Soundies Distributing Corporation of America photographs

Special Collections
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Soundies Distributing Corporation of America photographs
Date (inclusive): 1940-1946
Collection number: 1097
Creator: Soundies Distributing Corporation of America
Extent: 3 linear feet of photographs.
Repository: Margaret Herrick Library. Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.
Languages: English

Access
Available by appointment only.

Publication rights
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Preferred Citation
Soundies Distributing Corporation of America photographs, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Biography
The Soundies Distributing Corporation of America issued filmed musical shorts for their proprietary jukebox, the "Panoram," between 1940 and 1947. The playback machines were made by the Mills Novelty Company in Chicago, a leading manufacturer of jukeboxes. The Soundies Corporation executive offices and general headquarters were in Chicago, with exchanges there and in Los Angeles and New York. Gordon B. Mills, one of several Mills brothers associated with the Mills Novelty Company, served as president, and James Roosevelt assumed the role of vice president. Three-minute black-and-white 16mm films with optical soundtracks were rear-projected on a small self-contained screen. Subjects included band, dance, and vocal performances of popular, novelty, and ethnic songs. The music covered genres from big band to country to jazz, with artists performing to a prerecorded music track. Dancers, vaudeville acts, comedians, and others also were programmed. Producers William D. Alexander, William Forest Crouch, Ben Hersh, Dick Hyland, Arthur Leonard, and directors Dudley Murphy, Josef Berne, and others were responsible at various times for the creation of the musical short subjects. Production companies include Cinemasters, Inc.; Mills Globe; Minoco Productions, a Mills Novelty Company subsidiary; and R.C.M. Productions, which took its name from Roosevelt, songwriter Sam Coslow, and Herbert Mills. Some 1,800 Soundies were produced and distributed.

Collection Scope and Content Summary
The Soundies Distributing Corporation of America photographs span the years 1940-1946 and encompass 3 linear feet. The collection contains a total of 1,119 photographic prints from some 1,100 films. The photographs were intended for publicity purposes and document the performers appearing in the films, including musicians, singers, and dancers, as well as an occasional songwriter.

Arrangement
Arranged in the following series: 1. Motion picture production photographs

Indexing Terms
Soundies Distributing Corporation of America