

**BEANE, REGINALD.**  
**Reginald Beane papers, 1932-1964**

Emory University  
Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library  
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**Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Beane, Reginald.  
**Title:** Reginald Beane papers, 1932-1964  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 1278  
**Extent:** .75 linear ft. (2 boxes), 5 oversized papers (OP), 3 bound volumes (BV), and AV Masters: .25 linear feet (1 box, CLP)  
**Abstract:** Papers of African American actor, pianist, and composer Reginald Beane including photographs and photograph albums, printed material, musical scores, and audiovisual material.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

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**Administrative Information**

**Restrictions on Access**

Unrestricted access.

**Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

**Source**

Purchase, 2012.

**Custodial History**

Originally received as part Robert Langmuir African American photograph collection.

**Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Reginald Beane papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

**Processing**

Processed by Susan Potts McDonald, December 13, 2013.

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## Collection Description

### Biographical Note

Reginald "Sonnie" Beane (1918-1985), African American actor, pianist, and composer made his stage debut with Ethel Waters in Mamba's Daughters and later became her accompanist and arranger throughout her singing career. As a young man in New York, Beane studied piano and came to the attention of blues and jazz singer Ethel Waters (1896-1977). Through Waters' influence, Beane became a member of the musician's union. In 1936, after the death of Waters' piano accompanist, Pearl Wright, Beane took over that position. For over 40 years, until Waters' death in 1977, Beane served as her accompanist and arranger.

In 1935, Beane provided piano accompaniment for the was in the original chorus of the first production of the opera, *Porgy and Bess*. When the production went on tour in January 1936, Beane accompanied it. In 1939, Beane made his Broadway theatrical debut with Ethel Waters in Dorothy and Du Bose Hayward's *Mamba's Daughters*. He later played the part of a piano player in William Samoan's Pulitzer-Prize winning play, *The Time of Your Life*.

Beane is a recognized musical composer and was a member of the National Association of Negro Musicians and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP). Beane died at his home in the Bronx in 1985.

### Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of the papers of African American actor, pianist, composer Reginald Beane including photographs and photograph albums, printed material, and musical scores. The photograph albums contain images from both his personal and professional life. They include photos of family and friends, events, and travels including various tours with Ethel Waters. Two seem to be compiled by his mother and the other by Beane himself. The printed material in the collection is comprised mainly of playbills from Beane's performances.

Of particular interest is a good number of Beane's musical compositions including original autograph and photocopied scores and lyrics. These date roughly from 1938-1949. The collection also includes the phonograph album, *Ethel Waters Reminisces with Reginald Beane at the Piano*, which was recorded in 1962.

### Arrangement Note

Arranged by record type.

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## Container List

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	Bookplates
OP1		Certificate, American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, 1 membership, 1964
1	2	Certificate, National Association of Negro Musicians, certificate of merit, 1955
OP2		Certificate, New York Board of Education, City of New York, Junior High diploma, 1932
1	3	Certificate, University of the State of New York, certificate of literacy, October 13, 1945
1	4	Musical score (published), <i>Carl Czerny, The School of Velocity</i> , Schirmer's Library, published in 1893
1	5	Playbill, <i>Mamba's Daughters</i> , The Empire Theatre (New York, New York), February 20, 1939
1	6	Playbill, <i>The Time of Your Life</i> , Shubert Theatre (New Haven, Connecticut), October 7, 1939
1	7	Playbill, <i>The Time of Your Life</i> , Plymouth Theatre (Boston, Massachusetts), October 9, 1939
1	8	Playbill, <i>The Time of Your Life</i> , The Booth Theatre (New York, New York), November 6, 1939
1	9	Playbill, <i>The Time of Your Life</i> , Guild Theatre (New York, New York), January 29, 1940
1	10	Playbill, <i>The Time of Your Life</i> , Ogunquit Playhouse (Manhattan New York), July 11, 1949
1	11	Playbill, <i>Charm</i> , Ogunquit Playhouse (Manhattan New York), July 4, 1949
1	12	Poems, "Out Nature Exhibit" and "How I Manage to Save," ca. 1929
1	13	Script, Unknown play, "General Sequence of Dream Ballet," pages 81-86
1	14	Stage pass, William Cagney Productions, <i>The Time of Your Life</i> , May 14, 1947

### Photographs/prints

1	15	Beane, Reginald
OP3		Beane, Reginald
1	16	People: identified
1	17	People: unidentified
1	18	Places: Unknown movie set
OP4		Waters, Ethel, performing "Heat Wave" from "As Thousands Cheer," photograph and drawing, 1933
1	19	Negatives
1	20	Negatives

**Photograph albums**

- BV1 1931-1950: family photographs, *Porgy and Bess* tour in 1936, *The Time of Your Life* release in 1947; Starlite Time television production; World War II soldiers [some photos missing from album]
- BV2 1952-1958: includes montage of small photographs of Beane from 1941-1951; family photographs, and tours with Ethel Waters
- BV3 1958-1962: includes recording of album with Ethel Waters in 1962 [many photos missing from album, many photos releasing from pages]

**Scores/lyrics**

- 2 1 Fragments, untitled
- 2 2 "Ain't it awful to be lonely"
- 2 3 "Blues Mood (taken from "Strange Love," by Reginald Beane
- 2 4 "Cabin in the Sky" score and sheet music (includes "Cabin in the Sky-Routine," "Cabin Medley," "Happiness is Jes' A Thing Called Joe" and "Petunia's Prayer")
- 2 5 "Can't Stand No More," words and music by Reginald Beane
- 2 6 "Doggone My Luck"
- 2 7 "Faithfully," words and music by Reginald Beane
- 2 8 "Feeling Kind a Lonesome and Blue," words and music by Reginald Beane
- 2 9 "A Gangster's Lament" (lyrics only)
- 2 10 "God is my Refuge"
- 2 11 "Hanging by my Heels from the Mood," words and music by Avon Long and Reginald Beane
- 2 12 "He's With Me (Each Step of the Way)," words and music by Reginald Beane
- 2 13 "It Must be Love," words and music by Reginald Beane, March 28, 1943 [electrostatic copy]
- 2 14 "Jazzantasy Suite"
- 2 15 "Just Dropped in to Say Hello," words and music by Herb Jeffries and Reginald Beane, undated
- 2 16 "Let's Not Forget," words and music by Avon Long and Reginald Beane
- 2 17 "Midnight Sun," words and music by Reginald Beane
- 2 18 "Mother, dear," by Reginald Beane, August 31, 1939
- 2 19 "Motherless"
- 2 20 "My Savior Will Always be There," Waters
- 2 21 "Nobody Knows"
- 2 22 "Odd Moments," by Reginald Beane
- 2 23 "Tabby the Cat"
- 2 24 "To Be Sure," words and music by Reginald Beane`
- 2 25 "Topsy," by Reginald Beane

- 2 26 "When you're looking for."  
2 27 "Who'd A Thought it Blues," words and music by Reginald Beane  
2 28 "A Woman Without A Man," lyric by E.V. Harburg and music by Arthur  
Schwartz

**Audiovisual**

- CLP2 - *Ethel Waters Reminisces with Reginald Beane at the piano*, Word Records Inc.,  
1962 [original:33 1/3 LP record]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id pr164][Digital/  
digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id pr178]
- AV1 - Music recordings, featuring Frank Sinatra, Royce Wallace, Olga James and  
others, no date [original: open reel tape]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id pr1q6]
- AV1 - Interview with Larry Foller; Carpenter; Amy Records Audit, 1960 [original: open  
reel tape]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id pr1nx]
- AV1 - Music recording, "My Little Baby Boy" and "Memories of You" and others, no  
date [original: open reel tape]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id pr1p2]

**Memorabilia**

- OP5 Ethel Waters, leather music portfolio with her initials embossed on flap
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