

Collection #
M 1209

SEVITZKY AND SPALDING FAMILY PAPERS, 1946-1974

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Processed by

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January 2016

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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 and ½ manuscript boxes; 1 folder color photographs; 4 folders photographs

COLLECTION DATES: 1946-1974

PROVENANCE: Thomas Mullinix, Indianapolis, IN

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Indiana State Symphony Society M614; Booth Tarkington M274

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2000.0196

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mary (Spalding) Sevitzy (August 4, 1922-June 26, 1986) was born in Indianapolis, Indiana to Dr. John Spalding, a dentist. She had an older brother, Joseph. She studied music at DePauw University and Butler University, specializing in the harp. She was the 1st Harpist at the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra from 1946-55, which is where she met Dr. Fabien Sevitzy. The couple married in 1959 and relocated to Miami, Florida where Sevitzy accepted a faculty position at the University of Miami and Mary gave private harp lessons and some recitals of her own. Sevitzy died suddenly of a heart attack while on tour in Athens, Greece in 1967. Mary continued giving recitals on the harp and later met sculptor and artist Joseph Portanova (1907-1979). The couple made their home in Pacific Palisades, CA until Portanova's death in 1979.

Dr. Fabien Sevitzy (September 29, 1893-February 3, 1967) was born in Vyshny Volochyok, Russia. He graduated from the St. Petersburg Imperial Conservatory in 1911 and travelled Europe as a string bass virtuoso. He served in the military for Russia during WWI, but fled after the Revolution in 1923. Sevitzy ended up in Philadelphia, where he played double bass in the Philadelphia Orchestra. He also did a stint as conductor at the Peoples Symphony Orchestra in Boston, MA before taking over at the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra from 1937-1955. In 1959, Sevitzy was hired as conductor at the University of Miami Symphony (which became the Greater Miami Philharmonic) and he remained associated with the organization until his death in 1967. Sevitzy was a sometimes controversial figure, as he chose to perform more modern compositions that were not always to the public and leadership's tastes.

Dr. Joseph Spalding was the older brother of Mary Sevitzy Portanova. The collection seems to indicate that he was an optometrist or ophthalmologist and he had offices at 23 E. Ohio St. downtown Indianapolis. He and his wife Dorothy Reed were married on May 31, 1941 had one daughter, Marianne. The family were active Catholics who supported many Catholic organizations in the city.

Sources:

Ancestry.com

Materials in the collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection is made up mostly of letters and clippings that Mary Sevitzy sent to her brother and sister-in-law in Indianapolis that detail Mary and Fabien Sevitzy's musical life in Miami. The collection also contains a snapshot of Mary Sevitzy and Joseph Spalding's parents, John and Mary, as well as headshots of Mary Sevitzy and snapshots from Mary's travels around California with her second husband Joseph Portanova.

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