



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Chico O'Farrill Papers

NMAH.AC.0892

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Chico O'Farrill Papers
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0892
Date:	1975 - 1975 1999 - 1999 1949
Extent:	1 Cubic foot (5 boxes)
Creator:	O'Farrill, Chico, 1921-2001 O'Farrill, Lupe Stravinsky, Igor, 1882-1971
Language:	Collection is in English. Some materials in Spanish.
Summary:	The collection documents the professional career of Chico O'Farrill, Cuban-born trumpet player, composer and arranger of Afro Cuban, bebop, and other styles of jazz.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Guadalupe Valero O'Farrill, widow of Chico O'Farrill, donated the collection in 2005.

Materials in the Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Paquito D'Rivera Music Manuscripts and Photograph (AC0891)

Tito Puente Papers (AC0894)

Mongo Santamaria Papers (AC0893)

Charismic Productions Records of Dizzy Gillespie (AC0979)

Latino Music Collection (AC0852)

Processing Information

Collection processed by Sarah Allan (volunteer), supervised by Vanessa Broussard Simmons, archivist, 2008.

Preferred Citation

Chico O'Farrill Papers, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

: Arturo (Chico) O' Farrill was born October 28, 1921, into an Irish-German Cuban family in Havana, Cuba. He learned to play trumpet while attending Riverside Military Academy in Gainesville, Georgia. O'Farrill later returned to Havana and studied composition. He arranged and composed classical music and jazz for mainstream and Latin musicians. He played trumpet throughout the mid-forties with various Cuban bands, including the Lecuna Cuban Boys. In 1948, O'Farrill moved to New York to study at The Julliard School. Later he composed and arranged music for Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Machito, Stan Kenton, Dizzy Gillespie, and Gato Barbieri. He collaborated with impresario Norman Granz, who helped put together a recording session including Machito, alto saxophonist Charlie Parker, tenor saxophonist Flip Phillips and drummer Buddy Rich. They recorded Afro Cuban Jazz Suite in 1950, a successful blend of the bebop sound he arranged for Benny Goodman and Latin jazz rhythms. O'Farrill formed his own band and toured the United States and Cuba, returning to Havana around 1955, subsequently relocating to Mexico City. O'Farrill moved to Los Angeles in 1965. He recorded Afro Cuban Moods with Dizzy Gillespie in 1975. Around this time, he began to compose commercial music for advertising and television. From 1998 until 2000, he conducted the Lincoln Center Latin Jazz Orchestra and the Chico O'Farrill Afro-Cuban Jazz Big Band in New York. O'Farrill died on June 27, 2001 in New York City.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of materials documenting the musical career of Chico O'Farrill. There are no personal papers, and there is very little information about his life.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into two series.

Series 1, Music Manuscripts, undated

Series 2, Other Materials, 1949, 1975, 1999

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
Musicians -- United States

Types of Materials:

Photographs -- 20th century
Scores
Videotapes

Container Listing

Series 1: Music Manuscripts, undated

This series consists of three of O'Farrill's most important compositions. Afro Cuban Jazz Suite, a milestone in Latin jazz, was composed with Charlie Parker and recorded in December 21, 1950. Also included is Aztec Suite created for trumpeter Art Farmer and recorded in 1959. Six Jazz Moods, created while O'Farrill was living in Mexico City, is a twelve-tone piece. The twelve-tone technique ensures that all twelve notes of the chromatic scale are sounded an equal number of times, preventing the emphasis of any one note in one piece of music. The materials are arranged in alphabetical order by title.

Box 1, Folder 1	Afro Cuban Jazz Suite, alto saxophone solo, undated
Box 1, Folder 2	Afro Cuban Jazz Suite (III), second part, bass score, undated
Box 1, Folder 3	Afro Cuban Jazz Suite (I-II, III-IV), drum score, undated
Box 1, Folder 4	Afro Cuban Jazz Suite, saxophone parts, undated
Box 2, Folder 1	Afro Cuban Jazz Suite, score for piano, undated
Box 2, Folder 2	Afro Cuban Jazz Suite, score for first trombone, second trombone, third trombone, fourth trombone, undated
Box 2, Folder 3	Afro Cuban Jazz Suite, score for trumpet parts, undated
Box 2, Folder 4	Afro Cuban Jazz Suite, various parts, undated
Box 3, Folder 1	Afro Cuban Jazz Suite, score for orchestra, undated
Box 3, Folder 2	Afro Cuban Jazz Suite, score for orchestra, undated
Box 4, Folder 1	Aztec Suite, score for orchestra, undated
Box 2, Folder 5	Aztec Suite, original score for orchestra, various parts, undated Image(s)
Box 4, Folder 2	Six Jazz Moods, score for orchestra, undated Image(s)

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Series 2: Other Materials, 1975 - 1975, 1999 - 1999, 1949 - 1949

This series includes a video tape, Chico O'Farrill: Heart of a Legend. This eight-minute tape recorded in 1999 describes the release of O'Farrill's CD, Heart of a Legend, which marked the international return of this composer. It is a gathering of well-known artists, among them Gato Barbieri, Paquito D'Rivera, Arturo Sandoval, Alfredo Armenteros, Israel Lopez, Carlos Valdes and Freddy Cole. There is a photograph of O'Farrill with Dizzy Gillespie. The title page of Igor Stravinsky's symphonic poem, Chant du Rossignol, inscribed to O'Farrill, is also included among the materials.

Box 2, Folder 6 Title page of Igor Stravinsky's Chant du Rossignol, 1949 April 1
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 2, Folder 6 Photograph of O'Farrill and Dizzy Gillespie , circa 1975

Box 5, Item OV 892.1 Videotape , 1999 November 26

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