) 1978-1989
Box 4, Folder 11  E-F 1981-1989
Box 4, Folder 12-13  G 1978-1989

Box 4, Folder 14  Goldbeck, Eva 1922-1936
Box 4, Folder 15  H-I 1979-1989
Box 4, Folder 16  Hewitt, Bill 1944-1988
Box 4, Folder 17  J-K 1979-1989
Box 4, Folder 18  L 1979-1989
Box 4, Folder 19-20  Lehrman, Leonard 1979-1989

Box 4, Folder 21  M 1977-1989
Box 4, Folder 22  N-O 1979-1991
Box 5, Folder 1  P-Q 1980-1992
Box 5, Folder 2  R 1980-1991
Box 5, Folder 4  S 1980-1990
Box 5, Folder 5  Simon, Louis and Stella 1927-1989
Box 5, Folder 3  Skildelsky, Berenice 1921-1988
Box 5, Folder 6  T-U 1980-1991
Box 5, Folder 7  V-W 1980-1990
Box 5, Folder 8  X-Z 1980-1987
Publication records Series 3. 1850-1991

Physical Description: 0.5 linear foot.

Series Description
This series comprises correspondence, grant proposals, notes, bibliographies, permissions and releases, financial records, promotional and other administrative material from the publication of Gordon's biography on Blitzstein, *Mark the Music* (1989). This series includes Gordon's various project proposals sent to potential funders and information regarding archives of Blitzstein's sound recordings.

Arrangement
This series is arranged alphabetically.

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