



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

Guide to the

Lena Horne collection

1942-1989 [bulk 1981-1984]

Sc MG 326

Summary

Creator: Horne, Lena

Title: Lena Horne collection

Date: 1942-1989 [bulk 1981-1984]

Source: Gift, Horne, Lena / Sneed, Sherman (manager) 211 E. 20th Street - #2A New York, N.Y. 10021, 02/--/1991

Abstract: Collection consists predominantly of material relating to Lena Horne's one woman Broadway production and national and international tour of "Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music" (1981-1984). Papers contain fan mail, a small amount of business, personal and family correspondence; press coverage (newspaper and magazine clippings and audio and video reviews); publicity and public relations material; programs; financial data and certificates (proclamations, awards and honors).

Preferred citation: [Item], Lena Horne collection, Sc MG 326, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division: various books

Transferred to the Schomburg Art and Artifacts Division: 8 portraits (paintings, pencil drawings, velvet); 2 posters; 3 medallions; 2 leather bags - Lennie Hayton; large rolled up poster; plaque: Famous Black American Entertainers; 3 silver dresses and jackets; 2/3 white dresses and shoes; capes; 2 watercolors - fashion designs; jewelry: African silver necklace; Georgio belts; Schell necklace; ball necklace; gold colored necklace with two large medallions; necklace with pink/purple colored stones (rhinestones); 3 pins; 2 pairs of earrings - gold/silver; bag with "Chinese" earrings and belt buckle; beaded collar; gold and blue collar necklace; many colored bead necklace; brass plate neckpiece on leather string; 1 pin and 2 square "Chinese" pieces; white dress and cape - used in opening number of *Lady and her Music*; medallions (city of Dallas; Radcliffe College Alumnae Association; Encyclopedia Britannica); Keys to the City (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Washington D.C; Hartford, Connecticut; Norfolk, Virginia; Houston, Texas; Detroit, Michigan; Kansas, City Kansas; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; San Diego, California); paperweights (San Diego California; 200th Anniversary Jamaican Service Program 1983, New

Orleans); awards (Delta Sigma Theta - Distinguishing Soror 1980; Distinctive Eyes, American Optometric Association, 1985 New York State Arts Governor's Award; City of Buffalo, Thaliens - Ms. Wonderful, 1980); bust: M. M. Bethune - National Council of Negro Women, 1983; Cap: National Black Law Student Association, Trailblazer Award, 1984; tee Shirts: 2 Clothes bag - San Diego Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta; London Palladium, 1976 small calendar; License Plate (LUNA C); and 1 poster

Transferred to the Schomburg Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: 1 movie, 2 video tapes, 2 records, 2 albums (not recorded by Lena Horne)

Creator History

Singer, actress, performer of stage, films and television. Lena Horne was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1917 and began her professional career in 1934 as a chorus girl at the Cotton Club in Harlem, New York. In 1935 her career as a singer was launched with the Noble Sissle and later, the Charlie Barnet bands. She toured extensively in the United States and Europe. In the 1940s she appeared at New York's Cafe Society Downtown and from there went to Hollywood where she became the first black woman to sign a long term contract. Beginning in 1942, her films included "Panama Hattie," "Cabin the Sky," "Stormy Weather," "As Thousands Cheer," "Till the Clouds Roll By" and "The Wiz," among others.

Horne recorded extensively, her most popular recordings include "Stormy Weather," "Blues in the Night" and "The Lady is a Tramp." She sang on the radio, made numerous television appearances including the specials "Harry and Lena," 1972; "Jubilee," 1976; and "The Sound of His Music" (a salute to Richard Rogers) in 1976. Her Broadway stage appearances include "Blackbirds of 1939," "Jamaica" (1957) and her greatest recent success, a one-woman show called "Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music" (1981), the longest running one-woman show in Broadway history, for which Ms. Horne won a Drama Desk Award as the Outstanding Actress in a Musical, a Special Tony Award for Distinguished Achievement in Theatre, a Special Award of the New York Drama Critics' Circle, New York City's Handel Medallion (the city's highest award in the arts and music), and two Grammy Awards - Best Female Pop Vocalist of 1982 and Best Original Cast Album. Horne is also the recipient of an Honorary Doctorate from Howard University, Washington, D.C., in 1997, the 1983 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Spingarn Medal and was a 1984 Kennedy Center Honors awardee.

Scope and Content Note

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Arrangement: Organized into four series: I. Correspondence; II. Subject files; III. Printed matter; IV. Honors and awards

Key Terms

Subjects

African American entertainers
African American motion picture actors and actresses
African American singers
African American theater
African Americans in the performing arts
Musicals -- New York (State) -- New York
Women singers -- United States

Names

Horne, Lena

Container List

Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 1 Outgoing 1984
- b. 1 f. 2 Family 1981
- b. 1 f. 3 Personal 1981 - 1983
- b. 1 f. 4 General 1977 - 1989
- b. 1 f. 5 Business 1977 - 1989
- b. 1 f. 6 Fan mail 1947 - 1983
- b. 2 f. 1
- b. 2 f. 2 65th birthday greetings 1982
- b. 3 Fan mail 1983 - 1984

Subject files

- b. 4 f. 1 Writing
- b. 4 f. 2 Awards and honors
- b. 4 f. 3 Programs
- b. 4 f. 4 Scripts
- b. 4 f. 5 Calendars
- b. 5 f. 1 Lena Horne Scholarship Fund
- b. 5 f. 2 Delta Sigma Theta
 - Includes advertisements made by Horne.
- Lady and Her Flower Music*
- b. 5 f. 3 Backstage visitor and flower log
- b. 5 f. 4 Press releases
- b. 5 f. 5 Press conference
- b. 5 f. 6 Flyers
- b. 5 f. 7 Dialogue
- b. 5 f. 8 Audio and video reviews
- b. 5 f. 9 Public relations and publicity
- b. 9 Payroll register
- b. 10 Canceled payroll checks and Marquis nameplates

Printed matter

- b. 5 f. 10 Magazine articles 1942 - 1958
- b. 5 f. 11 Newspaper and magazine clippings 1970 - 1980
 - b. 6 Newspaper and magazine clippings 1981 - 1984
 - b. 7
 - b. 8 Newspaper and magazine clippings 1983 - 1989

Honors and awards

- b. 11 Certificates, proclamations, honors, and awards
- b. 12-14 Plaques