

Amateur Hour Collection

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Music Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2005

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Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/eadmus.mu004002>

Collection Summary

Title: Amateur Hour Collection

Span Dates: 1934-1948.

Call No.: ML31.A4

Creator: Bowes, Edward, Major, 1874-1946.

Size: 9 linear ft.; 20 boxes; ca. 8500 items

Language: Collection material in English

Repository: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Primarily over 7000 applications from contestants who appeared on the Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour radio program between 1934 and 1948. A small percentage of the administrative papers dating from the late 1940s and 1950s, as well as materials relating to the Mexican version of the program, La hora internacional del aficionado, are also included. Filed with the contestant applications are letters of introduction, reference letters, and other documents sent by prospective contestants. Applications from conventional performers such as musicians, dancers, singers, and impersonators are the most numerous, but also included are applications from novelty acts such as a human piccolo, a group of hand-standing singers, and a group who played harmonicas with fire extinguishers. Of particular interest are applications from various performers, now well-known, including Teresa Brewer, Stubby Kaye, Robert Merrill, Beverly Sills, and Frank Sinatra. Photographs from the 1940s and 1950s provide a visual record of the show, while correspondence to and from program staff members recount some of the program's business transactions. Scripts, promotional material, and advertising and sponsor documents also are part of the collection.

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 personal names, subjects, related names, and listed alphabetically therein.

Personal Names

Bowes, Edward, Major, 1874-1946.

Subjects

Original amateur hour--Sources.

Talent shows--United States.

Related Names

Bowes, Edward, Major, 1874-1946.

Brewer, Teresa.

Kaye, Stubby.

Mack, Ted.

Merrill, Robert, 1917-

Sills, Beverly.

Sinatra, Frank, 1915-

Administrative Information

Provenance

Deposit, Joseph Brown 1970.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Processing History

The Amateur Hour collection was processed in 1993 by Robert Saladini with assistance from Timothy Bullard, Cheryl Dempsey, Michael A. Ferrando, and Claudia Widgery. The finding aid was then prepared with Corel WordPerfect 5.1. In 2004, the Amateur Hour finding aid was edited, corrected and coded for EAD by Michael A. Ferrando.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright on the materials of the Amateur Hour Collection is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Restrictions

Certain restrictions to use or copying of materials may apply.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: container number, the Amateur Hour Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Agency Sketch

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
April 1934	First radio broadcast of <i>Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour</i> on WHN, New York
1935	William Edward Maguiness (stage name Ted Mack) joins Bowes as emcee and talent scout
March 24, 1935	Coast to coast broadcast on NBC radio with Chase & Sanborn as sponsor
June 1935	<i>Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour</i> is named the most listened to radio program in the United States
Sept. 8, 1935	The Hoboken Four, featuring Frank Sinatra, performs on the <i>Original Amateur Hour</i> program
Sept. 17, 1936	<i>Original Amateur Hour</i> moves to CBS radio, with Chrysler Corporation as sponsor
1944	Major Bowes retires for health reasons
1945	Radio broadcast of <i>Original Amateur Hour</i> is suspended
June 13, 1946	Major Bowes dies
Jan. 14, 1948	<i>Original Amateur Hour</i> is revived on television by Dumont Studios, with Ted Mack as emcee
Oct. 29, 1948	P. Lorillard Company becomes a sponsor
Oct. 4, 1949	First national television broadcast of <i>Original Amateur Hour</i> , on NBC
1952	Final radio broadcast
April 25, 1953	Pet Milk becomes a sponsor
Oct. 30, 1955	Television program broadcasts on ABC

Jan. 19, 1957	<i>La Hora Internacional del Aficionado</i> , Mexican version of program, broadcasts
July 1, 1957	Program returns to NBC television
May 1, 1959	Program broadcasts on CBS
March 7, 1960	Program returns to ABC
Oct. 2, 1960	Programs returns to CBS
Sept. 20, 1970	Final broadcast

Scope and Content Note

The records of the Amateur Hour Collection consist primarily of over 7,000 applications from contestants who appeared on the Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour radio program between 1934 and 1948. The remainder of the materials in the collection are administrative papers dating from the late 1940s and 1950s. Although these materials are only a small percentage of the administrative papers of the organization, they are worthy of note in that they provide some insight into the way in which the Original Amateur Hour program was run. Materials relating to the Mexican version of the program, *La Hora Internacional del Aficionado*, are also included.

The Amateur Hour collection is represented by twelve series. The first series is **CONTESTANTS** consists primarily of over 7,000 applications from contestants who appeared on the Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour radio program between 1934 and 1948. This series is divided into three subseries: Contestant applications; Contestant biographical sketches; Lists of performers.

Filed with the contestant applications are letters of introduction, reference letters, and other documents sent by prospective contestants. Both the "type of entertainment" and "details of interest" responses on the applications provide an overview of the broad range of amateur performance genres of the period. Applications from conventional performers such as musicians, dancers, singers, and impersonators are the most numerous, but also included are applications from novelty acts such as a human piccolo, a group of hand-standing singers, and a group who played harmonicas with fire extinguishers. Of particular interest are applications from various performers, now well-known, who "got their break" on the show, including Teresa Brewer, Stubby Kaye, Robert Merrill, Beverly Sills, and Frank Sinatra.

The second series is **PHOTOGRAPHS** consisting of photo prints (B&W) of various sizes and arranged by subject. An interesting collection of photographs from the 1940s and 1950s provides a visual record of the show.

The third series is **CORRESPONDENCE** consists of correspondence to and from program staff members Lou Goldberg, Daniel Manjarrez, and Harry McWilliams recounts some of the program's business transactions and is arranged by subject.

The other nine series consist of administration and operations materials. The general program information, advertising packages, and ratings information are included with Advertising/Sponsor papers. Scripts are housed with the Production materials.

Organization of the Amateur Hour Collection

The Amateur Hour Collection is organized in 12 series:

- Contestants
- Photographs
- Correspondence
- Advertising/sponsor materials
- Promotional materials
- Production materials

- Financial papers
- Legal papers
- Printed programs of performances
- Clippings
- Awards
- Miscellaneous

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX-FOLDER 1/1-16/6	<u>CONTESTANTS</u> Applications and other related materials of contestants for the Amateur Hour. The majority of which pertain specifically to the Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour radio program between 1934 and 1948. Arrangement is in three subseries: Contestant applications; Contestant biographical sketches; Lists of Performers.
BOX 1-15	<u>Contestant applications, related correspondence and documents</u> Applications from contestants who appeared on the Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour radio program between 1934 and 1948. Arranged in alphabetical order by name
BOX-FOLDER 16/1-2	<u>Contestants' biographical sketches</u> Brief biographical sketches of contestants who appeared on the Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour radio program between 1934 and 1948. Arranged alphabetical order by name
BOX-FOLDER 16/3-5	<u>Lists of performers</u> Typescript lists of performers from the Amateur Hour. Arranged in alphabetical order by nationality
BOX-FOLDER 16/6-33	<u>PHOTOGRAPHS</u> Photo prints (B&W) of various sizes. Arranged in alphabetical order by subject
BOX-FOLDER 17/1-26	<u>CORRESPONDENCE</u> Correspondence, drafts, letters received variously related to the operation and performers of the Amateur Hour. Arrangement is by subject
BOX-FOLDER 17/27-37	<u>ADVERTISING/SPONSOR MATERIALS</u> Various types of materials created or generated by the Amateur Hour intended to advertise the unique entertainment value for potential investors or broadcasters. Arrangement is by subject
BOX-FOLDER 18/1-10	<u>PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS</u> Various publications, brochures, and packages created by the Amateur Hour in order to promote its unique entertainment value to potential investors or broadcasters. Arrangement is by subject or genre.
BOX-FOLDER 18/11-18	<u>PRODUCTION MATERIALS</u> Various materials created by the Amateur Hour intended and used for show production. Arrangement is by subject
BOX-FOLDER 19/1-10	<u>FINANCIAL PAPERS</u> Financial papers concerning the operation and expenses of the Amateur Hour. Arrangement is by subject or genre

BOX-FOLDER 19/12-13 **LEGAL PAPERS**

Contracts and other legal writ concerning the operation and rights acquired by the Amateur Hour.
Arrangement is by genre or subject

BOX-FOLDER 19/14 **PRINTED PROGRAMS OF PERFORMANCES, 1934-1954, undated**

Amateur Hour programs from various productions throughout its history.
Arrangement is chronological by date

BOX-FOLDER **CLIPPINGS, 1935-1957**
19/15-20/5

Clippings from various periodicals related to the Amateur Hour.
Arrangement is chronological by date

BOX-FOLDER 20/6 **AWARDS**

Honorary certificate given to Ted Mack and the Amateur Hour.
Arrangement is by subject

BOX-FOLDER **MISCELLANEOUS**
20/7-20/13

Miscellaneous materials related to the Amateur Hour.
Arrangement is by format or subject

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX-FOLDER 1/1-16/6	CONTESTANTS Applications and other related materials of contestants for the Amateur Hour. The majority of which pertain specifically to the Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour radio program between 1934 and 1948. Arrangement is in three subseries: Contestant applications; Contestant biographical sketches; Lists of Performers.
BOX 1-15	Contestant applications, related correspondence and documents Applications from contestants who appeared on the Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour radio program between 1934 and 1948. Arranged in alphabetical order by name
BOX-FOLDER 1/1	Aalrud to Alvi
BOX-FOLDER 1/2	Amato to Astroff
BOX-FOLDER 1/3	Atanasoff to Banks
BOX-FOLDER 1/4	Barad to Beloff
BOX-FOLDER 1/5	Benak to Bishop
BOX-FOLDER 2/1	Bjornie to Bombara
BOX-FOLDER 2/2	Bon Bons to Bauner
BOX-FOLDER 2/3	Breen to Brydof
BOX-FOLDER 2/4	Buchannan to Capwell
BOX-FOLDER 2/5	Cardonna to Caye
BOX-FOLDER 2/6	Clancy to Connie
BOX-FOLDER 3/1	Connors to Cross
BOX-FOLDER 3/2	Crowell to Davis
BOX-FOLDER 3/3	Davy to Dexter
BOX-FOLDER 3/4	Diamond to Dottie and Bobbie
BOX-FOLDER 3/5	Dougherty to Dynamic Harmonica Four
BOX-FOLDER 4/1	Eagle to Ely
BOX-FOLDER 4/2	Emerick to Farrow
BOX-FOLDER 4/3	Fasany to Fiore
BOX-FOLDER 4/4	Five Aces to Flatbush Floogies
BOX-FOLDER 4/5	Fleer to Foster
BOX-FOLDER 4/6	Four Amateur Rogues to Fourtan
BOX-FOLDER 5/1	Fox to Fyfe
BOX-FOLDER 5/2	Gaderick to Gaynor
BOX-FOLDER 5/3	Geankoplis to Giusti
BOX-FOLDER 5/4	Goerger to Grazzini
BOX-FOLDER 5/5	Great Lakes Swing Sextet to Gypsy Quartet
BOX-FOLDER 6/1	Hackman to Harmony Four
BOX-FOLDER 6/2	Harold to Hechl
BOX-FOLDER 6/3	Hedling to Hjerpe
BOX-FOLDER 6/4	Hoag to Hopkinson

CONTESTANTS

Container

Contents

BOX-FOLDER 6/5	Horlbogen to Hylselop
BOX-FOLDER 7/1	Idaho Ranch Boys to Jive'n Five
BOX-FOLDER 7/2	Joan and Ernie to Juvinall
BOX-FOLDER 7/3	Kaaren to Keenan
BOX-FOLDER 7/4	Keister to Kiwanis Quartette of Yonkers
BOX-FOLDER 8/1	Klaff to Kwan
BOX-FOLDER 8/2	Laborde to Lazzesi
BOX-FOLDER 8/3	Leah to Leslie
BOX-FOLDER 8/4	Leuname to Logue
BOX-FOLDER 8/5	Lohr to Lyric Male Quartet
BOX-FOLDER 9/1	Maas to M[a]cVeigh
BOX-FOLDER 9/2	Macchiaverna to Mansan
BOX-FOLDER 9/3	Maranville to Maryella
BOX-FOLDER 9/4	Mäsch to Melodie
BOX-FOLDER 9/5	Melodious Harmonica Trio to Mike and Bill
BOX-FOLDER 10/1	Miki to Mistichelli
BOX-FOLDER 10/2	Mitchel to Morris, D.
BOX-FOLDER 10/3	Morris, M. to Myers
BOX-FOLDER 10/4	Nadel to Nogueira
BOX-FOLDER 10/5	Nona to O'Neil, R.
BOX-FOLDER 11/1	Ooms to Pagin
BOX-FOLDER 11/2	Pagliarini to Payne
BOX-FOLDER 11/3	Peace and Pizzuto
BOX-FOLDER 11/4	Plantation Four to Puzelli
BOX-FOLDER 11/5	Quantico Marine Quartet to Rezits
BOX-FOLDER 12/1	Rhodes to Robbins, R.
BOX-FOLDER 12/2	Robbins, S. to Rondeau
BOX-FOLDER 12/3	Roosa to Rozman
BOX-FOLDER 12/4	Rubenstein, L. to Sanders
BOX-FOLDER 12/5	Sandherr to Scott
BOX-FOLDER 13/1	Seabee Quartet to Shiff
BOX-FOLDER 13/2	Shilton to Six Janitors
BOX-FOLDER 13/3	Six Jars of Jam to Southwick
BOX-FOLDER 13/4	Spadafora to Stewart
BOX-FOLDER 13/5	Stock to Swing Sisters Trio
BOX-FOLDER 13/6	Swingers of Harmony to Texas Wanderers
BOX-FOLDER 14/1	Thatcher to Three Coxswains
BOX-FOLDER 14/2	Three Davis Brothers to Three Mouth Organ Kings
BOX-FOLDER 14/3	Three Niblicks to Towle
BOX-FOLDER 14/4	Tracy to Tyler
BOX-FOLDER 14/5	Watcher and Freeman to Weal
BOX-FOLDER 14/6	Wetherson to Westward Ho!
BOX-FOLDER 15/1	Uccellini to Vuylsteke
BOX-FOLDER 15/2	Whalen to Williams, L.
BOX-FOLDER 15/3	Williams, M. to Wittig
BOX-FOLDER 15/4	Wobnick to Wyoming Range Buddies

CONTESTANTS

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX-FOLDER 15/5	Yaffe to Zyne
BOX-FOLDER 16/1-2	Contestants' biographical sketches Brief biographical sketches of contestants who appeared on the Major Bowes' Original Amateur Hour radio program between 1934 and 1948. Arranged alphabetical order by name
BOX-FOLDER 16/1	All Girl Swing Band to One Man Band
BOX-FOLDER 16/2	Kathleen Ray to Frances White
BOX-FOLDER 16/3-5	Lists of performers Typescript lists of performers from the Amateur Hour. Arranged in alphabetical order by nationality
BOX-FOLDER 16/3	American
BOX-FOLDER 16/4	Irish
BOX-FOLDER 16/5	Mexican
BOX-FOLDER 16/6-33	PHOTOGRAPHS Photo prints (B&W) of various sizes. Arranged in alphabetical order by subject
BOX-FOLDER 16/6	Cowboy Acts
BOX-FOLDER 16/7	Dancers: Adult, male
BOX-FOLDER 16/8	Dancers: Adult, female
BOX-FOLDER 16/9	Dancers: Child, female
BOX-FOLDER 16/10	Partners, Adult
BOX-FOLDER 16/11	Partners, Child
BOX-FOLDER 16/12	Impersonators Instrumentalists:
BOX-FOLDER 16/13	Accordion players
BOX-FOLDER 16/14	Bands
BOX-FOLDER 16/15	Bellringers
BOX-FOLDER 16/16	Guitar players
BOX-FOLDER 16/17	Harmonica players
BOX-FOLDER 16/18	Piano players
BOX-FOLDER 16/19	Trumpet players
BOX-FOLDER 16/20	Xylophone players
BOX-FOLDER 16/21	Rollerskaters
BOX-FOLDER 16/22	Singers: Adult, male
BOX-FOLDER 16/23	Singers: Adult, female
BOX-FOLDER 16/24	Singers: Child, male
BOX-FOLDER 16/25	Singers: Child, female
BOX-FOLDER 16/26	Novelty acts
BOX-FOLDER 16/27	Performing Groups
BOX-FOLDER 16/28	Major Bowes
BOX-FOLDER 16/29	Ted Mack
BOX-FOLDER 16/30	Game shows

PHOTOGRAPHS

Container

Contents

BOX-FOLDER 16/31	Stage Set
BOX-FOLDER 16/32	Promotional banners and billboard
BOX-FOLDER 16/33	Others, identified and unidentified
BOX-FOLDER 17/1-26	CORRESPONDENCE Correspondence, drafts, letters received variously related to the operation and performers of the Amateur Hour. Arrangement is by subject
BOX-FOLDER 17/1	Drafts and copies of letters of Lou Goldberg, June 26, 1936 to February 11, 1957
BOX-FOLDER 17/2	Drafts and copies of letters of Daniel Manjarrez, March 27, 1957 to June 25, 1957
BOX-FOLDER 17/3-6	Drafts and copies of letters sent by Harry McWilliams, June 1, 1936 to December 2, 1957
BOX-FOLDER 17/7-24	Letters received, filed alphabetically by correspondent
BOX-FOLDER 17/25	Collage of commendatory letters received by Ted Mack (photocopies)
BOX-FOLDER 17/26	Undated and unidentified
BOX-FOLDER 17/27-37	ADVERTISING/SPONSOR MATERIALS Various types of materials created or generated by the Amateur Hour intended to advertise the unique entertainment value for potential investors or broadcasters. Arrangement is by subject
BOX-FOLDER 17/27-29	General program information Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual documents BOX: 17/27• <i>Ted Mack and the Original Amateur Hour, NBC television</i> BOX: 17/28• <i>The Original Amateur Hour, NBC television</i> BOX: 17/29
BOX-FOLDER 17/30-32	Program ratings sheets Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mexico BOX: 17/30• United States BOX: 17/31• <i>The Amateur Hour Program examination</i> BOX: 17/32
BOX-FOLDER 17/33-34	Station listings sheets Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mexican and Carribean area BOX: 17/33• United States BOX: 17/34
BOX-FOLDER 17/35	Program listings
BOX-FOLDER 17/36	Other TV & Radio program listings
BOX-FOLDER 17/37	Miscellaneous
BOX-FOLDER 18/1-10	PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS Various publications, brochures, and packages created by the Amateur Hour in order to promote its unique entertainment value to potential investors or broadcasters. Arrangement is by subject or genre.
BOX-FOLDER 18/1	Press release drafts
BOX-FOLDER 18/2	Program fact sheets and announcements
BOX-FOLDER 18/3	In-house publications
BOX-FOLDER 18/4	Original Amateur Hour magazine
BOX-FOLDER 18/5	Flyers and proofs

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Container

Contents

BOX-FOLDER 18/6 Newspaper materials

BOX-FOLDER 18/7-8 Posters

BOX-FOLDER 18/9 Ted Mack

BOX-FOLDER 18/10 Miscellaneous

BOX-FOLDER 18/11-18 **PRODUCTION MATERIALS**

Various materials created by the Amateur Hour intended and used for show production.
Arrangement is by subject

BOX-FOLDER 18/11-13 Scripts

Includes:

- Original Amateur Hour BOX: 18/11
- La Hora Internacional Del Aficionado, 9 Mar 1957 - 13 July 1957 BOX: 18/12-13

BOX-FOLDER 18/14-15 Commercials scripts (English and Spanish)

BOX-FOLDER 18/16 Program order and sequence, La Hora Stage directions

BOX-FOLDER 18/17 Stage directions

BOX-FOLDER 18/18 Miscellaneous

BOX-FOLDER 19/1-10 **FINANCIAL PAPERS**

Financial papers concerning the operation and expenses of the Amateur Hour.
Arrangement is by subject or genre

BOX-FOLDER 19/1 Balance sheets

BOX-FOLDER 19/2 Bank deposits lists

BOX-FOLDER 19/3 Bills (facturas)

BOX-FOLDER 19/4 Payroll sheets

BOX-FOLDER 19/5 Program budgets

BOX-FOLDER 19/6-8 Time/rate tables

Includes:

- American TV stations BOX: 19/6
- Mexican TV stations BOX: 19/7
- Mexican radio stations BOX: 19/8

BOX-FOLDER 19/9 Travel expenses

BOX-FOLDER 19/10 Miscellaneous

BOX-FOLDER 19/12-13 **LEGAL PAPERS**

Contracts and other legal writ concerning the operation and rights acquired by the Amateur Hour.
Arrangement is by genre or subject

BOX-FOLDER 19/12 Contract for La Hora Internacional

BOX-FOLDER 19/13 Servicio Postal Mexicano registration form

BOX-FOLDER 19/14 **PRINTED PROGRAMS OF PERFORMANCES, 1934-1954, undated**

Amateur Hour programs from various productions throughout its history.
Arrangement is chronological by date

PRINTED PROGRAMS OF PERFORMANCES, 1934-1954, undated

Container

Contents

BOX-FOLDER 19/14	Printed programs of performances of the Amateur Hour contestants, 1934-1954, undated
BOX-FOLDER 19/15-20/5	CLIPPINGS, 1935-1957 Clippings from various periodicals related to the Amateur Hour. Arrangement is chronological by date
BOX-FOLDER 19/15	January 1935 to November 29, 1935
BOX-FOLDER 19/16	January 28, 1936 to December 4, 1936
BOX-FOLDER 19/17	March 11, 1937 to April 20, 1937
BOX-FOLDER 19/18	January 6, 1939 to October 2, 1941
BOX-FOLDER 19/19	August 6, 1947 to May 15, 1953
BOX-FOLDER 19/20	April 19, 1956 to December 5, 1956
BOX-FOLDER 20/1	January 25, 1957 to March 16, 1957
BOX-FOLDER 20/2	April 7, 1957 to June 19, 1957
BOX-FOLDER 20/3	July 1, 1957 to November 6, 1957
BOX-FOLDER 20/4	Collage of clippings (photocopy)
BOX-FOLDER 20/5	Undated
BOX-FOLDER 20/6	AWARDS Honorary certificate given to Ted Mack and the Amateur Hour. Arrangement is by subject
BOX-FOLDER 20/6	Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States presented to Ted Mack and The Original Amateur Hour, 2 May 1953. [photocopy]
BOX-FOLDER 20/7-20/13	MISCELLANEOUS Miscellaneous materials related to the Amateur Hour. Arrangement is by format or subject
BOX-FOLDER 20/7	Notebook of Lloyd Marx
BOX-FOLDER 20/8	Catalogues of films
BOX-FOLDER 20/9	Harry McWilliams: Notes from Amateur Hour tours and miscellaneous notes
BOX-FOLDER 20/10-11	Articles
BOX-FOLDER 20/12	Samples of stationery and forms
BOX-FOLDER 20/13	Travel brochures, postcards and maps

Related Material

The Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division has in its custody both the Original Amateur Hour radio broadcasts dating from 1935 to 1944 and the television recordings of the show from 1948 to 1968.