



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Bob Howard papers

1927-1986

Sc MG 328

Summary

Creator: Howard, Bob, 1906-

Title: Bob Howard papers

Date: 1927-1986

Size: 2 linear feet

Source: Gift, Blish, Sylvia and Smith, Veora Joyner, 11/14/1989

Abstract: The Bob Howard Papers consist of numerous programs for dinner engagements, benefits and other performances, three scrapbooks of news clippings, and lyrics, musical scores and arrangements by Howard and his wife, Ruth Howard, and Ruth Joyner. Other material includes biographical information, correspondence, contracts and correspondence with his agent, broadsides, handouts and announcements, notices in guidebooks and magazines, feature stories in magazines and miscellaneous radio, television and performance material.

Preferred citation: Bob Howard papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

Creator History

Bob Howard, pianist, comedian, actor of the Broadway stage and on his own radio show, was the first African American performer to have a regularly scheduled television program. Born in West Newton, Massachusetts as Howard Joyner, he attended and dropped out of Howard University Medical School and later enrolled in the New England Conservatory of Music. During his early years in vaudeville he was the piano playing member of Joyner and Hopkins (Morris Hopkins was a dancer).

In 1943 Howard appeared on Broadway in "Early to Bed." He also worked in radio from 1938 to 1975, with his own programs on WEA, WCBS and WHN. He was the first black performer on television, with his own 15 minute show on CBS from July 1948 to December 1951. His film credits include "Howard's House Party," "Junction 88," and "Stars on Parade." Howard's career took him to Europe, Japan and across the United States. He continued playing the piano and singing at various nightclubs and restaurants until his death in 1986.

Scope and Content Note

The Bob Howard Papers consist of numerous programs for dinner engagements, benefits and other performances, three scrapbooks of news clippings, and lyrics, musical scores and arrangements by Howard and his wife, Ruth Howard, and Ruth Joyner. Other material includes biographical information, correspondence, contracts and correspondence with his agent, broadsides, handouts and announcements, notices in guidebooks and magazines, feature stories in magazines and miscellaneous radio, television and performance material.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American musicians -- New York (State) -- New York

African Americans -- Music

African Americans in radio broadcasting -- New York (State) -- New York

African Americans in television broadcasting -- New York (State) -- New York

African Americans in the performing arts -- New York (State) -- New York

Comedians -- New York (State) -- New York

Jazz musicians -- New York (State) -- New York

Pianists -- New York (State) -- New York

Piano music

Revue -- History and criticism

Titles

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Names

Howard, Bob, 1906-

Joyner, Ruth A.