



Smithsonian

Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

London Library of Recorded English records, 1949-2010

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Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections
Title:	London Library of Recorded English records
Date:	1949-2010 (bulk 1950-1965)
Identifier:	CFCH.LLRE
Creator:	Compton, Joseph, 1891- (Editor) Clinton-Baddeley, V. C. (Victor Clinton), 1900-1970 (Editor)
Extent:	1.25 Cubic feet (11 legal folders, 6 cassette tapes, 18 sound discs (vinyl))
Language:	English .
Summary:	London Library of Recorded English was a 6-volume Anthology of English Literature, consisting of poetry spanning 16th-20th century England, read aloud by well-known British poets, scholars, and actors. The first four recordings were edited by poet-scholars V.C. Clinton-Baddeley and Joseph Compton, and when it was acquired by Britam Agencies in 1955, Clinton-Baddeley stayed on to create two more releases. The collection contains 6 LP recordings, as well as the business papers associated with the creation and management of the Anthology.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This collection was donated in memory of Lewis R. Breslauer to Smithsonian Folkways Recordings/ Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in January, 2010. The donation included all right, title, and interest in and to the recordings, papers, and historical materials, as well as all intellectual property rights.

Processing Information

The London Library of Recorded English records were received in 2010, upon which they were stored in acid-free housing and very basically parsed by type of material. The collection was fully processed in 2014, when more faceted file titles were created, fasteners were removed from materials and materials were organized chronologically. Materials exceeding three copies were weeded, and the best examples were kept.

Preferred Citation

London Library of Recorded English records, Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Access to the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections is by appointment only. Visit our [website](#) for more information on scheduling a visit or making a digitization request. Researchers interested in accessing born-digital records or audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies.

Conditions Governing Use

Permission to publish materials from the collection must be requested from the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections. Please visit our [website](#) to learn more about submitting a request. The Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections make no guarantees concerning copyright or other intellectual property restrictions. Other usage conditions may apply; please see the Smithsonian's [Terms of Use](#) for more information.

Biographical / Historical

The London Library of Recorded English had roots in V.C. Clinton-Baddeley's 1937 recordings of poetry broadcasts with W.B. Yeats for the BBC. In 1940, during World War II, Clinton-Baddeley helped prepare British propaganda on gramophone discs for the use of foreign radio stations. A portion of these recordings were dedicated to "cultured propaganda," and this included recordings of English poetry produced by Clinton-Baddeley and read by himself and other well-known readers.

During the war, Clinton-Baddeley was speaking to Joseph Compton, a prominent specialist in English literature education, about the propaganda records. Compton believed that recordings of literature would be in demand in schools. When the war ended, E.J. Vetter, a recording engineer told Clinton-Baddeley that he would be setting up a small recording studio where it would be possible to make some poetry recordings. Compton soon got on board, and the recording studio, which was a part of United Programmes Limited (UPL) of London, England, would support the production of the recordings.

The first four volumes (called "books") of the anthology were made with UPL in the late 1940s. These were directed by Clinton-Baddeley and engineered by Vetter and J. Bramhall. Compton made selections and provided literary criticism. Both Clinton-Baddeley and Compton were considered editors of the series.

UPL went into receivership and in 1950, Edgar J. Grande, receiver for UPL, appointed Britam Agencies, Inc. (Britam) sole agent in the U.S.A. and Canada for the sale of the recordings (twenty-four 78rpm records per set) to be imported from England. The recordings were sold to schools, colleges, and libraries.

In 1955, UPL and Grande arranged with Britam to purchase the LLRE free and clear. Britam re-engineered the recordings and converted them into 4 LPs, manufactured by Columbia Records and sold under the Alpha Records label.

In 1963, Clinton-Baddeley and Irwin Breslauer of Britam agreed to a plan to produce two additional LP records (Books V and VI). All six volumes were marketed as a package, and later, as a set of six cassette tapes. The LLRE then went dormant, with no effort being made towards sales, as the principals of Britam, Irwin Breslauer and Norman Breslauer were occupied with other business.

The collection was donated to the the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in 2010.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in two series: 1. Papers, 1949-2010, arranged alphabetically by subject and chronologically thereafter, and 2. Audiorecordings, 1956-1965, arranged chronologically.

Shared Stewardship of Collections

The Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage acknowledges and respects the right of artists, performers, Folklife Festival participants, community-based scholars, and knowledge-keepers to collaboratively steward representations of themselves and their intangible cultural heritage in media produced, curated, and distributed by the Center. Making

this collection accessible to the public is an ongoing process grounded in the Center's commitment to connecting living people and cultures to the materials this collection represents. To view the Center's full shared stewardship policy, which defines our protocols for addressing collections-related inquiries and concerns, please visit <https://doi.org/10.25573/data.21771155> .

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Types of Materials:

- English poetry -- 17th century
- English poetry -- 18th century
- English poetry -- 19th century
- English poetry -- Early modern, 1500-1700
- Lyric poetry
- Narrative poetry, English

Container Listing

Series 1: Papers, Undated, 1949-2010

0.5 Cubic feet

Box 1, Folder 2	LLRE_01_02: Collected Texts, Undated, 1949-1964 Notes: Periodicals and clippings.
Box 1, Folder 3	LLRE_01_03: Correspondence - 1, Undated Notes: Correspondence, including with V.C. Clinton-Baddeley and Joseph Compton.
Box 1, Folder 4	LLRE_01_04: Correspondence - 2, 1950-1955 Notes: Correspondence, including with V.C. Clinton-Baddeley and Joseph Compton.
Box 1, Folder 5	LLRE_01_05: Correspondence - 3, 1956-1972 Notes: Correspondence, including with V.C. Clinton-Baddeley and Joseph Compton.
Box 1, Folder 6	LLRE_01_06: Correspondence - 4, 1964 Notes: Correspondence and legal documents pertaining to the United States Information Agency and Britam Agencies' rights to the London Library of Recorded English.
Box 1, Folder 7	LLRE_01_07: Historical / Business Narratives, Undated Notes: Narratives regarding the early history of LLRE, narratives on transition of LLRE from United Programmes Ltd. to Britam Agencies, biographical information on readers.
Box 1, Folder 8	LLRE_01_08: Legal Documents, Undated, 1955-1999 Notes: Contracts, agreements, and signed memos regarding rights to LLRE.
Box 1, Folder 9	LLRE_01_09: Office Stationary, Record Labels, Design Components, Undated, 1955
Box 1, Folder 10	LLRE_01_10: Promotional Materials - 1, Undated Notes: Promotional materials related to United Programs Limited/Britam Classic Recordings releases of the LLRE.
Box 1, Folder 11	LLRE_01_11: Promotional Materials - 2, Undated

Notes: Promotional materials related to Alpha Records releases of Master Recordings in English Literature (Columbia Records pressing of LLRE).

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Series 2: Audio recordings, 1956, 1964, 1965, 1990

Box 1

Box 1, Item 1	Master Recordings in English Literature, Book I and Book II, Lyric Poetry, 1956 6 Sound discs (vinyl) (Three copies of two-volume set. Includes liner notes.) Notes: LLRE recordings released on Alpha Records, custom pressed by Columbia Records Inc.
Box 1, Item 2	Master Recordings in English Literature, Book III - Narrative Poetry and Book IV - Shakespearean Dramatic Poetry, 1956 6 Sound discs (vinyl) (Three copies of two-volume set. Includes liner notes.) Notes: LLRE recordings released on Alpha Records, custom pressed by Columbia Records Inc.
Box 1, Item 3	LL1001 The London Library of Recorded English, Book I: Lyric Poetry, 1964 1 Sound discs (vinyl) Notes: Recording produced by Britam Agencies, Inc.
Box 1, Item 4	LL1002 The London Library of Recorded English, Book II: Lyric Poetry, 1965 1 Sound discs (vinyl) Notes: Recording produced by Britam Agencies, Inc.
Box 1, Item 5	LL1003 The London Library of Recorded English, Book III: Narrative Poetry, 1965 1 Sound discs (vinyl) Notes: Recording produced by Britam Agencies, Inc.
Box 1, Item 6	LL1004 The London Library of Recorded English, Book IV: Shakespearean Dramatic Poetry, 1965 1 Sound discs (vinyl) Notes: Recording produced by Britam Agencies, Inc.
Box 1, Item 7	LL1005 The London Library of Recorded English, Book V: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Poetry, Undated 1 Sound discs (vinyl) Notes: Recording produced by Britam Agencies, Inc.
Box 1, Item 8	LL1006 The London Library of Recorded English, Book VI: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Poetry, Undated 1 Sound discs (vinyl) Notes: Recording produced by Britam Agencies, Inc.
Box 1, Item 9	The London Library of Recorded English, 1990 6 Cassette tapes (Includes liner notes.) Notes: Complete LLRE recordings, produced by Britam Agencies, Inc.

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