

Wigmore Hall

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ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS

Summary report on

records of

THE WIGMORE HALL

1901 to date

preserved at

**The Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore Street, London
W1H 0BP**

1999

NOTE ON ACCESS

Enquiries about access should be addressed to The Publications Manager, Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore Street, London W1H 0BP. Access may not be practicable while the collection is in course of arrangement and cataloguing.

February 2000

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Bechstein Hall was opened in 1901, as a platform for the products of the leading German firm of piano manufacturers, founded by Carl Bechstein of Berlin in 1853. During the First World War public hostility to German pianos and increasingly draconian import restrictions forced the closure of Bechstein's London agency, in June 1916, but the following year the Hall reopened as the Wigmore Hall. It was taken over by the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1946, and is now funded by the Council through the London Arts Board, with additional financial support from Westminster City Council.

The Wigmore Hall has been host to many internationally distinguished singers, pianists and chamber musicians, and has witnessed some important débuts and first performances. These are documented in a fine series of concert programmes and related printed items, complete for the periods 1901-44 and 1970 to date.

These programmes are complemented by a day book for the period 1917-30 and by performance diaries for 1933 onwards as well as by a fine collection of photographs of leading artists, and by (less complete) series of accounts, letter books and correspondence. In 1985 the Hall deposited some records for the period 1906-67 in Westminster City Archives (see the Appendix). This report describes complementary records for the post-War period, but also includes earlier material (notably concert programmes) going back to 1901.

The Commission is grateful to the Wigmore Hall for the opportunity to record the existence of this collection, and the compiler of this report would like to add his thanks to Ms Paula Best and Mr Andrew Payne for their help and hospitality on the occasions of his visits to the Hall, on 10 and 17 November 1999.

RJ OLNEY
19 November 1999

SUMMARY

Accounts

Concert day book 1917-30.

Concert ledgers 1955-83 (13 vols).

General ledger 1946-58.

Classified accounts 1953-65 (2 vols).

Analysis book 1946-62.

Concert analyses 1974-80.

Cash book 1961-7.

Agent's profit and loss account 1968-76.

Rough ledgers 1980s (3 vols).

Ticket sales accounts ('advances', 'subscription', 'non-subscription') 1968-9, 1976-88 (13 vols).

Wages accounts 1949-66 (4 vols).

Payments to attendants and others 1901-68 (7 vols).

Catering ledger 1967-70.

Bar invoices 1969-70.

Cheques and counterfoils 1908-13 (2 envelopes), 1918-19 (1 item), 1917-29 (account books supplied by Waterlow and Son Ltd).

Other manuscript material

Diaries (use of Hall) 1950-2, 1956-76, 1982-3 (19 vols).

Correspondence 1989-90 (2 cartons).

Contracts 1989-90 (1 file).

75th anniversary 1976 (1 file).

Box office improvements, light fittings, etc 1980s (1 file).

Miscellaneous agreements and accounts 1930s, etc (1 file).

Attendants' address book.

Friends' records 1990s (14 files.)

Short score of an anonymous operetta entitled 'The Vital Spark' early 20th cent (1 volume, apparently incomplete).

Non-manuscript material

Printed concert programmes and related items (tickets, books of words, posters, press opinions, etc) 1901-44. Mounted in a series of annual albums. (1901-2 conserved and re-mounted in 6 blue albums.)

A similar series (kept in punched file binders) 1957-61, 1963-June 1964 (with a few for Sept-Dec 1966), 1970-84 (53 files).

A similar series (kept loose within cardboard transfer cases) 1984-95 (25 cases). (More recent programmes, etc are now stored in a series of archive boxes.)

Programmes 1980-5 (5 albums).

Diaries and leaflets 1976-91 (6 albums).

Newspaper cuttings 1970-94 (10 albums).

Early programme notes 1907, 1908, nd (3 booklets in a folder).

Miscellaneous copies of programmes, photographs and copies of photographs, framed prints and other printed items.

APPENDIX

Records deposited 1985 in Westminster City Archives (Acc 1475):

Ledgers and cash books 1906-61, 1964-7 (18 vols).

Advance bookings 1913-60 (1 vol).

Correspondence and other files 1946-55 (9).

Letter books 1912-19 (8 vols).

Concert diaries 1933-56 (21 vols).

(For further details see NRA 29712.)