



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Ray Brown Papers

NMAH.AC.1362

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Arrangement.....	3
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Bibliography.....	3
Names and Subjects	3
Container Listing	5
Series 1: Musical Compositions and Notes, 1940s-2000s, undated.....	5
Series 2: Publicity Materials, 1950s-2002, undated.....	6
Series 3: Photographic Materials, 1940-2003, undated.....	8
Series 4: Personal Papers, 1954-2010.....	9
Series 5: Audiovisual Materials, 1978-1993, undated.....	10

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Ray Brown Papers
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1362
Date:	undated circa 1940-2010
Extent:	8 Cubic feet (8 boxes)
Creator:	Brown, Ray (Jazz musician)
Language:	English Collection is in English. Some materials in Japanese, French, German, Spanish, and Dutch.
Summary:	Ray Brown was an African-American musician, composer, bandleader, manager, music teacher and promoter. He became best known for his collaborative work with Dizzy Gillespie, Oscar Peterson, Ella Fitzgerald, the Oscar Peterson Trio and Norman Granz' s Jazz at the Philharmonic. Over the course of his career, Brown received awards and accolades from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Jazz Hall of Fame, Down Beat and Playboy. Brown's papers document his professional music career from 1944 to 2002 and include music compositions and notes, publicity materials, photographs and some recordings of his performances.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated to the Archives Center in 2015 by Ray Brown's widow, Cecilia Brown.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Kayla Foney and Vanessa Broussard-Simmons, November-December 2015.

Preferred Citation

Ray Brown Papers, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Raymond Matthews Brown was an African-American musician (double bass and cello) born on October 13, 1926 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He became known for his collaborative work with Dizzy Gillespie, Oscar Peterson, Ella Fitzgerald (to whom he was married for a few years) and others. He was a composer, bandleader, manager, music teacher and promoter. His professional music career lasted almost sixty years, dating from 1944 to 2002.

Brown's career began with a risky move to New York City in 1945, as a recent high school graduate, which resulted in his being hired on the spot to play with Dizzy Gillespie. Brown continued to play with Gillespie and others in various groups, recording songs such as "One Bass Hit" and "Night in Tunisia," before leaving in 1947. Brown married notable jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald that same year. He and Fitzgerald adopted a son, Raymond Matthew Brown Jr., and performed together in Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic. Granz's tours, which Brown participated in from around 1949 to 1958, allowed him to travel and play all around the world. After being introduced to Oscar Peterson during a Philharmonic tour, Brown became a founding member of the Oscar Peterson Trio in 1952. His growing commitment to the group, along with other factors, led to Brown and Fitzgerald's divorce in 1953. However, the two would continue to collaborate and perform together, as friends and colleagues.

Brown worked with Peterson and other prominent jazz musicians to found the Advanced School of Contemporary Music in Toronto, which lasted from 1960 to 1965. He left the Peterson trio in the late 1960s and moved to Los Angeles to work as a composer, manager, educator, and publisher. In California, he worked for several movie and television show orchestras, became bassist for all of Frank Sinatra's television specials, and accompanied some noted singers, including Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and Tony Bennett. He composed the theme song to Steve Allen's show, "Gravy Waltz," for which they both won a Grammy Award in 1964. He also managed the Modern Jazz Quartet, and Quincy Jones. In the 1980s, he formed the Ray Brown Trio with pianist Gene Harris, which lasted nine years. He also directed events such as the Monterey Jazz and Concord Summer Festivals, and consulted for the Hollywood Bowl Association. Brown continued to play and record with his trio and various other groups, such as the Oscar Peterson Trio and the Modern Jazz Quartet, for the rest of his life. He also published an instructional book for the bass, *Ray Brown's Bass Method*, through his own company in 1999. Over the course of his career, Brown received awards and accolades from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Jazz Hall of Fame, *Down Beat*, *Playboy*, and many more. Ray Brown died in 2002 at the age of seventy five.

Scope and Contents

The collection primarily documents the near sixty-year music career of upright bass player, bandleader, composer, and instructor Raymond Matthews (Ray) Brown and the various bands that he played with. The materials consist of music manuscripts, musical arrangements, published sheet music, photographs, programs, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, posters, audio and video recordings, honors and awards, correspondence, and publications. There is very little information about Brown's education, family or other aspects of his personal life.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into five series.

Series 1, Musical Compositions and Notes, 1940s-2000s, undated

Series 2, Publicity Materials, 1950s-2002, undated

Series 3, Photographic Materials, 1940-2003, undated

Series 4, Personal Papers, 1954-2010

Series 5, Audiovisual Materials, 1978-1993, undated

Bibliography

Editors, Biography.com. "Ray Brown Biography." *Biography* A&E Networks Television, undated. Web. 04 December 2015.

"Ray Brown." *Concord Music Group* Concord Music Group, undated. Web. 04 December 2015.

"Ray Brown Trio." *Concord Music Group* Concord Music Group, undated. Web. 04 December 2015.

Merrill, Joan. "Jazz Profiles from NPR - Ray Brown." *NPR*, undated. Web. 04 December 2015.

Panken, Ted. "Remembering Ray Brown (1926-2002)." *Jazz.com*, 2002. Web. 03 December 2015.

Jung, Fred. "A Fireside Chat With Ray Brown." *Jazz Weekly*, undated. Web. 04 December 2015.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

African American music -- 20th century

African American musicians

African Americans -- Music

Jazz

Jazz musicians -- United States

Music -- 20th century

Music -- Performance

Music -- Songs

Musicians

Musicians -- United States

Types of Materials:

Audiotapes

Awards

Business records -- 20th century

Clippings

Correspondence -- 20th century

Music -- Manuscripts
Photographic prints
Posters
Posters -- 20th century
Scrapbooks -- 20th century

Names:

Allen, Steve, 1921-2000
Clarke, Kenny, 1914-1985
Clayton, John
Ellis, Herb
Fitzgerald, Ella, 1917-1996
Granz, Norman
Harris, Gene, 1933-2000
Jackson, Milt
Lewis, John, 1920-2001
Peterson, Oscar, 1925-
Shank, Bud

Container Listing

Series 1: Musical Compositions and Notes, 1940s-2000s, undated

Materials consist primarily of music manuscripts and arrangements by Ray Brown. There are also some arrangements that were created by other composers including Steve Allen, Quincy Jones and John Clayton Jr. Other materials include notebooks, song lists, lyric books, notes and published sheet music. The materials are organized in alphabetical order by the title of the song and then by the type of material.

Box 1, Folder 1	Compositions, A-C
Box 1, Folder 2	Compositions, Christmas
Box 1, Folder 3	Compositions, D-F
Box 1, Folder 4	Compositions, "Gravy Waltz"
Box 1, Folder 5	Compositions, "Gumbo Hump"
Box 1, Folder 6	Compositions, H-I
Box 1, Folder 7	Compositions, J-L
Box 1, Folder 8	Compositions, M-O
Box 1, Folder 9	Compositions, P-R
Box 2, Folder 1	Compositions, <i>Ray Brown Suite</i>
Box 2, Folder 2	Compositions, S-U
Box 2, Folder 3	Compositions, W-Z
Box 2, Folder 4	Compositions, untitled
Box 2, Folder 5	Notebooks
Box 2, Folder 6	Song lists and notes

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Publicity Materials, 1950s-2002, undated

Some materials in Japanese, French, German, Spanish, and Dutch.

This series consists primarily of programs, press releases, newspaper clippings, magazine articles and record charts related to the performances of Ray Brown, the Ray Brown Trio, the Oscar Peterson Trio, and their jazz contemporaries. There are also interviews and critical reviews relating to these performances. A scrapbook documenting performances but undated can be found among these materials. See series five, audio visual materials for audio and video recordings of performances including the White House Jazz Festival in 1978. The materials date from 1950 to 2002 and are organized in chronological order.

Box 4, Folder 1	Newspaper clippings, 1950s
Box 4, Folder 2	Programs, 1956 - 1979
Box 4, Folder 3	Newspaper clippings, 1960s
Box 4, Folder 4	Articles, 1961 - 1964
Box 4, Folder 5	Articles, <i>Playboy</i> , 1962
Box 4, Folder 6	Record charts, A & M Records, 1974
Box 7, Folder 1	Newspaper clippings, 1974 - 1996
Box 4, Folder 7	Articles, 1975 - 1978
Box 4, Folder 8	Newspaper clippings, White House Jazz Festival, 1978 - 1979
Box 4, Folder 9	Newspaper clippings, 1980s
Box 2, Folder 7	Programs, 1985
Box 4, Folder 10	Articles, 1989 - 1999
Box 4, Folder 11	Newspaper clippings, 1990s
Box 4, Folder 12	Programs, 1990 - 2001
Box 2, Folder 8	Programs, 1994
Box 4, Folder 14	Newspaper clippings, 2000s
Box 4, Folder 15	Articles, 2002, undated

Box 4, Folder 16	Newspaper clippings, undated
Box 2, Folder 9	Programs, Oscar Peterson Trio, undated
Box 4, Folder 17	Programs, undated
Box 3, Folder 8	Scrapbook , undated
Box 3, Folder 9	Scrapbook covers

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Photographic Materials, 1940-2003, undated

Consists of color and black-and-white prints, negatives, and film strips primarily documenting the music career of Brown. Ray Brown is in many of the photographs with well-known musicians such as Oscar Peterson, Herb Ellis, and others. The photographs range from 1940 to the early 2000s and are organized in chronological order.

Box 5, Folder 1	Photographs, 1940
Box 5, Folder 2	Photographs, 1955 - 1956
Box 5, Folder 3	Photographs, 1960 - 1964
Box 5, Folder 4	Photographs, 1975 - 1978
Box 3, Folder 1	Photographs, 1977
Box 5, Folder 5	Photographs, 1980s
Box 3, Folder 2	Photographs, 1989
Box 5, Folder 6	Photographs, 1990s
Box 3, Folder 3	Photographs, 1994
Box 5, Folder 7	Westdeutscher Rundfunk, 1997
Box 5, Folder 8	Photographs, 2000s
Box 3, Folder 4	Photographs, 2003
Box 3, Folder 5	Photographs, undated
Box 5, Folder 9	Ray Brown Trio , undated
Box 5, Folder 10	Photographs, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Personal Papers, 1954-2010

Materials primarily document the honors and awards that Brown received during his lifetime for his contributions to the music industry. Other materials include personal calendars, tour itineraries, a few identification cards, correspondence, copyright materials, published instruction books and obituaries collected by Brown. The materials date from 1950 to early in 2010 and are arranged in chronological order.

Box 5, Folder 11	Awards and tributes, 1954 - 1972
Box 3, Folder 6	Awards and tributes, 1954 - 2003
Box 5, Folder 12	Itineraries, 1955 - 1991, undated
Box 5, Folder 13	Miscellaneous, 1960 - 1998
Box 5, Folder 14	Car merchandising, 1961 - 1990
Box 5, Folder 15	Correspondence, 1962 - 2003
Box 6, Folder 1	Extension workshop papers, University of California, Los Angeles, 1969
Box 6, Folder 2	Awards and tributes, 1991 - 1996
Box 6, Folder 3	Copyright claim, 1992
Box 6, Folder 4	Calendar, 1996 July-1996 December
Box 6, Folder 5	Identification cards, 1994
Box 6, Folder 6	Instruction book, 1999 "Ray Brown's Bass Method: Essential Scales, Patterns, and Exercises" Published by Hal Leonard Corporation Copyright 1963, 1999 by Ray Brown Music
Box 6, Folder 7	Obituaries, 2002 - 2010
Box 6, Folder 8	Awards and tributes, 2003
Box 3, Folder 7	Awards and tributes, 2004

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Audiovisual Materials, 1978-1993, undated

Contains moving images (3/4" U-Matic, 1/2" VHS and 1/2" betacamsp), audio cassettes and reel-to-reel tapes of Ray Brown performing with various other artists. The series is divided into two subseries. Subseries one is moving image and subseries two is audio recordings.

Subseries 5.1: Moving Image, 1992-1993, undated

Consists primarily of commercially available videotapes of Ray Brown performing with Milt Hinton, John Clayton, Francois Rabbath, Monty Alexander and Herb Ellis. There is also a recording that was created in Germany of Ray Brown in 1992. The materials date from 1992-1993 and are arranged in chronological order.

- Box 8, Item 1362.1 *Ray Brown and Bobby*, Germany , 1992 September
1 videocassettes (vhs)
- Box 8, Item 1362.2 *Ray Brown Presents: The Art of Playing the Bass: Featuring Milt Hinton*,
volume one , 1993
1 videocassettes (vhs) (Duration: 30:00 ;)
- Box 8, Item 1362.3 *Ray Brown Presents: The Art of Playing the Bass: Featuring Milt Hinton*, stripe
hour four, Reyben Music and Masai Films, Incorporated, undated
1 videocassettes (vhs) ()
- Box 8, Item 1362.4 *Ray Brown Presents: The Art of Playing the Bass: Featuring John Clayton*,
part one, volume two , 1993
1 videocassettes (vhs) (Duration: 30:00;)
- Box 8, Item 1362.5 *Ray Brown Presents: The Art of Playing the Bass: Featuring John Clayton*,
volume one, stripe hour one, Reyben Music and Masai Films, Incorporated ,
undated
1 videocassettes (vhs)
- Box 8, Item 1362.6 *Ray Brown Presents: The Art of Playing the Bass: Featuring Francois
Rabbath*, volume three , undated
1 videocassettes (vhs) (Duration: 30:00)
- Box 8, Item 1362.7 *Ray Brown Presents: The Art of Playing the Bass: Featuring Francois
Rabbath*, Reyben Music and Masai Films, Incorporated , undated
1 videocassettes (betacamsp) (Betacam SP conversion master)
- Box 8, Item 1362.8 *Ray Brown Presents: An Evening with Triple Treat: Featuring Monty Alexander,
Ray Brown and Herb Ellis*, volume four , undated
1 videocassettes (vhs) (Duration: 60:00;)
- Box 8, Item 1362.9 *Ray Brown Presents: Triple Treat featuring Monty Alexander, Ray Brown
and Herb Ellis*, stripe hour 2, Reyben Music and Masai Films, Incorporated ,
undated

1 videocassettes (vhs)

Box 8, Item 1362.1 *Ray Brown's Two Bass, undated*
1 videocassettes (u-matic) ()

Subseries 5.2: Audio Recordings, 1978-1985, undated

Materials include a recording of the White House Jazz Festival in 1978. Other sound recordings were created by unknown sources and include performances by the Ray Brown Trio with Ernestine Anderson on August 16, 1979. In addition, there are four tapes of the Gene Harris Trio with Stanley Turrentine recorded in 1985 and an unknown date and location. The materials are arranged in chronological order.

- Box 8, Item 1362.11 *Ray Brown Pittsburgh Demo , 1978 August 11*
1 Sound tape reel (7 1/2" IPS; 7"
- Box 8, Item 1362.12 *White House Jazz Festival, tape one, 1978 June 18*
1 Sound cassette
- Box 8, Item 1362.13 *White House Jazz Festival, tape three , 1978 June 18*
1 Sound cassette
- Box 8, Item 1362.14 *Ray Brown Trio with Ernestine Anderson, Honeysuckle Rose, 1979 August 16*
1 Sound tape reel (7 1/2" IPS; 7"
Reel three
- Box 8, Item 1362.15 *Gene Harris Trio with Stanley Turrentine , 1985 September 3*
1 Sound tape reel (Ampex magnetic tape two track)
Note inside says Tones @ Head Lionel Hampton artist.
- Box 8, Item 1362.16 *Gene Harris Trio, reel two , undated*
1 Sound tape reel (1 Ampex magnetic tape)
Reel two
- Box 8, Item 1362.17 *Gene Harris Trio, reel three , undated*
1 Sound tape reel (1 Ampex magnetic tape 8")
Reel three; First tune Misty end of set one begin set two last tune Love me tender, master
- Box 8, Item 1362.18 *Gene Harris Trio, reel six, undated*
1 Sound tape reel (1 Ampex magnetic tape 9")
Reel six; first tune Summertime (start of third set) last tune Gospel tune), master

Return to Table of Contents