

**The New York Public Library
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center
Music Division**

Guide to the
Robert Savage collection
1975-1994
JPB 13-24

Compiled by Susan Malsbury, September 2013

Summary

Creator: Savage, Robert, 1951-1993

Title: Robert Savage collection, 1975-1994

Size: 1.71 linear feet (7 boxes)

Source: Donated by Pat O'Hara, 2013.

Abstract: Robert Savage (1951-1993) was an American composer and pianist. The Robert Savage collection (1975-1994) consists of scores, personal files, and sound and video recordings.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying and photography will apply. Advance notice may be required. Audio/visual materials will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

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

Preferred citation: Robert Savage collection, JPB 13-24, Music Division, The New York Public Library.

Custodial history: Collection was maintained by the donor prior to donation.

Creator history

Robert Savage (1951-1993) was an American composer and pianist. Savage was born in Saudi Arabia to American parents. He moved to the United States as a teenager and received his Bachelor of Arts in music from Columbia University in 1975 where he studied with Jack Beeson. In subsequent years he studied privately with Ben Weber, Ned Rorem, David Diamond, John Corigliano, and David Del Tredici.

Savage's music was inspired by nature, poetry, his Buddhist practice, and his travels. He was an avid backpacker and hiked throughout Central and South America, and the United States. These trips introduced Savage to the indigenous music of the Americas. Savage was particularly interested in zydeco, a blues-influenced type of Cajun dance music popular in Louisiana.

Savage studied and practiced Zen Buddhism and spent some time living at the Zen Mountain Monastery in Mount Tremper, New York. He wrote essays about his music and engagement with nature for the monastery's paper, *The Mountain Record*. He also led a meditation group for people with AIDS at the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City.

He was the recipient of fellowships from the Wurlitzer Foundation, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the MacDowell Colony, and the Dorland Mountain Colony. Savage died in New York City in 1993.

Source: Neff, Severine. [Biography of Robert Savage]. The Aids Estate Project for Artists with AIDS. <<http://www.artistswithaids.org/artforms/music/catalogue/savage.html>> Accessed September 4, 2013.

Scope and content note

The Robert Savage Collection dates from 1975 to 1994 and consists of scores, personal files, and sound and video recordings. The scores make up the bulk of the collection and span works he produced in college to works he produced shortly before his death in 1993. The scores reflect the entirety of his titled and untitled compositions and also contain unidentified score fragments. Many of the scores are undated. Savage's sole orchestral work, *An Eye-Sky Symphony*, and its various incarnations - *Dark Night of the Soul*, *Endless Spring*, *Jalal* - are included in the collection along with a handmade score of the complete work. There is one file of early and incomplete works. Savage's compositions are described in detail at the website of The Estate Project for Artists with AIDS (<http://www.artistswithaids.org/artforms/music/catalogue/savage.html>). Researchers should consult the site for composition titles, dates, and possible recordings.

Personal files include programs from Savage's memorial service at Greenwich House and an audiocassette recording of the event; a catalogue of work and biography, both compiled by Severine Neff; and a complete set of essays written by Savage for *The Mountain Record*.

There are video recordings of a recording session on Fire Island in 1992, of Savage conducting meditation instruction at the Gay Men's Health Crisis, and two interviews with Savage from 1991 and 1992. Inquiries regarding audio/visual material in the collection may be directed to the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound (rha@nypl.org). Audio/visual materials will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

Arrangement

The collection is in two divisions, scores and personal files. Scores are arranged alphabetically by title.

Key terms

Subjects

AIDS (Disease) and art
Composers -- United States -- 20th century

Names

Gay Men's Health Crisis, Inc.
Savage, Robert, 1951-1993

Special formats

Scores

Container list

Scores

- b.1 A-E, 1982-1992, undated
- b.6 Eye Sky Symphony, 1988
- b.2 F-J, 1984-1991, undated
- b.3 N-R, 1984-1993, undated
- b.4 S, 1986-1986, undated
- b.5 T, 1977-1992, undated
- b.5 Early and Incomplete Works, 1975-1993
- b.7 Personal Files, 1992-1994