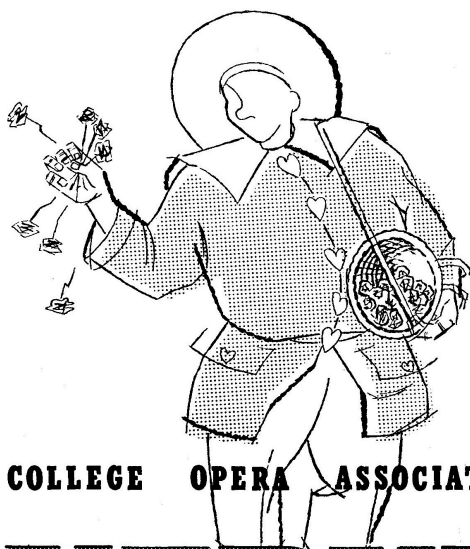


*The Hunter College Opera
Association, 1946 - 1972
Finding Aid*

Hunter College of the City of New York
SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES



HUNTER COLLEGE OPERA ASSOCIATION

presents

XERXES

The only Comic Opera

by

GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL

Orchestra of the New York College of Music

LEON FINLEY,
*Chairman, Board of Directors
Hunter College Opera Association*

EDWARD DAVISON,
*Acting Director,
The School of General Studies*

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Cover image from the program of *Xerxes* performed in 1953.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Accession Number: 94-10

Size: 1.3671 cu. ft.

Provenance: Hunter College Opera Workshop / Hunter College Opera Association

Restrictions: None.

Location: Range 6 Section 3 Shelf 13

Archivist: Prof. Julio L. Hernandez-Delgado

Assistant: Ms. Gretchen Opie
Ms. Maria Enaboifo

Date: August 1999

Revised: September 2013

HISTORICAL NOTE

In 1952, The Hunter College Opera Association was established by Hunter College president George N. Shuster, Dr. Edward Davison, Professor Livingston Welch, and the Board of Higher Education of the City of New York. The purpose of the Opera Association was to facilitate the production of operas under the auspices of Hunter College and to create opportunities for talented young singers. The Opera Association was primarily responsible for selecting, organizing, raising funds, and publicizing pending productions by the Opera Workshop. The bulk of the funds raised derived from private donations and sponsorships. The funds provided scholarships for singers and allowed for the presentations of three to four operas per season.

The Hunter College Opera Workshop was established on a modest basis in 1945 as a non-credit adult education program within the Hunter College School of General Studies by Fritz Stiedry, who had formerly conducted the Berlin State Opera House. He later became conductor at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. Stiedry was succeeded by Josef Turnau who served under him and who gave the Workshop its initial momentum and laid solid foundations for its later growth and fruition. Succeeding directors of the Workshop included Madame Rose Landver, Carolyn Lockwood, and William Tarrasch. Students enrolled in the Opera Workshop learned basic singing, acting techniques, body movement and dancing, fencing, make-up for stage, costuming, scenic and lighting design, as well as role preparation and diction. Students also partook in operatic excerpts and some even participated in opera theatre productions either in leading or supporting roles, as well as chorus work.

The first full production by Hunter College Opera Workshop that was sponsored by the Hunter College Opera Association was Handel's *Xerxes* in 1953, which received rave reviews. Subsequent productions that were performed included *What Men Live By*, by Bohuslov Martinu, *The Farmer and the Fay*, by Alexander Tcherepnin, and *Bay Boys in School*, by Jan Meyerowitz and *Fra Diavolo* by Auber in 1956; *Il Tabarro* by Puccini and *Riders to the Sea* by Vaugh Williams in 1957; *Les Malheurs d'Orphee* by Darius Milhaud and *The Marriage Merchant* by Rossini in 1958; and *Don Perlimplin* by Vitorio Rieti, *Pepito* by Garcia Lorca, and *Cosi Fan Tuffe* by Mozart in 1959. Hunter College Opera Workshop productions continued to be performed through the 1960's.

The artistic and musical success of the Opera Workshop produced a number of graduates who went on to have successful careers. Many students became respected professionals. Among the most successful students was Martina Arroyo, who joined the Workshop while still a student at Hunter College High School. She went on to win the Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air, recorded for Westminster and performed a successful European tour. Other graduates joined American and European opera houses, or performed on radio and television.

In 1971, the Hunter College Opera Workshop and the Opera Association were discontinued due to dwindling financial support and a diminished interest in the degree program.

Maria Enaboifo
Julio L. Hernandez-Delgado

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The purpose of the Hunter College Opera Association was “to facilitate the production of operas under the auspices of Hunter College and to create opportunities for talented young singers through scholarship grants and other assistance that might help to launch them on their careers.” With this goal in mind the Hunter College Opera Association was viewed by leading operatic figures and other civic leaders as an important feature on the American operatic scene. Outstanding artists and directors who graduated from the Workshop included Jean Keis, Hans Kuhn, William Lewis, Alan Smith, William Stelling, Barbara Owens, Eva Marie Wolff, and Martina Arroyo.

The Hunter College Opera Association Collection contains few documents on the Hunter College Opera Workshop and even fewer materials on the musical productions that were sponsored by the Hunter College Opera Association. Much of the correspondence documents contributions to Hunter College Opera Association and highlight its fund raising efforts. There is a small assortment of promotional materials consisting of programs, flyers, and brochures which summarize the history and accomplishments of the Hunter College Opera Association and the Hunter College Opera Workshop. In addition, there are folders on three of the Workshop’s musical directors: Carolyn Lockwood, Joseph Turnau, and William Tarrasch.

The Hunter College Opera Association Collection is small in size, but it should be of interest to aficionados of opera and to scholars who have an interest in researching one of the 228 opera workshops which sprung up among 47 states between 1953 and 1958.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series I – Administration

Series I consists of annual reports, articles, by-laws, minutes of the Board of Directors, correspondence, memoranda, personnel files, and programs of dramatic productions. The folders are arranged alphabetically.

Series II – Musical Directors

Series II contains files on former musical directors Josef Turnau (1946 - 1954), Carolyn Lockwood (1961 - 1963), and William Tarrasch (1964 - 1971). The folders are arranged by each director's term in office.

Series III – Dramatic Performances

Series III consists of reviews of dramatic performances by the Hunter College Opera Association from 1953 to 1971.

CONTAINER LIST

SERIES I – ADMINISTRATION

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Annual Reports, 1955 - 1958	
	2	Articles, 1965, 1970	
	3	Board of Directors, 1954 - 1959	
		Minutes	
	4	1958 - 1966	
	5	1967 - 1971	
	6	By-Laws, 1952, 1956, 1962, 1966	
	7	Contributing Members Donations, 1962 - 1970	
		Correspondence	
	8	October 1952 - December 1953	
	9	January 1954 - December 1955	
	2	1	January - May 1956
		2	January - December 1957
3		January - December 1958	
4		January - October 1959	
5		January 1960 - October 1962	
6		March 1964 - September 1972	
7		Financial Reports, 1965 - 1961	
3	1	“The Hunter College Opera Association An Interim History” by Clark Mills, March 1959	
	2	Memoranda, 1957, 1960 - 1961	
	3	Miscellaneous Materials	
	4	Personnel Files	
	5	Promotional Materials	
		Programs	
	6	1953 - 1964	
7	1968 - 1971		

SERIES II – MUSICAL DIRECTORS

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
3	8	Josef Turnau, 1946 - 1954
	9	Carolyn Lockwood, 1961 - 1963
	10	William Tarrasch, 1964 - 1971

SERIES III – DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES

3	11	Performance Reviews, 1953 - 1971
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