Guide to the Norman and Sally Coe Scopitone Film Collection

NMAH.AC.1230
Wendy Shay.
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Norman and Sally Coe Scopitone Film Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.1230
Date: circa 1962-1970
Extent: 141 film reels
Creator: Coe, Norman
Language: English
Lyrics in English, French, or German.

Summary: Scopitones are three minute long 16mm films that were viewed on a Scopitone machine, a jukebox-like player. A precursor to music videos, Scopitones -- both the films and the machines -- were popular in the United States from around 1962 to 1968. The films featured sets, costumes, and dancers in support of well-known performers singing a single song. The collection includes Scopitone films from the United States and Europe.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
Scopitone machine and films donated by Norman and Sally Coe in 2011.

Related Materials
Materials in the National Museum of American History
The Division of Culture and the Arts acquired a Scopitone machine as part of the same donation. Accession #: 2011.0056

Processing Information
Processed by Wendy Shay, archivist, April, 2011.

Preferred Citation
[Title], Norman and Sally Coe Scopitone Film Collection, circa 1964-1970, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

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Biographical / Historical

Referring to both the films and the machines that played them, a Scopitone is song-length film viewed on a juke-box like machine with a screen. Introduced in the late 1950s in France, and based on technology developed during World War Two, the Scopitone machine offered a selection of up to thirty-six titles. Patrons would insert coins (twenty-five cents per play in the United States), press the button for the film desired, and the film would appear on a small screen that formed the top of the machine. The Scopitone films were three minute-long 16mm composite magnetic track prints that featured performers singing popular songs of the time. Like their predecessor, Soundies, and paving the way for music videos, Scopitones included basic sets, costumes, and choreography. Scopitones were made in France, Great Britain, and Germany. Scopitones (both the machines and the films) were most popular in France. Consequently, a large number of the films are in French and star performers well-known in France. One of the major producers of American Scopitone films was Harman-ee Productions, a company owned by Debbie Reynolds. In the United States, Scopitone machines could be found in bars, restaurants, and lounges. Performers as varied as Debbie Reynolds, Neil Sedaka, and Ethel Ennis appeared in American Scopitones. In many of the films the stars sang the songs while surrounded by scantily-clad dancers. On occasion the production numbers told the "story" of the song. More often, the sets, dance moves, and costumes appeared superfluous. The "look" of the films reflected the times with choreography influenced by the Twist and other contemporary dances and clothing and hair-dos straight from a mid-1960s teen fashion magazine. Scopitones flourished in the United States for a very short period of time. First introduced around 1962, interest in producing and viewing Scopitones had ended by 1968. Most American machines and films were tossed in the trash. Collectors acquired the remaining machines and films. Scopitone films, once a mostly forgotten genre, are now easily viewed on Youtube, introducing this short-lived cultural phenomenon to new generations of viewers. The donor, Norman Coe, became involved with Scopitone as a business in 1964 when he purchased ten machines from the Scopitone division of Tel-A-Sign, Inc. of Chicago, Illinois. Coe placed his machines and the films in bars and restaurants around the Albany, New York area. He left the business in the late 1960s, selling all but one of his machines and several cartons of Scopitone films. He donated his remaining machine and films to the National Museum of American History in 2011.

Scope and Contents

The collection comprises approximately one hundred and forty 16mm color composite magnetic track motion picture prints produced to be played on a Scopitone juke box. These films were produced in Europe and the United States.

Arrangement

The collection is organized into one series. The order follows the original catalogue/distribution numbers.

Series 1, Original Films, 1962-1970
Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

16mm composite magnetic track motion picture film. No reference copies exist. Special arrangements must be made with the Archives Center to view film. Many Scopitones are available for viewing on Youtube.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Types of Materials:
- 16mm motion picture film
- Music

Names:
- Alpert, Herb
- Anka, Paul
- Bach, Vivi
- Carr, Vikki
- Damone, Vic
- Darren, James
- Eckstine, Billy
- Ennis, Ethel
- Gore, Lesley, 1946-
- Greco, Buddy
- Hallyday, Johnny, 1943 -
- Lansing, Joi, 1934-1972
- Legrand, Michel, 1932 -
- McNair, Barbara
- Morgan, Jane, 1920 -
- Rawls, Lou
- Reese, Della
- Reynolds, Debbie
- Riley, Billy Lee, 1933-
- Rydell, Bobby
- Sedaka, Neil
- Sinatra, Frank, Jr., 1944-
- Starr, Kay
- Vee, Bobby
- Warwick, Dionne
Container Listing

Series 1: Original Films, circa 1964-1970

Das Susse Leben (La Dolce Vita), 1962
1 film reel
Performer: Vivi Bach

He's Got the Power, 1963
Performers: The Exciters

Tell Him
Performers: The Exciters

Walk On By
Performer: Dionne Warwick

Hurt by Love
Performers: Charley and Inez Foxx

Mocking Bird
Performers: Charley and Inez Foxx

Frenchie
Performer: Annie Cordy

La Cage
Performer: Marie-Helene

Truddie
Performer: Marie-Helene

Bons Baisers a Bientot (Kisses and Farewells)
Performers: Kessler Sisters

Je Suis Mordu (I Got Stung)
Performer: Johnny Hallyday

So High, So Wide, So Low
Performers: Delta Rhythm Boys

On the Street Where You Live (L'amour Est Dans Ta Rue)
Performer: Dominique

On the Street Where You Live (color)

Black Boy
Performer: John William

Garde-Moi La Derniere Danse (Save the Last Dance)
Performer: Maya Casablanca

*Le Bleu de Lete (The Blue of Summer)*
Performer: John William

*Itsi Bitsi Petit Bikini (Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini)*
Performer: Richard Anthony

*Une Boom Chez John (A Party at John's)*
Performer: Johnny Hallyday

*Tom Pilibi*
Performer: Jacqueline Boyer

*Pepito*
Performers: Los Machucambos

*Nous les Amoureux (We Who Love) (A-59)*
Performer: Jean-Claude Pascal

*C'etait Bien (It Was Good)*
Performer: Juliette Greco

*Reve Mon Reve (Dream My Dream)*
Performer: Isabelle Aubret

*Dum Dum Twist*
Performer: Hancy Halloway

*Loin de Vous (Far From You)*
Performer: Dalida

*Ya-Ya Twist*
Performer: Richard Anthony

*Quando Quando (When, When)*
French and German lyrics
Performers: Kessler Sisters

*Zizi! La Twisteuse*
Performers: Glenn Jack & ses Glenners

*Locomotion*
Performer: Sylvie Vartan

*Le Jour le Plus Long (The Longest Day)*
Performer: Dalida

*Sherry*
Performers: Les Chats Sauvages

*Youpi Ya Tamoure*
Performer: Danyel Gerard

*Une College Anglais (The English College Girls)*
Performer: Audry Arno

*Tous les Garcons et les Filles (All the Boys and Girls)*
Performer: Francois Hardy

*Dans le Train de Nuit (Night Train)*
Performers: Dominique et Georges Jouvin et son Ochestre

*El Gato Montes (Spanish Bullfight)*
Performers: El Trompet Gitana - Leo Vidal

*Basin Street Blues*
Performer: Colette Magny

*My Prayer*
Performers: Les Brutos

*Good Good Lovin’*
Performer: Nancy Halloway

*Twiste et Chante (Twist and Shout)*
Performer: Sylvie Vartan

*Remember Diana*
Performer: Paul Anka

*Oui Les Filles (We Girls)*
Performers: Les Gams

*Ruby Baby*
Performer: Dion

*Si J’Avais Un Marteau (If I Had a Hammer)*
Performers: Les Surfs

*America*
Performer: Danyel Gerard

*Ava Naguila*
Performer: Rika Zarai

*Snappez a Mes Cotes (Snappy)*
Performer: Conrad Prindel

*I Love Paris*
Performer: Michel Legrand

*Scopitone Party*
Performer: Betty Claire

**Viva! El Macho (Long Live the Man)**
Performer: Carlos Aragon

**Hello Dolly**
Performers: Georges Jouvan and Dolly Brothers

**Belly Dancer**
Performer: Miguel Cordoba

**Ca C’est Paris (It is Paris)**
Performer: Josette Joubert

**Etrangers Dans le Nuit (Strangers In the Night)**
Performer: Ricardo

**Le Catch (Wrestling Match)**
Performers: Christian Marin and Roger Delaporte

**L’Argent Ne Fait Pas le Bonheur (Money Doesn't Buy Happiness)**
Performers: Les Parisiennes

**Mon Ami Lointain (My Friend From Far Away)**
Performer: Dick Rivers

**La Chevalier d’Amour** (American version)

**Les Majorettes (Touchdown Girls)**
Performers: Crazy Horse Saloon Dancers

**A Whiter Shade of Pale**
Performers: Procol Harum

**Johnny Liar**
Performer: Molly Bee

**The Best is Yet to Come**, 1967
Performer: Barbara McNair

**The Other Side of the Tracks**
Performer: Barbara McNair

**Ain’t That Just Like Me**
Performers: The Condors

**Won’t You Come Home Bill Bailey?**
Performer: Della Reese

**Toreador**
Performer: Mary Kaye
C'est Si Bon, 1966
Performer: Jane Morgan

Under Paris Skies, 1966
Performer: Jane Morgan

Cake Walkin' Baby, 1966
Performers: Greenwood County Singers

Around the World
Performer: Kay Starr

Wheel of Fortune, 1966
Performer: Kay Starr

We'll Sing in the Sunshine, 1966
Performer: Debbie Reynolds

If I Had a Hammer, 1966
Performer: Debbie Reynolds

I've Got the World on a String, 1966
Performer: January Jones

That Old Gang of Mine, 1966
Performer: January Jones

High Heeled Sneakers
Performer: Billy Lee Riley

Pussycat A-Go-Go, 1966
Performer: Stacy Adams

Tweedlee Dee
Performers: Freddie Bell and Roberta Linn

For You
Performer: Freddie Bell and Roberta Linn

Pretty Girls Everywhere
Performer: Bobby Vee

The Night Has a Thousand Eyes
Performer: Bobby Vee

Queen of the House, 1965
Performer: Jody Miller

The Race is On, 1966
Performer: Jody Miller

Because You're Mine, 1966
Performer: James Darren

*The One I Love Belongs to Somebody Else*
Performer: Joi Lansing

*Three O’Clock in the Morning*
Performer: Lou Rawls

*The Mighty Mississippi*
Performers: Back Porch Majority

*Bless Them All*
Performer: Shani Wallis

*Lost and Found*
Performer: Vic Damone

*The Lady is a Tramp*
Performer: Buddy Greco

*Good for Nothing Bill*
Performers: The Legendaires

*Yellow Haired Woman*
Performer: Frankie Randall

*I Cried for You*
Performer: Sonny King

*Sea Cruise, 1966*
Performers: The Hondells

*Padam Padam*
Performer: Hanna Ahroni

*Before the Rain*
Performer: Sue Raney

*Silver Dollar*
Performer: Damita Jo

*Everything I've Got*
Performer: Vicki Carr

*I've Got that Feeling*
Performer: Ethel Ennis

*One Has My Name*
Performer: Barry Young

*Keep Your Eyes On the Hands*
Performers: Princess Leilani and Alex

**Smoldering Drums**
Performers: Princess Leilani and Alex

**Bellazza, 1966**
Performer: Bobby Rydell

**Where Did All the Good Times Go?**
Performers: Dick and Dee Dee

**Where Do You Go To Go Away?**
Performer: Gale Garnett

**My Teenage Fallout Queen, 1964**
Performer: George McKelvey

**Mother Nature, Father Time, 1965**
Performer: Brook Benton

**Just a Dream**
Performer: Marian Montgomery

**Ike Cole Salutes His Brother Nat King Cole**
Performer: Ike Cole

**If**
Performer: Timi Yuro

**Prime of My Life**
Performer: Billy Eckstine

**Five Card Stud**
Performer: Merle Kilgore

**The Silencer, 1965**
Performer: Joi Lansing

**Enamorado**
Performer: Enamorado

**Love for Sale, 1968**
Performer: Frank Sinatra, Jr.

**Feminity, 1968**
Performer: Donna Theodore

**The Web of Love**
Performer: Joi Lansing

**Lazy River, 1966**
Performer: January Jones

I Love Being Here With You
Performer: January Jones

If I Never Get to Heaven, 1966
Performer: Della Reese

Irma La Douce, 1966
Performer: Barbara McNair

Calendar Girl, 1966
Performer: Neil Sedaka

Little Miss Go-Go, 1966
Performers: Gary Lewis and the Playboys

Tijuana Taxi, 1966
Performers: Herb Albert and the Tijuana Brass

St. Louis Blues, 1966
Performer: Lou Rawls

Experience Unnecessary
Performer: Donna Theodore

Wonder Boy, 1966
Performer: Lesley Gore

Small Potatoes, 1966
Performer: Gale Garnett

Ole

Most Unusual Day, 1966
Performer: Vic Damone

Cabaret
Performer: Marilyn Maye

Winchester Cathedral, 1967
Performers: Ray Anthony and the Bookends

Love
Performer: Misti Walker

Whole World
Performer: Unknown

Down By the Riverside
Performer: Faith Flury
When You Make Such Pretty Eyes at Me (German)

Das Suss

Please Love Me
Performer: Michel Polnareff

Le Mone

Oh Yeah
Performers: Trio Athenee