

Guide to the Audrey Marsh Papers, 1871-1998

JPB 06-76

Music Division

**The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
New York, New York**

Contact Information:
The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
Music Division
40 Lincoln Center Plaza – Third Floor
New York, New York 10023-7498
Phone: 212/870-1650
Fax: 212/870-1794
Email: musicdiv@nypl.org
Web address: <http://www.nypl.org/research/mus/mus.html>

Processed by: Matthew Snyder
Date Completed: March 2007

Processed and encoded through a gift from Robert W. Wilson.

© 2007 The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. All rights reserved.

Descriptive Summary

Title:	Audrey Marsh Papers
Collection ID:	JPB 06-76
Creator:	Marsh, Audrey
Extent:	1.8 linear feet; 2 boxes
Repository:	Music Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Abstract

The American singer Audrey Marsh had a successful career singing in performance and on commercial radio. Her papers contain correspondence, clippings, concert programs, journals, photographs and personal papers.

Administrative Information

Access

Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

Publication Rights

For permission to publish, contact the Chief, Music Division.

Preferred Citation

Audrey Marsh Papers, JPB 06-76, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Custodial History

The Audrey Marsh Papers were donated to the Music Division in 2006 by Meredith Monk.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2007.

Related Collections

See also the Meredith Monk Papers, LPA Mss 2006-001.

Biographical Note

Audrey Marsh was born in New York City on March 18, 1911 (her birth name is Audrey Lois Zellman). Her father, Joseph B. Zellman had come to America from Russia in the 1880s. A bass-baritone, Joseph sang at the Czar's last court and left Russia because of political (Anarchist) and religious (Jewish) affiliations. He also played violin and was able to travel to the United States with 2nd class accommodations after being awarded a scholarship from a music conservatory. After school, he settled in New York City and had a busy career as a singer and recitalist at churches, temples and concert halls such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music and Carnegie Hall. He later opened his own music school, Zellman Conservatory of Music, on Lenox Avenue and 126th Street.

Audrey's mother, Rose Kornicker, was a concert pianist who became Joseph Zellman's accompanist. Born in Philadelphia in a German Jewish family, Rose concertized and taught piano at an early age. She continued to teach throughout Audrey's childhood. Joseph Zellman and Rose Kornicker recorded an extensive repertoire of voice and piano duets on the early Thomas Edison cylinders.

Surrounded by music throughout her childhood, Audrey wanted to be an actress and attended the John Murray Anderson School of Drama for 6 months. Soon after graduating she was hired for the cast of *Abie's Irish Rose*. In 1927, at the age of 16, she went on an American tour of the play for 9 months. Shortly after that, she was taken to CBS radio to audition as a singer. Someone had heard her sing at a cast party and was deeply impressed with her talent. She was brought to CBS by a song plugger who had heard her sing one song after she had accompanied a friend to a coaching session. The story goes that he was very impatient with the friend but after hearing her sing, he convinced her to let him bring her to audition at CBS. She was immediately given a contract and premiered on February 2, 1928 at the Brooklyn Paramount in an orchestral variety program. The cast included the Dorsey Brothers, Mark Warno and Freddie Rich, conductor.

After that performance, she became part of the regular cast of the *Wickwire Spencer Steele Show*, singing ballads and popular songs of the period (the cast of the show included Veronica Wiggins-contralto, Freddie Viertel-tenor, and Bernie Ocko-violinist). During the late 1920's and 1930's she became very well known as a radio singer and personality appearing on shows such as the *US Steel Show*, the *Prudential Hour*, *Maxwell House Coffee Hour*, *Jack and Jill* and the *Harvester Cigar Show* in which she played Esther to Jack Arthur's Harvester. She worked for CBS, NBC, WOR and various advertising agencies, and performed with Rudy Vallee, Fred Allen, Arthur Godfrey, Shirley Booth and many more stars of that time.

In the 1940s and 1950s she also became a popular jingle singer. She sang commercials for DUZ Soap (she performed this commercial live every day on the soap opera *The Road of Life*. Bud Collier was the announcer); Muriel Cigars, Blue Bonnet Margarine, Royal Pudding, Schaeffer Beer, Robert Hall Clothes and Chevrolet. She appeared as a soloist on *The Ford Show* with the tenor James Melton. In the 1950s she began singing in groups such as The Mitch Miller Singers, The Ray Charles Singers and in Ray Bloch's group. She also sang on the popular Sunday night show hosted by Tallulah Bankhead, *The Big Show*, appearing with stars such as Jimmy Durante, Ezio Pinza, Gary Cooper, Mary Martin, Meredith Willson, Gordon Mac Rae, Frank Sinatra, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Laurence Melchior and others.

During that period she was lead soloist on the RCA Victor show tune albums: *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Finian's Rainbow*, *Guys and Dolls*, *HMS Pinafore*, and *The Mikado*. She was also in the cast of the television version of *Peter Pan* starring Mary Martin and Cyril Richard, and worked with Billy Taylor, Cy Oliver and Regis Philbin on the *Model Tobacco Show*.

A versatile singer and performer, Audrey Marsh also performed classical music recitals at Carl Fisher Hall and Steinway Hall in New York. She studied with Florence Ostrander and William Horne.

In her later years she was very active in the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) becoming an officer (Recording Secretary) and attending 30 conventions as a delegate. She also worked for the Bedside Network in VA hospitals in New York City and in Loma Linda, California.

In 1935, Audrey married Theodore Glenn Monk, a businessman who co-owned Square Lumber & Supply Company (Lumberville) at Westchester Square, Bronx, NY with two of his brothers. They had two children: Meredith (born 1942) and Tracy (born 1948). In 1949, the family moved from Forest Hills, New York to Stamford, Connecticut. In 1986, they moved to Rancho Mirage, California where Tedd died in 1998.

Scope and Content Note

The Audrey Marsh Paper consist of personal correspondence, a small collection of newspaper clippings and concert programs, a personal journal from 1991, personal papers for Marsh and her husband, Theodore Monk, and photographs of Marsh, Monk and their daughter Meredith Monk. Correspondence forms the bulk of the collection and consists mostly of fan letters to Marsh in response to her performances on radio. There are also two folders of letters to Marsh from Theodore Monk. The clippings include an article about a Marsh performance in Waterbury, Connecticut in 1934 and an undated article about Marsh's volunteer activities at a veteran's hospital in Loma Linda, California, ca. 1980s. Among the concert programs are items from the 1920s featuring Marsh in performance at Temple Israel of Washington Heights, and a 1955 dance program featuring Meredith Monk. The personal papers include contracts and professional membership certificates, as well as a published score autographed for Meredith Monk. The photographs include portraits of Marsh and Meredith Monk, as well as undated photos of Marsh in a recording studio and snapshots of Theodore Monk's lumber supply business.

Audrey Marsh Papers

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	Clippings, 1934-1998 and undated
	2	Concert Programs, 1922-1955 and undated Includes program for Meredith Monk performance, 1955.
		Correspondence, 1924-1945 and undated
	3	A-B, 1931-1940 and undated
	4	C-D, 1930-1941 and undated
	5	E-G, 1931-1940 and undated
	6	H, 1929-1940 and undated
	7	J-L, 1930-1941 and undated
	8	M, 1932-1940 and undated
		Monk, Theodore, 1924-1945 and undated
	9	1924-1945 Apr.
	10	1945 May - Nov. and undated
	11	N-R, 1931-1941 and undated
	12	S, 1929-1945 and undated
	13	T-W, 1935-1941 and undated
14	Unidentified, 1931- 1940 and undated	
15	Journal, 1991	
	Personal Papers, 1871-1991 and undated	
16	Marsh, Audrey, 1871-1991 and undated Contains Columbia Artist Management contract, membership certificates, a score autographed by Lyn Murray for Meredith Monk and an 1871 ledger for an unknown production company.	
17	Monk, Theodore, 1946-1949 Contains Freemason vestment and initiation paraphenalia.	
	Photographs, ca. 1930s - 1990s and undated	
18	Marsh, Audrey, ca. 1930s - 1990s and undated Contains publicity headshot, photos of Marsh in recording studio and photo with Meredith Monk.	
19	Monk, Theodore, ca. 1930s - 1974 and undated Most pictures are of Monk's lumber supply business.	
	Oversized Photographs, 1958-ca. 1962 and undated	
	Marsh, Audrey, 1958 and undated	
2	1	At American Federation of Television and Radio Artists Convention, 1958
	2	Publicity photo, undated
	3	Monk, Meredith, ca. 1962 (Portrait.)