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The Jazz Loft Acquires Memorabilia from Larry Conley, Composer of ‘A Cottage for Sale’

Stony Brook, N.Y.-The Jazz Loft, 275 Christian Avenue in Stony Brook, recently announced that it has acquired a vast collection of memorabilia from composer Larry Conley (November 29, 1895 - February 29, 1960), best known for his composition *A Cottage for Sale*, which has been recorded by more than 50 artists, including Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Tony Bennett and others. Conley wrote the lyrics to the song and the music was composed by Willard Robison.

The acquisition, which was donated by Conley’s son-in-law and Jazz Loft patron Bob Lang, includes master acetates from original songs dating back to the 1920’s, original concert programs, letters, song writing contracts, and a wealth of research material compiled over many decades by Lang. The acquisition also included funding for the care and maintenance of the collection.

“We are elated to get this collection and to honor Bob Lang in the process,” said The Jazz Loft Founder Tom Manuel. “Bob was a loyal patron and supporter of The Jazz Loft. He was one of those extra special people with an encyclopedic knowledge of the history of the music. Talking to Bob was like hanging with a star musician who had been around for it all. I’m especially honored that he so appreciated The Jazz Loft and especially honored to have had the opportunity to be his friend.”

Bob Lang, a former resident of Port Jefferson, died on April 29, 2022.

The story of Lang's fascination for all things Larry Conley has its roots in a sweet love story. Lang's wife Hope Conley was Larry's daughter. She was orphaned at the young age of 16. While Hope was left with royalties from her father's work, she did not know much about his illustrious career as a song writer and musician.

But Bob Lang changed all of that. After the couple was married in 1966, Bob launched his "detective career," looking into "all things Larry Conley."

"Bob helped Hope to uncover resources and family members that she did not know she had," said Virginia Tanner, who knew Bob for many years prior to his death in 2022. "Bob helped her to retrace her father's life. They visited the town where he was born, followed research trails throughout the mid-west and eventually to St. Louis. It was there that they discovered the venues where he played, from the steamboats to the night clubs, to the theaters, to the homes of his musical collaborators. They even struck up friendships with the remaining families, exchanging Christmas cards until Bob's last days."

In St. Louis, Bob and Hope visited the offices of the musician's union and found Conley's application for his union card. Conley had a nightclub that underwent many changes from the late 20's to the 1990's and beyond, according to Virginia. The couple joined the New York City Sheet Music Society where Hope got to meet contemporaries of her father.

"Singers and songwriters who had known and played with Conley told them story after story, lead after lead to chase down sheet music, old records, test pressings and more," said Virginia. "Bob was an impeccable researcher who followed every lead until he could prove it or discard it."

Hope passed away in 2001, but Bob never stopped working on Larry's story. The Conley music rights are now in the hands of Hope's half-sister Joy's family and Larry Conley's great grandson, Ryan.

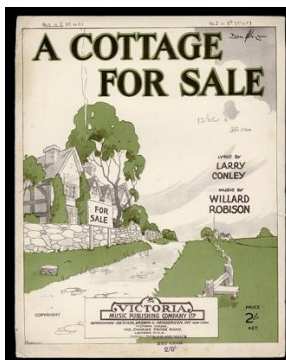
Throughout the years, Bob and Hope amassed a tremendous collection of Larry Conley memorabilia. After Bob's death in 2022, the collection was given to The Jazz Loft, where he had spent many enjoyable evenings listening to music. The hit song "A Cottage for Sale" remains a favorite of musicians. Willie Nelson recorded it in 2021 for his Frank Sinatra tribute album "That's Life."

According to Virginia, Bob would say over and over, "I love this place!" when referring to The Jazz Loft.

The Larry Conley collection will on display in the Fall of 2024 at The Jazz Loft. For more information visit: <https://www.thejazzloft.org>



*Photo courtesy of Virginia Tanner
Caption: Bob Lang*



*Photo Courtesy of The Jazz Loft
Caption; The music for A Cottage for Sale.*