



**THE CENTER FOR POPULAR MUSIC, MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY,
MURFREESBORO, TN**

**AMERICAN SOCIETY OF COMPOSERS, AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS
(ASCAP)/BROADCAST MUSIC, INC. (BMI) WAR SCRAPBOOK 89-029**

Creator:

McMillan, Charles W.

Type of Material:

Manuscript textual scrapbook

Physical Description:

1 scrapbook

Languages:

English

Dates:

1940 November - 1941 July

Abstract (Descriptive Summary):

This scrapbook, titled by the compiler "The Battle of Music, ASCAP vs. BMI", documents what Russell Sanjek, American Popular Music and Its Business, vol. III, calls "the music war" between the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) and the Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), November 1940 July 1941, over licensing fees for the use of music on radio networks. Included are ASCAP press releases, newsletters and flyers, many of which are reprints from newspapers and numerous clippings from one or more newspapers in Massachusetts, Ohio, New York, Oregon, Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey, California, Colorado, Arkansas, Alabama, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Washington, Indiana, Florida, Kentucky and Tennessee.

Repository:

Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN 37132, (615) 898-2449.

Access/Restrictions:

The collection is open for research use. All materials in this collection are subject to

standard national and international copyright laws. Center staff are able to assist with copyright questions for this material.

Preferred Citation:

(Box Number, Folder Number/Name), American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP)/ Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI) War Scrapbook 89-029, Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Provenance and Acquisition Information:

Purchased from R.R. Allen Books of Knoxville, TN in 1989.

Subject/Index Terms:

American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP)
Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI)
Scrapbook
Newspaper clippings

Agency History/Biographical Sketch:

The ASCAP boycott was a 1941 boycott of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) by radio broadcasters, due to license fees. From another perspective, it was a boycott of radio broadcasters by ASCAP, "concerned about the unlicensed radio broadcast of its members' material ..."

Between 1931 and 1939, ASCAP increased royalty rates charged to broadcasters some 448%.

In 1940, when ASCAP tried to double its license fees, radio broadcasters prepared to resist their demands by enforcing a boycott of ASCAP, and inaugurating a competing royalty agency, Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI). It is currently the largest performing rights organization in the United States and one of the largest in the world.

During a ten-month period lasting from January 1 to October 29, 1941, no music licensed by ASCAP (1,250,000 songs) was broadcast on NBC or CBS radio stations. Instead, the stations played songs in the public domain, regional music, and styles (like rhythm and blues or country) that had been traditionally disdained by ASCAP, resulting in many classical compositions being recorded by the big bands.

When the differences between ASCAP and the broadcasters were resolved, ASCAP agreed to settle for a lower fee than they had initially demanded.

From "ASCAP boycott." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 22 Mar. 2023. Web.

Scope and Content:

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licensing fees for the use of music on radio networks. Included are ASCAP press releases, newsletters and flyers, many of which are reprints from newspapers and numerous clippings from one or more newspapers in Massachusetts, Ohio, New York, Oregon, Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey, California, Colorado, Arkansas, Alabama, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Washington, Indiana, Florida, Kentucky and Tennessee.

Most of the material explains/defends/supports the viewpoint of ASCAP, except for an 8 page illustrated BMI pamphlet presenting its argument. Included are articles about and lists of composer/subject songs (e.g. Stephen Foster, Irish, patriotic, religious) managed by ASCAP which will no longer be available on radio. Items are occasionally interlined and/or annotated or titled by the scrapbook compiler about whom no information is available.

Collection Contents (Folder/Box List):

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Description</u>
Box 1		Original "The Battle of Music, ASCAP vs. BMI"
Box 2		Photocopy for preservation / use

Arrangement:

Original order of the scrapbook was maintained.

Materials Cataloged Separately:

In addition to these manuscript materials this collection included monograph and sound recording materials which have been transferred to the appropriate Center collections. A list of those items is attached at the end of this document.

Location:

These materials are located in the manuscripts section of the archival stacks, filed chronologically by accession number. A preservation photocopy is available for use.

Related Materials:

The Center holds two ASCAP documents pertaining to the ASCAP Consent Decree of 1941, filed with other manuscript collections by accession number 07-001. Other periodicals and rare books and reading room books can be found by searching the archival database.