BENNY GOODMAN EPHEMERA COLLECTION, ca. 1964
(1 oversize file folder)

Biography

Benjamin [Benny] David Goodman (1909-1986) was born in Chicago and as a child studied clarinet with James Sylvester and Franz Schoepp. Goodman gave his first public solo performance at Chicago’s Central Park Theater in 1921 and organized his first jazz orchestra, a 12-piece ensemble, in 1934. His orchestra successfully debuted for Billy Rose’s new Music Hall and began recording for Columbia Records that same year. Goodman’s reputation as a jazz musician, however, was not recognized by the American public until a nation-wide radio broadcast on August 21, 1935 of his performance at the Los Angeles Palomar Ballroom.

The "overnight" success of Goodman’s orchestra quickly earned the band a job with the CBS "Camel Caravan" between 1936 and 1939. In 1937 the orchestra provided the music for the films, "The Big Broadcast of 1937" and "Hollywood Hotel," and on January 16, 1938 Goodman’s band debuted at Carnegie Hall. Goodman commissioned the work Contrasts from Bela Bartok that same year and gave its premiere at Carnegie Hall in January 1939.

Goodman’s career as both a classical and jazz clarinetist eventually enabled him to develop an international reputation through tours to Europe (1950), Far East (1956-1957), Brussels World’s Fair (1958), South America (1961), Soviet Union (1962), and Japan (1964). He returned to Carnegie Hall on January 17, 1978 to commemorate the anniversary of his 1938 performance and in 1982 was a recipient of a Kennedy Center Honors Award.

Scope and Content

The Benny Goodman Ephemera Collection consists of a poster documenting Goodman’s 1964 tour to Japan and the published sheet music to Brahms’ Quintett for Clarinet in A and Sonata for Clarinet in B.

Provenance

The Benny Goodman Ephemera Collection was donated to the Archives Center on May 25, 1990 by Ms. Rachael Goodman Edelson and Mr. Benjie Lasseau.

For more information contact the Archives Center at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270
Container List

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Scott Schwartz, November 4, 1993

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