



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the John Coltrane Music Manuscript

NMAH.AC.0903

Kiley Orchard

2008

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Names and Subjects	2

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	John Coltrane Music Manuscript
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0903
Date:	1964
Extent:	1 Item (1 folder)
Creator:	Guernsey's New York, New York Coltrane, John, 1926-1967
Language:	English
Summary:	The original manuscript for Coltrane's composition <i>A Love Supreme</i> .
Digital Content:	Image(s): John Coltrane Music Manuscript
Container:	Box 1, Folder 1; Box 1, Folder 1

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection purchased at auction, 2005.

Related Materials

Materials in the Archives Center

William Claxton Photographs, 1955-1960 (NMAH.AC.0695)

Audrey Wells "Women in Jazz" Radio Series, 1981-1982 (NMAH.AC.0899)

Processing Information

Collection processed by Kiley Orchard (intern); supervised by Vanessa Broussard Simmons, 2008.

Preferred Citation

John Coltrane Music Manuscript, 1964, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

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Biographical / Historical

John Coltrane was born September 23, 1926 in Hamlet, North Carolina. Surrounded and influenced by music from a young age, Coltrane trained in Philadelphia at Granoff Studios and the Ornstein School of Music. He went on to play in the U.S. Navy Band when he was called to military service during World War II.

When the war was over, Coltrane played with the likes of Jimmy Heath, the Eddie "CleanHead" Vinson Band, and Dizzy Gillespie. In 1958, he joined the Miles Davis Quintet and became famous for his three-on-one chord approach and "sheets of sound," a method of playing multiple notes a one time.

Coltrane formed his own quartet by 1960 with pianist McCoy Tyner, drummer Elvin Jones, and bassist Jimmy Garrison. It was with this group that he created his famous *A Love Supreme*, a work that discusses the greatness, power, and love of God. Coltrane believed that everyone should contribute positively to the world, and his way of doing so was creating positive thought patterns through his music.

Coltrane accumulated much recognition throughout his career, including a posthumous 1982 Grammy Award for Best Jazz Solo Performance for "Bye Bye Blackbird" and the organization's esteemed Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1995, he was honored by the United States Postal Service with a commemorative postage stamp. He also has a street named on the Universal Studios lot in his honor. Coltrane's former home has been turned into a National Historic Landmark to commemorate his influence on American culture.

Coltrane died of liver disease in July 1967. His music is still heard today in various avenues of popular culture, including movies and television shows. Coltrane and his wife Alice had one child, Ravi, a prominent jazz saxophonist.

Scope and Contents

The music manuscript is the original 1964 manuscript of *A Love Supreme*, a work that exalts the greatness, power, and love of God. The collection includes handwritten music, doodles, lyrics, and notes. *A Love Supreme* is thought to be one of the greatest jazz albums of all time.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Jazz

Music -- 20th century -- United States

Types of Materials:

Manuscripts -- Music -- 1960-1970