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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Doc Cheatham Papers
Identifier: NMAH.AC.0814
Date: 1939-1998
Extent: 11 Cubic feet
Creator: Cheatham, Doc, 1905-1997
Cheatham, Amanda

Language: English
Summary: Papers documenting Cheatham's career as a jazz trumpeter. The papers include passports, appointment and address books; photographs, both personal and professional; a transcript of an interview of Cheatham; sheet music, including parts for various instruments; home movies from Cheatham's travels; awards and certificates; printed material including posters, programs, clippings.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
The collection was donated to the Archives Center by Amanda N. Cheatham, widow of Doc Cheatham, June, 2002.

Separated Materials
The Division of Culture and the Arts, National Museum of American History holds related artifacts: a trumpet, trumpet mutes, bowtie, and pair of glasses.

Processing Information
Collection processed by Timothy Anne Burnside and Scott Schwartz, June 2003.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions
Collection is open for research.
Biographical / Historical

Adolphus "Doc" Cheatham (1905-1997) was born in Nashville, Tennessee. He grew up playing trumpet and saxophone in the pit orchestra of the Bijou Theater where he accompanied such blues artists as Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith. His first professional break was with Marion Hardy's band for the Sunshine Sammy Revue.

After touring with Hardy's band in 1924, Cheatham taught himself to read music and moved to Chicago, where he became acquainted with Louis Armstrong. Under the influence of Armstrong, Cheatham decided to play trumpet exclusively and eventually subbed for Armstrong. While in Chicago, Cheatham also worked with Wilbur De Paris and Chick Webb. Between 1927 and 1930 he toured Europe as the lead trumpet player for Sam Wooding.

When Cheatham returned to the United States in 1930, he joined Marion Hardy's Alabamians, but eventually took a position in McKinney's Cotton Pickers. In 1933 he joined Cab Calloway's Orchestra and toured with him for nine years, including a tour of South America. Cheatham took a few months off in 1933 but soon found himself in recording studios with such jazz legends as Count Basie and Billie Holiday. During recording sessions and performances throughout the 1940s Cheatham continued to develop his skills as a trumpet soloist in big bands and smaller ensembles.

The eventual decline of big bands in the 1950s led Cheatham to explore Latin music. As a result, he performed with Marcelino Guerra, Perez Prado, and Machitos Band. Cheatham reunited with Wilbur De Paris in 1957 for a tour of Africa and in the following year he toured Europe with Sammy Price. In 1960 he returned to Africa with Herbie Mann and later moved to New York where he led his own band.

During the 1960s Cheatham decided to build on his past music influences to improve himself as a soloist and improviser. Consequently, he gained an international reputation as a trumpet soloist. It was at this time that he also began singing on his recordings. Throughout the rest of his career he remained in high demand on the concert and festival circuit.

Cheatham continued performing and recording into the 1990s. Every Sunday for the last years of his life he played at Sweet Basil, his "hangout" club in New York. In 1996 he recorded an album with then newcomer Nicholas Payton. However, the morning after a 1997 concert with Payton in Washington, D.C. Cheatham suffered a fatal stroke. He did not live to see his collaboration with Payton receive a Grammy for Best Jazz Instrumental Performance in 1998.

Scope and Contents

The Adolphus "Doc" Cheatham Papers contain publications, photographs, correspondence, memorabilia, autobiographical materials, music, awards, and audio and visual recordings documenting his life and career as a big band and jazz trumpeter.

The collection is 11 cubic feet and is organized into five series: Series 1: Publications, Series 2: Photographs and Artwork, Series 3: Personal Papers and Memorabilia, Series 4: Music and Awards, and Series 5: Audiovisual Materials. The majority of the material dates from the mid-1930s to the late 1990s.
Arrangement

The collection is arranged into five series.

Series 1: Publications, circa 1950s-1990s
Series 2: Photographs and Artwork, 1930s-1990s
Series 3: Personal Papers and Memorabilia, circa 1930s-1990s
Series 4: Music and Awards, circa 1940s-1990s
Series 5: Audiovisual Materials, circa 1930s-1990s

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
  Jazz musicians -- United States
  Trumpet players -- 20th century

Types of Materials:
  Address books
  Appointment books
  Awards
  Clippings -- 20th century
  Home movies
  Interviews
  Motion pictures (visual works)
  Parts (musical)
  Passports
  Photographs -- 20th century
  Posters -- 20th century
  Programs -- Concerts
  Sheet music
Container Listing

Series 1: Publications, ca. 1950s-1990s

Subseries 1.1: Magazines, ca. 1950s-1990s

Subseries 1A, ca. 1950s-1990s, boxes 1-3. Magazines and Newspaper and Magazine Clippings. The Magazines are arranged alphabetically by title and include domestic and international music magazines and others that have articles about or related to Cheatham. The Newspaper and Magazine Clippings are arranged alphabetically by title and consist of articles about Cheatham, including a collection of articles about his successes with Nicholas Payton during the 1990s.

Box 1, Folder 1  "December Rose", 1987
Box 1, Folder 2  "Down Beat", June 1995, January 1999
Box 1, Folder 3  "Jazz Beat", Spring 1997
Box 1, Folder 4  "Jazz Express", March 1988, May 1989
Box 1, Folder 5  "Jazz Hot", March 1979
Box 1, Folder 6  "Jazz Journal", October 1967, June 1984, October 1988
Box 1, Folder 7  "Jazz Monthly", October 1967
Box 1, Folder 8  "Jazz Podium", September 1960, December 1977
Box 1, Folder 9  "Jazz Podium", July/August 1991, April 1992
Box 1, Folder 10 "Louisiana Cultural Vistas", Winter 1998-1999
Box 1, Folder 11 "The New Yorker", September 30, 1991
Box 1, Folder 12 "Off Beat", July 1998
Box 1, Folder 13 "Orkester Journalen", September 1985, July/August 1987
Box 1, Folder 14 "People", May 8, 1989
Box 1, Folder 15 "Time", June 2, 1997
Box 1, Folder 16 "Where", November 12, 1966
Subseries 1.2: Newspaper and Magazine Clippings

Box 2, Folder 1  Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, 1950s
Box 2, Folder 2  Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, 1970s
Box 2, Folder 3  Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, 1982-1983
Box 2, Folder 4  Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, 1984-1985
Box 2, Folder 5  Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, 1986-1987
Box 2, Folder 6  Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, 1992-1993
Box 2, Folder 7  Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, 1994-1995
Box 2, Folder 8  Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, 1998-1999
Box 3, Folder 1  Oversized, 1980s-1990s
Box 2, Folder 9  Doc Cheatham and Nicholas Payton, 1990s
Box 2, Folder 10  Undated

Subseries 1.3: Programs, Advertisements, Posters and Miscellaneous Publications, ca. 1970s-1990s

Subseries 1B, ca. 1970s-1990s, boxes 4-6, Map Case 3. Programs, Brochures, Advertisements, and Posters. The Programs are arranged in general chronological order and are divided into International Festival Programs and Domestic Festival Programs. The Brochures, Advertisements, and Posters are arranged in general chronological order.

Box 4, Folder 1  International Festival Programs, 1976
Box 4, Folder 2  International Festival Programs, 1979
Box 4, Folder 3  International Festival Programs, 1981
Box 4, Folder 4  International Festival Programs, 1982
Box 4, Folder 5  International Festival Programs, 1983
Box 4, Folder 6  International Festival Programs, 1985
Box 4, Folder 7  International Festival Programs, 1987
Box 4, Folder 8  International Festival Programs, 1988
Box 4, Folder 9  International Festival Programs, 1989
Box 4, Folder 10  International Festival Programs, 1990
Box 4, Folder 11  International Festival Programs, 1991
Box 4, Folder 12  International Festival Programs, 1992
Box 4, Folder 13  International Festival Programs, 1993
Box 4, Folder 14  International Festival Programs, 1997
Box 4, Folder 15  International Festival Programs, undated
Box 5, Folder 1  Domestic Festival Programs, 1981
Box 5, Folder 2  Domestic Festival Programs, 1982
Box 5, Folder 3  Domestic Festival Programs, 1988
Box 5, Folder 4  Domestic Festival Programs, 1989
Box 5, Folder 5  Domestic Festival Programs, 1990-1991
Box 5, Folder 6  Domestic Festival Programs, 1993
Box 5, Folder 7  Domestic Festival Programs, 1995-1996
Box 4, Folder 8  Domestic Festival Programs, 1997-1998
Box 5, Folder 9  Miscellaneous Programs, 1950s-1990s and Undated
Box 5, Folder 10  Miscellaneous Advertisements, 1950s-1990s and Undated
Box 5, Folder 11  Loose Paper Publications, 1940s-1990s and Undated
Box 5, Folder 12  Booklets, 1970s-1990s and Undated
Box 6, Folder 1  International Posters, 1980s
Box 6, Folder 2  International and Domestic Posters, 1990s
Box 6, Folder 3  International Posters, Undated
Box Map Case 3, Folder Dr. 13  International and Domestic Posters, 1980s-1990s and Undated

Subseries 1.4: Newsletters, ca. 1970s-1990s
Subseries 1C, ca. 1970s-1990s, box 7. Newsletters. The Newsletters are arranged alphabetically by title and include primarily international and domestic jazz newsletters.

Box 7, Folder 1  "All Nite Soul", 1989
Box 7, Folder 3  "International Musician", July 1997
Box 7, Folder 4  "The Duke Ellington Society", 1990
Box 7, Folder 5  "Jazz (Berman Music Foundation)", July/August 1997, March, June/July/August, and September/October 1998
Box 7, Folder 6  "Jazz (Berman Music Foundation)", January/February and March/April 1999, January/February 2000
Box 7, Folder 7  "der Jazzfreund", December 1986
Box 7, Folder 8  "Jazzland", September 1989, April 1990
Box 7, Folder 9  "Jersey Jazz", November 1975, June 1988, September 1991
Box 7, Folder 11  "The Nashville Musician", July-September 1988
Box 7, Folder 12  "The Note", September 1998, January, May, and September 1999
Box 7, Folder 13  "Notes", undated
Box 7, Folder 14  "Opus", July 1996
Box 7, Folder 15  "Roaring Jazz Crooner Chronicle", June 1981
Box 7, Folder 16  "Royal Viking Skald", May 19, 1989
Box 7, Folder 17  "Storyville", April/May 1970, February/March 1971, February/March 1972
Box 7, Folder 18  "Storyville", December 1972/January 1973, April/May 1977
Box 7, Folder 19  "Swingtime", May 1977
Box 7, Folder 20  "tout sur le Jazz", February 1983, July 1985, August/September 1986
Box 7, Folder 21  "tout sur le Jazz", March 1987, April and June 1990 issues, October 1992

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Series 2: Photographs and Artwork, 1930s-1990s

The series contains photographs documenting Cheatham's career and personal life. The series is arranged in categories and general chronological order. The categories include Cheatham in Concert Solo and with Others, Photographs taken at the jazz club Sweet Basil, and Candids of Cheatham alone and with Family, Friends, and Associates. The photographs span the 1930s-1990s. Also included are photo albums and scrapbooks. The photo album from Cheatham's trip to Africa in 1957 with Wilbur De Paris contains very few photos of the band in performance settings but does include many photos of the places and people he encountered throughout the tour. He spent a significant amount of time in Europe during the 1960s and 1970s and the Europe scrapbook contains photographs and some memorabilia. The most recent photo album is the collection of photos and letters put together for Cheatham by students at Lafayette Elementary School after he visited the school on Valentine's Day in 1994.

The series also contains some sketches of Cheatham and a framed drawing of a man playing a trumpet.

Box 8, Folder 1  Doc in Concert: Solo, 1970s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 2  Doc in Concert: Solo, Undated
Box 12, Folder 1  Doc in Concert: Solo, Oversized, Undated
Box 8, Folder 3  Doc in Concert: Solo (Not Playing), 1970s-1990s
Box 8, Folder 4  Doc in Concert: Solo (Not Playing) Undated
Box 8, Folder 5  Sweet Basil, 1980s
Box 8, Folder 6  Sweet Basil, 1990s
Box 8, Folder 7  Sweet Basil: Doc's 90th Birthday Party, 1995
Box 12, Folder 4  Sweet Basil: Doc's 90th Birthday Party, Oversized, 1995
Box 8, Folder 8  Sweet Basil, Undated
Box 8, Folder 9  Sweet Basil, Undated
Box 12, Folder 5  Sweet Basil, Undated
Box 9, Folder 1  Doc in Concert: With Others, pre-1970
Box 9, Folder 2  Doc in Concert: With Others, 1970s
Box 9, Folder 3  Doc in Concert: With Others, 1980s
Box 9, Folder 4  Doc in Concert: With Others, 1990s
Box 9, Folder 5  Doc in Concert: With Others, Undated
Box 9, Folder 6  Doc in Concert: With Others, Undated
Box 12, Folder 2  Doc in Concert: With Others, Oversized, 1980s-Undated
Box 12, Folder 7  Doc in Concert: With Others, Undated
Box 10, Folder 1  Candids: Doc, 1920s-1990s
Box 12, Folder 3  Candids: Doc, Oversized, 1990s-Undated
Box 10, Folder 2  Candids: Doc, Undated
Box 10, Folder 3  Doc with Family, Friends and Associates, 1930s
Box 10, Folder 4  Doc with Family, Friends and Associates, 1950s
Box 10, Folder 5  Doc with Family, Friends and Associates, 1960s
Box 10, Folder 6  Doc with Family, Friends and Associates, 1970s
Box 10, Folder 7  Doc with Family, Friends and Associates, 1980s
Box 10, Folder 8  Doc with Family, Friends and Associates, 1990s
Box 10, Folder 9  Doc with Family, Friends and Associates, Undated
Box 10, Folder 10  Doc with Family, Friends and Associates, Undated
Box 11, Folder 1  Family, Friends and Associates, pre-1960
Box 11, Folder 2  Family, Friends and Associates, 1960s-1970s
Box 11, Folder 3  Family, Friends and Associates, 1980s-1990s
Box 11, Folder 4  Family, Friends and Associates, Undated
Box 11, Folder 5  Family, Friends and Associates, Undated
Box 11, Folder 6  Artwork, 1997 and Undated
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 13</td>
<td>Africa Photo Album, 1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 14</td>
<td>Europe Photo Album, 1960s-1970s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 15, Folder 1</td>
<td>Lafayette Elementary Album, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 15, Folder 2</td>
<td>Framed Drawing with Inscription, 1988</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Series 3: Personal Papers and Memorabilia, ca. 1930s-1990s

Subseries 3.1: Personal Papers, ca. 1930s-1990s
Subseries 3A, ca. 1930s-1990s, boxes 2 and 16-17.

Contains Cheatham's autobiography, correspondence, an interview done by the Smithsonian Institution, itineraries, passports, planners, pension/welfare handbooks and research notes. Published in 1995, Cheatham's autobiography is an informative account of his career and personal life. The Smithsonian Institution interview conducted by a Mr. Albertson in 1976 reveals much about Cheatham's career and those he worked with.


Box 16, Folder 1  Correspondence, To Doc, 1978, 1985, 1990s, Undated

Box 16, Folder 2  Correspondence, To Nellie and Others, 1980s-1990s

Box 16, Folder 3  Documentary Film Outline, Undated

Box 16, Folder 4  Smithsonian Institution Interview, April 1976

Box 17, Folder 4  Itineraries, 1991

Box 2, Folder 12  Passports, 1930s-1990s

Box 2, Folder 13  Planners, 1990s

Box 17, Folder 7  Pension/Welfare Handbooks, 1970s-1990s

Box 16, Folder 5  Research Notes, Undated

Subseries 3.2: Memorabilia, ca. 1940s-1990s
Subseries 3B, ca. 1940s-1990s, boxes 2 and 17.

Contains autographs, business cards, memorial material, postcards, and international tourism brochures.

Box 17, Folder 2  Autographs, Undated

Box 17, Folder 3  Business Cards, Undated

Box 17, Folder 5  Miscellaneous, 1957

Box 17, Folder 6  Memorial, 1997
Box 17, Folder 8  Postcards, 1940s-1970s and Undated
Box 17, Folder 9  International Tourism Brochures, Undated
Box 2, Folder 11  Menus, 1987 and Undated

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Series 4: Music and Awards, ca. 1940s-1990s

Subseries 4.1: Music, ca. 1940s-1990s

Subseries 4A, ca. 1940s-1990s, box 18. Contains lesson and music books for the trumpet, handwritten lyrics, music notebooks with handwritten music, handwritten parts, set lists, and sheet music.

Box 18, Folder 1 Lesson and Music Books, 1940s-1950s
Box 18, Folder 2 Lyrics, Undated
Box 18, Folder 3 Notebooks, Undated
Box 18, Folder 4 Parts, 1990s and Undated
Box 18, Folder 5 Set Lists, Undated
Box 18, Folder 6 Sheet Music, 1920s-1950s

Subseries 4.2: Awards, ca. 1980s-1990s

Subseries 4B, ca. 1980s-1990s, box 3. Contains international and domestic awards given to Cheatham for his musical achievements.

Box 3, Folder 2 Awards, 1980s-1990s
Subseries 4B, ca. 1980s-1990s, box 3.
Contains international and domestic awards given to Cheatham for his musical achievements.

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Series 5: Audiovisual Materials, ca. 1930s-1990s

Subseries 5.1: Sound Recordings, ca. 1930s-1990s

Subseries 5A, ca. 1930s-1990s, boxes 19-20.

Contains a collection of LPs recorded by Cheatham and others. Includes a "test" recording of Cheatham's 1973 self-titled album.

Box 19, Folder 1  "Adolphus Anthony 'Doc' Cheatham," Doc Cheatham ("test" recording), 1973
Box 19, Folder 2  "Ain't Misbehavin'," Clark Terry, 1979
Box 19, Folder 3  "The Authentic Art Hodes Rhythm Sections Accompanies Carrie Smith with Doc Cheatham", 1985
Box 19, Folder 4  "Cab Calloway and His Orchestra 1932", 1932
Box 19, Folder 5  "Dear Doc . . .," Doc Cheatham, Kenny Drew, Idris Muhammad, Jimmy Woode, 1988
Box 19, Folder 6  "Doc Cheatham Prescribes," Al Casey, Doc Cheatham, Al Hall, Herb Hall, Gloria Hearn, Irwin Spivak, 1973
Box 19, Folder 7  "Doc & Sammy," Doc Cheatham and Sammy Price, 1976
Box 19, Folder 8  "Eartha Kitt, Doc Cheatham, Bill Coleman with George Duvivier & Co.", 1950, 1956
Box 19, Folder 9  "From Dixie to Swing," Doc Cheatham, Kenny Davern Vic Dickenson, George Duvivier, Gus Johnson Jr., Dick Wellstood, 1972
Box 19, Folder 10 "Giants of Jazz," Various artists, Undated
Box 19, Folder 11 "Good for What Ails Ya . . .," Doc Cheatham, 1977
Box 19, Folder 12 "Grande Parade du Jazz," Various artists, 1975
Box 19, Folder 13 "hey doc!," Doc Cheatham, Undated
Box 19, Folder 14 "I've Got a Crush on You," Doc Cheatham featuring Howard Alden and Milt Hinton with the Hot Jazz Orchestra of New York, 1983
Box 19, Folder 15 "It's a Good Life," Doc Cheatham and his New York Quartet, 1983
Box 20, Folder 1  "Jane Harvey," Gene Bertoncini, John Bunch, Doc Cheatham, Richard Davis, Don Elliot, Billy Goodwin, "Bucky" Pizzarelli, 1974

Box 20, Folder 2  "Jive at Five;", Doc Cheatham, Dic Dickenson, George Duvivier, Johnny Guarnieri, Oliver Jackson, Buddy Tate, 1975

Box 20, Folder 3  "John – Doc & Herb," Fessors Nighthawks, 1979

Box 20, Folder 4  "Lionel Hampton All Star Band at Newport '76", 1980

Box 20, Folder 5  "Maestro Sam Wooding y sus Chocolate Kiddies 1925-1929", 1925, 1929

Box 20, Folder 6  "More Blues & Jazz from Harlem," Clyde Bernhardt – Jay Cole Blues and Jazz Band, 1973

Box 20, Folder 7  "New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra", 1987

Box 20, Folder 8  "Old School Band," (20e anniversaire de l'orchestre de Jazz New Orleans Old School Band avec la participation du celebre trumpettiste noir Doc Cheatham), 1961

Box 20, Folder 9  "Sam Wooding and his Chocolate Dandies", 1929, 1963

Box 20, Folder 10  "Too Marvelous for Words," Doc Cheatham with the Hot Jazz Orchestra of New York, 1982

Box 20, Folder 11  "A Tribute to Louis Armstrong," Doc Cheatham and his Swedish Jazz All Stars featuring Dick Cary, 1988

Box 20, Folder 12  "Wilbur De Paris and his New New Orleans Jazz", 1955

Box 20, Folder 13  "Wilbur De Paris Plays Something Old, New, Gay, Blue", Undated

Subseries 5.2: Moving Image, ca. 1930s-1990s

Subseries 5B, ca. 1930s-1990s, boxes 21-23.

Contains VHS recordings of performances, interviews, and events related to Cheatham's career, and Film recordings of his tours in Europe, Africa, South America, and Japan (user copies unavailable).

Box 21, Folder 1  "International House", 1933

Box 21, Folder 2  "Doc's '85", 1985

Box 21, Folder 4  "The Jazz Tradition with Doc Cheatham", November 13, 1985
Box 21, Folder 5  "What It Takes taping", June 9, 1988
Box 21, Folder 6  "For Doc, with Love, Jane & Chuck Folds", April 1989
Box 21, Folder 7  "Louis Armstrong House, Queens College Presents Home Fire, tape 2", June 9, 1990
Box 21, Folder 8  "Doc Cheatham, Art Gallery, Windsor", April 28, 1991
Box 22, Folder 1  "Louis Armstrong Archive Dedication Ceremony", September 5, 1991
Box 22, Folder 2  "Doc Cheatham at Waterloo Carnival of Jazz", September 8, 1991
Box 22, Folder 3  "Doc Cheatham in New Orleans in Radio Station WWOZ, "Interview in Louis Armstrong Park, raw video footage for TV WYES New Orleans," April 28, 1994
Box 22, Folder 4  "Nightline – The Ace of Jazz", February 24, 1995
Box 22, Folder 5  "Cotton Club and Brown Sugar, parts 1-2", Undated
Box 22, Folder 6  "Doc Cheatham", Undated
Box 22, Folder 7  "Doc Cheatham, Charles Kuralt", Undated
Box 22, Folder 8  "Louis Armstrong", Undated
Box 22, Folder 9  "Peter Appleyard presents Doc Cheatham", Undated
Box 22, Folder 10  "Wynton Marsalis and Friends, A Tribute to Louis Armstrong", Undated
Box 22, Folder 11  "Special Tape for Doc Cheatham, Cotton Club London", Undated
Box 22, Folder 12  Unidentified
Box 22, Folder 13  Unidentified
Box 23  "Paris 1957, Las Vegas 1967, London 1968"
Box 23  "Russia, Nice 1975"
Box 23  "Africa Tour"

Box 23  "Caracas, Panama, San Domingo, P. R., N. Y."

Box 23  "Japan and Honolulu"