The Betty McGettigan Collection of Duke Ellington Memorabilia

(1.66 cu. ft.; 4DB, 2 Flt B)

Biography

Ms. McGettigan was born in Herreid, South Dakota, and currently lives in Menlo Park, CA. She is widowed (her husband died around 1988) and has four children. McGettigan met Ellington as a result of a benefit concert for the California Youth Symphony. She was a Youth Symphony parent who had been designated to find some celebrated artist to do a benefit. The proceeds were used to help fund the youth orchestra's travel to Australia. Duke happened to be in the area at the time, and it was suggested to McGettigan that she seek him out to see if he would do the honors. McGettigan did not know Ellington then, however, she was able to find Duke and ask him if he would help the California Youth Symphony. Ellington consented and performed with the group on March 9, 1969.

McGettigan and Ellington stayed in touch, and she worked with him on the Queenie Pie materials. She kept a notebook, and researched particular questions, such as the type of chair Queenie Pie should have, the particulars in presenting a beauty pageant, and the types of pitfalls that other such shows had met.

Scope and Content

The Betty McGettigan Collection of Duke Ellington Memorabilia consists of materials that relate to the opera buffa Queenie Pie, Duke Ellington's last extended work. Also included are draft pages from, and correspondence concerning, Duke Ellington's autobiography, Music Is My Mistress, which were used to help publicize Queenie Pie, and a script for the extended work My People, which Ellington sent to McGettigan as an example of his work. The materials are arranged in four series: Queenie Pie, which includes music, scripts, and research materials; Correspondence; Photographs; and Music is My Mistress publicity. Most photos pertain to McGettigan, Ellington, and the California Youth Symphony.

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

The materials were donated to the Archives Center by Betty McGettigan, and were received in August, 1993. Ms. McGettigan subsequently visited the Archives Center and spoke to us at length about the materials in the collection. [There are two 1-hour cassette tapes in our files from this visit].

Deborra A. Richardson
October 1994

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Container List

Box  Folder

**Series 1: Queenie Pie**, contains music, scripts and research materials pertaining to Duke Ellington's multi-movement work, *Queenie Pie*.

**Sub-Series 1: Music** consists of the music to the opera buffa *Queenie Pie*, and a music manuscript workbook (Ellington's last) for the third Sacred Concert. Formats are manuscripts, copy scores, and books (which include music and libretto).

1  1.  Original music manuscripts
   2.  Copyist's scores, scenes I - V
   3.   scenes VI & VII
   4.  Original music manuscript notebook; works appear unrelated to QP

2  5-7. Opera Buffa score and libretto (3 books)

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Sub-Series 2: Scripts consists of the scripts and notes to the opera buffa Queenie Pie, as well as a script for My People. Included among these materials are complete scripts from various dates, McGettigan's handwritten notes and manuscript items identified by McGettigan as "Betty's working book," and "the steps to birthing Queenie Pie.

3 1-5. "Steps in birthing Queenie Pie" (A-E) [Duke's working notes]
6. Script for Queenie Pie, June 1973
7. " August 31, 1973
8. Betty McGettigan's handwritten notes for Queenie Pie. used to complete work
after Duke's death
9-10. Betty's Work Book (A-B)
11. Betty's Work Book (C) includes production score for the 1986 staging of
Queenie Pie -- edited by Maurice Perez
12. Betty's Work Book (D) (1986 production score)
13. Playbills from the New York and Washington, DC productions of

Box  Folder

Series 1: Queenie Pie

Sub-Series 3: Articles consists of news and magazine articles, some undated, others ranging from February, 1973 to April, 1978. Subjects include Duke Ellington, Jazz, movies, musical theatre, opera, beauty pageants, and celebrities. These articles were used in Betty McGettigan's research for Queenie Pie.

4 1. Articles on Duke Ellington, related to Duke Ellington, or on jazz
   February, 1973 - April, 1977, some undated
2. Articles on movies, musical theatre, and opera, dating from
   August, 1975 to June, 1977, including reviews on Porgy and Bess, some undated
3. Undated articles on celebrities and "The Black Elite"
4. Articles concerning beauty contests, one dating from April, 1978, the others,
   undated
5. Articles from Stanton Delaplane's "Postcard" and from Von Hoffman's "The Spectators," undated columns
6. Clippings of Rattan Furniture

Series 2: Correspondence consists of letters and notes to and from Duke Ellington, Mercer Ellington, and Betty McGettigan. Duke Ellington memorabilia, ephemera and miscellanea (including business cards and loose files). The letters to and from Duke include business correspondence, letters from friends and acquaintances, fan mail, birthday and Easter

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correspondence. The notes to McGettigan accompanied her pay (April, 1972 - January, 1974), concerned company business, or included short greetings. Among the names on the business cards and the loose file of names and addresses were the composers Betty Jackson King and Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, and Brock Peters an actor with a beautiful singing voice. All three are African Americans.

4  8. Duke Ellington birth certificate
9. 75th Birthday wishes
10. Letters and notes to Duke and Mercer Ellington, and from the company in 1973, some material undated
11. Performance schedule/chart from DE's last European tour and handwritten list of musicians/instruments, undated
12. Correspondence and program from the California Youth Symphony (1969)
13. Notes to Betty McGettigan, from Duke Ellington or regarding Duke Ellington, including a personal Christmas card (1970) and personalized signature on art paper
14. Correspondence between Betty McGettigan and NMAH (Division of Musical History and Archives Center, 1992)
15. Miscellaneous receipts from 1972 and 1973, some undated
16. Handwritten addresses on note papers, alphabetized by last name
17. Business cards, alphabetized by last name
18. Miscellaneous notations on scrap paper
19. Church ephemera

Box   Folder   

**Series 3: Photographs** consists of fifteen 8x10 b+w photos and three 5x7 photos, dating from 1969-74. There are three groups and one miscellaneous shot. Nine photos are from the March 9, 1969 concert of the California Youth Symphony Orchestra with guest, Duke Ellington, at Foothill College in Los Altos, CA. Two photos are from Bimbo's Club in San Francisco, CA (December, 1969). Three photos are head and shoulders shots of Duke Ellington. The final photo is Duke with a friend. In addition, there are three copies of a publicity shot of Duke at the piano, two in black and white, one in color. Photographers represented in this series are: Doug Rider, Fred English, Ken Yim (*Palo Alto Times*), and *Sepia Magazine*.

5  1. Duke Ellington at the piano, autographed to Betty McGettigan, Fred English photo, (Foothill College).
   -- Duke Ellington, Betty McGettigan, and friend (Foothill College).
   -- Duke Ellington and Betty McGettigan -- arriving (Foothill College).
   -- Duke Ellington and Betty McGettigan (Los Altos, CA).
   -- Duke Ellington at the piano -- rehearsal, Fred English photo (Foothill College).
   -- Duke Ellington at the piano -- rehearsal, Fred English photo (Foothill College).
   -- Duke Ellington at the piano -- taking a break at rehearsal, Ramon Espinosa,

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violinist from CYSO in background, Ken Yim photo -- Palo Alto Times (Foothill College).
-- Duke Ellington at the piano -- concert (Foothill College).
-- Duke Ellington at the piano -- concert (Foothill College).
-- Duke Ellington and friend (Ron Collier?) in Toronto, courtesy Ron Collier.
-- Duke Ellington, Betty McGettigan and son, Michael McGettigan, Stanford, CA, 1969
-- Duke Ellington at the piano -- publicity photo, ca. 1970
-- Duke Ellington at the piano -- duplicate of 16.
-- Duke Ellington at the piano -- duplicate of 16.

Box  Folder

Series 4: Music is My Mistress consists of typed and written drafts from the Ellington autobiography, as well as some correspondence with its publisher, Doubleday, and promotional materials. Some of the draft materials are unidentified and may not have been published in Music is My Mistress.

6  1. Doubleday materials: correspondence, contract agreements, promotional materials for Music is My Mistress, book outline
2. "Dramatis Felidae" -- typescripts of biographical notes from Music is My Mistress.
6. Honors and Awards list from Music is My Mistress
7. Miscellaneous untitled articles concerning sacred music and clergy from Music is My Mistress? [probably not published in MIMM]
8. Miscellaneous Untitled articles from Music is My Mistress? [probably not published in MIMM]
Scott:

Here is your copy of the draft of the series description to the Betty McGettigan Collection. I am particularly interested in discerning the following info:

Series 2, folder 8a -- is the handwritten description of the scene from Queenie Pie?

Series 3, folder 1 -- does all the material belong together?

Series 3, folders 20a - 20n -- is this actually material from MIMM? If not what is it?

Series 4 -- would you please ask Ms. McGettigan to identify all the photographers and people as well as place and time in the photographs that have no info attached (either on the back or otherwise)?

Series 5 -- this series is not yet completely processed. You may want to glance through the materials in folders 7, 8, and 9 to see if you have any questions. They still need to be organized by date or by something that may come of your interview with Ms. McGettigan.

Series 5 -- folders 11, - 15 could use brief explanations from Ms. McGettigan if she would like to explain them.

Series 6 -- Could you tactfully ask Ms. McGettigan why she feels that folders 3 - 8 should be included in this collection?

Ms. McGettigan was born in Herreid, SD. She will not divulge her year of birth. She currently lives in Menlo Park, CA, is widowed (Her husband died around 1988 or 1989) and has four children -- two sons and two daughters (boy, girl, girl, boy)-- all musical. The first three are within five years of each other and in their thirties. The last came approximately five years later. I believe the boys' names are Michael and Peter. The oldest played percussion, the youngest I believe played saxophone. The girls played clarinet and French horn. Her husband worked for Bechtol(?) Engineering during the times when pipelines were being laid in the Middle East.

Ms. McGettigan met Duke Ellington because she needed a celebrity to play a benefit concert for the California Youth Symphony. She was one of the parents responsible for raising money so that the group could travel to Australia. She first heard the Duke at Bimbo's, a famous night club in San Francisco. She met him shortly before that at the hotel where he stayed during the itinerary. They remained fast friends until Duke's death.

If you have the time, you might like to listen to her taped interview with Jessie Roderique from April, 1992. It's approximately 3 hours long.