Summary

Creator: Randall, J.K., 1929-

Title: J. K. Randall Collection, 1944-2006 (bulk 1953-1999)

Size: 14.95 linear feet (45 boxes)

Source: Donated by James K. Randall in 2006.

Abstract: The bulk of the J.K. Randall Collection consists of the composer's scores and other papers documenting his compositions. The remainder is comprised of Randall's personal files containing his writings, theoretical notes and analyses, correspondence and concert programs.

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

Copyright information: For permission to publish, contact the Chief, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.


Processing note: Processing consisted of foldering and arranging scores and papers.

Creator history

James Kirtland Randall (1929 - ) was born in Cleveland, Ohio. He studied at the Cleveland Institute of Music from 1934 to 1947, and subsequently attended Columbia University (B.A., 1955), Harvard (M.A., 1956) and Princeton (M.F.A., 1958). He studied piano with Leonard Shure and composition with Herbert Elwell, Thad Jones, Roger Sessions and Milton Babbitt. From 1958 to 1991 he taught at Princeton, where he was professor of music. He was a founding member of the American Society of University Composers and has written articles on composing and music theory for several journals, notably Perspectives of New Music (some of these were collected in the monograph Compose Yourself: A Manual for the Young (Open Space, 1995)). He also collaborated with Benjamin Boretz on the book Being About Music: Textworks 1960-2003 (Open Space, 2003).
From the early 1960s into the 1970s, Randall engaged principally in computer synthesis of sound and, with Godfrey Winham, developed facilities for this at Princeton University. His tape compositions were generated by the MUSIC IV B program, a version of MUSIC IV introduced at Princeton. He designed his own software "instruments," which enabled him to specify every aspect of every sound and structure developments within single notes in ways that reflect principles of development used in whole compositions as, for example in Lyric Variations for Violin and Computer (1966-1968).

In 1980 he turned his attention to improvised musical performance and began a series of explorations of spontaneous group performance, or "real-time co-creation," involving many kinds of musicians and other artists (painters, dancers) as well. The ongoing efforts, preserved on hundreds of sound recordings and videotapes (under the project name Inter/Play), document the emergence of idiosyncratic group styles and performing conventions. Randall is himself a regular participant in these performances. In 1990, Randall, along with Elaine Barkin and Benjamin Boretz, started the publications series Open Space.


Scope and content note
The J.K. Randall Collection primarily contains scores and other papers documenting Randall's compositions. In addition to notes, sketches, manuscript drafts, final manuscripts, and printed scores, the papers have a large component of computer code printouts for the work Randall did in the mid-1960s to early 1970s, when he was concentrating on computer sound synthesis and composition incorporating computers. Documented works from this era include Lyric Variations for Violin and Computer, Eakins, Bell, Horsehigh, Connect and Prelude 1A and 2A. The collection also holds scores for Randall's early and later works for voice, piano, keyboard and other instrumentations, including the GAP series for piano, 9 Salon Pieces for Yamaha DX-100, Svejk, and Shouldn't We Talk.

The remainder of the collection is comprised of Randall's personal files containing his writings, theoretical notes and analyses, correspondence, and concert programs. The writings include drafts, final versions and rejected content for the essays and collections How Music Goes, Compose Yourself: A Manual for the Young, and Tonality, as well as lectures, speeches, course descriptions, and papers Randall wrote as a student. The correspondence makes up only three folders in the collection, but holds letters from Aaron Copland, Otto Luening, and the American Society of University Composers.

The collection also has an audio and video component. Unique items include an original DAT recording of GAP7 (2001), a CD-R of a 1980 collaboration between Randall and Marjorie Tichenor called Breathe, and a VHS recording labeled "Pinecone game no. 1 7/28/1981". Among the other audio recordings are 20 cassettes of Randall's improvisational group Inter/Play recorded from 1980 to 1986 (these are copies meant for distribution, not originals), and 14 single or double-CD sets of Randall's music released on the Open Space label. There is also one published CD which does not contain any music by Randall.

Inquiries regarding audio and video materials in the collection 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 J. K. Randall Collection are organized into the following series:

Series I: Compositions, 1944-2006
Series II: Personal Files, 1954-2006

Key terms

Names
American Society of University Composers
Copland, Aaron, 1900-1990
Howe, Hubert S.
Imbrie, Andrew, 1921-2007
Luening, Otto, 1900-1996
Randall, J.K., 1929-
Scelsi, Giacinto, 1905-1988
Taneiev, Serguei, 1856-1915

Occupations
Composers
Musicians

Special formats
Correspondence
Manuscripts (document genre)
Printouts
Programs (documents)
Scores
Series I: Compositions, 1944-2006 (32.5 boxes)
This series contains scores, sketches, sketchbooks, notes and computer code printout for Randall's compositions. Although he has written for a variety of instrumental settings including chamber groups, brass and woodwind quintets, string quartets, and solo instruments, Randall remains best known for his pioneering work with computer sound synthesis and composition. Works for computer realization (or that have a component of computer realization) date from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s. For these pieces, Randall regarded the computer coding (using either the Music IV or Fortran languages) to be more accurate representations of the music than sound recordings made at the time of creation. Folder contents for these compositions can include preliminary written notes and sketches, followed by code printout, but in some cases only code printout exists.

The composition with the most documentation is Lyric Variations for Violin and Computer (1965-1968). The piece contains 20 variations, and there are written sketches and final scores for the violin part, preliminary notes and sketches for the computer component, and extensive code printout. Randall made multiple attempts at achieving the sound he wanted, and several different code printouts exist for each variation. Randall's notes in pen on the first page of printout usually designate the variation in question. The first few lines of code also provide clues to identification, as they list Randall as author and have a field for title. Randall also wrote titles in ink along the stacked sides of the printout.

Another piece for computer with extensive code printout is Eakins (1965), which was composed for a film about the artist Thomas Eakins. Other works for computer include Bell (1966), Bessel3 (1973), Chanrev1 (1968), Connect (1965), Horsehigh (1971), Oddrev1 (1968), and Prelude 1A and 2A (1965). Many of these have only code printout.

Five pieces for computer composed in 1965 are labeled as having been recorded on “Tanglewood tape 7/65.” The five are Connect, Prelude 1A and 2A, Section, and Toronto1.

Randall's works for acoustic instruments and/or voice date from his student days to the early 2000s. Earlier pieces include Piano Sonata (1944-1946), Suite for Piano (1953), Rodeo for Solo Violin (1951), Dance for Woodwind Quintet (1953), Quartet (for woodwinds, 1953), Choral Pieces (1955-1956), Fugues (1955-1956) and Five Monologues for Cello (1955).

After his computer work of the early 1970s, Randall spent several years on the Troubador Project (1977-1980). These are collections of traditional European songs, but they also contain his adaptations of them for voice. His piano/keyboard works include …such words as it were vain to close…(1977); the GAP series (1993-2002), a set of eight pieces, published separately or in small collections; and 9 Salon Pieces for Yamaha DX-100 (1996). His later compositions used unusual instrumental combinations: Svejk (1995-1996) is for violin and marimba; and Shouldn't We Talk (2002-2003) is for baritone saxophone, drums and percussion.

Randall's sketchbooks span his career from the late 1950s to 2006 (there are no books from the 1980s). They appear at the end of the series and often contain preliminary work on compositions found elsewhere in the series. They were stored in binders and some have dividers with titles. Three untitled/unidentified pieces also appear at the end of the series.

There is one piece in the series not composed by Randall. This is Genwot Spectray by Hubert S. Howe (1965), written for computer.
Series I: Compositions, 1944-2006 (32.5 boxes... (cont.)

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<th>Container</th>
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<tr>
<td>b.2 f.1</td>
<td>3 for Piano, 1991</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.2 f.2</td>
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<td>Unspecified instrumentation, probably for computer. Notes and sketches.</td>
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VII. Quartets in Pairs (For computer)

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<td>b.4 f.1-2</td>
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<td>Unfinished choral setting of T.S. Eliot poem</td>
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<td>Chanrev1, 1968 (For computer. Code printout)</td>
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<td>b.3 f.8</td>
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<td>b.8 f.1</td>
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<td>b.9 f.1</td>
<td>From My Diary: A Meditation on Rossignol, ca. 1977</td>
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<td>For piano. Sketches and manuscript. Dedicated to Roger Sessions.</td>
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<td>b.9 f.2</td>
<td>Fugues, 1955-1956 (For unspecified instrumentation)</td>
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# Series I: Compositions, 1944-2006 (32.5 boxes… (cont.)

**GAP** (Series of works for piano) (cont.)

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<td><em>Improvisation on a Poem by E.E. Cummings</em> For Ensemble Soprano or contralto voice, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, guitar and piano.</td>
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Lyric Variations for Violin and Computer (cont.)

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b.15 Variations 6-10, 1966-1967
b.16 Variations 11-19, 1967-1968
b.17 Variations 11-19, 1968
b.18 Variations 11-19, 1968
b.19 Variations 11-19, 1968
b.20 Variations 11-19, 1968
b.21 Variation 20, 1968
b.14 f.5-6 Unidentified Variations, 1968
b.22 f.1 Mono 20,000, 1966 (For computer. Code printout)
   Mudgett: Monologues by a Mass Murderer
   Original version for soprano or contralto, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, piano, percussion,
   viola, cello and bass. Revised version for pre-recorded female voice and computer
b.14 f.7-9 Notes and Sketches, mid-1960s
b.22 f.2 Sketches, Score Manuscripts and Program Note, 1960, 1965
b.22 f.3-4 Prelude, 1969 (Code printout.)
b.22 f.5 Music for Brass Sextet, 1953
   For two trumpets, French horn, trombone, baritone horn and tuba. Score manuscript.
b.22 f.6 Oddrev1, 1968 (For computer. Code printout)
b.22 f.7 Old Song, 1954
   For bass voice and piano. Text by Hart Crane. Score manuscript.
b.22 f.8 Piano Sonata, 1944-1946 (Score manuscript)
   Pitch-Derived Rhythm: Five Demonstrations (For two celi)
b.23 f.1 Notes and Sketches, 1961
b.22 9 Manuscript and Copy, 1966, 1973 (1973 copy has annotations.)
b.24 f.1 Prelude 1A, 1965 (For computer. Code printout)
b.24 f.2 Prelude 2A, 1965 (For computer. Code printout)
b.24 f.3 QBlock VS, 1966 (For computer. Code printout)
b.24 f.4-5 Quartersines, 1967-1969 (For computer. Code printout)
b.25 f.1 Quartet, 1953
   For trumpet, oboe, clarinet and bassoon. Score manuscript.
b.23 f.2 Revelstoke, 1975
   Unknown instrumentation. Notes and sketches
b.26 Rand-Reson, 1967 (For computer. Code printout)
b.25 f.2 Rodeo for Solo Violin, 1951 (Manuscript)
b.25 f.3 Section, 1965 (For computer. Code printout)
b.25 f.4 Shorglis, 1970 (For computer. Code printout)
   Shouldn't We Talk, 2002-2003
   For baritone saxophone, drums and percussion
Series I: Compositions, 1944-2006 (32.5 boxes... (cont.)

Shouldn’t We Talk, 2002-2003
For baritone... (cont.)

b.23 f.3  Notes and Correspondence
b.23 f.4  Score in Progress (Printed.)
b.23 f.5  Sketch and revised MIDI score
b.23 f.6  Notes and Score in Progress
b.23 f.7  Sketches, Manuscript and Printed Scores and Correspondence
b.23 f.8  Rejected Video Captions
b.25 f.5  Showcase, 1953
For clarinet, violin, cello and piano. Manuscript score
b.25 f.6  Six Duets, 1953
For unspecified instruments. Score manuscript
b.25 f.7  Slow Movement for Piano, 1957-1959
Sketches, manuscript and manuscript copy. See also essay Slow Movement in Series II.
b.25 f.8  Solo Cello, 1954 (Manuscript)
b.23 f.9  Soundscroll, 1973 (For piano. Notes only)
b.23 f.10 Speculations (Notes toward unrealized piece)
b.25 f.9  Square1, 1968 (For computer. Code printout)
b.25 f.10 Square2, 1968 (For computer. Code printout)
b.27 f.1  String Trio, 1954
For violin, viola and cello. Manuscript score and parts, and copies with notes.
…such words as it were vain to close…, 1977 (For piano)
b.23 f.11 Sketches
b.27 f.2  Manuscript Score
b.27 f.3  Suite for Piano and Piano Sonata, 1945-1946 (Manuscript scores)
b.28 f.1  Suite for Piano, 1953 (Manuscript copy)
Svejk, 1995-1996 (For violin and marimba)
b.27 f.4  Sketches
b.27 f.5  First Version
Sketches, score manuscript and copy with notes.
b.27 f.6  Revision (Score manuscript copy.)
b.27 f.7  Second Revision (Score manuscript.)
b.29 f.1  Score Edited for Recording Session
b.28 f.2  SYSA, 1969-1970 (For computer. Notes)
b.29 f.2  Theme and Variations, 1947
For unspecified instruments. Manuscript score
b.28 f.3  Three Songs, 1996
Sketches and scores (manuscript and printed)
b.29 f.3  To You, 1954
For bass voice and piano. Text by Walt Whitman. Manuscript score.
b.29 f.4  Tonvib, 1968 (For computer. Code printout)
b.29 f.5  Toronto1, 1965 (For computer. Code printout)
b.29 f.6  Toronto2, 1965 (For computer. Code printout)
Series I: Compositions, 1944-2006 (32.5 boxes) (cont.)

b.29 f.7  Trev, 1968 (For computer. Code printout)

Troubador Project, 1977-1980 (For voice)

b.29 f.8  Manuscript scores and copies.

b.28 f.4-6  Sketches, Manuscripts Scores and Texts

b.30 f.1  Variations for Cello and Piano, ca. 1949 (Manuscript score copy)

b.30 f.2  Vercoe Instr. (For computer. Notes and code printout)

b.12  Violin Sonata, 1955-1956 (Manuscript score (in scroll))

b.30 f.3  Violin and Viola, 1955 (Manuscript score)

b.30 f.4  A Wandering Theme with Ten Variations (For piano. Manuscript)

b.30 f.5  Woodwind Quintet in Three Movements, 1953

For flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn and bassoon. Score manuscript and copy with notes.

b.30 f.6  Untitled Piece for Piano, 1974-1976 (Score manuscript)

b.28 f.7  Untitled Piece, 1988

Unspecified instrumentation. Notes and sketches

b.30 f.7  Unidentified Piece for Computer, 1967-1968 (Code printout)

Sketchbooks

b.31 f.1-4  1957-1959

b.31 f.5  1970s

b.32 f.1-6  1970s

b.33 f.1-2  1990s

b.33 f.3-5  2001-2006

b.33 f.6  Undated
Series II: Personal Files, 1954-2006 (12.5 boxes)
Randall’s personal files primarily hold his writings, theoretical notes and analyses. They also have a small quantity of correspondence and concert programs.

The writings consist of drafts, manuscripts and rejected content for articles and essays, some of which were published. These include the essays How Music Goes, Tonality, and Halloween ‘82; the essay collection Compose Yourself: A Manual for the Young; music reviews published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer; an interview transcript with the composer Giacinto Scelsi; manuscripts of Three Lectures To Scientists (published in Perspectives of New Music); an undelivered speech titled Boston; descriptions for courses Randall taught at Princeton; and papers written while Randall was a student at Columbia and Harvard. The essay A Discovery on Livy concerns the Russian composer Sergei Taneiev.

Randall’s notes are primarily concerned with his work on computer sound production, but also include theoretical topics (Pitch Systems, Instrumental Overtone Spectra, Harmony Exercises), as well as his notes on a Symphony by Andrew Imbrie. The content of the notes varies. The folders can include written musical analyses and sketches, mathematical formulae, musical exercises and lecture notes, and written computer programming or code printout. They mostly do not contain textual explanations (folder titles were derived from envelopes the notes were contained in).

The analyses include examinations of music by Milton Babbitt, Elliot Carter, Brahms, Haydn, Debussy, and Stockhausen.

The correspondence includes letters from Aaron Copland, Otto Luening and the American Society of University Composers, and a rejected program proposal for the 1986 New Music America festival. The programs are for concerts at Princeton featuring Randall's music.

Correspondence
b.33 f.7 General, 1955-1956
b.33 f.8 American Society of University Composers, 1966
b.33 f.9 New Music America, 1986

Notes
b.33 f.10 360 Program
b.34 f.1-2 Computer Tests, 1971
b.34 f.3-4 Digital Filters
b.34 f.5 Frequency Modulation
b.34 f.6 Harmony Exercise Solutions
b.34 f.7 Imbrie Symphony
b.34 f.8 Instrumental Overtone Spectra
b.35 f.1 Math
b.35 f.2 Music IV Early Struggles
b.35 f.3 Numbers of X-Gen Y-Coll Linsets, 1965
b.35 f.4-6 Pitch System Notebooks
Series II: Personal Files, 1954-2006 (12.5 bo... (cont.)

Notes (cont.)

b.36 f.1-2  Pitch System Notebooks
b.36 f.3  Physics of Sound
b.36 f.4  Operations on Wave-Forms, 1966
b.36 f.5  Pitch-Mappings, 1974
b.36 f.6  Scoreboard (Pitch Collection)

Writings

b.36 f.7  Stored Waveforms and Conversion Rates
b.36 f.8  Theoretical Notes, 1964

Analyses

b.37 f.1  Programs, 1997-2003

Articles and Papers

b.37 f.2-3  Babbitt, Milton, and Elliot Carter, 1976
b.38 f.1-2  Brahms, 1976
b.38 f.3  Haydn
b.38 f.4  Medieval and Renaissance Music
b.38 f.5  Debussy Prelude, Book II, No. 2, 1976
b.38 f.6  Schenkerian Analysis of Various Works
b.38 f.7  Stockhausen’s Structure and Experiential Time

Writings

b.38 f.8  Analytical Papers Written at Columbia and Harvard, 1954-1956
b.38 f.9  Are You Serious?

b.39 f.1  Boston
b.39 f.2-3  Characteristics of Language, 1970


Drafts

Articles and Papers

b.39 f.4-6  Drafts
b.40 f.1  Drafts
b.40 f.2  Drawings
b.40 f.3  Finished Manuscript
b.40 f.4-6  Rejected Content
b.41 f.1  Rejected Content

b.41 f.2-3  Composition Log, 1973-1977
b.41 f.4-5  Course Descriptions and Analyses
b.41 f.6  Depth of Surface

b.42 f.1  A Discovery on Livy
b.42 f.2  Godfrey Winham’s Composition for Orchestra, 1962
b.42 f.3  Halloween ’82, 1984


b.42 f.4-7  Drafts
b.42 f.8  Finished Manuscript
b.43 f.1-2  Finished Manuscript
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Writings (cont.)

Articles and Papers (cont.)

b.43 f.3  Interview with Giacinto Scelsi, 1980
b.43 f.4  Intimacy
b.43 f.5  On Facing Front, 2003
b.43 f.6-7  P.C. Collections, 1975

Pitch-Time Correlations


b.43 f.8  Manuscript and Typescript
b.44 f.1  Auxiliary Material
b.44 f.2  Revision, 2001 (Copy of published article.)

b.44 f.3  Playback, 1980
b.44 f.4  Program Note for Shouldn’t We Talk
b.44 f.5  A Report from Princeton
b.44 f.6  Reviews for Cleveland Plain Dealer, 1956
b.44 f.7  Review of Twentieth Century Harmony by Vincent Persichetti, 1961
b.44 f.8  Slow Movement, ca. 1959

b.44 f.9-10  Something Medieval, 1975

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b.45 f.2  T.M.VK. Program Notes

Tonality, 1963

b.45 f.3  Preliminary Notes
b.45 f.4  Draft
b.45 f.5  Typescript
b.45 f.6  What Is It About [a response to recent contentions], ca. 2003
b.45 f.7  When the Birds Come Calling (a public meditation around two recent compositions by Ben Boretz), 2006
b.45 f.8  (You Said) (Yes), 1973
b.45 f.9-10  Untitled Writings, 1980