



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Willie Smith Collection

NMAH.AC.0382

NMAH Staff

1990

Archives Center, National Museum of American History

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Willie Smith Collection
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0382
Date:	1945-1987
Creator:	Smith, Willie, 1910-1967 (musician) (Composer)
Extent:	0.25 Cubic feet (2 boxes)
Language:	Collection is in English. One item in German.
Summary:	Collection documents Willie Smith's career as a musician and arranger between 1945 and 1958.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Fischella Smith, August 14, 1990.

Processing Information

Processed by Archives Center staff.

Preferred Citation

Willie Smith Collection, 1945-1987, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

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Biographical / Historical

Willie Smith, a leading alto saxophonist and arranger of the swing period, was born in Charleston, South Carolina on November 25, 1910 and died in Los Angeles on March 7, 1967. He attended Nashville Tennessee's Fisk University during the 1920s and played with the Jimmy Lunceford Orchestra between 1929 and 1942. After a brief period performing with Charlie Spivak's band between 1942 and 1943, Smith began his tenure with the Harry James Orchestra in 1944. He remained with the Harry James Orchestra until 1964 with brief interruptions between 1951 and 1953 performing with the Duke Ellington Orchestra, Jazz at the Philharmonic, and leading several of his own small ensembles in Los Angeles. In addition to Smith's reputation as a section leader and soloist, he is best known for his arrangements of Sophisticated Lady and Rose Room for the Jimmie Lunceford Orchestra.

Scope and Contents

The Willie Smith Collection consists of correspondence, event programs, a periodical entitled *Musikkunde in beispielen*, thirty-six black and white photographs, and nine music arrangements documenting Smith's career as a musician and arranger between 1945 and 1958.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into three series.

Series 1: Music Manuscripts, 1945-1947

Series 2: Photographs, 1938-1958

Series 3: Ephemera, 1945-1987

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Jazz
- Jazz musicians -- United States
- Music -- 20th century

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence -- 1940-2000
- Photographs -- 20th century
- Programs -- 1940-1990
- Sheet music -- Manuscripts -- 20th century

Names:

- Ellington, Duke, 1899-1974
- Harry James Orchestra
- James, Harry, 1916-
- Jimmie Lunceford Orchestra
- Lunceford, Jimmie

Container Listing

Series 1: Music Manuscripts, 1945-1947

Scope and Contents: This series consists of nine different music arrangements for jazz orchestras, complete sets of parts for eight of these arrangements and a full score for a ninth arrangement. The music was acquired by Smith during his tenure with the Hary James Orchestra. The music selections were written by various unidentified composers and arranged by Ray Conniff. The music is organized alphabetically by title.

Box 1, Folder 1	Ain't She Sweet, parts, 1945
Box 1, Folder 2	Hatsville U.S.A., parts, undated
Box 1, Folder 3	Lone Star Moon, parts, undated
Box 1, Folder 4	Man With a Horn, drum parts, undated
Box 1, Folder 5	One More Kiss, parts, 1946
Box 1, Folder 6	Orange Colored Smoke Sky, parts, undated
Box 1, Folder 7	Smoke, Smoke, Smoke, parts, undated
Box 1, Folder 8	What's Mine, score, 1947
Box 1, Folder 9	Who's Sorry Now, parts, undated

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Series 2: Photographs, 1938-1958

Scope and Contents: This series consists of thirty-six black and white photographs of Willie Smith, Duke Ellington Orchestra, Count Basie Orchestra, Harry James Orchestra, Jimmy Lunceford Orchestra, United State Navy Band, and friends. The photographs are arranged chronologically.

Box 2, Folder 1	Jimmy Lunceford Orchestra, 1938-1945
Box 2, Folder 2	U.S. Navy Band, 1942-1943
Box 2, Folder 3	Willie Smith, Buddy Rich and Flip Phillip, 1947
Box 2, Folder 4	Harry James Orchestra, 1947-1950
Box 2, Folder 5	Willie Smith, Charles Preble, Vic Hamann and Juan Tizol, circa 1950
Box 2, Folder 6	Duke Ellington Orchestra, 1951
Box 2, Folder 7	Jazz in the Philharmonic Tour of Japan, 1953
Box 2, Folder 8	Count Basie Orchestra, circa 1954
Box 2, Folder 9	Willie Smith, circa 1958
Box 2, Folder 10	Willie Smith and Barney Kessel, undated
Box 2, Folder 11	Willie Smith, Bob Bawes and Billy May, undated
Box 2, Folder 12	Willie Smith and Billy May, undated
Box 2, Folder 13	Nat King Cole, autographed, undated
Box 2, Folder 14	Joe Thomas, autographed, undated
Box 2, Folder 15	Doc Trager, autographed, undated
Box 2, Folder 16	Miscellaneous photographs, undated

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Series 3: Ephemera, 1945-1987

Scope and Contents: This series consists of correspondence, event programs, and a German periodical documenting Willie Smith's performance career. The material is arranged alphabetically.

Box 2, Folder 17	Correspondence, 1945-1985
Box 2, Folder 18	Event Programs, 1947-1987
Box 2, Folder 19	Musikkunde in beispielen, circa 1957

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