

# Guide to the collection on Adelina Patti

MSS 102



written by Mark Bailey

June 2017

120 High Street  
PO Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520  
(203) 432-0497

[musicspecialcollections@yale.edu](mailto:musicspecialcollections@yale.edu)

<https://guides.library.yale.edu/MusicSpecialCollections>

---

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	3
Requesting Instructions .....	3
Administrative Information .....	3
Conditions Governing Access .....	3
Conditions Governing Use .....	4
Preferred Citation .....	4
Biographical / Historical .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	4
Arrangement .....	4
Collection Contents .....	5
Selected Search Terms .....	6

---

## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Gilmore Music Library  
120 High Street  
PO Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520  
(203) 432-0497  
musicsspecialcollections@yale.edu  
<https://guides.library.yale.edu/MusicSpecialCollections>

**CALL NUMBER:** MSS 102

**CREATOR:** Patti, Adelina, 1843-1919

**TITLE:** Collection on Adelina Patti

**DATES:** 1854-1964

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 5 boxes

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 3 linear feet (5 containers)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** This collection documents the career of Adelina Patti, and many of the items in the collection are housed in a large scrapbook. Also included in the collection is a biography of Patti: *Adelina Patti: Her Loves and Letters*, by her goddaughter, Gladys Adelina Lewis. The collection also includes an autograph book presented to Selma Gruenberg, which includes an Adelina Patti autograph and inscription (1882), and correspondences from Patti to Giulia Valde and various other people. Objects in the collection include a slipper autographed by Patti, a pair of opera glasses, a pair of formal evening gloves, and an ornate collapsible fan.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/music.mss.0102>

---

## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/music.mss.0102>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

---

## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

---

## Preferred Citation

MSS 102, Collection on Adelina Patti, Historical Sound Recordings, Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Adelina Patti's career as a coloratura soprano spanned the second half of the nineteenth century, both in the United States and in Europe. Patti was born in Madrid, Spain, on February 19, 1843. Her father and mother were singers, as were her two sisters. She spent much of her childhood in New York City, where she studied voice with her brother-in-law, Moritz Strakosch. Patti made her operatic debut at the age of sixteen in the title role of Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, which was a resounding success. Soon after, at Covent Garden's Royal Opera House, she performed the role of Amina in Vincenzo Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, also to much acclaim. Patti then enjoyed an extensive and high profile operatic career in North America and Europe, including guest appearances at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City toward the end of the 19th century. After an initial clash with Gioachino Rossini during the 1862-1863 operatic season in Paris over Patti's extensive ornamentation of his music, the two became friends. Rossini in fact made aria arrangements specifically for Patti and learned to admire her vocal artistry, as did other prominent operatic composers of the time. Patti intended to retire after 1900, but was convinced by her many fans to perform on several more occasions. Around that time, in 1905 and 1906, she also made a series of recordings. Patti died on September 27, 1919, in Brecknock, Wales.

---

## Scope and Contents

This collection documents Adelina Patti's career through biographical information found in scrapbooks, correspondence, photographs, articles, newspaper clippings, other promotional material, and objects. Many of these items are included in a large scrapbook with an extensive collection of handwritten (and then typed) correspondence to Selma Gruenberg (1886 Aug 17 - 1917 Dec 16), portrait photographs of Patti and her husbands, Baron Cederstrom (1900) and Ernesto Nicolini, photographs of paintings and sketched portraits of Patti, a marriage announcement for Patti and Nicolini, concert programs, an extensive collection of newspaper clippings, and typed descriptions of the items within. Also included in the collection is a self-published biography of Patti, *Adelina Patti: Her Loves and Letters*, by her goddaughter, Gladys Adelina Lewis. This book includes a typed biography as well as several photographs. Photograph inserts of Patti's letters to Mrs. Gruenberg (originals in scrapbook) have been removed from the biography and put into separate folders. The letters from Patti to Gruenberg primarily concern normal cordial matters, with the occasional mention of Patti's travels and performances, such as *Carmen* (1887). The collection also includes an autograph book presented to Selma Gruenberg, which includes an Adelina Patti autograph and inscription (1882), and correspondences from Patti to Giulia Valde and various other people. Objects include one slipper autographed by Patti, a pair of opera glasses, a pair of formal evening gloves, and an ornate collapsible fan.

---

## Arrangement

The collection is divided into five series: 1. Articles and clippings, 2. Correspondence, 3. Biographical material by Gladys Adelina Lewis, 4. Photos, postcards and scrapbooks, and 5. Ephemera.

## Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1	Articles and clippings	1932-1964
b. 1, f. 2	Autograph book presented to Selma Gruenberg	1882
b. 1, f. 3	Autograph and inscription by Adelina Patti	1895
b. 1, f. 4	Biographical material by Gladys Adelina Lewis (Patti's goddaughter)	
b. 1, f. 5	Adelina Patti to Guilia Valde	1890
b. 1, f. 6	Adelina Patti to various people typed copies of handwritten letters	
b. 1, f. 7	Original collection contents and materials listing	
b. 1, f. 8	Photographs and postcards	
b. 2, f. 9	Adelina Patti: Her Loves and Letters. by Gladys Adelina Lewis Handcrafted book.	
b. 2, f. 10	Photograph and negative removed from book.	
b. 2, f. 11-16	Correspondence removed from book.	1886-1911
b. 3	Scrapbook of photos and original letters by Adelina Patti	
b. 3, f. 17	Scrapbook items listing	
b. 3, f. 17	Picture portrait of Adelina Patti and a faded handwritten note [may have been attached to picture]	
b. 4	Adelina Patti's opera gloves, opera glasses, and autographed gold shoe/slipper	
b. 5	Adelina Patti's collapsible hand fan	

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Opera -- 19th century

### **Names**

Patti, Adelina, 1843-1919