

# INDIANA STATE SYMPHONY SOCIETY RECORDS, 1931-1988

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Collection #  
M 614  
OMB 45

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Processed by  
Charles Latham  
1 May 1992

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## USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 4 manuscript boxes, 11 oversize boxes

COLLECTION DATES: 1931-1988

PROVENANCE: Marion County-Indianapolis Public Library, 16 February 1990; Charles Latham, Jr., Indianapolis IN, 1 March 1992

RESTRICTIONS: None

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RELATED HOLDINGS: Other programs of Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, stored in Print Collections

ACCESSION NUMBER: 90.0216; 92.0301

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra (there were two unsuccessful predecessors with the same name) began in 1930 when a group of musicians, led by violin teacher Ferdinand Schaefer, organized to hire Caleb Mills Hall at Shortridge High School, give four concerts, and split whatever was cleared from ticket sales. (This amounted to \$80 for each musician the first year, and \$18 the second.) In 1931 a group of people interested in music organized to help this

orchestra; they formed the Indiana State Symphony Society, and worked mainly to improve attendance at concerts. The orchestra soon moved most of its concerts to the Murat Theatre.

In 1936-1937 the Society decided to expand its efforts, to have a larger orchestra, a longer concert season, and a well-known conductor. The two leading candidates were Werner Janssen of Baltimore, and Fabien Sevitzy, nephew of Serge Koussevitzky of the Boston Symphony. Sevitzy was then conducting a theater orchestra in Boston and the Philadelphia Sinfonietta. He came to Indianapolis in the summer of 1936, was guest conductor on 17 November, and was engaged as conductor for the following year.

To back these expanded operations, the symphony board was reorganized to consist mainly of wealthy businessmen who were willing to support a greatly increased budget. The first two presidents of this new board were William H. Ball, of the Ball Jar firm of Muncie, and Dr. G. H. A. Clowes, research director of Eli Lilly and Company. At Sevitzy's request a separate Women's Committee was set up, to help sell tickets, to raise money, and to promote the orchestra in other ways. The first two presidents of the Women's Committee were Mrs. Frederic M. Ayres (1937-1940) and Mrs. Charles Latham (1940-1946). The Committee made a great effort to spread news of the orchestra through the whole state, and had units in a number of Indiana cities.

Sevitzy remained as conductor until 1954. After an interim year during which several guest conductors were "tried out," Izler Solomon was chosen music director, and remained until 1975. His tenure spanned several important landmarks in the orchestra's history. In 1962, Clowes Memorial Hall at Butler University, built in memory of Dr. G. H. A. Clowes, was offered to the orchestra as a permanent home. Like other musical organizations, the orchestra paid only a portion of its expenses by ticket sales, and balancing the budget from year to year was a recurring suspense story. At the same time, the musicians found themselves earning minimal salaries for a concert season which covered only a part of the year. The result was two bitter strikes, in 1966 and 1971. During one of these the orchestra office operated from a moving van.

The next music director was John Nelson (1976-1988), who had a special interest in choral music and in the compositions of Hector Berlioz. The orchestra's position at Clowes Hall became increasingly difficult. It was hard to find office space for an increasing staff, and there were problems in scheduling rehearsals. When Butler University proposed to quadruple the rent, the symphony board began to look for space elsewhere. A combination of circumstances made it possible to obtain and remodel the Circle Theater downtown, and to find office space in the Washington Hotel building next door. The orchestra moved to its new home at the beginning of the 1984-1985 season. The acoustics of the new hall were widely acclaimed, but a smaller seating capacity meant that even more funds would have to be raised in addition to ticket sales. Raymond Leppard became music director in 1988.

The scrapbooks in this collection came from the Marion County Indianapolis Public Library. The rest of this collection comes from the papers of Mrs. Charles Latham (1892-1988). She was born in Indianapolis and educated in private schools. She studied piano for many years, notably with Charles Anthony and Rudolf Reuter. She was among the group which formed the Indiana State Symphony Society in 1931, and was secretary for the first three years. She and her husband happened to entertain Fabien Sevitzy on his first trip to Indianapolis in 1936. She remained a close friend of the Sevitzy's during their stay in Indianapolis, and helped entertain many soloists. In 1940-1946 she was the second president of the Women's Committee, and after that headed the committee to encourage development in the state. About 1955 she was elected to the main symphony board, and remained until becoming an honorary trustee in 1972. She was a close friend of Harry V. Wade, who headed the board negotiating team during the 1966 strike.

Sources: Materials in collection  
Personal knowledge of processor

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## SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection, filling four manuscript boxes and eleven oversize boxes, contains correspondence, minutes, brochures, concert programs, clippings, and scrapbooks covering the period 1931-1988. It is arranged by function, and

chronologically within function.

Box 1 contains historical material, and material from the first decades of the Women's Committee, 1937-1965. The historical material includes written accounts (Folder 1), early programs (Folders 2-7), three photographs (of Fabien Sevitzyk and an early Women's Committee board, Folder 8), and some early correspondence (Folders 12-15). The correspondence in Folders 13-14 deals with Sevitzyk's first visits to Indianapolis in 1936-1937.

The rest of Box 1 deals with the Women's Committee. In Folder 16 are the first statements of the committee's purpose. In Folder 18 is correspondence concerning the committee's membership, with long letters from board chairman Clowes maintaining that wealth and potential gifts should be the criterion for appointing women to the Committee board, while Committee heads Ayres and Latham held that work and potential service should be the guidelines. Minutes of the Women's Committee continue through Folders 21-23 of Box 1 and Folders 1-15 of Box 2.

Box 3 contains minutes and other material from the Board of the Society (after about ten years as a "men's board," it began to include women about 1948), 1962-1987. Notable are Folder 1, containing the invitation to the orchestra to move to newly constructed Clowes Hall; and Folders 4-5, with minutes, clippings, and correspondence from the 1966 musicians' strike.

Box 4 begins with four reports from consultants in the 1980s. Of particular interest in the report in Folder 4 about the expected effects of a move to the Circle Theater, including the need of a greatly expanded endowment to offset smaller ticket sales. Material on marketing and fund-raising is in Folders 8-17.

Eleven scrapbooks in OMB 45 contain clippings from the early Sevitzyk years, 1937-1948. They deal not only with the orchestra itself but with Sevitzyk's activities. In the middle of World War II, for example, he proclaimed that Germany's warlike attitude was caused by her music, and that any attempt to reform German after the war would need to wean the Germans from warlike music to something more calming.

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## BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

### **BOX 1: Historical; Women's Committee, 1937-1965**

#### **FOLDER**

1 Historical accounts-- orchestra, Women's Committee

2 Programs-- 1933

3 Programs-- 1934

4 Programs-- 1935

5 Programs-- 1936

6 Programs-- 1937

7 Programs-- 1940, 1965, 1973

8 (VC) Photographs

9 Clippings-- 1931-1941

10 Clippings-- 1941-1946

11 Clippings-- 1947-1970

12 Correspondence-- 1935

13 Correspondence-- 1936

14 Correspondence-- 1937-1938

15 Correspondence-- 1975-1986

16 Women's Committee-- first announcement, 1937

17 Women's Committee-- correspondence 1943, 1949, 1972

18 Women's Committee-- correspondence 1944-1945, re board membership

19 Women's Committee-- national conference 1943

20 Women's Committee-- national conference 1959

21 Women's Committee-- board minutes-- 1962

22 Women's Committee-- board minutes-- 1964

23 Women's Committee-- board minutes-- 1965

**BOX 2: Women's Committee, 1972-1988**  
**FOLDER**

1 Board minutes-- 1972

2 Board minutes-- 1973

3 Board minutes-- 1976

4 Board minutes-- 1977

5 Board minutes-- 1978

6 Board minutes-- 1979

7 Board minutes-- 1980

8 Board minutes-- 1981

9 Board minutes-- 1982

10 Board minutes-- 1983

11 Board minutes-- 1984

12 Board minutes-- 1985

13 Board minutes-- 1986

14 Board minutes-- 1987

15 Board minutes-- 1988

16 "Whole Notes"

17 Junior Group

18 Fund-raising 1977-1981

**BOX 3: Board Meetings, 1962-1987  
FOLDER**

1 Invitation to Clowes Hall, 1962

2 Board meetings-- 1964

3 Board meetings-- 1965

4 1966 strike-- minutes and correspondence

5 1966 strike-- clippings

6 Board minutes-- 1972

7 Board minutes-- 1973

8 Board minutes-- 1976

9 Board minutes-- 1977

10 Board minutes-- 1978

11 Board minutes-- 1979

12 Board minutes-- 1980

13 Board minutes-- 1981

14 Board minutes-- Jan.-June 1982

15 Board minutes-- July-Dec. 1982

16 Board minutes-- Jan.-June 1983

17 Board minutes-- July-Dec. 1983

18 Board minutes-- Jan.-June 1984

19 Board minutes-- July-Dec. 1984

20 Board minutes-- 1985

21 Board minutes-- 1986

22 Board minutes-- Jan.-June 1987

23 Board minutes-- July-Dec. 1987

**BOX 4: Consultants; Marketing and Publicity**

## **FOLDER**

- 1 Howard Taubman, "The Symphony Orchestra Abroad," ca 1970
  - 2 Ketchum, Inc., 1975, re fund-raising
  - 3 David L. Engle, 1981, management review
  - 4 C. W. Shaver, 1983, re move to Circle Theater
  - 5 Blue & Co, audit, 1976-1977
  - 6 Printed material, 1952-1971
  - 7 Fund-raising and marketing, 1976-1987
  - 8 (CT 517) Season preview 1992-1993
  - 9 "Fifty Colorful Years 1930/1980"
  - 10 "Prelude to Greatness", 1982-1983
  - 11 Brochures 1984-1985
  - 12 Press Book 1977-1978
  - 13 News releases-- 1973, 1976
  - 14 News releases-- 1980
  - 15 News releases-- 1981
  - 16 News releases-- 1982
  - 17 Clippings, 1970-1990
  - 18 (OMB 45) Scrapbooks, 1937-1948
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## **CATALOGUING INFORMATION**

MAIN ENTRY: Indiana State Symphony Society

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Indiana State Symphony Society

Latham, Josephine Sharpe, 1892-1988

Clowes, G. H. A. (George Henry Alexander), 1877-1958

Sevitzky, Fabien, 1891-1967

Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

Clowes Memorial Hall (Indianapolis, Ind.)

Circle Theatre (Indianapolis, Ind.)

Symphony orchestras--Indiana--Indianapolis

Music patronage--Indiana--Indianapolis

Music-halls--Indiana--Indianapolis

Scrapbooks--Indiana--Indianapolis

Concert programs--Indiana--Indianapolis

Indianapolis (Ind.)--Social life and customs

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