

S0608 Landesman, Fran (1927-)

Papers, 1959-1998

112 Folders; 44 Photographs; And 30 Audio Tapes, CDs, And LPs,

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Poet and songwriter Fran Landesman donated her papers to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection at the University of Missouri-St. Louis in the spring of 1999. She retains the copyright to her materials, so that her written permission or the written permission of her heirs is needed in order to reproduce any one of her works in its entirety.

Fran Landesman was born Frances Deitsch on October 21, 1927, in New York City. Her father, a successful dress manufacturer, collected books; and her mother, a journalist, loved the theater and music. Fran has a brother, Sam Deitsch, who lives in San Francisco.

Fran attended private schools, Temple University in Philadelphia, and the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. She was working for Biancini Silks in New York when she met Jay Landesman, a writer and publisher of *Nerotica* magazine from St. Louis. They were married in July of 1950, and shortly thereafter they moved to St. Louis.

Jay went to work in his family's antiques business, and he and his brother, Fred, opened a classy cabaret called the Crystal Palace in 1952. In 1958 the Landesmans moved the Crystal Palace to Gaslight Square, an entertainment district developing among the bars and restaurants and antique shops at Boyle and Olive near the Central West End of St. Louis. The Crystal Palace soon became the focal point of Gaslight Square, producing avant garde theater and bringing new talent to St. Louis, such as Barbra Streisand, Lenny Bruce, Woody Allen, the Smothers Brothers, Mike Nichols and Elaine May, Stiller and Meara, and Phyllis Diller and Dick Gregory from St. Louis.

In 1952 Fran Landesman began writing song lyrics while sitting at a bar listening to the jive conversation of musicians. She translated T. S. Eliot's phrase: "April is the cruellest month," into their hip language and came up with: "Spring can really hang you up the most." The resident piano player at the Crystal Palace, Tommy Wolf, set her words to music. Their song became a jazz classic and began a string of Landesman-Wolf collaborations. They wrote the songs for "The Nervous Set," a musical by Jay Landesman which went to Broadway, and "Molly Darling," a musical by Jay Landesman and Martin Quigley which was performed at the St. Louis Muny Opera. Fran also wrote the song lyrics for "A Walk on the Wild Side" by Nelson Algren.

The Landesmans had two sons, Cosmo and Miles Davis. In 1964 the Landesmans moved to London where avant garde theater was more appreciated. Jay opened a talent agency and publishing company and continued to write plays and an autobiography.

Fran wrote lyrics for songs by Alec Wilder, Steve Allen, Tommy Wolf, George Shearing,

Richard Rodney Bennett, and Dudley Moore; and she wrote the lyrics for another musical, "Dearest Dracula," produced by her husband at the Dublin Theater Festival.

In the 1970s Fran began writing poetry. Her poetry has been compared to Edna St. Vincent Millay and Dorothy Parker, because of her combinations of sophistication and innocence, and melancholy and wit. Over the years she has published several volumes of her poetry including: *More Truth Than Poetry*, *Invade My Privacy*, *The Ballad of the Sad Young Men and Other Verses*, *Rhymes at Midnight*, *Is It Overcrowded In Heaven?*, *The Thorny Side of Love*, and *Scars and Stripes*. Around 1967 Fran began reading her poetry in public at the Crypt of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields cathedral in London and at cabarets and art festivals all over Europe. She read her poetry with R. D. Laing, the Scottish psychologist who wrote *The Divided Self*, and with Michael Horowitz who organized the Olympics of Poetry at Prince Albert Hall. She also reads her poetry on BBC radio.

In addition Fran has translated songs by Edith Piaf and Jaques Brel from French into English, written screenplays and song lyrics for plays, and in recent years she has collaborated with Simon Wallace on a CD of Landesman/Wallace songs sung by Nicki Leighton Thomas.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Fran Landesman Papers are divided into six series.

Series One: Personal Material and Correspondence contains biographical material and reviews and articles about Fran. It contains flyers and programs for shows. It contains correspondence regarding recordings, publishing, theater productions, permission to perform songs, royalties, poetry readings, interviews, and correspondence with friends and family. Many of the letters and cards are undated or are from the 1990s. It contains an essay on writing poetry and a speech in favor of marijuana.

Series Two: Published Songs and Plays contains published copies of sheet music, books and catalogs containing songs with lyrics by Fran Landesman, and annotated scripts for plays on which Fran collaborated or wrote the lyrics.

Series Three: Poetry contains printed and handwritten poems and song lyrics by Fran Landesman, magazines containing poems by Fran, galley proofs for small books of poetry, and the stage books for *Invade My Privacy* and *Confessions of a Middle Ages Juvenile Delinquent* from which Fran read on stage.

Series Four: Published Poetry contains copies of the small, published books of poetry by Fran Landesman including *More Truth Than Poetry*, *The Ballad of the Sad Young Men and Other Verse*, *Invade My Privacy*, *Is It Overcrowded In Heaven?*, *The Thorny Side of Love*, *Rhymes at Midnight*, *Scars and Stripes*, and *Songs Without Music*.

Series Five: Photographs contains personal photographs and publicity shots from poetry readings. Some photographs of Gaslight Square years are included.

Series Six: Audio Tapes, CDs, and LPs contains demo tapes of music with lyrics by Fran Landesman, demo tapes of performances by Fran, demo tapes by friends of Jay and Fran, tapes of broadcast interviews with Fran, and tapes of live performances by Fran. Series Six

contains CDs of live poetry readings, CDs of Nicki Leighton Thomas performing songs by Fran Landesman and Simon Wallace, and a CD of Fran singing some of her own songs and reading some of her own poems. Series six also contains an LP album of the original Broadway cast singing the music from *The Nervous Set* with lyrics by Fran Landesman, music by Tommy Wolf, and book by Jay Landesman.

FOLDER LIST

SERIES ONE: PERSONAL MATERIAL AND CORRESPONDENCE

BOX 1 (047550)

FOLDERS 1-57

1. Biographical Information, Fran Landesman, 1978 and no date.
2. Reviews and Articles about Fran Landesman, 1980-1998.
3. Flyers for Shows, 1980-1998.
4. Programs from Shows, 1960-1997.
5. Correspondence Regarding Recording, Publishing, Producing, 1989-1998.
6. Correspondence Regarding Theater Productions with Fran Landesman, 1979-1994
7. Landesman Lyrics in Anthologies, no date-1996.
8. Requests for Permission to Perform Songs or Poems, Correspondence Regarding Royalties, 1993-1999.
9. Poetry Readings and other Performances, 1984-1998.
10. Michael Horovitz and the Poetry Olympics, 1994-1997.
11. The Poetry Marathon, 1996.
12. BBC Interviews and Performances, 1981-1998.
13. Symposiums on Art, 1966-1996.
14. Essay on Writing Poetry, no date.
- 15 . Speech in favor of Marajuana, Delivered at Oxford Union, no date.
- 16 . Jay Landesman, 1981.
17. Cosmo and Jack Landesman, no dates.
18. Miles Landesman, 1974-1984.
- 19 . Fred and Paula Landesman, 1994, no date.
- 20 . Gene and Ellie Landesman, no dates.
21. Rocco Landesman, 1995-1996.
- 22 . Nicki Leighton Thomas, 1996-1999.
- 23 . Samuel Deitsch, 1994.
- 24 . Mary and Tommy Wolf, 1965-1999.
- 25 . Eleanor Brooks, 1994, no date.
- 26 . Carolyn Cassidy, 1996-1997.
- 27 . James Harelson, 1992-1998.
- 28 . Jim Gavin, 1992-1998.
- 29 . Simon Callow, 1992-1999.
- 30 . C. C. Loveheart (married to director John Simon), 1994-1998.
- 31 . Jackie and Roy Kral, 1996-1998.
- 32 . Wendy Varnals Silverman, 1971 and no date.
- 33 . Gershon Legman, no date.
- 34 . Emile de Antonio, 1986-1993.

- 35 . Bette Davis, 1975, 1983.
- 36 . Elia Kazan, 1992.
- 37 . Stephen Sondheim, 1986.
- 38 . Johnny Mercer, no date.
- 39 . Amanda McBroom, no date and 1996-1998.
- 40 . Ian Shaw, no date and 1997.
- 41 . Ned Sherrin, no date.
- 42 . Michael Alexander, 1992.
- 43 . Sheila Davis, 1996-1998.
- 44 . Steve Ross, 1988-1998.
- 45 . Steve Allen, 1967-1997.
- 46 . TRO, The Richmond Organization (Steve Allen wrote music for them), 1965-1998
- 47 . Correspondence, much undated, others from 1980-1998.
- 48 . Correspondence, cards, no date to 1998.
- 49 . Correspondence, cards, no date to 1998.
- 50 . Drawing by Jeremy Stieg, son of William Stieg, no date.
- 51 . ASCAP, American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, 1988-1997.
- 52 . Resumes of Performers, 1968, no date.

SERIES TWO: PUBLISHED SONGS AND PLAYS

53. 49 Most Popular Jazz Songs, including "Spring Can Really Hang You up the Most," 1963.
- 54 . The Nervous Set, Book by Jay Landesman, Lyrics by Fran Landesman, 1959, Revised 1994.
- 55 . Molly Darling, Music for Musical Performed at St. Louis Muny Opera, 1963.
- 56 . The Wolf-Mills Music, Inc. Catalog, no date.
- 57 . "A Man Who Used to Be," Lyrics by Fran Landesman, Music Jeremy Fitch (Steve Allen), 1968.

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58. The Anthony Newley Story in Music, contains two songs by Fran Landesman, 1967
- 59 . Songs by Alec Wilder, some lyrics by Fran Landesman, 1968.
- 60 . Songs by Jacques Brel translated into English by Fran Landesman, 1968.
- 61 . Piaf, French Songs Translated into English by Fran Landesman, 1977.
- 62 . In the Words of Fran Landsman, Book of Songs Published by TRO, no date. Sheet music for "It's Nice Weather for Ducks"
- 63 . Dearest Dracula, a Musical, Lyrics by Fran Landesman, first produced 1965.
64. Dearest Dracula, a Musical, Lyrics by Fran Landesman, first produced 1965.
- 65 . "Spend, Spend, Spend," Story and Songs, 1976.
- 66 . Loose Connections, by Fran Landesman and Jason McAuliffe, 1980.
67. Confessions of a Middle Aged Juvenile Delinquent, A Musical Autobiography by Fran Landesman, 1983.
- 68 . Fairy Tale, Draft by Nathan Silver, Lyrics by Fran Landesman, 1982-1986.
- 69 . Fairy Story, Book by Nathan Silver, Lyrics by Fran Landesman, 1990.
70. Laughing Gas, Lyrics by Fran Landesman, Revised 1989.

- 71 . Invade My Privacy, Screenplay by Howard Samuels, Based on the Works of Fran Landesman, 1992-1993.
- 72 . Spring Can Really Hang You up the Most! and F&%!!-'Em! If They Can't Take a Joke! Produced by Marc Malamed, Book and Lyrics by Fran Landesman, 1993.
73. Gatsby, Draft Book and Lyrics by Jay and Fran Landesman, 1992.
74. Gatsby, Book and Lyrics by Jay and Fran Landesman, Music by Jason McAuliffe, 1994. (No music here.)
- 75 . The Decline of the Middle West, A Cabaret, Book by Jay Landesman, Lyrics by Fran Landesman, Produced by Rocco Landesman, 1995
- . 76 . There's Something Irresistible in Down, and Forbidden Games, (Same Play), Words and Lyrics by Fran Landesman, Music by Simon Wallace, 1996.
- 77 . Songs from "Damned If I Do" CD, Lyrics by Fran Landesman, Music by Simon Wallace, 1998.
- 78 . Songs by Fran Landesman, no date.
- 79 . Songs about the Movies, by Fran Landesman, no date.
- 80 . Satan in the Suburbs, Book by Bertram Russell, Lyrics by Fran Landesman, (never produced), 1965.

SERIES THREE: POETRY

81. Lyrics, by Fran Landesman, 1983-1995.
82. Poems and Song Lyrics by Fran Landesman, no dates.
- 83 . "Spring Can Really Hang You up the Most," Music only, no date.
84. Invade My Privacy, by Fran Landesman, Galley Proofs, 1975, 1979.
85. Rhymes at Midnight, by Fran Landesman, Draft, no date.
86. Poems about Old Movies, no dates.
87. Songs from Fairy Story, 1990.
88. Scars and Stripes, by Fran Landesman, Galley Proofs, 1997.
89. "The King's New Clothes," by Fran Landesman, for Grandson Jack, no date.

BOX 3 (047555)

FOLDERS 90-112 AND TAPES 1-28

90. Stage Book for Invade My Privacy, by Fran Landesman, late 1970s, 1993.
91. Stage Book for Confessions of a Middle Aged Juvenile Delinquent, by Fran Landesman, no date.
92. Poem about John Steinbeck's Son, by Fran Landesman, no date.
93. Poems including "Scars and Stripes," by Fran Landesman, 1980-1997.
94. Celtic Dawn Magazine, Number 1, Contains "Sappho's Song," by Fran Landesman, and Review of Jay Landesman's Rebel Without Applause, 1988.
95. Butterfly Magazine, Contains Interview with Fran Landesman, Summer 1998.
96. Short Story by Fran Landesman, no date.

SERIES FOUR: PUBLISHED POETRY

97. More Truth Than Poetry, by Fran Landesman, published by The Permanent Press, New York, 1979, 1981.
98. The Ballad of the Sad Young Men and Other Verse, by Fran Landesman, published by

Polytantric Press, London, 1975.

99. The Ballad of the Sad Young Men and Other Verse, by Fran Landesman, published by The Permanent Press, New York, 1982.

100. More Truth Than Poetry, by Fran Landesman, published by Jay Landesman Ltd., London, 1979.

101. Invade My Privacy, by Fran Landesman, published by The Permanent Press, New York, 1981.

102. Is It Overcrowded in Heaven? by Fran Landesman, published by Golden Handshake, London, 1981.

103. The Thorny Side of Love, by Fran Landesman, published by Sun Tavern Fields, London, 1992.

104. Rhymes at Midnight, by Fran Landesman, published by Golden Handshake, London, 1996.

105. Scars and Stripes, by Fran Landesman, published by Golden Handshake, London, 1997.

106. Songs Without Music, by Fran Landesman, no date.

SERIES FIVE: PHOTOGRAPHS

107. Photographs, 608.1-608.3 New York Years.

108. Photographs, 608.4-608.8 St. Louis Years.

109. Photographs, 608.9-608.16 1960s and 1970s.

110. Photographs, 608.17-608.25.

111. Photographs, 608.26-608.40 1980s.

112. Photographs, 608.41-608.44 1990s.

SERIES SIX: AUDIO TAPES, CDs, and LPs

T.1: Tommy Wolf, no date.

T.2: Ned Sherrin's Remarks about Fran, 1981.

T.3: It's Not Your Night, 1985.

T.4: Jackie and Roy, Bits and Pieces, Grass, no date.

T.5: Jackie and Roy, Windows, Absent Friends, 1993.

T.6: Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most, Chaka Khan, no date.

T.7: Quote, Unquote, no date.

T.8: Just Me, no date.

T.9: A Sincere Act of Contrition, no date.

T.10: Sarah and Fran, If You Can't Trust, no date.

T.11: Sarah and Fran, no date.

T.12: Small Day Tomorrow, Creative Arts Liberated, no date.

T.13: Arts in the Evening, WBAT, 1995.

T.14: Fran Landesman Demo Tape, Cri De Cour, no date.

T.15: Fran Landesman, Last Cabaret, no date.

T.16: Songs for Show, 1996.

T.17: Scars, Some Boys, 1996.

T.18: Material for Fran Landesman CD, no date.

T.19: Fran Landesman, Simon Wallace, Nicki Leighton Thomas, Five New Songs, 1997.

T.20: Fran Landesman, Simon Wallace, Forbidden Games, no date.

T.21: Fran Landesman, Simon Wallace, Down, 1996.

T.22: Sing Along Song Demo, 1998.
T.23: Taped and Gagged for Amnesty International, 1998.
T.24: Songs, 1999.
T.25: CD: Invade My Privacy, 1993.
T.26: CD: The Usual Suspects, Lyrics by Fran Landesman, Music by Simon Wallace, no date.
T.27: CD: Damned If I Do, Nicki Leighton Thomas, Songs by Fran Landesman and Simon Wallace, 1997.
T.28: CD: Damned If I Do, Nicki Leighton Thomas, Songs by Fran Landesman and Simon Wallace, 1997. (Different Cover Photo.)
T.29: CD: Scars and Stripes, Songs and Poems in Her Own Voice, Words by Fran Landesman, Music by Simon Wallace, no date.

BOX 9 OVERSIZE, STORED ON SITE

T.30: LP: The Nervous Set, The Original Broadway Musical Production, Book by Jay Landesman and Theodore Flicker, Music by Tommy Wolf, Lyrics by Fran Landesman, 1959.

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