

Guide to the Rudolph Dunbar Papers

JWJ MSS 174



by Afua Ferdnance

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: JWJ MSS 174

CREATOR: Dunbar, Rudolph, 1899-1988

TITLE: Rudolph Dunbar Papers

DATES: 1938-1986

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.50 linear feet (10 boxes)

LANGUAGE: In English.

SUMMARY: The Rudolph Dunbar Papers document the professional activities of clarinetist, conductor, music critic, teacher and journalist Rudolph Dunbar. Series in this collection include Correspondence, Professional Papers, Photographs and Other Papers. Among those represented in the correspondence series include Coretta Scott King, Eslanda Robeson, and British parliament member Robert Allan. Professional papers include press releases, German propaganda of African Americans during World War II, and music programs from Dunbar's performances as a music conductor. Photographs of independence day celebrations of former British colonies in Africa and the Caribbean make up a large portion of the photographs alongside highlights of Dunbar's music career as a conductor and teacher. Photographs also include dignitaries and celebrities of the day such as Kwame Nkrumah, Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Phillip and Jesse Owens.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.dunbar>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.dunbar>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Rudolph Dunbar, 1974-1986.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Rudolph Dunbar Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Rudolph Dunbar Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Former call numbers: JWJ MSS Small Collections, Uncat JWJ MSS Rudolph Dunbar, Uncat JWJ MS 13, JWJ Zan Dunbar, R., 1979 Folio 79, and 1984 Folio 26.

Rudolph Dunbar (1899-1988)

The musician Rudolph Dunbar was born in Nabacalis, British Guiana (now known as Guyana). While Dunbar gave various dates throughout his career, records of the Danish Immigration Office file V. 76420 of March 1929, and various ship passenger lists show that his actual birthdate is April 5, 1899. Dunbar held many positions throughout his life including clarinetist, music critic, orchestra conductor, music teacher and journalist.

Dunbar began his musical career as a clarinetist in 1912 while in the British Guiana Militia band. He later moved to the United States in 1919 to study music composition, piano, and clarinet playing at the Institute of Musical Art (Now the Julliard School). After graduation, Dunbar continued his musical education in France, Germany, and Austria. He studied music composition with Paul Vidal, clarinet playing with Louis Cahuzac as well as conducting with Phillip Gaubert and Felix Weingartner. In 1931, Dunbar created the Rudolph Dunbar School of Clarinet Playing in London, England. In 1942, he became the first musician of African descent to conduct the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the noted Royal Albert Hall in London, England. Other noted orchestras Dunbar conducted include the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Berliner Philharmoniker Orchestra. Dunbar was also the London correspondent for the Associated Negro Press and reported information of Great Britain during World War II. A journalist throughout his life, he also documented the independence of several African and Caribbean countries from British colonial rule. Dunbar continued his career as a musician and journalist until his death in London, England on June 10, 1988.

Scope and Contents

The Rudolph Dunbar Papers document the professional activities of clarinetist, conductor, music critic, teacher and journalist Rudolph Dunbar. Series in this collection include Correspondence, Professional Papers, Photographs and Other Papers. Among those represented in the correspondence series include Coretta Scott King, Eslanda Robeson, and British parliament member Robert Allan. Professional papers include press releases, German propaganda of African Americans during World War II, and music programs from Dunbar's performances as a music conductor. Photographs of independence day celebrations of former British colonies in Africa and the Caribbean make up a large portion of the photographs alongside highlights of Dunbar's music career as a conductor and teacher. Photographs also include dignitaries and celebrities of the day such as Kwame Nkrumah, Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Phillip and Jesse Owens.

Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Correspondence, 1938-1977 II. Professional Papers, 1944-1984 III. Photographs, 1940-1975 IV. Other Papers, 1963-1986.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1938–1977

This series contains the professional correspondence of Rudolph Dunbar. Letters regarding Dunbar's music performances such as those at the Royal Albert Hall and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra are in this series. Many letters from British parliament member Robert Allan also document Dunbar's trials in securing steady work as a music conductor in a field that included few people of African descent.

The series is arranged alphabetically by last name.

b. 1, f. 1	"A" general	1951–1967
b. 1, f. 2	Allan, Robert	1955–1965
b. 1, f. 3	"B" general	1942–1973
b. 1, f. 4	Bacewicz, Grazyna	1967
b. 1, f. 5	Barnet, Claude	1964
b. 1, f. 6	British Broadcasting Company (BBC)	1959–1971
b. 1, f. 7	Brockway, Fenner	1957
b. 1, f. 8	"C" general	1942–1972
b. 1, f. 9	Coleridge, Taylor Jessie F.	1942–1975
b. 1, f. 9a	Coleridge, Taylor Avril	1943–1975
b. 1, f. 10	"D" general	1942–1969
b. 1, f. 11	Driberg, Tom	1965
b. 1, f. 12	"E" general	1942–1972
b. 1, f. 13	"F" general	1939–1972
b. 1, f. 14	"G" general	1941–1967
b. 1, f. 15	Gallup, Donald	1975–1980
b. 1, f. 16	Green, William	1966–1971
b. 1, f. 17	"H" general	1942–1972
b. 1, f. 18	"J" general	1942–1971
b. 1, f. 19	"K" general	1941–1971
b. 1, f. 20	King, Coretta Scott	1968
b. 1, f. 21	"L" general	1942–1973
b. 1, f. 22	"M" general	1941–1977
b. 1, f. 23	"O" general	1942–1961

b. 1, f. 24	O'Brian, E.D.	1968-1974
b. 1, f. 25	"P" general	1941-1970
b. 1, f. 26	"R" general	1938-1953
b. 1, f. 27	Robeson, Eslanda Goode	1938
b. 1, f. 28	"S" general	1939-1975
b. 1, f. 29	Schuyler, Josephine	1967
b. 1, f. 29a	Still, Grant William	1942-1945
b. 1, f. 30	"T" general	1945-1971
b. 1, f. 31	"V" general	1942-1959
b. 1, f. 32	"W" general	1942-1959
b. 1, f. 33	Young, P. B.	1939
b. 1, f. 34-35	Invitations	Circa 1947-1975
b. 1, f. 36	Unidentified	1942-1977

Series II: Professional Papers, 1944–1984

This series contains materials that document Rudolph Dunbar's music and journalism career. Items such as his personal press passes, press releases and music programs are in this series. Also included from Dunbar's work as a news correspondent during World War II are excerpts of Nazi German war propaganda against African Americans. Journals detailing the schedule of British ceremonial state visits to African countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zaire are also contained within this series.

The series is arranged alphabetically.

b. 2, f. 37	Affidavit	1973
b. 2, f. 38	Ceremonial state visit to Kenya	1979
b. 2, f. 39	Ceremonial state visit to Nigeria	1973
b. 2, f. 40	Ceremonial state visit to Tanzania	1975
b. 2, f. 41	Ceremonial state visit to Zaire	1973
b. 2, f. 42	News clippings	1947–1977
b. 2, f. 43	German war propaganda	1942–1943
b. 2, f. 44	Martin Sullivan's address for the late Martin Luther King Jr.	1968
b. 2, f. 45	Memorial service for Martin Luther King	1968
b. 2, f. 46	Norman Washington Manley Memorial Service Program	1969
b. 2, f. 47	Orrett Rhoden piano recital	1984
b. 2, f. 48	Periodical New England	1978
b. 9, f. 48a-48c	President of Nigeria State Visit to the United Kingdom Ephemera from the former Nigerian President Alhaji Shehu Shagari's visit to the United Kingdom in 1981. A transcript of a speech given by President Alhaji Shehu Shagari is also included.	1981–1981
b. 3, f. 49-50	Press passes	1944–1973
b. 3, f. 51	Press releases	1967–1975
b. 3, f. 52	Programs related to Rudolph Dunbar	1939–1977
b. 3, f. 53	Proms 84 press release	1984
b. 3, f. 54	Sir Alexander Bustamante memorial service program	1977
b. 3, f. 55	Ten Jamaican Sculptors	1975

Series III: Photographs and Scrapbooks, 1938–1983

This series contains photographs, scrapbooks and news clippings that document Rudolph Dunbar's career as a journalist, music conductor, teacher and critic. Photographs include independence day celebration of African and Caribbean countries from British colonial rule. Dignitaries depicted within this series include former Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah, Queen Elizabeth II Prince Phillip of England and Jesse Owens.

b. 3, f. 56	Ghana independence celebration	1957
b. 3, f. 57	Independence celebrations of former British colonies	1947–1973
b. 3, f. 58	Music and journalism career	Circa 1938-1986
b. 4	Photo album	Circa 1940-1975
b. 5 (Oversize), f. 63	Various Portraits	Circa 1938-1986
b. 5 (Oversize), f. 64	Clippings by and about Dunbar	1934–1972
b. 5 (Oversize), f. 65	Articles	1967–1983
b. 8	Scrapbook Volume I	1938-1972
b. 10	Scrapbook Volume II	1942–1961
b. 6	Scrapbook Volume III	1945

Series IV: Other Papers, 1963–1986

The Other Papers series includes ephemera collected by Rudolph Dunbar throughout his career.

The series is arranged alphabetically.

b. 3, f. 59	ACER and Black Cultural archives	1983–1986
b. 3, f. 60	Ben Enwonwu "Dance Theme" Sculptures and Paintings	1985
b. 7, f. 66-72	Printed materials	
b. 3, f. 61	Programs	1963–1977
b. 3, f. 62	Who's Who in Music Directory	1972

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Clarinetists -- Great Britain
Conductors (Music) -- Great Britain
Journalists -- Great Britain
Photojournalism -- Africa
Photojournalism -- West Indies

Genres / Formats

Photographs

Occupations

Conductors (Music) -- Great Britain -- 20th
Century
Journalists -- Great Britain -- 20th Century

Names

Allan, Robert, 1914-1979
Dunbar, Rudolph, 1899-1988
Elizabeth, Queen of Great Britain, II, 1926- --
Portraits
King, Coretta Scott, 1927-2006
Nkrumah, Kwame, 1909-1972 -- Portraits
Owens, Jesse, 1913-1980
Philip, Prince, consort of Elizabeth II, Queen of
Great Britain, 1921- -- Portraits
Robeson, Eslanda Goode, 1896-1965

Corporate Body

Associated Negro Press