

## Found in the Files

An Artifact From the Morgue, The Times's Clippings Library



THE NEW YORK TIMES

Jeff Roth, the caretaker of the Morgue, The New York Times's clippings and photo archive, was looking through the file of Igor Stravinsky, the Russian composer, this year when he discovered a curious photo.

In it, Stravinsky was on the right side of the image, holding a pen over an unidentified document; the left side of the photo was coated with a thick layer of gray, water-based paint, concealing whatever — or whoever — was sharing the frame.

More peculiar still was a handwritten note on the back, which indicated that a second, arguably more well-known subject was in the photo. Roth used a wet towel to wipe away the paint, revealing that Stravinsky was seated next to Walt Disney.

The photo was taken when Stravinsky made a trip to Disney's studios, though the year is unknown. Stravinsky was the only composer featured in "Fantasia" still alive when the film was released in the United

States on Nov. 13, 1940. It was Disney's third feature-length animated film. A version of Stravinsky's ballet "The Rite of Spring" was used in the movie.

Seemingly, The Times was more concerned about using a candid image of Stravinsky than it was about showing Disney. The paint was used to obscure one famous figure to spotlight another.

Annotations on the back of the photo indicate that the image of Stravinsky ran in The Times on at least three occasions, with articles published in 1948, 1953 and 1955.

In 1993, The Times reported that Stravinsky may have regretted his involvement with "Fantasia." In an autobiography written with his friend Robert Craft, Stravinsky wrote this of his ballet in the film: "The order of the pieces had been shuffled, and the most difficult of them eliminated — though this did not save the musical performance, which was execrable." JOHN OTIS