

JHSSA DESCRIPTIVE LEVEL RECORD

TITLE: JHSSA Performing Arts collection

No.: JHS- PFA

DATE RANGE: 1903-1927, [195-]-1956, 1993-1996, 2010

EXTENT: 4cm of textual records.—1 audio cassette, 3 CDs

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

Participation in – and the creation of – various performing arts has been part of the Jewish community of Calgary since its earliest days. The earliest documentation is in the form of newspaper articles from 1914 and 1915, which refer to performances by a group called the Calgary Jewish Dramatic Club. This company presented plays at Paget Hall, raising funds for the relief of Jews suffering in Russia.

Community gatherings often included a performance of some kind, and by the 1930s it was becoming common for children to take music or elocution lessons. Some were among the first students at what would become the Banff Centre for Performing Arts.

Choirs were often, but not exclusively, associated with specific congregations or service organizations. Performances of music and theatre were presented by groups as well-equipped and long-running as the Beth Israel Players, and as fleeting as the Jewish Polish Dramatic Club, which has a single 1929 credit for staging “a play in four acts” at the Paget Hall. The I.L. Peretz Institute, House of Israel and later the Calgary Jewish Centre, served as host to many performance initiatives, including choirs, dance troupes, and theatrical presentations, some mounted by the host facility, some by other entities.

In addition to activities and performances created and performed primarily within the community, individual performers – particularly musicians -- were early and regular participants in the performing arts activities of the wider community, including the Calgary Symphony Orchestra, Mount Royal College’s Junior Symphony Orchestra, The Calgary Ladies’ String Orchestra and later the Calgary Theatre Singers. The names of Jewish community members also appear in significant numbers as patrons and donors to many of Calgary’s early performing companies.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The JHSSA Performing Arts collection consists of Yiddish sheet music (1903-1927), envelopes from Jaffe’s Book and Music Exchange and a poster advertising a performance by The Calgary Jewish Community Choir [199-]. Also included are commercially produced recordings by local musicians.

The collection has been arranged into the following series: Sheet Music; Local Musicians; Ephemera

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of collection

SOURCE OF ACQUISITION: Calgary JCC, Susie Basi, Arlein Chetner, Cheryl Shiel

LANGUAGE NOTE: some material in Yiddish

ACCESS CONDITIONS: some of the sheet music is very fragile; access may be restricted at the discretion of the archives; no other restrictions on access

FINDING AID: item lists available

ACCRUALS: further accruals expected though not scheduled

RELATED GROUPS OF RECORDS: JHSSA Photo Collection; JHSSA Community Events & Initiatives collection; Beth Israel Players; Calgary Jewish Choral Society; IL Peretz Institute; Star Players

GENERAL NOTE: Some information for the Admin Histories is taken from JHSSA oral history transcripts
Includes material from the following accessions: 2002-006, 2005-010, 2006-002, 2006-006