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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Title: Al Celley Collection of Duke Ellington Materials

Identifier: NMAH.AC.1240

Date: 1943 - 1989

Extent: 2.5 Cubic feet (7 boxes, 1 oversize folder)

Creator: Celley, Al
Ellington, Duke, 1899-1974

Language: Collection text is in English. Some materials in Arabic, Dutch, French, and German.

Summary: A diverse collection of papers assembled by Duke Ellington's road manager, Al Celley. The collection includes correspondence, photographs of Ellington and his orchestra at various times and locations; concert ephemera; handwritten notes; business and financial documents, primarily receipts; and travel ephemera.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Related Materials

Materials in the Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Duke Ellington Collection (AC0301)
Duke Ellington Oral History Project (AC0368)

This project includes an interview with Al Celley, July 12, 1989.

Processing Information
Processed by Alison Oswald, archivist, January 2014.

Preferred Citation
Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Reference copies for audio discs and moving image do not exist. Use of these materials requires special arrangement with the Archives Center staff. Gloves must be worn when handling unprotected photographs and negatives.

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.

Biographical / Historical

Albert "Al" Joseph Celley (1909-1994) was Duke Ellington's road manager from 1942 to 1964. Celley handled the band's business affairs, such as concert bookings, logistics, staging shows, and organizing tours. Celley also handled the weekly payroll, contracts, collecting money from promoters, paying road expenses, and sending weekly reports to Bill Mittler, an accountant.

Scope and Contents

The collection was assembled by Duke Ellington's road manager, Al Celley and includes correspondence, photographs of Ellington and his orchestra at various times and locations; concert ephemera; handwritten notes; business and financial documents, primarily receipts; and travel ephemera.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into six series.

Series 1: Personal Materials, 1943-1962
Subseries 1.1: Al Celley, 1943-1962
Subseries 1.2: Duke Ellington, 1948

Series 2: Correspondence, 1945-1963
Subseries 2.1: Chronological, 1945-1963
Subseries 2.2: Alphabetical, 1949-1961

Series 3: Subject Files, 1948-1963

Subseries 4.1: Payroll/Salary Ledgers, 1944-1962
Subseries 4.2: Expense Notebooks, 1946, 1959
Subseries 4.3: Receipts and Bills, 1945-1964

Series 5: Photographs, 1947-1967
Subseries 6.1: Moving Image, 1957
Subseries 6.2: Audio Discs, 1945-1946

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
  African Americans
  Big bands
  Jazz -- 20th century -- United States
  Jazz musicians
  Music
  Music trade
  Musicians

Types of Materials:
  16mm motion picture film
  78 rpm records
  Business records
  Contracts
  Correspondence
  Financial records
  Handbills
  Notes
  Orchestrations
  Passports
  Photographs
  Signatures (names)
  Tickets
  Writings
**Container Listing**

**Series 1: Personal Materials, 1943 - 1962**

The personal materials are divided into two subseries: Al Celley and Duke Ellington. Celley's personal materials consist of a prescription, a pocket diary, an amateur radio license, a union card for the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers, and a business card for an optician in Toronto. Al Celley's pocket diary from 1943 contains notes about bills paid and other appointments. Duke Ellington's personal materials contain a receipt for medical services, 1957; a smallpox vaccination record, 1948; and some biographical information (name, birth date, address, and instrument played) about band members Matthew Gee, Andrew Wilcox Ford, Mitchell Wood, and Eddie Mullen.

**Subseries 1.1: Al Celley, 1943 - 1962**

- Box 1, Folder 1: Prescription, 1958
- Box 1, Folder 2: Diary, 1943
- Box 1, Folder 2: Federal Communications Commission (FCC) amateur radio license, 1961
- Box 1, Folder 2: Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers card, Union 18032, 1962

**Subseries 1.2: Duke Ellington, 1957, 1948**

*Box 1, Folder 3*
Series 2: Correspondence, 1945 - 1963

This series is divided into two subseries: Subseries 2.1: Chronological, 1943-1963 and Subseries 2.2: Alphabetical, 1949-1961. The chronological correspondence is general in nature and consists of correspondence written to Duke Ellington and Al Celley primarily about matters pertaining to Ellington band performances (bookings and arrangements). Also included are letters and telegrams from other businesses in the music industry (agreements and contracts), hotels, musicians seeking employment with Ellington, and fans seeking photographs and autographs. The series is arranged chronologically.

The alphabetical correspondence includes letters, receipts, and contracts with organizations such as the American Federation of Musicians, Associated Booking Corporation, Charter Coach Corporation, Checkerway Charter Coach Company, Chicago Federation of Musicians, and Gary Suburban Lines. Many of the handwritten notes detail salary information for the band and provide the percentage of money (typically ten percent) due under the union guidelines. Also included are contracts executed between Duke Ellington, Inc. and other organizations and/or venues.

Subseries 2.1: Chronological, 1945 - 1963

Box 1, Folder 4 General, 1945 - 1959

Box 1, Folder 5 General, 1960 - 1963

Subseries 2.2: Alphabetical, 1949 - 1961

Box 1, Folder 6 American Federation of Musicians, 1952 - 1961

Box 1, Folder 7 Associated Booking Corporation (contracts), 1958

Box 1, Folder 8 Charter Coach Corporation (bus transportation), 1956 - 1957

Box 1, Folder 9 Checkerway Charter Coach Company (forms), undated

Box 1, Folder 10 Chicago Federation of Musicians (blank contracts), 1949

Box 1, Folder 11 Gary Suburban Lines (blank trip reports), undated

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Series 3: Subject Files, 1947 - 1989

The subject files consist of a variety of materials assembled by Celley as manager and used during the course of daily business. The ephemera consists of menus, hotel stickers, pocket maps, and a passenger list for the *R.M.S. Queen Elizabeth* (1948). The itineraries provide details about the band's international and domestic travels, and the instrument lists provide the musician's name, instrument played, and serial number.

Box 1, Folder 12  Business cards, undated
Map-folder 1      Calendar (wall), 1947
Box 1, Folder 13  Envelopes/letterhead, 1955 - 1962
Box 1, Folder 14  Ephemera, undated
Box 2, Folder 1   Instrument lists for Duke Ellington Orchestra, 1957
Box 2, Folder 2   Itineraries, 1952 - 1953, 1960, 1963
Map-folder 1      Manifest Lists (for the band), 1952, undated
Box 2, Folder 3;  Newspaper clippings, 1958 - 1989
Map-folder 1      Telephone messages and numbers, 1961
Box 2, Folder 4   Miscellaneous printed materials, 1948 - 1961

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The financial series is the largest series in the collection and is divided into three subseries: Subseries 4.1: Payroll/Salary, 1944-1962; Subseries 4.2: Expense Notebooks, 1946, 1959; and Subseries 4.3: Receipts and Bills, 1945-1964. The payroll information is arranged chronologically and provides detailed expenses not only for salaries, but for tips, taxis, gifts, and other entertaining. Loose materials associated with the payroll ledgers include union-related materials, envelopes, letterhead, and handwritten notes.

The expense notebooks are arranged chronologically and contain handwritten notes about expenses paid and advances provided to band members. Many of the expense notebooks contain loose materials, primarily consisting of "I Owe You" (IOU) slips for Duke Ellington, Inc.

The receipts and bills are arranged chronologically and consist of payroll deduction slips for band members, IOU slips, hotel and restaurant bills, and handwritten notes. Also included here are mileage and telephone log information.

Subseries 4.1: Payroll/Salary Ledgers (for the band), 1944 - 1962

Box 2, Folder 6  Payroll Ledger, 1944 - 1946
Box 2, Folder 7  Payroll Ledger, 1946 - 1948
Box 2, Folder 8  Payroll Ledger (loose materials), 1946 - 1948
Box 2, Folder 9  Payroll Ledger, 1949 - 1950
Box 2, Folder 10 Payroll Ledger (loose materials), 1949 - 1950
Box 2, Folder 11 Payroll Ledger, 1950
Box 2, Folder 12 Payroll Ledger, 1958
Box 3, Folder 1  Payroll Ledger, 1959
Box 1, Folder 2  Payroll Ledger, undated
Box 3, Folder 3  Salary information (for the band), [1957?]
Box 3, Folder 4  Loans and exchanges (photocopied ledger sheets), 1962
Box 3, Folder 5  Withholding tax tables, 1946

Subseries 4.2: Expense Notebooks, 1946, 1959

Box 3, Folder 6  Notebook (and loose material), 1946
Box 3, Folder 7  Notebook (and loose material), 1959
Box 3, Folder 8  Notebook, undated
Box 3, Folder 9  Expenses (loose), undated

Subseries 4.3: Receipts and Bills, 1945 - 1964

Box 3, Folder 10  Receipts and bills, 1945
Box 3, Folder 11  Receipts and bills, 1947
Box 3, Folder 12  Receipts and bills, 1948
Box 3, Folder 13  Receipts and bills, 1949 - 1949
Box 3, Folder 14  Receipts and bills, 1950
Box 3, Folder 15  Receipts and bills, 1951
Box 3, Folder 16  Receipts and bills, 1952
Box 3, Folder 17  Receipts and bills, 1953 - 1954
Box 3, Folder 18  Receipts and bills, 1955
Box 3, Folder 19  Receipts and bills, 1956
Box 4, Folder 1  Receipts and bills (includes mileage and telephone logs), 1957
Box 4, Folder 2  Receipts and bills , 1958
Box 4, Folder 3  Receipts and bills , 1959
Box 4, Folder 4  Receipts and bills (includes tickets, Germany trip), 1959
Box 4, Folder 5  Receipts and bills , 1960
Box 4, Folder 6-8  Receipts and bills , 1961
Box 4, Folder 9  Receipts and bills, 1962
Box 4, Folder 10  Receipts and bills, 1963
Box 4, Folder 11  Receipts and bills (Germany and Netherlands), 1959 - 1964
Box 4, Folder 12  Receipts and bills (miscellaneous), undated
Box 4, Folder 13  Super Service Bus Company (mileage), 1961

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Series 5: Photographs, 1947 - 1967

The photographs contain black and white and color prints depicting Duke Ellington and his band members performing and traveling, portraits of Duke Ellington as well as portraits of other musicians/singers such as Louie Bellson, Dave Black, Kay Davis, Harry Carney, Johnny Hodges, Erroll Garner, and Al Hibbler. Other publicity photographs include entertainers [Brigitte Bardot?], Sid Caesar, Jimmy Dean, Alice Faye, Steve Gibson and the Redcaps, the Smith Sisters, and the Jordanettes. The photographs taken during Ellington’s visit to Pakistan in 1963 were created by the United States Information Service (USIS).

Box 6
Portraits of Duke Ellington, undated

Box 6
Entertainers, Musicians and Singers, undated

Box 6
Pakistan and India Trip, 1963

Box 7
International Basketball Tournament, 1947

Box 7

Box 7
Duke Ellington Orchestra at Air National Guard of Utah, [1967?]

Box 7
Miscellaneous (unidentified), undated

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The audio visual materials are divided into two subseries: Subseries 6.1: Moving Image, 1957 and Subseries 6.2: Audio Discs, 1945-1946. There are two 16 mm films from The United States Steel Hour (television) for Duke Ellington's A Drum is a Woman. The television play was written by Will Lorin and directed by Norman Felton. The play was broadcast on May 8, 1957.

Subseries 6.1: Moving Image, 1957 - 1957

Reel 1  
A Drum is a Woman (Part 1), 1957 May 8  
1 Reel (16 mm)

Reel 2  
A Drum is a Woman (Part 2), 1957 May 8  
1 Reel (16 mm)

Subseries 6.2: Audio Discs, 1945 - 1946

Box 5, Item 1  
"Body and Soul", undated  
1 Disc (78 RPM)

Box 5, Item 2  
[Ellington/Murrow interview?], undated  
1 Disc

Box 5, Item 3  
"Threesome", undated  
1 Disc (78 RPM)

Box 5, Item 4  
Duke Ellington on the Piano, 1945 January 12  
1 Disc

Box 5, Item 5  
"Hollywood Hang [Ten?]". Duke Ellington and Cat Anderson, undated  
1 Disc

Box 5, Item 6  
"I Love to Make Love to You Doll", 1946 August 6  
1 Disc (78 RPM)

Box 5, Item 7  
Ravel: Chanson's Madecasses, Jennie Tourel, undated  
1 Disc (33 RPM)

Box 5, Item 8  
"Don't Matter At All" and "Lost Love", undated  
1 Disc

Box 5, Item 9  
"I Saw a Boy" and "I'm So In Love With You", undated  
1 Disc

Box 5, Item 10  
Jazz Concert, Volume 1 from Goodyear Jazz Concert, undated  
1 Disc