London Library of Recorded English records, 1949-2010

Cecilia Peterson

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# Table of Contents

Collection Overview ........................................................................................................ 1

Administrative Information .............................................................................................. 1

Arrangement ..................................................................................................................... 2

Biographical / Historical ............................................................................................... 2

Names and Subjects ......................................................................................................... 3

Container Listing ............................................................................................................. 4

  Series 1: Papers, Undated, 1949-2010........................................................................ 4

Collection Overview

Repository: Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections
Title: London Library of Recorded English records
Identifier: CFCH.LLRE
Date: 1949-2010 (bulk 1950-1965)
Extent: 1.25 Cubic feet (11 legal folders, 6 cassette tapes, 18 sound discs (vinyl))
Creator: Compton, Joseph, 1891-
Clinton-Baddeley, V.C. (Victor Clinton), 1900-1970
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 by appointment only. Contact the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections at (202) 633-7322 or rinzlerarchives@si.edu for additional information.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright restrictions apply. Contact archives staff at (202) 633-7322 or rinzlerarchives@si.edu for additional information.

Restrictions may apply concerning the use, duplication, or publication of items in these collections. Consult the archivists for additional 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.
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
Periodicals and clippings.

Box 1, Folder 3  LLRE_01_03: Correspondence - 1, Undated
Image(s): Correspondence - 1: Undated
Correspondence, including with V.C. Clinton-Baddeley and Joseph Compton.

Box 1, Folder 4  LLRE_01_04: Correspondence - 2, 1950-1955
Image(s): Correspondence - 2: 1950-1955
Correspondence, including with V.C. Clinton-Baddeley and Joseph Compton.

Box 1, Folder 5  LLRE_01_05: Correspondence - 3, 1956-1972
Image(s): Correspondence - 3: 1956-1972
Correspondence, including with V.C. Clinton-Baddeley and Joseph Compton.

Box 1, Folder 6  LLRE_01_06: Correspondence - 4, 1964
Image(s): Correspondence - 4: 1964
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
Image(s): Historical / Business Narratives: Undated
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
Contracts, agreements, and signed memos regarding rights to LLRE.

Box 1, Folder 9  LLRE_01_09: Office Stationary, Record Labels, Design Components, Undated, 1955
Image(s): Office Stationary, Record Labels, Design Components: Undated, 1955

Box 1, Folder 10 LLRE_01_10: Promotional Materials - 1, Undated
Image(s): Promotional Materials - 1: Undated
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
Image(s): Promotional Materials - 2: Undated
Promotional materials related to Alpha Records releases of Master Recordings in English Literature (Columbia Records pressing of LLRE).

Return to Table of Contents

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.)
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.)
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)
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)
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)
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)
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)
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)
Recording produced by Britam Agencies, Inc.

Box 1, Item 9  
*The London Library of Recorded English, 1990*
6 Cassette tapes (Includes liner notes.)
Complete LLRE recordings, produced by Britam Agencis, Inc.