

Guide to the John Watts Papers, 1947-1982

JPB 06-67

Music Division

**The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
New York, New York**

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Descriptive Summary

Title:	John Watts Papers
Collection ID:	JPB 06-67
Creator:	Watts, John
Extent:	6 linear feet (16 boxes)
Repository:	Music Division. The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Abstract:

The John Watts Papers span the years 1947-1982 and contain scores, correspondence, teaching materials, writings and photographs pertaining to the career of this noted composer.

Administrative Information

Access

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

Publication Rights

For permission to publish, contact the Chief, Music Division.

Preferred Citation

John Watts Papers, JPB 06-67, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and cataloged in 2007.

Biographical Note

John Watts was born July 16th, 1930. He received his BA from the University of Tennessee, his Masters in Musicology from the University of Colorado and completed doctoral studies at the University of Illinois and Cornell University. Some of his teachers included Cecil Effinger, Roy Harris, John Krueger, Robert Palmer, Burrill Phillips and David Van Vactor.

In 1950 Watts entered military service and served for two years as a clarinetist, dance band pianist and arranger in the 75th and 179th Army Bands, Special Services. After this he taught briefly at the Army-Navy Music School in Washington, DC. During this time he married his first wife, Mary.

He held many teaching positions over the years including posts at the University of Colorado, North Dakota State College, International Institute of Music, Puerto Rico, and Staten Island Community College. He was also the editor of the *Manhattan East* newspaper, a graphic designer and a free lance writer.

In the fall of 1964, Watts founded the Composers Theatre, and in 1966 he became the president of its parent organization, the Composers and Choreographers Theatre. In 1969 he became a member of the faculty at the New School for Social Research in New York. Watts was the director of the ARP Electronic Music Program, and the Music Workshops coordinator. During this time Watts met and married his second wife, Laura Foreman.

Over the years Watts produced over 100 compositions in all forms, primarily chamber music and dance scores. He also had an interest in children's theater. Starting in 1969 Watts began to incorporate electronic elements into his compositions, and became an adept ARP synthesizer soloist. His works and performances helped to popularize the electronic synthesizer as a musical instrument.

John Watts died on July 2, 1982 at the age of 52.

Scope and Content Note

The John Watts Papers contain documents from 1947 to 1981 and cover the professional musical career of the composer, John Watts. The correspondence includes letters between Watts and his friends and colleagues and letters between Watts and his first wife, Helen. The grant materials contain applications for various federal and private grant programs, not only for personal work but on behalf of the Composers Theater. Watt's teaching materials include class lists, flyers, grades and other materials pertaining to the Composers Theater, such as handwritten lecture notes. The writings consist of papers Watts completed for various publications, as well as research for several of his compositions. The collection is primarily scores and includes many of Watts' compositions, both published and unpublished, sketches and drafts. Of special note are the "environmental" scores, collages created by Watts and meant to be played intuitively by instrumentalists. With the exception of the correspondence, the collection is lacking in materials of a personal nature.

Arrangement:

The collection is organized into 6 series. They are:

Series I: Correspondence, 1950-1975

Series II: Grant Materials, 1969-1976

Series III: Teaching Materials 1969-1975

Series IV: Writings and Research 1953-1976

Series V: Photographs, 1971

Series VI: Scores, 1949-1981

Series I: Correspondence, 1950-1975 1 box

Arrangement: Chronological

Correspondence between Watts and his friends and colleagues.

Series II: Grant Materials, 1969-1976 1 box

Arrangement: Alphabetical

Includes applications for various federal and private grant programs, not only for personal work but on behalf of the Composers Theater as well. Both successful and unsuccessful applications are represented.

Series III: Teaching Materials 1969-1975 2 boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical

Contains class lists, flyers, grades and other materials pertaining to the Composers Theater, as well as lecture notes.

Series IV: Writings and Research 1953-1976 1 box

Arrangement: Alphabetical

Includes papers Watts completed for various publications and forums, as well as research for several of his compositions.

Series V: Photographs, 1971 1 box

Arrangement: Subject

Photographs of the Composers Theater gatherings in 1971. Includes both group shots and individual pictures of Watts.

Series VI: Scores, 1949-1981 10 boxes

Arrangement: Alphabetical by title.

Scores composed by Watts. Includes many rough sketches and undated pieces. Also includes "environmental" scores – collages meant to "move" musicians to play.

Series I: Correspondence, 1950-1975

General

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	1950-1955
	2	1956-1960
	3	1973-1975
		Watts, Helen
	4	1950 Jan - May
	5	1950 June - Dec
	6	1951 Jan - May
	7	1951 June – Oct.

Series II: Grant Materials, 1969-1976

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
2	1	American Music Center, 1969
		Composers and Choreographers Theatre
	2	1973
	3	1974
	4	1975
	5	Creative Artists' Public Service Program, 1973
	6	Ditson Fund, 1970
	7	Edward John Noble Fund, 1973
	8	The Ford Foundation, 1971
	9	Guggenheim Foundation, 1974
	10	Ingram Merrill Foundation, 1973
	11	Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund, 1974
		National Endowment for the Arts
	12	1972
	13-	1973
	14	
	15	1974
	16	1975
	17-	1976
	18	

Series III: Teaching Materials, 1969-1975

		Composers Theatre
3	1	Ad copy
	2	Correspondance, 1969-1977
		Degree Program Proposal, 1976
	3	Flyers, 1974-1976
	4	Flyers, 1977-1979
	5	Grades
4	1	May Festival, 1975
	2	Student Applications
		Lecture notes
	3	notetooks
	4	loose notes
	5	Libretto - <i>Aesops Fable Fair</i>
	6	<i>Pajama Game</i> , 1965

Series IV: Writings and Research, 1953-1976

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
5	1	<i>Aesthetics of Music</i>
	2	<i>Musical Signals</i>
	3	<i>Quintet for Piano and String Quartet</i> , 1953
	4	<i>A Short History of Electronic Music</i>
	5	<i>Tribute to Rogers and Hammerstein</i>
	6	Untitled Cornell Paper

Series V: Photographs, 1971

		Composers Theatre, 1971
6	1	Group Shots
	2	Individual Musicians
	3	Watts, John
		May Festival, 1971
	4-5	Group Shots
	6	Individual Musicians
	7	Watts, John

Series VI: Scores, 1949-1981

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
7	1	<i>Aesops Fable Fair</i> , undated (full score, original manuscript)
	2	<i>Bells</i> , undated (undated pencil sketch)
	3	<i>Bon Jour, Bon Mois</i> , undated (for organ, undated)
		<i>Celebration Fanfare</i> , undated
	4	pencil score
	5	sketches
		<i>Chamber Laughs When I Sit Down at the Piano</i> , undated
	6	holograph score, for piano and harmonica
	7	onionskin, for piano and harmonica
	8	<i>Chimes for Dance Marathon</i> , 1971 (reproduction, for chimes)
	9	<i>Chorale</i> , undated (pencil score)
	10	<i>Chorale and Finale for Brass</i> , undated (reproduction with parts)
	11	<i>Chorale Prelude for Organ</i> , undated (pencil score)
	12	<i>Donnz pas ces Gueux</i> , 1974 (for mixed voices and tape)
	13	<i>Dow Jones Blues</i> , undated (pencil sketch)
	14	<i>Duo for Cello and Piano</i> , undated (reproduction)
	15	<i>Dry Bones</i> , undated (holograph score)
	16	<i>Elegy to Chimney: In Memoriam</i> , 1972 (for B flat trumpet and tape)
	17	<i>Exercise for the Violin</i> , undated (Sketch, fragment)
		<i>Fantasy for Violin and Piano</i> , undated
	18	onionskin
	19	sketch
	20	<i>Finale</i> , undated (undated sketch)
8	1	<i>Glass and Shadows</i> , 1970 (reproduction)
	2	<i>In The Mountains</i> , undated (reproduction, for womans voice)
	3	<i>Jesus the Christ is Born</i> , undated (pencil sketch, for piano)
	4	<i>The Lotus</i> , undated (holograph score for mixed voices)
	5	<i>Le Matche de Botte</i> , undated (sketches)
	6	<i>Manhattan East Pieces</i> , undated
		various sketches of pieces done for the "Manhattan East" publication
	7	<i>Overture</i> , undated (undated sketch)
		<i>Pastorale</i> , undated
	8	holograph score with parts
	9	pencil score with parts
	10	<i>Pastorale for Strings and Horns</i> , undated (onionskin)
	11	<i>Pedro Pablo Cha-Cha</i> , undated (sketch)
	12	<i>Piano for Te</i> , 1973 (for piano, 13 players, and tape)
	13	<i>Piano for Te</i> , 1973 (sketches)
	14	<i>Piano for Te Tutti</i> , 1974 (for piano and tape)
	15	<i>Piece for Flute and Piano</i> , undated (undated onionskin)

	16	<i>Polly Garter</i> , undated (for piano and voice, pencil score)
		<i>Prelude and Fuge for Chamber Orchestra</i> , 1950
	17	onionskin
	18	pencil sketch
		<i>Quintet for Piano and Strings</i> , undated
9	1	holograph score
	2	violin, cello and viola parts
		<i>Response</i> , undated
	3	pencil sketch
	4	piano and voice
	5	<i>Saxophone Quintet</i> , undated (pencil sketch)
	6	<i>Schzero</i> , undated (pencil sketch)
	7	<i>Service Music</i> , undated (pencil sketch)
		<i>Signals</i> , undated
	8	onionskin, parts
	9	soprano and chamber orchestra
	10	soprano and piano, recital version
	11	<i>Sonata for Piano</i> , undated (pencil sketch)
	12	<i>Sonata for Piano</i> , 1968 (final version, holograph)
	13	<i>Suite for Solo Violin</i> , undated (original holograph)
	14	<i>Sun Swept</i> , undated (reproduction)
	15	<i>Three Chorale Settings for Organ</i> , 1981 (reproduction)
	16	<i>Time Coded Woman</i> , undated (pencil score, with parts)
	17	<i>Waldo</i> , undated (pencil score, piano and voice)
	18	<i>Warp</i> , undated (pencil score, brass quintet)
		<i>Wicked John and the Devil</i> , undated
	19	onionskin (onionskin)
	20	pencil score, complete (pencil score, complete)
		Environmental Scores
		<i>Maxiconcerto</i> , 1976
10	1	bass part
	2	bassoon part
	3	clarinet part
	4	cello part
	5	flute part
	6	harp part
	7	horn part
11	1	oboe part
	2	trombone part
	3	trumpet part
	4	viola part
	5	violin I part
	6	violin II part
12	1-5	unidentified parts
	6-7	<i>Wallwork</i> , 1981 (unidentified parts)
		Untitled Works and Sketch Books
13	1	Untitled String Quartet Sketch
	2	Untitled Piano Sketch
	3-8	Untitled Sketches - Manuscript books
14	1-11	Untitled Sketches - Manuscript books

Oversized Scores

		<i>Fable Faire</i> , undated
15	1	Complete Score
	2	Piano rehearsal score
16	1	<i>Keepsakes</i> , undated (For Tape and Orchestra)
	2	<i>Time Coded Woman</i> , undated (holograph score)
	3	Untitled Sketches (pencil sketches)