
Finding aid for the Igor Stravinsky correspondence on The Rake's Progress 0302

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2011 March

Title: Igor Stravinsky correspondence on *The Rake's Progress*

Collection number: 0302

Contributing Institution: USC Libraries Special Collections

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.21 linear ft.1 box

Date (inclusive): 1950-1951

Abstract: The Igor Stravinsky correspondence on *The Rake's Progress* consists of correspondence, dated May 1950 to May 1951, between Stravinsky and his lawyer in New York, L. Arnold Weissberger, concerning the mounting of his opera, *The Rake's Progress*. The letters discuss business matters pertaining to the production of the opera, financial support for the work, where to stage the premier, locations for the opera's American debut, problems associated with Italian singers performing in English, and various other financial and administrative matters pertaining to the completion and production of the work.

creator: Kirstein, Lincoln, 1907-1996

creator: Ricketson, Frank H., (Frank Henry)

creator: Stravinsky, Igor, 1882-1971

Conditions Governing Access

Advance notice required for access.

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Preferred Citation

[Box/folder# or item name], Igor Stravinsky letters on *The Rake's Progress*, Collection no. 0302, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

Related Materials

See also the scores of *The Rake's Progress*, USC Special Collections.

Historical note

Stravinsky's opera *The Rake's Progress*, set to the libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman, was inspired by William Hogarth's series of paintings. Stravinsky had wanted to write an English-language opera since arriving in the United States in 1939, and was inspired to do so by seeing the paintings at the Art Institute of Chicago on May 2, 1947. The opera premiered in Venice on September 11, 1951.

Scope and Content

The Igor Stravinsky correspondence on *The Rake's Progress* consists of correspondence, dated May 1950 to May 1951, between Stravinsky and his lawyer in New York, L. Arnold Weissberger, concerning the mounting of his opera, *The Rake's Progress*. Also included are copies of letters to F. H. Ricketson of the Central Civic Opera House Association, Denver, Colorado; Lincoln Kirstein; Howard Taubmann of the New York Times; and Betty Bean and Dr. E. Roth of Stravinsky's publishers, Boosey & Hawkes, London. The letters discuss business matters pertaining to the production of the opera, financial support for the work, where to stage the premier (including discussions about a possible staging at USC), locations for the opera's American debut, problems associated with Italian singers performing in English, and various other financial and administrative matters pertaining to the completion and production of the work. Stravinsky's letters to Weissberger are on his personal letterhead with his Los Angeles address, "1260 N. Wetherly Drive, Hollywood 46, California."

Acquisition

Purchased from J & J Lubrano Music Antiquarians, March 2011.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers. -- Correspondence

Kirstein, Lincoln, 1907-1996 -- Correspondence

Ricketson, Frank H., (Frank Henry) -- Correspondence

Stravinsky, Igor, 1882-1971 -- Archives

Stravinsky, Igor, 1882-1971 -- Correspondence

Weissberger, L. Arnold, 1907-1981 -- Correspondence

- Box 1, Folder 1 **Letter from Stravinsky to Weissberger 1950 May 18**
 Scope and Content
 Mentioning his collaboration with Aaron Sapiro and his dislike of La Scala as a venue for the opera.
- Box 1, Folder 2 **Correspondence with F. H. Ricketson, Jr 1950 May-June**
 Scope and Content
 Discussion of possibility of Denver's Central City Opera House Association producing the Rake's Progress in 1951 and Stravinsky's hope of finishing the work by the beginning of 1951.
 General note
 Copies.
- Box 1, Folder 3 **Letters from Stravinsky to Weissberger, Lincoln Kirstein 1950 June 2**
 Scope and Content
 Note regarding forwarding of Stravinsky's letter to Lincoln Kirstein; discusses firming up Kirstein's interest in producing the opera.
 General note
 Kirstein letter is a copy.
- Box 1, Folder 4 **Correspondence with F. H. Ricketson 1950 June 14, 19**
 Scope and Content
 Ricketson relays his conversation with Ralph Hawkes regarding the latter's interest in a Denver production of the opera; asks Stravinsky if he will be visiting Denver in July; Stravinsky assures Ricketson of his intention to work with him on the artistic side of the production.
 General note
 Copies.
- Box 1, Folder 5 **Letter from Stravinsky to Weissberger 1950 June 8**
 Scope and Content
 Discusses the stalling of the project with Kirstein, negotiations with Ricketson.
- Box 1, Folder 6 **Letter from Stravinsky to Weissberger 1950 June 29**
 Scope and Content
 Discusses contract with Boosey & Hawkes regarding the opera, negotiations with Ricketson, financial compensation.
- Box 1, Folder 7 **Letter from Stravinsky to Weissberger 1950 July 21**
 Scope and Content
 Discusses complications with Ricketson; Boosey & Hawkes; La Scala.
- Box 1, Folder 8 **Letter from Stravinsky to Weissberger 1950 September 13**
 Scope and Content
 Discusses "shocking" news of Ralph Hawkes' death; potential new patronage for the opera.
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Box 1, Folder 9	<p>Letter from Stravinsky to Weissberger 1950 September 22</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Discusses potential patronage of Blevin Davis; concerned that he has not received any news from his publishers regarding the handling of his business.</p>
Box 1, Folder 10	<p>Letter from Stravinsky to Harold Taubmann 1950 November 3</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Relative to a letter Stravinsky sent to the New York Times regarding publication of this letter and clarification for Olin Downes of various iterations of the Firebird--ballet, and 1919 versus 1945 symphonic excerpts.</p> <p>General note</p> <p>Copy.</p>
Box 1, Folder 11	<p>Letter from Stravinsky to Weissberger 1950 November 6</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Discusses collapse of Sher-Hartford deal, Ricketson deal, and includes copy of the "expose" sent to Betty Bean; discusses with Betty Bean the collapse of the Ricketson deal, possible premier of the opera at USC in 1951, and financial arrangements for that premier.</p> <p>General note</p> <p>Betty Bean letter is a copy.</p>
Box 1, Folder 12	<p>Letter from Stravinsky to Weissberger 1950 November 17</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Discusses copy of letter to [Erich] Leinsdorf, Ricketson letter, Rochester, and USC.</p>
Box 1, Folder 13	<p>Letter from Stravinsky to Weissberger 1950 December 19</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Discusses break down of USC performance planning; contract issues with Boosey & Hawkes regarding the completion of the opera, the world premier, and his creation of the "tradition" of his work; and his willingness to sacrifice some financial gain for more control over a potential production.</p>
Box 1, Folder 14	<p>Letter from Stravinsky to Weissberger 1951 January 30</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Discusses problems with Boosey & Hawkes and Covent Garden premier against his wishes, Venice festival, and expresses appreciation for Weissberger's help.</p>
Box 1, Folder 15	<p>Letter to Weissberger, correspondence with Lincoln Kirstein 1951 February-March</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Letter to Weissberger that discusses the enclosed correspondence with Kirstein: Kirstein discusses possibility of new backer, possible costs for New York production, ways to save money by using Venice cast in New York, and asks how much Stravinsky would need in financial compensation for conducting? Stravinsky's reply discusses difficulties in using Venice cast, quotes a price for his conducting services. Stravinsky's letter to Weissberger expresses confusion regarding subsequent developments in the New York production of the opera.</p> <p>General note</p> <p>Copies.</p>
Box 1, Folder 16	<p>Letter from Stravinsky to Weissberger 1951 April 11</p> <p>Scope and Content</p> <p>Discusses meeting potential backers Cowles and Farrell, possibility of conducting New York premier, role of Kirstein in the production.</p>

Box 1, Folder 17

Letter from Stravinsky to Weissberger, Dr. E. Roth 1951 May 9

Scope and Content

Describes letter written to Dr. Roth, of Boosey & Hawkes in London (and of which he encloses a copy) regarding Betty Bean's lack of enthusiasm for the New York premier at a Broadway theater.

General note

Roth letter is a copy.