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Guide to the Barrett Deems Papers circa 1950s-1999



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.DEEMSB
Title	Deems, Barrett. Papers
Date	circa 1950s-1999
Size	2.25 linear feet (3 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.
Abstract	Barrett Deems, drummer. The Barrett Deems Papers contain articles, correspondence, photographs, obituaries and funeral programs, concert and event ephemera, publications, organization newsletters, and a poster.

Acknowledgments

The Barrett Deems Papers were processed and preserved as part of the "Uncovering New Chicago Archives Project," funded with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Information on Use

Access

Series I, Personal, does not include access copies for the audio material in this series. Researchers will need to consult with staff before requesting material from this series.

The remainder of the collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Deems, Barrett. Papers, [Box#, Folder#], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Barrett Deems was born in 1914 in Springfield, IL. Deems, once billed as "the world's fastest drummer," began his professional career in the late 1920s and led several Chicago-area bands, including his own Barrett Deems 18-piece Big Band.

Deems worked with Joe Venuti, Jimmy Dorsey, Red Norvo, Muggsy Spanier, Jack Teagarden, and Art Hodes. While leading his own band, Chicago's Brass Rail Club, Deems also collaborated with the Dukes of Dixieland, Joe Kelly's Gaslight Band, and several Louis Armstrong tribute

bands. From 1952-1958, Deems played with Armstrong, who called him "The Kid," and can be heard on Armstrong's "Satch Play's Fats," and "Louis Armstrong Play W.C. Handy." In 1956, Deems appeared in the film *High Society*.

Deems was best known for his energetic nature and fast, driving drumming technique. Legend has it Louis Armstrong said of him: "He makes coffee nervous."

Deems died in 1998.

Scope Note

The Barrett Deems Papers are divided into two Series I, Personal; and Series II, Organizations and Publications. The Barrett Deems Papers contain articles, correspondence, photographs, obituaries and funeral programs, concert and event ephemera, publications, organization newsletters, and a poster.

Series I, Personal, contains correspondence, a photograph, concert and event ephemera, and a compact disc. Correspondence includes letters from jazz societies and organizations, geriatric publications, musicians, and friends. The photograph is of an unknown musician taken by Louis H. Kaufman. Concert ephemera include programs, fliers, and advertisements for performances given by Deems. The event ephemera are arranged by location and include programs, fliers, and advertisements from jazz festivals and events. There are obituaries and funeral programs of musicians including Philly Joe Jones and Hillard Brown. There is a proof sheet of biographical information on Deems for "Who's Who in Entertainment." The compact disc was produced by Arts Midwest and is a professional recording of Johnny Frigo, Isaac "Redd" Holt, and Willie Pickens.

Series II, Organizations and Publications, contains publications such as *The Jazz Rag*, *Down Beat*, *Vantage*, and *The Mississippi Rag*. *International Musician* is in German. There are newsletters from various organizations including "Bix Notes," "Browsers' Notes," and "The Force of Jazz" as well as directories for the Associated Musicians of Greater New York and the Chicago Federation of Musicians. There is a brochure from Delmark Records. The articles feature performances, musicians, and art related news, and an article about Deems in "Health and Harmony." Also included is a poster advertising a performance by Deems. Oversize publications are in Box 3.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Subject Headings

- Deems, Barrett
- Jazz
- Jazz -- History and criticism
- Jazz -- Illinois -- Chicago
- Jazz -- Periodicals
- Jazz festivals
- Jazz musicians
- University of Chicago. Chicago Jazz Archive

INVENTORY

Series I: Personal

Box 1

Folder 1

Application, Chicago Artists Abroad, 1990

Box 1

Folder 2

Certificate, Chicago Federation of Musicians, 1996

Box 1

Folder 3

Compact Disc, Midwest Jazz Masters, 1999

Box 1

Folder 4

Concert Ephemera, Deems, 1989-1998

Box 1

Folder 5

Correspondence, 1986-1997

Box 1

Folder 6

Event, California, 1979-1989

Box 1

Folder 7

Event, Illinois, 1983-1998

Box 1

Folder 8

Event, Illinois, 16th Annual Chicago Jazz Festival, 1994

Box 1

Folder 9

Event, International, 1984-1989

Box 1

Folder 10

Event, Iowa, 1996

Box 1

Folder 11

Event, Missouri, 1992

Box 1

Folder 12

Event, Pennsylvania, 1983

Box 1

Folder 13

Event, Wisconsin, 1992-1997

Box 1

Folder 14

Obituaries, 1985-1994

Box 1

Folder 15

Photograph, undated

Box 1

Folder 16

Royalty Check, American Federation of Musicians, 1995

Box 1

Folder 17

"Who's Who in Entertainment," undated

Series II: Organizations and Publications

Box 1

Folder 18

Arbor Records, 1994

Box 1

Folder 19

Arts Midwest Jazz Letter, 1991

Box 1

Folder 20

Associated Musicians of Greater New York, Directory, 1990-1991

Box 2

Folder 1

"The Big Bands," 1977

Box 2

Folder 2

"Bix Notes," 1996

Box 2

Folder 3

"Browsers' Notes," 1995-1998

Box 2

Folder 4

Chicago Federation of Musicians, Directory, 1995-1996

Box 2

Folder 5

"Chuck Schaden's Nostalgia Digest and Radio Guide," 1999

Box 2

Folder 6

Delmark Records, undated

Box 2

Folder 7

Down Beat, 1991

Box 2

Folder 8

"The Force in Jazz," 1998

Box 2

Folder 9

International Musician, 1980

Box 2

Folder 10

The Jazz Rag, 1998

Box 2

Folder 11

Vantage, 1990

Box 3

Folder 1

Articles, circa 1950s-1997

Box 3

Folder 2

Barfly Newspaper, 1997

Box 3

Folder 3

"Health and Harmony," 1985

Box 3

Folder 4

Illinois Entertainer, 1995

Box 3

Folder 5

Inside, 1998

Box 3

Folder 6

The Mississippi Rag, 1986-1996

Box 3

Folder 7

Poster, 1980

Box 3

Folder 8

Reader, 1993