



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Ramsey Lewis Collection

NMAH.AC.1126

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2012

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Ramsey Lewis Collection
Date:	1945-2009, undated
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1126
Creator:	Lewis, Ramsey (1935-2022) (Creator) Ramsey Lewis Trio
Extent:	3.45 Cubic feet (9 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Collection includes press clippings, awards, honorary degrees, and photographs of Ramsey Lewis Jr., renowned jazz pianist. The majority of the collection is press clippings relating to Lewis's social appearances, performances, and CD releases from the early 1990s-2007.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This collection was donated by Ramsey Lewis Jr. in March 2008.

Related Materials

Materials in the Archives Center

John and Devra Hall Levy Papers, NMAH.AC.1221

W. Royal Stokes Collection, of Music Publicity Photoprints, Interviews and Posters, NMAH.AC.0766

Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Program Collection, NMAH.AC.0808

Pat and Chuck Bress Jazz Portrait Photographs, NMAH.AC.1219

Frank Schiffman Apollo Theatre Collection, NMAH.AC.0540

Processing Information

Sarah Allan, volunteer, 2008; Tiffany Draut, intern, 2008; Anne Jones, volunteer, 2012; and Reuben Jackson, archivist, 2008; supervised by Vanessa Broussard-Simmons, supervisory archivist, 2008.

Preferred Citation

Ramsey Lewis Collection, 1945-2009, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Accruals

Additional materials were added to the collection in March 2009.

Biographical / Historical

Ramsey Emmanuel Lewis Jr., an American jazz composer and pianist, was born in Chicago, Illinois to Ramsey Lewis Sr. and Pauline Lewis on May 27, 1935. His musical training began at the age of four with piano lessons. Lewis has achieved much success as a musician, as well as, a radio and television talk show host. In addition, he has organized and served for a number of educational programs in an effort to promote jazz. He has received recognition and numerous awards for his work.

Scope and Contents

The collection documents the life and career of Ramsey Lewis Jr., famous jazz pianist, and later, host of a popular syndicated radio talk show and television program. Though the majority of the collection consists of press clippings relating to Lewis's social appearances, performances, and CD releases from the early 1990s to the present, it also includes photographs from his early life and career, as well as selected correspondence tied heavily to events mentioned in the press clippings and a very small amount of personal materials. The collection contains programs and menus from social and fundraising galas, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, photographs, slides, awards, honorary degrees and diplomas, and a medal. Those interested in Ramsey Lewis, as well as the social scene of Chicago in the 1990s, will find this collection useful.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into five series.

Series 1, Professional Materials, 1993-2007, undated

Series 2, Personal Materials, 1950-1994, undated

Series 3, Awards, Honors, and Honorary Degrees, 1989-2009, undated

Series 4, Photographic Materials, 1945-2007, undated

Series 5, Scrapbooks, 1972-1982, undated

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

African American entertainers -- 20th century
African American musicians

Jazz -- 20th century -- United States
Music -- 20th century -- United States
Musicians -- 20th century
Pianists
Popular music -- 20th century -- United States

Types of Materials:

Awards
Clippings -- 20th century
Compact discs
Correspondence -- 20th century
Diplomas
Medals
Menus
Photographs -- 1950-2000
Photographs -- 2000-2010
Programs

Names:

Bennett, Tony, 1926-
Cole, Nat King, 1917-1965
Lewis, Jerry, 1926-
Poitier, Sidney
Robinson, Jackie
Taylor, Billy
Wilson, Nancy, 1937-
Wonder, Stevie

Container Listing

Series 1: Professional Materials, 1993-2007, undated

Scope and Contents: Include programs, fliers, mailings, sheet music for the Legends of Jazz program theme song, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and other publicity and promotional materials. The materials relate to concert performances, the Legends of Jazz radio show, and the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) television series Legends of Jazz. The Legends of Jazz radio show hosted by Ramsey Lewis was introduced in February 1997 and featured the musical talents of jazz instrumentalists and vocalists and later in April of 2006, the Legends of Jazz public television show was broadcasted on television stations for thirteen weeks. Correspondence closely tied to a specific event can also be found among the materials. In addition, there is a handwritten playlist or discography also found among the materials. Materials are arranged in chronological order. The 2009 addendum to the collection is in box eight.

Box 1, Folder 10 Press clippings and ephemera, 1993

Box 6, Folder 7 Press clippings and ephemera, 1994

Box 1, Folder 12 Press clippings and ephemera, 1995

Box 6, Folder 8 Press clippings and ephemera, 1995

Box 1, Folder 13 Press clippings and ephemera, 1996

Box 6, Folder 9 Press clippings and ephemera, 1996

Box 1, Folder 14 Press clippings and ephemera, 1997

Box 6, Folder 10 Press clippings and ephemera, 1997

Box 1, Folder 15 Press clippings and ephemera, 1998

Box 6, Folder 11 Press clippings and ephemera, 1998

Box 1, Folder 16 Press clippings and ephemera, 1999

Box 6, Folder 12 Press clippings and ephemera, 1999

Box 1, Folder 17 Press clippings and ephemera, 2000

Box 6, Folder 13 Press clippings and ephemera, 2000

Box 7, Folder 2 Press clippings and ephemera, 2000

Box 1, Folder 18 Press clippings and ephemera, 2001

Box 4, Folder 5	Press clippings and ephemera, 2001
Box 1, Folder 19	Press clippings and ephemera, 2002
Box 4, Folder 6	Press clippings and ephemera, 2002
Box 6, Folder 14	Press clippings and ephemera, 2002
Box 1, Folder 20	Press clippings and ephemera, 2003
Box 4, Folder 7	Press clippings and ephemera, 2003
Box 2, Folder 1	Press clippings and ephemera, 2004
Box 2, Folder 2	Legends of Jazz, 2005-2006
Box 2, Folder 3	Press clippings and ephemera, 2005
Box 2, Folder 4	Press clippings and ephemera, 2005
Box 4, Folder 8	Press clippings and ephemera, 2005
Box 2, Folder 5	Press clippings and ephemera, 2006
Box 6, Folder 15	Press clippings and ephemera, 2006
Box 2, Folder 16	Press clippings and ephemera, 2007
Box 6, Folder 16	Press clippings and ephemera, 2007
Box 4, Folder 9	Handwritten playlist, discography, undated
Box 2, Folder 7	Press clippings and ephemera, undated
Box 6, Folder 17-19	Press clippings and ephemera, undated
Box 7, Folder 3	Press clippings and ephemera, undated
Box 6, Folder 17	Press clippings and ephemera, undated
Box 2, Folder 8	Audio disc, Horowitz interview, undated

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Series 2: Personal Materials, 1950-1994

Box 1, Folder 1	1950
Box 1, Folder 2	1959
Box 4, Folder 12	1966
Box 1, Folder 3	1967
Box 1, Folder 4	1972
Box 7, Folder 1	1976
Box 1, Folder 5	1978
Box 8, Folder 1	1980-1981
Box 8, Folder 2	1982-1983
Box 4, Folder 3	1982-1983
Box 8, Folder 3	1984
Box 8, Folder 4	1985
Box 4, Folder 4	1984-1985
Box 8, Folder 5	1986
Box 8, Folder 6	1987
Box 8, Folder 7	1988
Box 8, Folder 8-9	1989
Box 6, Folder 1	1982
Box 6, Folder 2	1989
Box 1, Folder 7	1990
Box 6, Folder 3	1990
Box 1, Folder 8	1991

Box 6, Folder 4 1991

Box 1, Folder 9 1992

Box 6, Folder 5 1992

Box 6, Folder 6 1993

Box 1, Folder 11 1994

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Series 3: Awards, Honors, and Honorary Degrees, 1989-2009

Scope and Contents: Documents Ramsey Lewis's achievements and honors presented to him. The series is arranged in two subseries: Subseries 3.1, Awards and Honors, 1989-2009, undated and Subseries 3.2, Honorary Degrees, 1993-2000.

Subseries 3.1: Awards and Honors, 1989-2007

Box 6, Folder 20	Certificate of Appreciation, Congressional Black Caucus, 1989
Box 2, Folder 10	Chicago Legacy award, 2000
Box 2, Folder 11	Citizen of the Year, Gateway Foundation, 1996
Box 2, Folder 12	Gold Medallion award, International Visitors Center of Chicago, 2003
Box 2, Folder 13	Jazz Master award, National Endowment for the Arts, 2007
Box 2, Folder 14	Legendary Landmark of Chicago honor, 2007 March 3
Box 2, Folder 15	Lifetime Achievement award, State of Illinois, 2009
Box 6, Folder 21	Proclamation, City of Detroit, Office of the Mayor, undated
Box 6, Folder 22	Proclamation, State of Oklahoma, 1994 July 24
Box 6, Folder 23	Resolution and Proclamation, City of Cleveland, 1995 April

Subseries 3.2: Honorary Degrees, 1993-2000

Box 5, Folder 1	DePaul University, 1993
Box 5, Folder 2	Lincoln Academy of Illinois, 1997
Box 5, Folder 3	Lincoln Academy of Illinois, 1997
Box 4, Folder 10	St. Xavier University, 2000
Box 4, Folder 11	University of Illinois, Chicago, 1995
Box 5, Folder 4	University of South Carolina, Spartanburg, 2000

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Series 4: Photographic Materials, 1945-2007, undated

Scope and Contents: Include photographs, slides, and reproductions of photographic prints of Lewis's life and career, primarily from the early 1990s-2007. There are a few photographs documenting his childhood. Most images are Lewis with actors and musicians including Sidney Poitier, Jerry Lewis, Stevie Wonder, Nat King Cole, Nancy Wilson, and Billy Taylor. Photographs of performances, social events, award ceremonies, and fundraising galas are also included among the materials. The series is arranged in two subseries: Subseries 4.1, Personal, 1945-2007, undated and Subseries 4.2, Professional, 1959-2007, undated.

Subseries 4.1: Personal, 1945-2007, undated

Box 3 Early childhood, 1945-1946
[Image\(s\): Early Childhood, 1945-1946](#)

Box 3 Family and friends, 1946-1971, undated
[Image\(s\): Family and Friends, 1946-1971; undated](#)

Subseries 4.2: Professional, 1959-2007, undated

Box 3 [1959-1975](#)

Box 4, Folder 12 1974

Box 4, Folder 13 1979

Box 4, Folder 14 1988

Box 4, Folder 15 1993

Box 3 2005-2007

Box 4, Folder 10 undated

Box 7, Folder 4 undated

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Series 4: Scrapbooks, 1972-1982, undated

Scope and Contents: Consist of two volumes of clippings, advertisements, announcements, programs, magazine articles, reviews, and other ephemera related to Lewis's performances and career. The scrapbooks are arranged in chronological order.

Box 9, Folder 1	Scrapbook, volume one, circa 1972-1978
Box 9, Folder 2	Loose items from scrapbook volume number one, 1960s, 1975, undated
Box 9, Folder 3	Scrapbook, volume number two, 1979-1982
Box 8, Folder 10-11	Scrapbook, undated, circa 1980s

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