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Music Division

Guide to the

Tom Boras scores

1962-2001

JPB 11-6

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, June 2011

Summary

Creator: Boras, Tom, ca. 1948-2003

Title: Tom Boras scores, 1962-2001

Size: 5.25 linear feet (21 boxes)

Source: Donated by Suzanne L. Boras, 2005.

Abstract: Tom Boras was a composer, arranger and saxophonist. His scores contain compositions and arrangements for jazz big band, and other music including pieces for orchestra, chorus, chamber groups, songs and a musical.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying will apply. Advance notice may be required.

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Processing note

Processing consisted of foldering and ordering scores and parts, and deaccessioning duplicates.

Creator history

The composer, arranger, and saxophonist Tom Boras grew up in Chicago. He started studying piano at age seven, and the saxophone and clarinet at nine. He discovered jazz at an early age, and was the featured soloist with the Chicago Suburban High School Jazz Ensemble.

In 1962, Boras was awarded a full scholarship to the Stan Kenton Clinics at Indiana University, where he met the composers Morgan Powell and Dee Barton. Powell and Barton recommended that he study performance and composition at North Texas State University. There, Boras played baritone saxophone, bass clarinet and flute in the North Texas One O'Clock Lab Band for three years and recorded three albums with the band from 1967-1969. Two of his arrangements, *Goodbye Pork Pie Hat* by Charles Mingus and *Ol' Five Spot* by Charles Lloyd, were recorded for those albums.

Following his graduation from North Texas, Boras toured as a performer and arranger with a rhythm and blues group, after which he was hired to play on Woody Herman's band, a stint which lasted ten months. Boras recorded one album with the Herman band, *Light My Fire*, in October of 1970. He was forced to leave Herman when he was drafted into the U.S. Army, where he served as a performer, composer and arranger with the prestigious North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Band of Colorado Springs, Colorado.

After an honorable discharge from the service, Boras used the G.I. Bill to study with the composer/theorist George Russell at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. There, he completed a Master of Music degree in composition in 1973. During his time at NEC, Boras taught and performed with the faculty there and at Berklee College of Music, among them Alan Dawson, Tom McKinley, Jaki Byard, Ray Santisi, Herb Pomeroy, Ted Pease, Andy McGee and the Paul Fontaine/Jimmy Mosher Orchestra.

Boras moved to New York in 1976 and in the same year received a National Endowment for the Arts Award in Jazz Composition. He also received a full scholarship to attend Columbia University, where he received his doctorate in composition in 1986.

Boras wrote for and recorded with the Gerry Mulligan Concert Jazz Orchestra, Dave Liebman, the Buddy Rich Orchestra, the Dave Stahl Big Band and the Dalton Gang. He served as composer/arranger for Servisound Music Productions for three years, producing music for advertising and films. In addition, he performed extensively on recording dates, Broadway theater orchestras and in local jazz venues.

In 1985, Boras was appointed director of the New York University Jazz and Contemporary Music Studies program. Alongside his academic work, Boras maintained a professional career in performance and composition. He worked as a free-lance performer in many different ensembles, and wrote the music for an off-Broadway play, *Jack's Last Ride*, based on the life of Jack Kerouac. He also wrote the music for *Signs and Wonders*, a musical which was produced at New York University in 2000. In 1994 he released a CD of his work, *Three Houses*, and, in 2001, finished *One Couple*, a three-movement work for two pianos. Boras's final project was the completion of his book, *Jazz Composition and Arranging*. He died on March 12, 2003.

Source: "Tom Boras," accessed May 27, 2011,
<http://www.reallygoodmusic.com/rgm.jsp?page=composers2&compid=124401>

Scope and content note

The Tom Boras scores contain Boras's compositions and arrangements. Most of these are for jazz big band and feature Boras's compositions as well as his arrangements of music by Dave Liebman, Charles Lloyd and Gerry Mulligan, among others. The collection also contains music for chorus, orchestra, concert band, chamber groups, piano, violin, and several pieces with unique instrumentations. In addition, there are songs Boras co-wrote with several lyricists; a musical, *Signs and Wonders*; music Boras wrote for commercial advertising; and unfinished sketches.

The collection also contains a single open-reel tape with no content listing or other information. Inquiries regarding this item may be directed to the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound (rha@nypl.org). Audio materials will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

Arrangement

The Tom Boras scores are organized into the following series:

Series I: Compositions for Jazz Big Band, 1962-1993

I.A. Compositions and Arrangements, 1972-1993

I.B. Arrangements, 1962-1993

Series II: Compositions for Other Instrumentations, 1965-2001

Key terms

Names

Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934-

Boras, Tom, ca. 1948-2003

Foster, Frank, 1928-

Liebman, Dave

Mulligan, Gerry

New England Conservatory of Music

One O'Clock Lab Band

Stahl, Dave

University of North Texas

Occupations

Arrangers

Composers

Musicians

Special formats

Programs (documents)

Scores

Scripts (documents)

Container list

Series I: Compositions for Jazz Big Band, 1962-1993

This series contains Boras's compositions and arrangements for jazz big band, divided into two sub-series: one for Boras's compositions and the other for his arrangements of the music of other composers. Boras mostly used a standard instrumentation of five saxophones (often replacing the lead alto with soprano), four trumpets, four trombones, and a rhythm section of guitar, piano, bass and drums. Unless noted otherwise, all the charts in this series have a full score and parts.

I.A. Compositions and Arrangements, 1972-1993

With the exception of *Echo's*, on which Boras collaborated with Tom McKinley and Roger Ryan, the charts in this sub-series were both composed and arranged by Boras. All of these charts are for normal instrumentation, with the exception of *Morningside* and *Mountain*, which adds chorus and strings. A few of the charts have notes on who the pieces were composed for. *Dominion* was written for the New England Conservatory Jazz Ensemble, *Horizon* was written for the Dave Stahl band, and *May I Be Frank* was composed for Frank Foster, for whom Boras produced a separate tenor saxophone solo part. There are two versions of *Horizon*, one dated 1979, the other 1982.

- b.1 f.1 *A Hit Of Pale Tail*, undated
- b.2 f.1 *Annika*, 1993
- b.2 f.2 *Britney*, 1993
- b.1 f.2 *Dominion*, 1972 (Score only)
- b.2 f.3 *Echo's*, ca. 1979 (Parts only)
- b.1 f.3 *Environmental Blues*, 1976
- b.1 f.4 *Eric and Jill*, undated
Horizon, undated
- b.3 f.1 1979 (Score only)
- b.3 f.2 1982
- b.4 f.1 *I Can't Sleep*, 1996
May I Be Frank, 1999
- b.4 f.2 Written Score
- b.5 f.1 Computer-generated Score
- b.5 f.2 Parts
- b.5 f.3 *Morningside*, undated
- b.6 f.1 *Mountain*, undated (Parts only)
- b.6 f.2 *One For Bobby*, undated (Parts only)
- b.6 f.3 *Sound Position*, 1993
Xenia, 1992
- b.4 f.3 Score
- b.7 f.1 Parts

I.B. Arrangements, 1962-1993

This sub-series contains Boras's arrangements of music by Rich Hohenberger, Duke Jordan, Dave Liebman, Charles Lloyd, Gerry Mulligan, Smokey Robinson, Horace Silver and Stephen Sondheim. The arrangement of Silver's *Cape Verdean Blues* was written for the NORAD band; the chart on Jordan's *Jordu* was written while Boras was at the Stan Kenton clinic in 1962; Lloyd's *Ol' Five Spot* was arranged for the University of North Texas One O'Clock Lab Band; Mulligan's *Sun On The Stairs* was arranged for a performance by Mulligan himself; and *Talk Back* was arranged for the Dave Stahl band.

Series I: Compositions for Jazz Big Band (cont.)

I.B. Arrangements (cont.)

- Cape Verdean Blues*, undated (By Horace Silver)
- b.3 f.3 Score
- b.7 f.2 Parts
- b.8 f.1 *Doin' It Again*, undated (By Dave Liebman. Parts only)
- The Hymn*, 1993 (Traditional)
- b.9 f.1 Scores
- b.8 f.2 Parts
- b.3 f.4 *I'm Still Here*, undated (By Stephen Sondheim)
- b.3 f.5 *Jordu*, 1962 (By Duke Jordan)
- b.3 f.6 *Loft Dance*, undated (By Dave Liebman)
- Move On Some*, 1980 (By Dave Liebman)
- b.9 f.2 Score
- b.10 f.1-2 Parts
- Ol' Five Spot*, undated (By Charles Lloyd)
- b.11 f.1 Score
- b.10 f.3-4 Parts
- b.9 f.3 *Ooh Baby, Baby*, undated (By Smokey Robinson)
- b.12 f.1 *Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most*, 1965 (By Frances Landesman and Thomas J. Wolf)
- b.12 f.2 *Sun On The Stairs*, undated (By Gerry Mulligan. Parts only)
- b.11 f.2 *Talk Back*, undated (By Rich Hohenberger. Scores only)
- b.9 f.4 *Win Your Love*, undated (By Dave Liebman.)

Series II: Compositions for Other Instrumentations, 1965-2001

Apart from big band music, Boras's musical output consisted of a variety of instrumentations and formats. These include pieces for orchestra; concert band; chamber groups; percussion; solo piano; solo violin; eight contrabasses; chorus; a double quartet of woodwinds and brass; and several unique combinations. Notes accompanying each piece in the box and folder list describe its instrumentation. The piece for contrabasses, *Stargazing*, was commissioned by the International Society of Bassists for their annual convention. Two of the most unusual instrumentations are *Trilogy*, written for saxophone, electronic keyboard and computer; and *Within Every Creature*, for mezzo-soprano, tenor, bass/baritone, cello and two tape recorders. The only arrangement in the series is *Hair*, a piece for concert band based on the musical composed by Galt MacDermot.

Also in this series is a script and scores, both in-progress and final, for a musical, *Signs and Wonders*, with lyrics by Herschel Garfein and book by Chris Smith. Based on *White Jazz*, a play by Marc Alan Zagoren, the musical was developed at New York University and performed there in workshop form in 2000. A program from these performances is in box 17, folder 5. The scores are mostly piano/vocal reductions but also include full piano/bass/vocal scores in the final versions, as well as bass and drum parts.

Boras worked on another musical, never completed, called *Casey and David*, for which there is only a brief script and sketch score. The lyricist or other authors for this project are unknown.

This series also contains songs on which Boras collaborated with lyricists, most often Bari Gilbert, but also with Mike Ventimiglia and, in one case, a song set to lyrics by Amiri Baraka (credited as Leroi Jones), and dedicated to Baraka's daughter, Kellie Jones. The songs mostly consist of lead sheets, but some of the songs Boras wrote with Gilbert and Ventimiglia have arrangements for piano trio and vocalist, or sketches of arrangements.

Finally, this series contains music Boras wrote for commercial advertising, sketches of unfinished music, and a folder of eight compositions by Wen Loong-Hsing, a friend of Boras's.

- b.9 f.5 *Apeiron*, 1987 (For orchestra. Score only)
- b.13 f.1 *Blackout*, undated (For percussion. Score only)
- b.12 f.4 *Casey and David*, undated
- b.13 f.2 *Chorale Prelude*, 1998 (For brass)
- b.14 f.1-2 Commercial Music, undated
- b.13 f.3 *Double Quintet*, 1976
For a quartet of reeds and a quartet of brass. Includes correspondence from Boras discussing the piece
- b.14 f.3 *Enigma Suite*, 1977 (For solo cello)
- b.14 f.4 *La Falcon De Nora*, 1965
For flute, clarinet, trumpet, alto saxophone, French horn, trombone, tuba and vibraphone
- b.14 f.5 *Father, Our Name Is Yours*, 1990 (For choir)

Series II: Compositions for Other Instrumenta... (cont.)

- b.13 f.4 *Fields Of Expression*, 1973 (For orchestra. Score only)
Hair, undated (For concert band)
- b.11 f.3 Score
- b.14 f.6 Parts
- b.16 f.1 *Improvisation for Solo Piano*, undated
- b.16 f.2 *Joan's Living Room*, 1977
For flute, piccolo, alto and tenor saxophones, violin, violins, viola, trumpets, trombone and rhythm section.
- b.16 f.3 *King Johnny*, 1985 (Sketch score only, possibly for big band)
- b.16 f.4 *One Couple*, 2001 (For two pianos)
- b.11 f.4 *Piano Trio*, 1973 (For piano, violin and cello)
- b.16 f.5 *Same Old Surf*, undated
For soprano saxophone, flute, trumpet and rhythm section. Parts only
- b.16 f.6 *Satan's Mysterious Feeling*, undated
Possibly for big band. Parts only for tenor saxophone I, baritone saxophone, trumpet II, trumpet III and bass
Signs and Wonders, 1997-2000 (Musical)
In Progress
- b.17 f.1 Script
- b.17 f.2 Sketch Score and Song List
- b.16 f.7 Vocal/Piano Score
- b.18 f.1 Vocal/Piano Score
- b.17 f.3-4 Vocal/Instrumental Score
Final Version
- b.17 f.5-7 Vocal/Instrumental Score
- b.17 f.8-9 Drum and Bass Parts
- b.18 f.2-3 Sketches, undated
- b.19 f.1-2 Sketches, undated
Songs, 1982-1994
- b.20 f.1-3 Lyrics by Bari Gilbert
- b.15 f.1 Lyrics by Bari Gilbert
- b.20 f.4 Lyrics by Mike Ventimiglia
- b.20 f.5 Other lyricists
- b.19 f.3 *Stargazing*, 1990
- b.21 f.1 *Suite for Solo Violin*, 1982 (Composed for Italian violin contest)
- b.19 f.4 *String Trio*, undated (For violin, viola and cello)
- b.21 f.2 *Three Choral Pieces*, 1966
Text by James Joyce. For chorus and piano
- b.21 f.3 *Transformations*, undated (For two pianos. Parts only)
- b.19 f.5 *Trilogy*, 1992 (Contains program from performance)

Series II: Compositions for Other Instrumenta... (cont.)

- b.19 f.6 *Trio*, 1974 (For violin, cello and piano. Score only)
- b.19 f.7 Wen Loong-Hsing (music by), 1984-1995
- b.15 f.2 *Within Every Creature*, ca. 1973