

**WALTER CARRINGER (1924- ) PAPERS, 1924-1994**

**Series 19/3/8**

**Boxes 1-2 (including one drop-front box)**

**Biography**

Vocalist and music professor Walter Carringer was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, on September 5, 1924, and grew up in Murphy, North Carolina. As a young man during WWII, Carringer spent two and a half years in the United States Army, from 1943 to 1946. It was during his time in the military that Carringer's military supervisors noticed his vocal talent and arranged for him to appear in USO shows and bond selling tours. He was urged by those who heard his tenor voice to pursue a solo career. After leaving the military, Carringer did just that—enrolling at Columbia University in New York City.

Carringer spent three years at Columbia, completing a B.S. in music in 1950. During this time he was the first student to appear in solo recital at Columbia's concert hall, McMillan Theatre. His senior year, Carringer auditioned for Robert Shaw, director of the famous Shaw Chorale, and was immediately hired. Carringer was granted special permission by Columbia to participate in a three-week tour as a soloist with the Chorale. For the next three and a half years, Carringer continued to sing with Robert Shaw's group.

The demand for Carringer as a solo artist grew during his years with the Shaw Chorale, and in 1953, the time had come for him to embark on an independent solo career. The guest appearances that soon followed included New York's Carnegie Hall, and in many cities and towns throughout the country. Carringer performed in full evening recitals, chamber music and school assembly programs, sacred recitals, oratorio, symphony and "pops" orchestra concerts, radio, and television engagements. Carringer sang in every U.S. state with the exceptions of Hawaii and Nevada. He performed in New York's Town Hall more than thirty times. During his career, Carringer sang more than twelve times in Carnegie Hall. It was in one of these performances that he appeared with Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne in the premier U.S. performance of Rossini's "Sermiramide." He also presented the first U.S. performances of Lucas Foss' "A Parable of Death," "Intimations of Immortality" by Finzi, "Lelio" by Berlioz (in Pittsburgh and New York City with the Pittsburgh Symphony conducted by William Steinberg), Shostakovich's "Song of the Forests" and Handel's "The Triumph of Time and Truth." Carringer also performed every major oratorio during his career.

During his career, Carringer appeared with almost all major orchestras in the United States and Canada. He also participated in many festivals—American Opera Society (NY), Bethlehem (PA) Bach, Winter Park (FL) Bach, Brevard (NC), Cabrillo, (CA), Lewisohn Stadium (NY), Marlboro (VT), Brattleboro (VT), and Tanglewood (MA). He sung under Pablo Casals in New York and at the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico. During the Mozart Bicentenary, he performed in over a hundred performances of the Mozart Requiem. In 1960, Carringer made his European debut in a London recital.

Carringer was the recipient, twice, of the Martha Baird Rockefeller Foundation award and was a finalist in the national competition held by the American Federation of Music Clubs. He also

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received, twice, the Orpheus Award given by Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia for “significant and lasting contributions to the cause of music in America.”

In 1964, Carringer joined the music faculty at Northwestern University as an Associate Professor of Voice. After 24 years with the University, he became professor emeritus in 1987. Some years after his retirement, Carringer returned to North Carolina.

**Description of the Series**

The Walter Carringer Papers document Carringer’s busy and successful singing career, and consist for the most part of newspaper clippings, publicity and repertoire information.

Biographical information includes Carringer’s Honorable Discharge certificate, a Freemason pin, Boy Scout badges and biographical forms from Northwestern University.

Carringer’s correspondence is mostly career-related—including letters of reference, letters from professional organizations, and inter-office correspondence from Northwestern University—with the exception of a few personal greeting cards. The form letters were sent to friends and colleagues on behalf of projects that Carringer founded and/or supported such as the Light Opera Works Company. Correspondence is arranged chronologically within the folders.

The most extensive part of this collection, the publicity folders, includes N.U. press releases (arranged chronologically) and newspaper clippings announcing concert appearances and reviewing appearances by Carringer. Many of these are undated. The majority of the newspaper clippings were photocopied. Also included here are the press kits put together by Carringer’s agent. The public and professional response to Carringer’s solo career is well documented in this collection.

The programs and repertoire lists in the collection show what repertoire was performed by Carringer throughout the majority of his career. The programs are from a wide range of concert appearances, including Carringer’s appearance at Pablo Casals’ music festival in Puerto Rico. Various other professional activities are lightly documented in the folders containing information about contests; the Bel Canto Foundation, an organization that Carringer helped found to support young singers; an article by Carringer published in the *Music Journal*; a “Singer’s Primer” he compiled; and the contract from a 1957 appearance with the North Carolina Symphony. These materials are arranged chronologically.

A drop-front box contains three scrapbooks from the early years of Carringer’s career and an oversized concert poster. One of the scrapbooks was disassembled because of its deteriorated condition, and the materials (programs, clippings, and photographs) were arranged in a folder.

**Provenance:** Walter Carringer donated his papers to the University Archives on October 3, 1990 as Accession No. 90-155 and on July 8, 2003 as Accession No. 03-103. Additional materials

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were transferred to the University Archives by Don Roberts of the Music Library on November 28, 1998 as Accession No. 98-220.

**Restrictions:** None.

**Separations:** Six inches of duplicate and extraneous materials were discarded. Six LPs (see list below) were transferred to the University Archives audio-visual collection. Two audiotapes (master copies of LPs) were discarded.

**Processor:** Sarah Rose; August 2003.

**Reformatted by:** Rachel C. Teuer; August 2, 2004.

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**Container List**

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
1	1	Biographical	1924-1977
CORRESPONDENCE			
	2	General	1937-1994
	3	Form letters	1958-1981
PUBLICITY			
	4	N.U. Press Releases	1964-1979
	5	Newspaper Clippings	Circa 1950-1988
	6	Reviews – Opera Performances	Circa 1964
	7	Reviews – Oratorio and Orchestra Performances	Circa 1953-1965
	8	Reviews – Solo Recitals	Circa 1954-1978
	9	Concert posters, announcements, fliers	Circa 1958-1984
	10	Quotes from Reviews	Circa 1960s
	11	Repertoire Lists	1950-1980
	12	Programs	1961-1990
	13	Contests	1948, 1954
	14	Bel Canto Foundation	1978,1990
	15	Publications	1959,1979
	16	Contract	1957
2	drop- front	Scrapbook	1954-1955
		Scrapbook	1952-1953
		Scrapbook (disassembled)	1949-1951
		Concert poster	n.d.
PHONOGRAPH ALBUMS			
		Charles Ives Early Songs, Brewster Records	1979
		Mozart Requiem Mass in d minor/Robert Shaw Chorale, RCA Victor	n.d.
		Poulenc Mass in G/Robert Shaw Chorale, RCA Victor	n.d.
		The Robert Shaw Chorale/Schubert, Bach, Brahms, RCA Victor	1953
		Walter Carringer In Recital	n.d.
		Walter Carringer Sings For Bel Canto Foundation	n.d.