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2020

Guide to the William A. Brown Collection

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COLLEGE CHICAGO

CENTER FOR BLACK MUSIC RESEARCH COLLECTION

The William A. Brown Collection, 1947-2003

EXTENT

8 boxes, 9 linear feet

COLLECTION SUMMARY

William A. Brown (1938-2004) was a founding member of the Center for Black Music Repertory Ensemble and a Distinguished Professor of Voice at the University of North Florida. He was a tenor and a recitalist who performed with leading orchestras and operatic companies throughout the world.

PROCESSING INFORMATION

The collection was organized by and the finding aid created by Suzanne Flandreau in 2010. Laurie Lee Moses updated the finding aid in 2015.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William A. Brown was born on May 29, 1938 in Jackson, Mississippi to Albert Brown and Ida Mae Perry. Brown began singing in his local church choir at an early age. In 1949, he pursued the trumpet and piano thus beginning his musical training. His success as a trumpeter at Jim Hill High School afforded him the opportunity to attend Jackson State College on a full scholarship in 1955. After performing in his first opera "Cavalleria Rusticana" at Jackson State he changed his concentration to voice. Brown graduated in 1959 with a B.M.E. In the fall of the same year he taught for one year as a voice teacher and director of the choir at Utica Junior College in Utica, Mississippi. He then went on to enroll at Indiana University-Bloomington in 1960 for voice. Brown received a M.M. in 1962 and enlisted in the United States Navy. He served as a chief petty officer and chorister for the US Navy Band "Sea Chanters".

While Brown was in the Navy he married Marion Tally. He was discharged in 1966 and began his career. In 1968, Brown debuted with the New York City Opera in Weisgall's Nine Rivers from Jordan. His contribution to black music came in 1970 when Brown gave recitals nationwide entitled "Black Composer Concert", which highlighted only black composers. Brown became Associate Professor of Music at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, FL in 1972. Until late 2002, his concert career consisted of performances with the Boston, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Royal Philharmonic, Detroit and Cape Town symphonies; New York City, Lake George Opera Festival, Opera Ebony, and Goldovsky opera companies; Don Ottavio in Don Giovanni, Tamino in Die Zauberflöte, Count Almaviva in Il Barbiere di Siviglia. Brown died on October 20, 2004 in Jacksonville, FL.

SCOPE & CONTENT/COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

His papers, from 1947, 1955-2003, include concert programs, promotional materials, photographs, correspondence, and media concerning his career as an operatic tenor and recitalist.

ARRANGEMENT

Original order has been maintained much as possible. The collection is then arranged by type of material and is then alphabetically and chronologically arranged within each folder.

Series list:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------|
| • Concert Programs | 3 boxes |
| • Correspondence | 42 Folders |
| • Articles | 3 Folders |
| • Itineraries | 1 Folder |
| • Photographs | 1 box |
| • Media | 1 box |

RELATED MATERIALS

ACQUISITION SOURCE

Received from Brenda Kelly, 2007, with additional donations from Ann Sears, 2008.

SUBJECT HEADINGS

African-American singers,

ACCESS STATEMENT

The collection is open and available for research use.

RIGHTS STATEMENT

United States copyright laws apply to the materials in this collection.

PREFERRED CITATION

The William A. Brown Collection, Center for Black Music Research Collection, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.

WILLIAM A. BROWN CONTAINER LIST:

Box 1, Series I:

Concert Programs 1968–1985

Box 2, Series I:

Concert Programs 1986–1996

Box 3, Series I:

Concert Programs 1997–2003

Box 4, Series II: General Correspondence (list of correspondents):

Adams, Leslie
Andrews, Dwight
Anderson, T.J.
Baker, David
Banfield, William C. (Bill)
Bay, Peter
Bolcom, William
Brown, William A.
Buffkins, Archie L.
Cheatham, Wallace
Connell, Doug M.
Crumb, George
Davis, Don
Fischer, William S. (Bill)
Hailstork, Adolphus
Hayes, Roland
Jackson, Isaiah
Jaffe, Stephen
Jenkins, Leroy
Jones, Harold
La Montaine, John
Logan, Wendell
Misurell-Mitchell, Janice
Morris, Robert L.
Newton, James
Patterson, J.O.
Perkinson, Coleridge-Taylor
Plush, Vincent

Box 4, Series II: General Correspondence (list of correspondents), continued:

Raphael Michael
Ran, Stewart
Reagon, Bernice Johnson
Rudel, Julius
Shirley, George
Singleton, Alvin
Smith, Horace
Smith, Wadada Leo
Spearman, Rawn W.
Still, Judith Anne
Stock, David
Tamul, Jack
Walker, George
Unidentified Correspondence

Box 4, Series III:

Articles about William Brown (from newspapers and magazines):

Herlinger, Ilona. *Pi Kappa Pi Journal: National Forum*, Fall 1987

Gelles, George. *Ovation*. July 1988

Warlick, Coutler. "My Hero William Brown." May 1993

Biographical Sketch

Photocopies (Jackson State College Yearbook 1955-1959)

Photocopies (newspaper articles about other musicians) – *The New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*

Resume

Itineraries 1967–2001

Box 5, Series IV:Cassette recordings:

Mims, A. Grace Lee. "Black Arts." William Brown, tenor featured on WCLV–FM. June 9, 1999.

Tamul, Jack. *Synthesist Composer*. "The Referee Has Vanished." 1982.

CD recordings:

"Black Composer Series Vol. II." Non-commercial recording. Undated.

National Programming, WCAL. St. Olaf College. *A Sample of "Essays of Note" with host Bill Banfield*. 2003.

Garcia-Nunes, Jose Mauricio. Requiem Mass. Non-commercial recording. Undated.

Mendelssohn, Felix. *Die Erste Waipurgisnacht, opus 60*. Non-commercial recording. Undated.

R. Nathaniel Dett recording sessions with Ann Sears. May 25, 2004: takes 101-119, 201-213; and May 27, 2004:

takes 301-319, 401-422; 501-521, 601-624. 3 discs.

"Other Voices." Non-commercial recording. Undated.

Czech National Symphony Orchestra. *Paul Freeman Introduces...William, Rendelman, Logan, Yardumian, Saltzmann*

Vol. 1. Albany Records, 1998.

Czech National Symphony Orchestra. *Paul Freeman Introduces...David N. Baker. Vol. 5*. Albany Records, 2000.

"Swing Time: The Songs of Will Marion Cook." Disc One. Recording session April 15, 2004 with Ann Sears.

N.A.C.S. "Unfold." Non-commercial recording. Undated. Note on CD-R: "National Adventist."

Box 5, Series IV: (continued)VHS recordings—all appear to be non-commercial, except for the first, published status unknown:

"Good Morning America." September 11, 1990. A segment from the television show (?).

Hughes, Langston. *Ask Your Mama: 12 Moods for Jazz*. 3 tapes: December 5, 1994, February 7, 1997 and undated.

Pleasant Green M.B. Church. "Annual Senior Citizens Concert." June 28, 1998.

28th Annual Church Music Workshops of America 2004. "African American Spirituals in the 21st Century:

Relevant or

Not?" Undated.

Six programs noted on cover: "Who is Roland Hayes?", "The Musical Legacy of Roland Hayes," "Paul Robeson—the Tallest Tree in Our Forest," "William Grant Still—Trailblazer from the South," "William Grant Still—Dean of Afro-American Composers," and "Langston Hughes—The Dream Keepers." Undated.

Untitled, note on tape cassette reads "In Mississippi," 12-24-01. Undated.

Untitled, note on tape cassette reads "AA Music Video." Undated.

Box 6, Series IV:

Reel-to-reel tape recordings:

Labelled: "The Gospel According to Brown/Boyer." 3 large reels.

Box 7, Series V: Photographs (Folders 1-22):

Operas

<i>Barber of Seville</i>	(Folder 1)
<i>Don Giovanni and Faust</i>	(Folder 2)
<i>La Boheme</i>	(Folder 3)
<i>Porgy and Bess</i>	(Folder 4)
<i>Turandot</i> and Unidentified Operas A and B	(Folder 5)

Portraits

A-D	(Folder 6)
E-H	(Folder 7)
J-Q	(Folder 8)
S-AB	(Folder 9)

Contact Sheets

Portraits A-E, G and J	(Folder 9)
<i>Barber of Seville</i>	(Folder 10)
Sergio Commissiona	
<i>Don Giovanni</i>	
Family	
Leon Fleisher	
Lowell Lecture	
Spelman College Lecture	

Negatives (Folder 11)

Barber of Seville
Family
Leon Fleischer
Portraits C, E, and G-H
The Shephards Playe (advertisement)
William Grant Still

Recitals

A-C	(Folder 12)
D-E	(Folder 13)

Box 7, Series V: Photographs (Folders 1-22): (continued)

Musicians

Anderson, T.J.	(Folder 14)
Baker, David	
Black Music Repertory Ensemble	

Boatwright, Henry
Carter, Nathan
Comissiona, Sergio
Dobbs, Mattiwilda
Festival of Spirituals
Fleisher, Leon
Foster, William (Folder 15)
Freeman, Paul
Gospel Rhythms
Graffman, Gary
Hakim, Talib Rasul
Harrower, Peter
Jackson State College Choir (Folder 16)
Jordan, Barbara
Joubert, Joseph (Folder 16)
Kraus, Lili
Maazel, Loren
Spieth, Donald
Still, William Grant
Weathers, Felicia
Wilson, Olly
Unidentified Vocalist
Yessin, Gerso

Lectures

Spelman College (Folder 17)
Unidentified Lectures (Folder 18)

Miscellaneous

U.S. Navy (Folder 19)
College Kaleidoscope (Folder 20)
Paul Freeman Rehearsal
William Brown age 8 or 9
William Brown age 18
William Brown chorister
William Brown with student

Unidentified photographs (Folders 21-22)

Box 8, Series I: (Outsize)

Flyers

Box 8, Series III: (Outsize)

Articles (newspaper articles about William Brown):
Bridgewater/Today. "Performing Arts Series concert in honor of the Hall of Black Achievement." January 1955.
Williams, Carol M. *Folio Weekly*. March 21, 1989.

Box 8, Series V: (Outsize) Photographs

Contact Sheets

F, H, and I
Wilson, Olly

Box 8, Series V: (Outsize) Photographs (continued)

Miscellaneous

William Brown in Russia

Musicians

Sears, Ann

Portraits H and I

Additional Materials donated by Ann Sears, December 2008:

Box 1A, Series IV:

16 CDs of recording session for a commercial CD of the songs of Will Marion Cook
(included in box count for series IV)

Box 2A, Series VI:

Papers, chiefly concerning the above recording, including:

Correspondence, 2002-2004, 2006 and undated
Production notes
Liner notes
Snapshots