Hairston (Jester) Collection SPC.2015.004

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2015, 2019
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Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: California State University Dominguez Hills, Gerth Archives and Special Collections
Title: Jester Hairston Collection
creator: Hairston, Jester, 1901-2000
creator: Caldwell, Hansonia L. (Hansonia LaVerne), 1944-
Identifier/Call Number: SPC.2015.004
Physical Description: 5 boxes
Date (inclusive): 1917-2007
Abstract: Materials created and collected by and about Jester Hairston, and administrative materials related to Hairston's centennial celebration. Materials include manuscripts, music and lyrics, articles, and administrative files.
Scope and Contents
The collection includes biographical materials on Hairston, music manuscripts written by him, music collected by him, programs for choral events, and administrative materials concerning the planning and execution of the Jester Hairston Centennial Celebration. Biographical materials include both unpublished book manuscripts and published works. Music includes arrangements written in Hairston's own hand, and published materials he collected. Centennial Celebration administrative materials focus on the planning committee, and a VHS of the program.
Biographical Note
Jester Hairston was an actor, composer, song writer, arranger, choral conductor, Goodwill Ambassador for the United States, and an expert on Spirituals. He is best known as an actor for his roles in the television sitcom "Amen" and radio and television version of "Amos n Andy." As a song writer he is best known for the song "Amen" which he wrote and recorded for the film "Lilies of the Valley", but over his life he composed over 300 other Spirituals, and was the choral director for Hollywood's's first integrated choir. He was born in Belews Creek, North Carolina, the grandson of a slave, and was raised in Pittsburgh. He enrolled in college in 1920 at Massachusetts Agriculture to study Landscape Architecture, and though he did not finish a degree at that time, he was later awarded a honorary Doctorate in 1972, and given the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Department of Music and Dance in 1992. After leaving Massachusetts he attended and graduated from Tufts University 1928, and studied music at the Juilard School. In addition to his work with choirs and spirituals in the United States, he performed folk music and spirituals all over the world in the 1960s as a Goodwill Ambassador. He died in Los Angeles at the age of 98 in the year 2000, is buried in Inglewood, California, and has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.
Conditions Governing Access
There are no access restrictions on this collection.
Conditions Governing Use
All requests for permission to publish or quote from the collection must be submitted in writing to the Director of Archives and Special Collections. Permission for publication is given on behalf of Special Collections as the owner of the physical materials and not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
Collection donated by members of the African Diaspora Sacred Music Archive.
Preferred Citation
[Title of item], Jester Hairston Collection, Courtesy of the Department of Archives and Special Collections. University Library. California State University, Dominguez Hills
Subjects and Indexing Terms
African Americans--California
African Americans--California--Los Angeles.
African Americans--Music.
African American actors
African American musicians
Gospel Music
Sacred music
Hairston, Jester, 1901-2000
box 1, folder 1  
**Articles about Jester Hairston 1979-2000**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 1, folder 2  
**Biographical Profiles 1981-2000**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 1, folder 3-5  
**Centennial Planning Committee 2000**  
Physical Description: 3 folder

box 1, folder 6  
**Centennial Responses 2000**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 1, folder 7  
**City of Los Angeles Tribute to Jester Hairston 1981**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 1, folder 8  
**Concert in Estonia 1991**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 1, folder 9  
**Correspondence 1968-1992**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 1, folder 10  
**CSUDH Jubilee Choir Concert 2001**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 1, folder 11  
**Flyers undated**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 2, folder 1  
"**The Hairstons" by Henry Wienceck 1999**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 2, folder 2  
**The Holman Choir Programs 1983-2007**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 2, folder 3  
**Isabel Hairston Memorial 1986**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 2, folder 4  
"**Jester Hairston: A Celebration of His Life in Music" 2000**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 2, folder 5  
**Just Jester 1979**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 2, folder 6  
**Last Will and Testament photocopy 1985**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 2, folder 7  
"**My Autobiography" typed manuscript circa 1970**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 2, folder 8  
"**My Autobiography" copy 1 undated**  
Physical Description: 1 folder

box 3, folder 1  
**Photographs of Hairston by Earl Raines undated**  
Physical Description: 1 folder
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box and Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| box 3, folder 2 | Programs spotlighting Hairston 1976-2007  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 3 | Unidentified historical article (written by Hairston?) circa 1940  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 4 | Hansonia Caldwell Correspondence 1979  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 5 | Eva Jessye, correspondence and works 1927-1943  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 6 | "My Cello and I" by Gregor Piatigorsky 1962  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 7 | Kirby Shaw Correspondence and music 1976  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 8 | William Farley Smith 1978  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 9 | Utica Jubilee Singers 1930  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 10 | Christmas choruses from the Messiah. ed. by Dr. B.R. Henson 1981  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 11 | The Lord's Prayer undated  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 12 | Manuscript Music by Other Musicians undated  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 13 | Masters of Russian song, collected by Kurt Schindler 1945  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 14 | The Messiah by George Frederic Handel undated  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 15 | Song Lyrics 1984  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 16 | Spirituals arranged by Hairston 1950-1960  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 3, folder 17 | Spirituals from the LAUSD in house choral library undated  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 4, folder 1 | Manuscript music by Hairston undated  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 4, folder 2 | Manuscript music fragments undated  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
<table>
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</thead>
</table>
| box 4, folder 3 | Transcriptions of Hairston music by J. Hamilton Grandison undated  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 4, folder 4 | Sakura (Cherry Blossoms) manuscript by Hairston undated  
  Physical Description: 1 folder |
| box 5          | Jester Hairston at Ramona High School 700 Club 1990  
  Physical Description: 1 Video Tapes |
| box 5          | 32nd annual Negro Spirituals concert, featuring the Holman Choir 1991  
  Physical Description: 1 Video Tapes |
| box 5          | The Jester Hairston Collection undated  
  Physical Description: 1 Cassettes |
| box 5          | Amen: The Life and Music of Jester Hairston documentary 2015  
  Physical Description: 2 items |
| box 5          | Amen: The Life and Music of Jester Hairston - Master copy 2013  
  Physical Description: 3 items |
| box 5          | Jester Hairston Tribute, parts I and II undated  
  Physical Description: 2 items |
| box 5          | My Autobiography by Jester Hairston undated  
  Physical Description: 3 items |