

Guide to the Gus Kahn Collection (Mss001)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Title: Gus Kahn Collection

Accession No: A2008-001

Dates: 1909-2007

Quantity: 4 ft; 1 Paige box, 1 clamshell box, 1 flat document box, and 1 monogrammed box, 5 framed pieces

Language: English

Processing information: Processed by Lisa Lobdell, Archivist. Completed May 22, 2012.

COLLECTION OVERVIEW

The collection consists of scrapbooks, photos, sheet music, manuscripts, and other material documenting the personal and professional life of popular music lyricist Gus Kahn, who collaborated on many of the most enduring hits of the 20th-century including "Yes, Sir, That's My Baby," "Carolina in the Morning," and "It Had to Be You."

The collection is divided topically into five series: papers, original compositions, sheet music, photos, and framed documents.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Born in Koblenz, Germany on November 6, 1886, Gustav Gerson Kahn immigrated to America with his family when he was four; the family settled in Chicago in 1892. Gus completed grammar school where he demonstrated an ability to create rhymes and won an essay writing contest. He worked at various jobs including a stint as a pottery wrapper in a china factory while continuing to write lyrics. In 1909, Kahn collaborated with Grace LeBoy, a song composer for music publisher Joseph H. Remick whom he met on New Year's Eve, 1908. Their collaboration of his lyrics and her melody resulted in Kahn's first hit "Gee, I Wish I Had a Girl," and the marriage of Kahn and LeBoy after an 8-year professional relationship. The marriage produced two children, Donald and Irene.

In 1932, Kahn moved his family from Chicago to Hollywood where he worked as a lyricist for MGM and RKO. With Vincent Youmans, Kahn wrote the score for *Flying Down to Rio*, the cinematic debut of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Before his untimely death in 1941, Kahn worked on numerous films including *The Merry Widow*, *Naughty Marietta*, and *Girl of the Golden West*. His last hit, "You Stepped Out of a Dream," appeared in the 1941 movie *Ziegfeld Girl*.

Kahn worked with and befriended many of the top songwriters of the period including Walter Donaldson, Richard Whiting, and Harry Warren; his circle of friends also included actors and singers like Eddie Cantor and Al Jolson, and bandleaders Guy Lombardo and Isham Jones. An avid golfer, Kahn was known to write lyrics while playing a course with Walter Donaldson. Al Jolson served as godfather to son Donald. Kahn served on the ASCAP Board of Directors from

1927 to 1930 and was admitted to the Songwriter's Hall of Fame in 1970. His 32-year songwriting career produced approximately 800 published songs, many of which remain standards today.

ACQUISITION

The Gus Kahn Collection was received by the Michael Feinstein Great American Songbook Initiative as a gift from Margaret Kahn on November 18, 2008.

SEPARATED MATERIALS

Materials relating to the life and career of Gus Kahn's son, Donald Kahn, have been removed from this collection and are located in *Mss 044 Donald Kahn Papers*.

Related materials

Gus Kahn musical compositions and papers at UCLA:

<http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c81n85mj/>

RESTRICTIONS

Access

All material is open to the public without restriction. Copyright laws of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) govern the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Use

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to the Great American Songbook Foundation. Music written prior to 1923 is in the public domain. For more information, please consult the staff of the Library and Archives.

SUBJECTS

Kahn, Gus

PREFERRED CITATION

Cite as: Gus Kahn Collection, The Great American Songbook Foundation.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

Contents	Box	File
Papers		
"I'll See You in My Dreams", Final, 7/18/1951. [Script]	1	1
"Mrs. Gus Kahn Oral History" by Irene Kahn Atkins, 1/30-2/13/1976.	1	2
"Ain't We Got Fun" by Donald Kahn, n.d. [Gus Kahn bio-Chapter 1].	1	3
Letter: Donald Kahn to Lauren Keiser, 8/27/1981. [Gus Kahn song origins]	1	4
"Memories of Gus Kahn", <i>Joslin's Jazz Journal</i> , Vol. 26, No. 1, 2/2007. [copy]	1	5
Gus Kahn Memorial Service, 10/10/1941. [program]	1	6
Condolence telegrams, 10/1941. [Files 1 & 2]	1	7-8

Notepad of flower and charity contributions, 1941.	1	9
Ziegfeld telegrams re: Whoopee!, ca. 1927.	1	10
"Whoopee" script, n.d.	1	11
Gus Kahn entry for American Lyricists, 1920-1960 by Marty Minchin, n.d. [discography]	1	12
Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame induction of "Ain't we got fun?", 1/28/2007. [Award]	1	13
ASCAP agreement, 8/13/1935.	1	14
Songwriters Guild of America thank you to estate of Gus Kahn, 4/30/1991.	1	15
"Do You Know What Makes a Popular Song?" <i>The American Magazine</i> , (June 1927): 54-55.	1	16
"Lo, the Poor Lyric Writer." <i>Esquire: the magazine for men</i> , (February 1935): 47, 120.	1	17
Typed and handwritten lyrics, n.d. [includes 64mo notepad]	1	18
New Amsterdam Theatre program, 1929. [original and copy]	1	19
"The Jazz Singer" World premiere, 10/6/1927. [program]	1	20
Grace Kahn correspondence, 1949-1950.	1	21
News clippings, 1915-1937. [publicity]	1	22
Newspaper clippings, 1918-1929. ["Whoopee" predominates]	1	23
Newspaper clippings, 1918-1926.	1	24
"I'll see you in my dreams", n.d. [handwritten lyrics on cocktail napkin]	1	25
Gus Kahn royalty earnings, 1923-1949.	1	26
Publicity scrapbook, 1934. [originals]	1	27
Gus Kahn and Grace LeBoy Kahn discographies, 1940 and 1997.	1	28
Hollywood Bandwagon song schedule, ca. 1936-1937. [vaudeville act]	1	29
Grace Kahn correspondence with North Carolina State Archivist re: <i>Carolina in the morning</i> , 9/1962.	1	30
Compositions [copies]		
<i>A Day away from town</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	31
<i>A New Day Dawnin'</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	32
<i>By an Old Winding Lane</i> , Lyrics: Raymond B. Egan Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	33
<i>Craving You</i> , Lyrics: Raymond B. Egan Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	34
<i>Cuckoo</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn, Music: unknown, n.d. [original]	1	35
<i>I gave my heart to you</i> , Words and Music: Gus Kahn and Bennie Krueger, n.d. [original]	1	36
<i>I'm just a fool in love with you</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Neil Moret, n.d.	1	37
<i>I've Had My Moments</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	38
<i>Moments</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	39
<i>My Swanee River Folks</i> , Lyrics: Raymond B. Egan Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	40
<i>So Lonesome So Long</i> , n.d. [lyrics only]	1	41
<i>South Sea Island Baby</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	42
<i>Swanee Blackbird</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	43
<i>Sweet Regret</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	44
<i>Two Together</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	45
<i>Where the shy little violets bloom</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	46
<i>Where the Weeping Willows Grow</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Richard A. Whiting, n.d.	1	47
Original compositions [in black, monogrammed portfolio]		

Gus Kahn with various composers, [Gus Kahn and Richard Whiting compositions unpublished]	2	
Sheet music		
<i>Danger!</i> Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Isham Jones, 1925.	1	48
<i>Gotta getta girl</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Isham Jones, 1924.	1	49
<i>I picked the wrong one to love</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Murray Bloom, 1924 [ukulele arrangement].	1	50
<i>Some other day-some other girl</i> , Lyrics: Gus Kahn Music: Isham Jones, 1924.	1	51
Photos [predominantly B&W]		
24 various sizes, Grace Kahn with friends, including Ed Sullivan, 1960's.	3	1
6 Photos autographed to Grace LeBoy Kahn, 1909-1930's. [includes Frank Sinatra]	3	2
6-8x10 Gus Kahn with Eddie Cantor, 1930. [back of 1 st photo reads: Gus Kahn and Eddie Cantor during the making of the film version of "Whoopee".	3	3
5- 8x10 Gus Kahn, Judy Garland, Walter Jurmann and Bronislau Kaper during making of "A Day at the Races", ca. 1937 [back of 1 st photo reads: Kindly credit M-G-M Photo by Virgil Apger]	3	4
6-8x10 bandleaders and composers, 1920's – 1930's.	3	5
21-8x10 Gus Kahn with various actors and composers, ca. 1930's.	3	6
6-8x10 Gus Kahn "crony" photos, 1914 - 1930's.	3	7
5 – 8x10 "Shantytown" photos	3	8
13-8x10 Gus Kahn, alone, 1907 – 1930's.	3	9
9 Family photos, Christmas cards, 1930's.[includes cards from Berlin, Jolson and Jones families, Jolson card separate]	3	10
10 various sizes, celebrity photos, 1914-1940.	3	11
21 oversized photos, 1910-1930's. [unfiled]	3	12
Photos and scrapbooks, 1910's – 1950's.	4	
Framed documents [unboxed]		
35 All-time best selling songs, ca. 1929.		1
Gus Kahn ASCAP membership, 1/20/1921.		2
Gus Kahn "Songwriters Hall of Fame" certificate, ca. 1969.		3
Gus Kahn Academy Award nomination for <i>Waltzing in the Clouds</i> , 12/31/1940.		4
Grace LeBoy Kahn ASCAP membership, 10/30/1930.		5