

# Guide to the D. Russell Connor collection of Benny Goodman interviews

MSS 143



Finding aid written by Emily DiLeo

2017

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New Haven, CT 06520  
(203) 432-0497

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<https://guides.library.yale.edu/MusicSpecialCollections>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Gilmore Music Library  
120 High Street  
PO Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520  
(203) 432-0497  
musicspecialcollections@yale.edu  
<https://guides.library.yale.edu/MusicSpecialCollections>

**CALL NUMBER:** MSS 143

**CREATOR:** Connor, D. Russell (Donald Russell)

**TITLE:** D. Russell Connor collection of Benny Goodman interviews

**DATES:** 1952–1993

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 19 Audiotape Reels (reel to reel tapes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The collection is comprised of recorded interviews with and/or about Benny Goodman, compiled by D. Russell Connor.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/music.mss.0143>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/music.mss.0143>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.            box  
■■■■        item barcode

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was purchased from Donald Russell Connor in 1996.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written

permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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## Preferred Citation

MSS 143, the D. Russell Connor collection of Benny Goodman interviews in the Gilmore Music Library of Yale University.

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## Related Materials

Researchers may wish to consult the Benny Goodman Papers (MSS 53), also held by the Gilmore Music Library. Within the Goodman Papers are several transcripts of similar interviews conducted for the American Masters PBS series.

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## Related Materials

A substantial number of D. Russell Connor's reel-to-reel recordings of Benny Goodman's live performances are held by the Institute for Jazz Studies at Rutgers University.

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## Biographical / Historical

Donald Russell Connor (1921-2014) was a drummer and jazz enthusiast. Although Connor never worked as a musician (he was a banker), he became close friends with performers such as Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa. Connor is known for his published bio-discographies of Benny Goodman: "BG--Off the Record" (1975), "Benny Goodman: Listen to his Legacy" (1988), and "Benny Goodman: Wrappin' it Up" (1996). Connor's published works are among the most comprehensive listings of Benny Goodman's recordings and performances available today.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection is comprised of recorded interviews with and/or about Benny Goodman. The interviews were compiled by D. Russell Connor, who describes the interviews as biographical and candid, as many of the recordings are unedited. Connor included detailed notes describing the content of each tape, which form the basis of the descriptions in this finding aid. Fellow musicians and producers who appear in the interviews include Gene Krupa, Helen Oakley Dance, John Hammond, George Avakian and Martha Tilton.

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## Arrangement

The reels are arranged in the original order in which they were received. Note that "BG" is used for "Benny Goodman" in the description portion of the finding aid.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Reel-to-reel tapes

b. 1	REEL No. INTV-1	1952-1959
<p>TRACK I: "Right you are" CBS Radio Network (19 September 1952): BG as a mystery guest; Private Interview with Frank Church (Goss) (1 July 1954): speaks about BG; "Heart Fund" Promotion (Winter 1955/1956): Steve Allen talks about BG; "Music USA" Voice of America Broadcast (Winter 1955/1956): Willis Conover interviews BG.</p> <p>TRACK II: "Music USA" continued from TRACK I; "Music USA" Voice of America Broadcast (Winter 1955/1956): another interview by Willis Conover, with BG; "News on the spot" WMAQ (NBC) Radio (1 February 1956): Len O'Connor interviews BG; "Voice of America Jazz Hour" (poss. November 1956): Willis Conover interviews BG about upcoming Far East tour; William Bellman Interview CBC Radio Network (23 November 1956): speaks about Far East tour; "Hy Gardner Calling" Dumont Television Network (2 April 1958): Hy Gardner interviews BG, speaks about black vs. white musicians; "The Jack Paar 'Tonight' Show" NBC-TV (7 April 1958): BG and Jack Paar converse about jazz; "CBC-Henry Whiston Interview" (27 April 1959).</p>		
b. 1	REEL No. INTV-2	
b. 1, ■■■■ 39002133914185	REEL No. INTV-3	1962-1963
<p>TRACK I: "Benny Goodman - First Person Singular" WNBC radio (late April 1962): BG interviewed about Bartok and Szigeti recording in 1940 and Far East Tour, 1956-1957; "PM" Westinghouse Television Network (7 May 1962): BG talks about Russian tour, and other guests (Gene Krupa and Tyree Glenn) reminisce about meeting BG; News Telecast, CBS Television Network (9 July 1962): Joya Sherrill interviewed about Russian tour; "Who in the World" CBS Television Network (15 July 1962): Joya Sherrill interviewed; James T. Maher Interview (mid-1962): Maher interviewed about BG (cont'd on Track II).</p> <p>TRACK II: James T. Maher Interview (mid-1962): cont'd from Track I, Maher interviewed about BG; "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson" NBC-TV (10 October 1962): interview on Tonight show, feat. talk about Russian tour; Integration Pitch, various TV networks (January 1963): (audio from) 1-minute film featuring still photographs of BG and others advocating integration; "The Bob Maxwell Show" WCBS Radio (May 1963): Bob Maxwell interviews BG; "The Hy Gardiner Show" WOR-TV (6 June 1963): BG and others discuss music business with Hy Gardiner.</p>		

b. 1, ■■■■ 39002133914193	REEL No. INTV-4	1963-1965
	<p>TRACK I: "The Make Believe Ballroom" WNEW Radio (27 August 1963): William B. Williams taped interviews with BG, Lionel Hampton, Teddy Wilson, Gene Krupa during "reunion" session"; "Sounding Board" WABC Radio (30 October 1963): Bob Maxwell interviews Buddy Greco, Jack Cassidy, and BG; "The Freddie Robbins Show - Robbins West" WNEW Radio (November 1963): interview of BG by Freddie Robbins; "Murph" Podalsky Interview (October 1964): John Steiner interviews Charles "Murph" Podalsky, who played with BG in 1920s.</p> <p>TRACK II: Frank Quartell Interview (October 1964): John Steiner interviews Frank Quartell, who played with BG (see also: "Murph" Podalsky Interview); "Hear Me Talking" BBC Radio (9 November 1964): BG interviewed while on vacation in London; "Frankly Speaking" BBC Radio (8 January 1965): second of two interviews with BG, recorded during London vacation; "Night Life" ABC-TV (12 July 1965): BG's daughter, Rachel, interviewed by Night Life's Les Crane; "The Talk of New York" WCBS Radio (31 August 1965): BG interviewed by Bill Randle.</p>	
b. 1, ■■■■ 39002133914029	REEL No. INTV-5	1966-1969
	<p>TRACK I: "The Martin Block Show" WNEW Radio (27 March 1966): BG interviewed by Martin Block about BG's first time in New York; Newscast-WCBS Radio (20 March 1966): BG plays "Honeysuckle Rose" in background of "Chuck's Composite" (restaurant) opening; "Critic's Circle" WOR Radio (11 May 1966): Jack O'Brian interviews Dave Kapp (of Decca Records) and BG; "Sunday News Closeup - And All That Jazz" WNEW Radio (15 May 1966): William B. Williams' interview of BG and Harry James; "Miss U.S.A. Pageant" CBS-TV (20 May 1967): As a judge of contest, BG asks Miss California questions; "The Martha Deane Program" WOR Radio (9 June 1967): Martha Deane's interview of BG.</p> <p>TRACK II: "The Martha Deane Program" WOR Radio (9 June 1967): cont'd from Track I; "The Duncan MacDonald Program" WQXR Radio (12 June 1967): Ms. MacDonald interviews BG, who discusses classical music v. jazz, embouchure, USSR tour, etc.; "The Martha Deane Program" WOR Radio (11 March 1968): Deane's interview with BG and Pat Hingle; "Late Night Lineup" BBC-TV (late November 1968): taped interview between Michael Deane and BG at BG's home in Stamford, CT.; "The Bill Mazur Show" WOR Radio (17 June 1969): Bill Mazur's interview with BG about upcoming engagements.</p>	
b. 1	REEL No. INTV-6	1969-1970
	<p>TRACK I: "Summer '69" WFIL-TV (late June 1969): Al McDowell interview with BG about pop music, program televised on 4 July; "The Peter Lind Hayes-Mary Healy Show" WOR Radio (30 June 1969): BG, Hayes, and Healy discuss new book by Russ Connor; "The Martha Deane Program" WOR Radio (28 August 1969): BG and Martha discuss Connor's book, "BG - On The Record."</p> <p>TRACK II: "The Martha Deane Program" WOR Radio (28 August 1969): cont'd from Track I; Jeff Scott CBS Interview (late 1969): Jeff Scott's (unedited) interview with BG; Gordon Kitchen Interview BBC Radio (4 February 1970): Kitchen interviews BG for BBC; "The Martha Deane Interview" WOR Radio (4 May 1970): Martha Deane interviews BG and Bess Myerson Grant; "Bright Lights - Hail to the King" CBC-FM Radio (22 May 1970): Henry Whiston's interview with BG.</p>	
b. 1, ■■■■ 39002132952798	REEL No. INTV-7	1970
	<p>[<a href="#">Aviary</a>] <a href="#">mss_0143_39002058724049_39002132952798</a></p> <p>TRACK I: NOTE: all programs on this reel are a part of a broadcast series, "A Salute to Benny Goodman" produced by CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Company), and dedicated to BG. Out of 13 total programs, programs No. 3-12 are extant and in order (Track I includes Programs 3-7). "A Salute to Benny Goodman," Program No. 3 (17 October 1970): Ted Miller (announcer) speaks with John Hammond, Ken</p>	

Whitten, and Helen Oakley about BG; Program No. 4 (24 October 1970): Ted Miller interviews George Avakian and Helen Oakley Dance; Program No. 5 (31 October 1970): Bud Freeman, Frank Diggs, Bill Simon, George Simon, George Avakian, and Ken Whitten are interviewed or introduced; Program No. 6 (7 November 1970): Feat. John Hammond, George Hoefler, Lionel Hampton, Teddy Wilson, Bobby Hackett, Ken Whitten, Helen Oakley; Program No. 7 (14 November 1970): Feat. BG, George Avakian, Bernie Privin, Vaughn and Marion Monroe, Jimmy McPartland, and Kai Winding.

TRACK II: NOTE: all programs on this reel are a part of a broadcast series, "A Salute to Benny Goodman" produced by CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Company), and dedicated to BG. Out of 13 total programs, programs No. 3-12 are extant and in order (track II includes Programs 8-11). "A Salute to Benny Goodman" Program No. 8 (21 November 1970): Feat. BG, George Simon, Gene Krupa, and Urbie Green; Program No. 9 (28 November 1970): Feat. BG, Pete Fountain, Ruby Braff, Jimmy Hamilton, and Marian McPartland; Program No. 10 (5 December 1970): Feat. George Avakian, Johnny Mince, Marian McPartland, Cootie Williams, John Hammond, and Patrick Scott; Program No. 11 (12 December 1970): BG interviewed by Henry Whiston and Marian McPartland.

b. 1, ■■■■  
39002132952806

REEL No. INTV-8  
[\[Aviary\] mss\\_0143\\_39002058724049\\_39002132952806](#)

1970-1971

TRACK I: Final extant program from CBC's "A Salute to Benny Goodman" (see INTV-7), Program No. 12 (19 December 1970): Henry Whiston interviews George Avakian, Zoot Sims, and Phil Woods; "Bright Lights - That Drummin' Man" CBC-FM (October 1970): Henry Whiston interviews Gene Krupa.

TRACK II: "The Arnold Dean Show" WTIC Radio, Hartford (8 June 1970): BG interviewed by Arnold Dean of radio WTIC; "Night Ride" BBC 1 Radio Network (10 February 1971): BG interviewed in room at Grosvenor House hotel in London by Bruce Wyndham; Moore-Obolensky-Goodman Interview, Voice of America (10 June 1971): unedited interview with BG by Garry Moore and Ludmilla "Lucy" Obolensky; "Swinging Reminiscences" WDR II Radio Network (28 July 1971): BG interviewed by Dieter Broer, press-relations officer with German record company; "Vibrations" PBS-TV Network (Fall 1971): BG reminisces, responds to questions.

b. 1

REEL No. INTV-9

1972-1975

TRACK I: "Memories in Melody" WALK-FM Radio (8 November 1972): Jack Ellsworth interviews BG; Capital Radio Interview BBC Radio (8 December 1973): Peter Findlay interviews BG from London; "Music for a Sunday Afternoon" WHAN Radio (15 July 1973): Howard Scott, Exec. Dir. of Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, is interviewed by Bill Gibbons; "Eyewitness News" ABC-TV (27 November 1973): Milton Lewis interviews BG at opening of Jazz Museum, NYC; Opening of Jazz Museum (27 November 1973): BG and Connors attend opening of Jazz Museum, NYC (cont'd Track II).

TRACK II: Opening of Jazz Museum (27 November 1973): cont'd from Track I; "Chicago to Copland" BBC Radio 3 (26 December 1973): Peter Clayton interviews BG; WNEW Newscast WNEW-TV (12 June 1974): a telecast videotaped during the Schaefer Festival in Central Park, NYC; "Bi-Centennial Minute" All TV networks (31 May 1975): previously videotaped one-minute history lesson with BG about event 200 years before the telecast; "From the Midway" University of Chicago radio station (12 May 1975): BG guest lecture at University of Chicago.

b. 1, ■■■■ 39002132952814	REEL No. INTV-10 <a href="#">[Aviary] mss_0143_39002058724049_39002132952814</a>	1975-1976
	<p>TRACK I: University of Chicago Interview (12 May 1975): transfer of complete recording of BG's appearance at University of Chicago (extended cut of same feature on INTV-9); "Happy Birthday, Aaron Copland" BBC-2 Televised 16 November 1975): celebration for Copland's birthday, BG among those who give testimonials about Copland.</p> <p>TRACK II: "Happy Birthday, Aaron Copland" (16 November 1975): cont'd from Track I; "The Swing Era" WBAI-FM Radio (15 April 1976): BG and Hal Davis interviewed by John Lissner.</p>	
b. 1	<p>REEL No. INTV-11</p> <p>TRACK I: "Echoes Bright and Clear: A Discovery of American Music" PBS-TV Network (11 May 1976): Musical and choral groups from University of Indiana, BG comments throughout about composers and compositions; "Big Band Bash" KWMU-FM Radio (24 June 1976): Charlie "Cactus" Menees interviews BG; "All You Need is Love" ITV (9 April 1977): British Independent Television Network (ITV) series feat. BG, Artie Shaw, Buddy Rich, Lionel Hampton, and others, commenting on film and music.</p> <p>TRACK II: "All You Need is Love" (9 April 1977): Cont'd from Track I; "Once Upon a Time" BBC Radio 3 (4 April 1977): Teddy Wilson interviewed by Charles Fox, talks about BG; Wolf Trap Interview, National Public Radio (2 July 1977): Paul Anthony interviews BG before performance at Wolf Trap Farm, Vienna, Virginia; Jack Sohmer Telephone interview (mid-November 1977): Jack Sohmer (newspaper columnist) interviews BG by phone.</p>	1976-1977
b. 1, ■■■■ 39002133914037	<p>REEL No. INTV-12</p> <p>TRACK I: Note: first four interviews on this track (McDonough interviews) are related to an unfinished Columbia Records project. McDonough-Hammond Interview (18 January 1978): McDonough interviews Hammond about 1938 BG Carnegie Hall concert recording; McDonough-Goodman Interview (January 1978): McDonough interviews BG about 1938 concert; McDonough-Savory Interview (January 1978): Savory interviewed about 1938 concert recording technology and acetates.</p> <p>TRACK II: McDonough-Savory interview: Cont'd from track I; McDonough-Marx Interview (January 1978): Marx, who arranged the recording of the 1938 concert, is interviewed about it; "Eyewitness News" ABC-TV (17 January 1978): Harry Reasoner introduces John Martin, BG makes brief comment, Gene Krupa speaks about 1938 Carnegie Hall concert; Powell Hall Interview (11 March 1978): taped interview with BG backstage at Powell Hall, St. Louis, where he was appearing in concert; "Tomorrow" NBC-TV (18 July 1977): Tom Synder interviews BG, cont'd on INTV-13.</p>	1977-1978



b. 1	REEL No. INTV-13	1979–1980
	<p>TRACK I: "Tomorrow" cont'd from INTV-12; "Consumer Survival Kit - Tenants' Rights" PBS-TV (21 January 1979): BG featured playing a bit of music and citing complaints he gets from neighbors about practicing; "Good Morning America" ABC-TV (8 March 1979): David Hartman (longtime fan) interview BG; Testimonial Dinner for Benny Goodman (29 April 1979): Benny says few words as thanks for dinner at Quinnipiac College; "Manufacturers-Hanover Trust 'Great Artists' Series" WQXR Radio (20 June 1979): Bob Sherman (son of Nadia Reisenberg, who played with BG) interviews BG and they discuss a recording with BG and Reisenberg; "Weekend Whereabouts" WOR Radio (21 June 1979): Kathy Novak of WOR Radio interviews BG about Newport Jazz Festival; Harry James Interview, KMOX Radio (4 October 1979): Charlie "Cactus" Menees interviews Harry James about James's joining and leaving BG.</p> <p>TRACK II: "The Arlene Francis Show" WOR Radio (21 December 1979): Arlene Francis interviews BG about "Benny - King of Swing," a pictorial biography; "The American Music Awards" ABC-TV (18 January 1980): Elton John introduces Henry Mancini, who announces that the annual award of merit is given to BG, and several artists pay tribute to BG; William B. Williams Interview, WNEW Radio (30 May 1980): BG's 71st Birthday celebration feat. BG's music (BG guest of William B. Williams).</p>	
b. 1	REEL No. INTV-14	1970–1984
	<p>TRACK I: "P.M., New York" WOR-AM Radio (12 January 1982): BG interviewed by Kathy Novak about his Stereo Review "Certificate of Merit Award"; "Critic's Circle" WOR-AM Radio (15 February 1982): Jack O'Brian interviews BG; "Entertainment Tonight" ABC-TV (30 May 1982): not an interview, rather a notice that BG was playing Kool Jazz Festival at the Kennedy Center on Memorial Day; "Great Sounds" (10 November 1982): Dick Shepard interview with BG, who was featured in a weekend program (Connors mentions LPs distributed across radio networks for play); CBS Morning News, CBS-TV (6 September 1983): BG interviewed by unidentified CBS staffer in his apartment, discusses modern jazz; CBS Morning News, CBS-TV (26 April 1984): BG comments on Count Basie's death.</p> <p>TRACK II: Note: this track is devoted to misc. interviews about BG, out of chronological order. Jerome - Allen Interview (29 March 1971): Walter Allen interviews Jerry Jerome (who worked with BG) for research on biography of Fletcher Henderson; Hendricks - Eagle Interview (late 1970's): Don Eagle, jazz enthusiast, interviewed Ray Hendricks (early BG vocalist); "Kennedy Center Honors" NBC-TV (5 December 1982): televised program features eulogies of BG given by artists and friends.</p>	
b. 2	REEL No. INTV-15	1948–1985
	<p>TRACK I: George Simon interviews Benny Goodman (October/November 1948): Simon interviews BG about big band and plays records; George Avakian interviews Benny Goodman (probably 1952): Avakian interviews BG about Columbia releases and promos; John Jenson radio show, Radio Station KMPX (poss. Spring 1976); Joe Thompson radio show, Radio Station KQED-FM (poss. October 1978); Shoreham Hotel recording (28 May 1982): BG presented with a plaque and made member of Shoreham Hotel "Hall of Fame," most of recording is performances of house band; WNEW Radio Interview (13 January 1983): broadcast to commemorate BG's 1938 Carnegie Hall concert, some interview and musical excerpts (interview continues on Track II).</p> <p>TRACK II: WNEW Radio Interview cont'd; "The Roy Leonard Show" WGN Radio, Chicago (15 February 1985): taped when BG was in Chicago for a dinner dance at Chicago Historical Society, features interview by Roy Leonard; Claes Dahlgren Interview (12 April 1950): Claes Dahlgren (rep of Radio Sweden) interviews BG.</p>	

b. 2	<p>REEL No. INTV-16</p> <p>TRACK I: "The Listening Room" WQXR AM and FM (c. 15 November 1985): Bob Sherman interview with BG feat. some commercial recordings</p> <p>TRACK II: "Out on a Limb" WMT Radio (c. 9 April 1983): telephone interview with BG and Murray Kent, of radio station WMT, to promote concert at Iowa State University; Benny Goodman Promo for radio station WLIN (n.d.): 37-second promo for BG's friend, Jack Ellsworth; Jack Ellsworth interviews Martha Tilton (July 1949): Martha and Jack discuss her career and her tenure with BG; Charles Shaw Interview, Radio Station WOLF (30 November 1948): BG and Shaw discuss BG's new band.</p>	1948-1985
b. 2, [REDACTED] 39002132952772	<p>REEL No. INTV-17</p> <p><a href="#">[Aviary] mss_0143_39002128474302_39002132952772</a></p> <p>TRACK I: "Stars on Parade" (9 May 1958): Transferred by the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service, featuring 10-piece orchestra, "The Benny Goodman All Stars," but transfer does not include BG playing or speaking (only comments about BG by guitarist Allan Reuss and vocalist Martha Tilton).</p> <p>TRACK II: Edward Greenfield interviews Benny Goodman (29 September 1981): BG interviewed by Edward Greenfield the day after his first engagement at the Benson and Hedges Festival in England. BG discusses Bartok recordings/ collaborations and other classical works he commissioned.</p>	1958, 1981
b. 2, [REDACTED] 39002132952780	<p>REEL No. INTV-18</p> <p><a href="#">[Aviary] mss_0143_39002128474302_39002132952780</a></p> <p>TRACK I: "The Jerry Williams Show" WRKO-AM Radio (11 June 1986): BG's last interview, two days before his death - telephone interview with Jerry Williams in Boston. First and only time BG responds to questions and comments from listeners; Lloyd Rauch interviews Allen Hanlon (27 March 1983): interview with guitarist Allen Hanlon, who was a sub for BG's regular guitarist.</p> <p>TRACK II: "Traditions in Swing," WKCR-FM Radio (27 Radio 1991): BG's brother, Harry Goodman (a bassist), is interviewed in NYC about various musicians and orchestras.</p>	1983-1991
b. 2	<p>REEL No. INTV-19</p> <p>TRACK I: cont'd from Reel No. INTV-18 "Traditions from Swing" (27 April 1991): features full-length recordings of BG, which are discussed by Harry and Schaap; "Benny Goodman Seance" (31 August 1993): BG enthusiast Ron Senet and his wife attended and recorded a psychic reading with the medium Elwood Babbitt - a voice that identifies itself as "Benny Goodman" is heard.</p>	1991-1993

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Jazz musicians

### **Names**

Connor, D. Russell (Donald Russell)

Goodman, Benny, 1909-1986