



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the William Russo Music and Personal Papers

NMAH.AC.0845

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2003

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	William Russo Music and Personal Papers
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0845
Date:	1920s-2002.
Extent:	53 Cubic feet
Creator:	Strayhorn, Billy (William Thomas), 1915-1967 Claxton, William Kenton, Stan Leonard, Herman, 1923-2010 Mulligan, Gerry Russo, William, 1928-2003
Language:	English
Digital Content:	Image(s): William Russo Music and Personal Papers

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Bequeathed to the Smithsonian by William Russo. Papers collected after Russo's death in 2003. The 2007 addendum sent by Russo's sister and daughter were also part of the bequest.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Daniel Alonzo, Charlotte Gray, Peiling Li, Adrienne Mullins, Sarah Winnan, and Scott Schwartz, 2003.

Preferred Citation

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Restrictions on Access

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Biographical / Historical

Russo (1928-2003) was a renowned American jazz composer, arranger and founder of the Chicago Jazz Ensemble.

Scope and Contents

Papers and audiovisual materials documenting Russo's career in music. The collection includes Russo's original and published music scores, parts and arrangements; audiovisual materials including recordings of broadcasts of Russo's radio show, performances of Russo's compositions, including performances by Duke Ellington, and film and video recordings of Russo's productions in theater and opera; and personal papers such as correspondence, photographs, scrapbooks, publicity files, contracts, etc. Among the most significant items in the collection are experimental jazz arrangements for Stan Kenton in the late 1940s-early 1950s, undated arrangements for Gerry Mulligan, Russo's original arrangement of Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert, scores to his first and second symphonies, and scores and libretti to several early rock operas. The photographs include images of persons such as Ellington, Kenton, and Billy Strayhorn, and photographs by jazz photographers Herman Leonard and William Claxton. 2007 addendum includes correspondence, mostly between Russo and his family; eighteen diaries for 1946-1967 (not all years are present) with sparse entries, some in Italian; and additional music manuscripts, parts, scores and libretti.

Arrangement

Divided into 3 series: Music manuscripts, Audiovisual materials, and Personal and Business Papers.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

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

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Awards
- Business records -- 20th century
- Correspondence -- 20th century
- Lecture notes
- Librettos
- Motion pictures (visual works)
- Music -- Manuscripts
- Photographs -- 20th century

Posters -- 20th century
Programs
Scores
Scrapbooks

Names:

Chicago Jazz Ensemble
Ellington, Duke, 1899-1974