



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Lewis Ramsey Collection

NMAH.AC.1126

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2008

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Ramsey Lewis Collection
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1126
Date:	1950 - 2007
Extent:	3.45 Cubic feet (9 boxes i)
Creator:	Lewis, Ramsey Ramsey Lewis Trio
Language:	English
Summary:	The collection includes press clippings, awards, honorary degrees, and personal and professional 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 Levy Papers, circa 1940s-2001

W. Royal Stokes Collection, of Music Publicity Photoprints, Interviews and Posters, 1970-2000

Other Finding Aids

Inventory available; contact the Archives Center for more information.

Processing Information

Sarah Allan, Tiffany Draut, Reuben Jackson, and Anne Jones

Processing Information

Processed by Sarah Allan (volunteer), Tiffany Draut (intern), Reuben Jackson, archivist, March, 2008 and Anne Jones (volunteer), July 2012; supervised by Vanessa Broussard Simmons, archivist.

Preferred Citation

Ramsey Lewis Collection, 1950-2007, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

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.

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 served for and organized a number of educational programs promoting jazz.

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. 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.

Series 1, Press Clippings and Career Ephemera, 1950-2007; undated, includes event programs, fliers, mailings, newspaper and magazine articles, and other publicity materials relating to events or jobs (such as his radio show or the PBS television series Legends of Jazz). There is a small amount of sheet music for the theme song to the Legends of Jazz, PBS miniseries. A very small amount of correspondence closely tied to a specific event or media article is also included among these materials. Personal materials include a birthday card from Lewis's sister and a church program about his father, Ramsey Lewis Sr. The materials are arranged in chronological order. Materials from the 1980s are an addendum to the collection and are located in box eight.

Series 2, Awards, Honors, and Honorary Degrees, 1993-2000, presented to Ramsey Lewis from the early 1990s to the present are found among these materials. The materials are arranged first by type and then in alphabetical order.

Series 3, Photographic Materials, 1945-2007; undated, includes photographs, slides, and reproductions of photographic prints of Lewis's life and career, mostly from the early 1990s to the present, with some from his childhood and earlier life. There are a number of images of Lewis with actors and musicians including Sidney Poitier, Jerry Lewis, Stevie Wonder, Nat King Cole, Nancy Wilson and Billy Taylor. Photographs of Lewis's performances, social events, award and fundraising galas are also included among the materials. The materials are arranged in chronological order to the extent possible; many are undated.

Subseries 4, Scrapbooks, 1972-1982; undated, consists of two albums including news clippings, advertisements, announcements, programs, articles and reviews, and other ephemera related to Lewis's performances and career. The scrapbooks are arranged in chronological order.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into three series.

Series 1, Press Clippings and Career Ephemera, 1950-2007; undated

Series 2, Awards and Honorary Degrees, 1993-2007

Subseries 1, Awards, 1996-2007

Subseries 2, Honorary Degrees, 1993-2000

Series 3, Photographic Materials, 1945-2007; undated

Subseries 1, Personal Photographs, 1945-1971; undated

Subseries 2, Professional Photographs, 1959, 1966-1967, 1975, 2005-2007; undated

Subseries 4, 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

1: Press Clippings and Career Ephemera, 1950 - 2007

Box 1, Folder 10	1993
Box 6, Folder 7	1994
Box 1, Folder 12	1995
Box 6, Folder 8	1995
Box 1, Folder 13	1996
Box 6, Folder 9	6 9 1996
Box 1, Folder 14	1 14 1997
Box 6, Folder 10	6 10 1997
Box 1, Folder 15	1 15 1998
Box 6, Folder 11	6 11 1998
Box 1, Folder 16	1 16 1999
Box 6, Folder 12	6 12 1999
Box 1, Folder 17	1 17 2000
Box 6, Folder 13	6 13 2000
Box 7, Folder 2	7 2 2000
Box 1, Folder 18	1 18 2001
Box 4, Folder 5	4 5 2001
Box 1, Folder 19	1 19 2002
Box 4, Folder 6	4 6 2002
Box 6, Folder 14	6 14 2002
Box 1, Folder 20	1 20 2003
Box 4, Folder 7	4 7 2003
Box 2, Folder 1	2 1 2004

Box 2, Folder 2	1.2: Legends of Jazz, 2005-2006
Box 2, Folder 3	3 2005
Box 2, Folder 4	4 2005
Box 4, Folder 8	2005
Box 4, Folder 9	Handwritten playlist, discography; undated
Box 2, Folder 5	2006
Box 6, Folder 15	2006
Box 2, Folder 16	2007
Box 6, Folder 16	2007
Box 2, Folder 7	Undated
Box 6, Folder 17-19	Undated
Box 7, Folder 3	Undated
Box 6, Folder 17	Undated ephemera
Box 2, Folder 8	Audio disc: "Horowitz Interview" undated
Box 2, Folder 9	Personal materials
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 Image(s)
Box 7, Folder 1	1976
Box 1, Folder 5	1978-1978
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	1984-4985
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
Box 2, Folder 10	2: Awards, Honors, and Honorary Degrees, 1993-2007
	Awards and Honors, 1996-2007
	Chicago Legacy Award, 2000
Box 2, Folder 11	11 Citizen of the Year, Gateway Foundation, 1996
Box 2, Folder 12	12 Gold Medallion Award, International Visitors Center of Chicago, 2003
Box 2, Folder 13	13 Jazz Master Award, National Endowment for the Arts, 2007
Box 2, Folder 14	14 "Legendary Landmark of Chicago" honor, 2007 March 3
Box 2, Folder 15	15 Lifetime Achievement Award, State of Illinois, 2009
Box 6, Folder 20	6 20 Certificate of Appreciation, Congressional Black Caucus, 1989
Box 6, Folder 21	21 Proclamation, City of Detroit, Office of the Mayor; undated

Box 6, Folder 22 22 Proclamation, State of Oklahoma, 1994 July 24

Box 6, Folder 23 23 Resolution and Proclamation, City of Cleveland; 1995 April

Box 5, Folder 1 2.2: Honorary Degrees, 1993-2000

 5 1 DePaul University, 1993

Box 5, Folder 2 2 Lincoln Academy of Illinois, 1997

Box 5, Folder 3 3 Lincoln Academy of Illinois, 1997

Box 4, Folder 10 4 10 St. Xavier University, 2000

Box 4, Folder 11 11 University of Illinois, Chicago, 1995

Box 5, Folder 4 5 4 University of South Carolina, Spartanburg, 2000

Box 5 3: Photographic Materials, 1945-2007; undated

Subseries 3.1: Personal, 1945- 1946, 1971; undated

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

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

Box 3 1959-1975
[Image\(s\)](#)

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

Subseries 3.2: Professional, 1959, 1966-1967, 1975, 2005-2007; undated

Subseries 3.3: Scrapbooks, 1972-1982; undated

Box 9, Folder 1

Scrapbook One, circa 1972-1978

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Box 9, Folder 2 | Loose items from scrapbook One, 1960s, 1975; undated |
| Box 9, Folder 3 | Scrapbook Two, 1979-1982 |
| Box 8, Folder 10-11 | 10-11 undated, circa 1980s |