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**

Box 1
Folder 1
Album Collection, 10" 78s

Box 1
Folder 2
Album Collection, 10" 78s

Box 1
Folder 3
Album Collection, 10" LPs, Assorted 45s, Demo Records

Box 1
Folder 4
Album Collection, 12" LPs

Box 1
Folder 5
Album Collection, 12" LPs Leatherette Holders, 10" 78s

Box 1
Folder 6
Album Collection, 78s, 200 Series

Box 1
Folder 7
Album Collection, 78s, Singles

Box 1
Folder 8
Album Collection, Classical and Unusual Recordings, 12" LPs

Box 1
Folder 9
Album Collection, Reader's Digest Series from Frank Marfis, Reno, NV

Box 1
Folder 10
Album Collection, Reel-to-Reels

Box 1
Folder 11
Album Collection, Time Life Swing Albums

Box 1
Folder 12
Album Collection, Notes

Box 1
Folder 13
Autobiographical Notes, 1950s-1970s

Box 1
Folder 14
Avedis Zildjian Cymbal Set-Ups of Famous Drummers, 1958

Box 1
Folder 15
Bookings and Contracts, 1946, 1990

Box 1
Folder 16
Correspondence, 1970-1990s

Box 1
Folder 17
Correspondence, 1990s

Box 1
Folder 18
Correspondence, 1990s

Box 1
Folder 19
Correspondence, Charlie Ventura, 1948-1949

Box 1
Folder 20
Correspondence, Clark Terry, Dizzy Gillespie, 1981-1985

Box 1
Folder 21
Dave Tough, 1940s-1980s

Box 1
Folder 22
Drum Advertisements, 1960s

Box 1
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

Box 1
Folder 28
McClarney's Famous Restaurant and Cocktail Lounge Menu, undated

Box 1
Folder 29
Morris B. Sachs Amateur Hour, 1944

Box 1
Folder 30
Newspaper Articles, 1969-1978

Box 1
Folder 31
Notebook, 1982
Box 1
Folder 32
Photographs, 1950s-1980s

Box 1
Folder 33
Photographs, undated

Box 1
Folder 34
Photographs, undated

Box 2
Folder 1
Programs, 1944-1991

Box 2
Folder 2
Record Album, Country and Western Classics, 1981

Box 2
Folder 3
Record Album, Great Men of Music, 1979

Box 2
Folder 4
Record Album, Songs of the Humpback Whale, 1978

Box 2
Folder 5
"Surviving the Blues," 1981

Box 2
Folder 6
Walt Disney World Company, 1981-1995

Box 2
Folder 7
Scrapbook, Artwork, undated

Box 2
Folder 8
Scrapbook, Loose Items, 1930s-1950s

Box 2
Folder 9
Scrapbook, Loose Items, 1930s-1980s

Box 2
Folder 10
Scrapbook, Loose Items, 1936, 1967-1975

Box 2
Folder 11
Scrapbook, Loose Items, 1940s-1979

Box 2
Folder 12
Scrapbook, Loose Items, 1966-1990
Folder 13  
Scrapbook, Loose Pages, 1950s-1980s
Box 2
Folder 14  
Scrapbook, Loose Pages, 1950s-1980s
Box 3
Folder 1  
Scrapbook, Loose Pages, 1950s-1980s
Box 3
Folder 2-3  
Scrapbook One, 1930s-1988
Box 3
Folder 4  
Scrapbook Two, 1932-1978
Box 3
Folder 5-6  
Scrapbook Three, 1940-1987
Box 4
Folder 1  
Scrapbook Three, 1940-1987
Box 4
Folder 2  
Scrapbook Four, 1948, 1969
Box 4
Folder 3  
Scrapbook Five, 1950-1986
Box 4
Folder 4-5  
Scrapbook Six, 1936-1979
Box 4
Folder 6  
Scrapbook Seven, 1944-1986
Box 4
Folder 7-8  
Scrapbook Eight, 1943-1991
Box 5
Folder 1  
Scrapbook Nine, 1941-1994
Box 5
Folder 2  
Box 5
Folder 3-6  
Scrapbook Eleven, 1942-1988
Box 5
Folder 7
Scrapbook Twelve, 1936-1996

Box 6
Folder 1
Scrapbook Twelve, 1936-1996

Box 6
Folder 2
Scrapbook Thirteen, 1949-1992

Box 6
Folder 3-4
Scrapbook Fourteen, 1939-1990

Box 6
Folder 5
Scrapbook Fifteen, 1964-1993

Box 6
Folder 6
Scrapbook Sixteen, 1923-1990

Box 7
Folder 1
Scrapbook Seventeen, 1930s-1991

Box 7
Folder 2
Scrapbook Eighteen, 1930s-1983

Box 7
Folder 3
Scrapbook Nineteen, undated

Box 7
Folder 4
Scrapbook Twenty, 1947-1989

Box 8
Folder 1
Scrapbook Twenty-One, 1968-1971

Box 8
Folder 2
Scrapbook Twenty-Two, 1930s-1990

Box 8
Folder 3
Scrapbook Twenty-Three, 1948-1980

Box 8
Folder 4
Scrapbook Twenty-Four, 1930s-1950s

Box 9
Folder 1
Scrapbook Twenty-Five, 1934-1940s, 1980s

Box 9
Folder 2
Scrapbook Twenty-Six, 1930s-1960s
Box 9
 Folder 3
 Scrapbook Twenty-Seven, 1949-1971

Box 9
 Folder 4
 Scrapbook Twenty-Eight, 1936-1987

Box 10
 Folder 1
 Scrapbook Twenty-Nine, 1948-1967

Box 10
 Folder 2
 Scrapbook Thirty, 1940s-1990

Box 10
 Folder 3
 Scrapbook Thirty-One, 1949-1978

Box 10
 Folder 4
 Scrapbook Thirty-Two, 1930s-1960

Box 11
 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

Box 12
 Scrapbook Thirty-Seven, Gene Krupa, 1930s-1940s, contains articles, magazine photos, photographs, and advertisements of Gene Krupa.

Box 12

Box 13
Folder 1

Box 13
Folder 2
Scrapbook Forty, 1967, contains production schedule for Wayne Newton’s “One More Time!”

Box 13
Folder 3
Crescendo, 1966

Box 13
Folder 4
Down Beat, 1954-1959

Box 13
Folder 5
Down Beat, 1966-1969

Box 13
Folder 6
Down Beat, 1969-1970

Box 13
Folder 7
Down Beat, 1970-1978

Box 14
Folder 1
Down Beat, 1978-1979

Box 14
Folder 2
Down Beat, 1979

Box 14
Folder 3
Down Beat Yearbook, 1956

Box 14
Folder 4
Game Day, 1982

Box 14
Folder 5
“Harlem Globetrotters,” 1972

Box 14
Folder 6
Jazz Today, 1956-1957

Box 14
Folder 7
Jazz World, 1957

Box 14
Folder 8
Limelight, 1956
Box 14
  Folder 9
    Metronome, 1956-1957
Box 14
  Folder 10
    Metronome Yearbook, 1950-1951
Box 14
  Folder 11
    Metronome Yearbook, 1956-1957
Box 14
  Folder 12
    Modern Drummer, 1978-1982
Box 15
  Folder 1
    Elementary School Diploma, 1943
Box 15
  Folder 2
    Esquire’s Jazz Book, 1944-1947
Box 15
  Folder 3
    Newspaper Articles, 1940s
Box 15
  Folder 4
    “Woody Herman and the Herd,” 1949
Box 16
  Folder 1
    Method Books
Box 16
  Folder 2
    Method Books
Box 16
  Folder 3
    Method Books
Box 16
  Folder 4
    Method Books
Box 17
  Folder 1
    Method Books
Box 17
  Folder 2
    Method Books
Box 17
  Folder 3
    Method Books
Folder 4
   Method Books
Box 18
   Folder 1
      Song Books
Box 18
   Folder 2
      Song Books
Box 18
   Folder 3
      Song Books
Box 18
   Folder 4
      Song Books