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Guide to the Harvey Lang Collection 1930s-1998



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Descriptive Summary

Title	Lang, Harvey. Collection
Date	1930s-1998
Size	12 linear feet (18 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract Harvey Lang, drummer. Lang started playing the drums at age three and played for over sixty years, primarily in Chicago, Las Vegas, and Disneyworld in Orlando. He played for a long list of performers including Wayne Newton, Herbie Fields, Ginny and the Gallions, Lee Caron, Frank Sinatra, Bubba Kolb, Louis Prima, and Clark Terry. The Harvey Lang Collection includes lists of Lang's record album collection, and thirty-eight scrapbooks containing photographs, newspaper articles, programs, brochures, correspondence, advertisements, postcards, and other ephemera documenting his career as a drummer.

Acknowledgments

The Harvey Lang Papers were processed and preserved as part of the "Uncovering New Chicago Archives Project," funded with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Information on Use

Access

The collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Lang, Harvey. Collection, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Harvey Lang was born in 1929 in Madison, Wisconsin, where his father owned a radio store. He married Jeanie on February 16, 1958 and divorced in 1982. They had five children.

Lang's talent for drumming was first noticed when he was 18 months old. By age three, he used garbage can lids, ice cream signs and the various parts of his tricycle to beat out various rhythms.

When neighbors came to his parents asking for their garbage can lids back, his grandmother bought him his first drum set.

He learned to play his drums by playing along with a polka band that came on a local radio station at noon every day. His mother could play piano by ear and he insisted on playing with her as well. They often played at vaudeville shows, church events, and weddings. When he was three and a half years old, a bandleader tried to throw Lang off by switching rhythms often and abruptly, but Lang easily picked up each one. Lang could play fox trots, tangos, rumbas, and by age four he could play classical, semi-classical, modern jazz, or any kind of music. When he was five he played with an orchestra at the Eastwood Theater and with a veterans' band. In 1937 when he was seven years old, he competed on the Morris B. Sachs 149th all-amateur hour in Chicago.

Lang was highly influenced by Gene Krupa and Dave Tough, and his mentor was Louie Bellson. Lang's parents took him to see all the greats when he was young: Gene Krupa, Benny Goodman, Cab Calloway, and his most memorable, Duke Ellington. He later said that Buddy Rich was the best drummer in the world, Duke Ellington his favorite musician, and Tom Jones a great singer. About drumming, he said, "Drums should be played, not beaten."

Lang studied at the Roy Knapp School of Percussion in Chicago from 1944-1947, taught by Knapp, Clarence Carlson, Lyle Todd, and Jerome Stowell. At age 15, Lang officially ranked as a professional. He was in his first band in 1944, in Chicago, and played in clubs around Chicago and Indianapolis during high school and after. In Indianapolis he played with then-unknown guitarist Wes Montgomery. He graduated high school in 1947. In 1948, he placed second at the Indiana Krupa Drum Contest.

At age 19, Lang served a two year term in the Navy, where he seldom played. In 1954, he played with Bobby Lain's Quartet, with Bobby Lain on saxophone, Mel Stone on bass, and John Jeffrey on vibes. In 1955, he played with Jimmy Nuzzo and his Quintet, Ralph Marterie, and he joined the Herbie Fields jazz band and toured the west coast, settling in Las Vegas. Also during the 1950s, he played with Frank Sinatra, Lionel Hampton, Louie Prima, Jimmy Rogers, Earl Grant, Duke Ellington, and Charlie Teagarden. He made television show appearances with such stars as Dinah Shore, Patti Page, and Frank Sinatra.

On April 29, 1958, Lang's life was turned upside down. Guitarist Bob Robertson was driving them to a performance in New Orleans when Bob tried to steer the car to avoid a wild pig, and the car swerved and rolled over four times. Lang had a broken hip and Robertson had cuts and bruises. Doctors believed Lang would never walk or play drums again. After a year in hospitals and with unwavering determination, Lang recuperated and in 1959 started playing with Harry Ranch at the Golden Nugget in Las Vegas. That same year he also played with Judy Garland.

In the early 1960s, he worked for Jimmy Rogers on his first show where he was the summer replacement for Carol Burnett on television, played eight shows for Joey Bishop, but had a steady job playing with Ginny Greer and the Gallions. He left the Gallions to join Jimmy "Little Red" Blount. In the later 1960s, he played steadily with Wayne Newton and Dick Cantino, as well as with Lee Caron and the Sharpshooters.

In 1970, Lang moved to Orlando, where he settled for the rest of his career. In 1971, he had his own group, Harvey Lang's Power Source, with Jim Davis on horn, Eddie Ambrose on organ, and Charlie May on saxophone, later joined by singer Cindy Ross. He played with Lee Caron and the Kut-Ups, which included Lee Caron, Lora Del Valle, Red Fletcher, Dave Liles, Jim Davis, Eddie Ambrose, and Glenn Teed. He also played several times with Marian McPartland. In the later 1970s, he joined the Bubba Kolb Trio. Though he played in several different places in Florida, he spent much of his time playing at Disney. Lang retired in the early 1990s.

Throughout his career, he endorsed several different drum and percussion companies, including Ludwig, Gretsch-Gladstone, Slingerland, Zildjian, Pearl, Rogers, and Lyon & Healey.

Harvey Lang died in 1998.

Scope Note

The Harvey Lang Collection is arranged by subject. There are lists documenting Lang's record album collection, correspondence, photographs, career-related ephemera, and material on other musicians. There are also three Time-Life released record albums. There are jazz periodicals as well as other publications. Also included are method and song books for various instruments, including drums, piano, organ, and saxophone.

The scrapbooks contain photographs, newspaper articles, programs, brochures, correspondence, advertisements, postcards, and other ephemera documenting Lang's career as a drummer. Lang annotated the material in nearly all of the scrapbooks, with names, dates, places, impressions, critiques, opinions, and other information. The items in the scrapbooks are not necessarily in any order and often the same items, or copies of items, appear in several scrapbooks. The folders with loose items and pages from scrapbooks were separated from the scrapbooks; for blank spaces in scrapbooks, look at those folders to find the items. The description of each scrapbook follows Lang's annotations, though not every item in each scrapbook is described.

Photographs include publicity shots, personal snapshots, magazine or newspaper cut-outs, or photocopies. Lang appears in many of the photos with others or by himself, mostly playing the drums. Many publicity shots are inscribed and/or signed by musicians. The photographs are mostly of musicians but also comedians, singers, actors, friends, family, and others.

There are many drum and cymbal endorsement photographs and advertisements of Lang or other drummers. Companies represented include Ludwig, Gretsch-Gladstone, Slingerland, Zildjian, Pearl, Rogers, and Lyon & Healey.

There are programs, brochures, postcards, ticket stubs, newspaper articles, fliers, broadsides, and other ephemera about Lang's performances by himself or with bands, mostly in Las Vegas and Florida.

The correspondence is mostly to Lang, occasionally to others, and is often about performances, travels, bookings, instrument endorsements, thank you for performing letters, and other topics about his musical career. Some correspondence is personal, though mostly from musicians. There is much correspondence from Lang's close friend Clark Terry. There are a few letters of support and concern after his car accident in 1958.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Chicago Jazz Archive

Jazz Institute of Chicago Oral Histories

Subject Headings

- Lang, Harvey
- Avedis Zildjian Company -- History
- Gretsch Drum Company
- Ludwig Drum Company
- Slingerland Drum Company -- History
- University of Chicago. Chicago Jazz Archive
- Drum
- Drum -- History
- Drum music (Jazz)
- Drum set -- History
- Jazz
- Percussion instruments
- Rhythm bands and orchestras
- Drummers (Musicians)

INVENTORY

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Correspondence, 1970-1990s

Box 1

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Correspondence, 1990s

Box 1

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Correspondence, 1990s

Box 1

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Correspondence, Charlie Ventura, 1948-1949

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Correspondence, Clark Terry, Dizzy Gillespie, 1981-1985

Box 1

Folder 21

Dave Tough, 1940s-1980s

Box 1

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Drum Advertisements, 1960s

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Folder 23

Gene Krupa Concert Program, 1943

Box 1

Folder 24

"Here's Lucy" Residual Payments, 1977-1988

Box 1

Folder 25

"Jack Cortez' Fabulous Las Vegas Magazine," 1957-1958

Box 1

Folder 26

"Ken's Spotlight on Las Vegas," 1959-1960

Box 1

Folder 27

Lee Caron, 1986-1996

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McClarney's Famous Restaurant and Cocktail Lounge Menu, undated

Box 1

Folder 29

Morris B. Sachs Amateur Hour, 1944

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Folder 30

Newspaper Articles, 1969-1978

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Notebook, 1982

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Photographs, 1950s-1980s

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Folder 33

Photographs, undated

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Folder 34

Photographs, undated

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Folder 1

Programs, 1944-1991

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Folder 2

Record Album, Country and Western Classics, 1981

Box 2

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Record Album, Great Men of Music, 1979

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Record Album, Songs of the Humpback Whale, 1978

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Folder 5

"Surviving the Blues," 1981

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Folder 6

Walt Disney World Company, 1981-1995

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Scrapbook, Artwork, undated

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Scrapbook, Loose Items, 1930s-1950s

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Scrapbook, Loose Items, 1930s-1980s

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Scrapbook, Loose Items, 1936, 1967-1975

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Scrapbook, Loose Items, 1940s-1979

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Scrapbook, Loose Items, 1966-1990

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Scrapbook, Loose Pages, 1950s-1980s

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Scrapbook, Loose Pages, 1950s-1980s

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Scrapbook, Loose Pages, 1950s-1980s

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Scrapbook One, 1930s-1988

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Folder 4
Scrapbook Two, 1932-1978

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Scrapbook Three, 1940-1987

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Scrapbook Three, 1940-1987

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Scrapbook Four, 1948, 1969

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Scrapbook Five, 1950-1986

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Scrapbook Six, 1936-1979

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Folder 6
Scrapbook Seven, 1944-1986

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Scrapbook Eight, 1943-1991

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Scrapbook Nine, 1941-1994

Box 5

Folder 2
Scrapbook Ten, 1991-1994

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Scrapbook Eleven, 1942-1988

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Scrapbook Twelve, 1936-1996

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Folder 1

Scrapbook Twelve, 1936-1996

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Scrapbook Thirteen, 1949-1992

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Scrapbook Fourteen, 1939-1990

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Folder 5

Scrapbook Fifteen, 1964-1993

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Scrapbook Sixteen, 1923-1990

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Folder 1

Scrapbook Seventeen, 1930s-1991

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Scrapbook Eighteen, 1930s-1983

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Folder 3

Scrapbook Nineteen, undated

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Scrapbook Twenty, 1947-1989

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Folder 1

Scrapbook Twenty-One, 1968-1971

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Scrapbook Twenty-Two, 1930s-1990

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Folder 3

Scrapbook Twenty-Three, 1948-1980

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Folder 4

Scrapbook Twenty-Four, 1930s-1950s

Box 9

Folder 1

Scrapbook Twenty-Five, 1934-1940s, 1980s

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Folder 2

Scrapbook Twenty-Six, 1930s-1960s

Box 9

Folder 3

Scrapbook Twenty-Seven, 1949-1971

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Folder 4

Scrapbook Twenty-Eight, 1936-1987

Box 10

Folder 1

Scrapbook Twenty-Nine, 1948-1967

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Folder 2

Scrapbook Thirty, 1940s-1990

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Scrapbook Thirty-One, 1949-1978

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Folder 4

Scrapbook Thirty-Two, 1930s-1960

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Folder 1

Scrapbook Thirty-Three, 1935-1981

Box 11

Folder 2

Scrapbook Thirty-Four, 1930s-1940s

Box 11

Folder 3

Scrapbook Thirty-Five, 1950s-1970s

Box 11

Folder 4

Scrapbook Thirty-Six, 1960s, 1978, 1990

Box 12

Scrapbook Thirty-Seven, Gene Krupa, 1930s-1940s, contains articles, magazine photos, photographs, and advertisements of Gene Krupa.

Box 12

Scrapbook Thirty-Eight, 1950s, contains articles, magazine photos, and advertisements with drummers, including Louie Bellson, Bobby Rickey, Ray McKinley, Bill Eden, Howie Mann, Teddy Stewart, Poley McClintock, Ed Shaughnessy, Harold Hahn-Formerly, Don Lamond, Shelly Manne, Mel Lewis, Jerry Rothans, Charles "Specs" Wright, Cozy Cole, Cliff Leeman, Kenny Clarke, Davey Tough, George Wettling, Shadow Wilson, Jimmie Vincent, Buddy Rich, Zutty Singleton, Alvin Stoller, Stan Kenton, Sidney "Big Sid" Catlett, Terry Snyder, Joe Morello, Tommy Thomas, Roy Haynes, Nick Fatool, Shadow Wilson, Marty Masters, James Crawford, Bobby Byrne, Gene Krupa, Max Roach, Bobby Rickey, Irv Cottler, Irv Kluger, Mel Tormé, Freddy Gruber, Sam Ulano, Sonny Greer, Jimmy Pratt, Phil Arabia, Howard Bruno, Jack Sperling, Chick Webb, Earl Walker, Roy Harte, Barrett Deems, Viola Smith, Ernie Rudisill, and Jo Jones.

Box 13

Folder 1

Scrapbook Thirty-Nine, 1944-1994, contains articles, Avedis Zildjian Company correspondence, and photographs of Lang with other musicians.

Box 13

Folder 2

Scrapbook Forty, 1967, contains production schedule for Wayne Newton's "One More Time!"

Box 13

Folder 3

Crescendo, 1966

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Down Beat, 1954-1959

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Down Beat, 1966-1969

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Down Beat, 1978-1979

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Down Beat, 1979

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Down Beat Yearbook, 1956

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Game Day, 1982

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"Harlem Globetrotters," 1972

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Jazz Today, 1956-1957

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Jazz World, 1957

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 - Modern Drummer, 1978-1982
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 - Elementary School Diploma, 1943
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 - Newspaper Articles, 1940s
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 - "Woody Herman and the Herd," 1949
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Folder 4

Method Books

Box 18

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Song Books

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Folder 2

Song Books

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Song Books

Box 18

Folder 4

Song Books