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H. Lawrence Freeman papers 6381639

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Freeman, H. Lawrence (Harry Lawrence), 1869-1954
Creator:	Freeman, Lottie J.
Creator:	Freeman, Valdo, 1900-1972
Creator:	Freeman, Anita Grannum, 1908-1999
Title:	H. Lawrence Freeman papers
ID:	6381639
ID:	MS#1456
Date [inclusive]:	1870-1982, 2015
Date [bulk]:	1890-1954
Physical Description:	35 linear feet 14 document boxes, 22 flat boxes, 12 oversize boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The original scores, clippings, correspondence and ephemera in this collection document the lives and careers of Harry Lawrence, Carlotta, and Valdo Freeman, a family of African-American performing artists involved in opera, theatre, and music in early-twentieth-century New York.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); H. Lawrence Freeman papers; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical Note

The African-American opera composer Harry Lawrence Freeman, son of Lemuel Freeman and Agnes Sims-Freeman, was born in 1869 in Cleveland, Ohio. The Freeman family had been free landholders in Cleveland for several decades before the Civil War. Agnes is said to have had

a beautiful singing voice, and young Harry showed exceptional musical abilities at an early age. By age 12, he organized a boy's vocal quartet, in which he sang first treble, and worked as a church organist. Self-taught, he began composing at the age of 18, after being inspired by a performance of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. By 1891, Freeman had organized the Freeman Grand Opera Company in Denver, Colorado. His first operas, *Ephthalia* and *The Martyr*, were performed by the Freeman Grand Opera Company in Denver's Deutsches Theater in 1891 and 1893 respectively. Freeman wrote the libretti as well as composing the music for these two pieces, as he did for all of his operas except for *Uzziah*.

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Biographical Note

In 1893 Freeman returned to Cleveland, where *The Martyr* had its second production at the German Theatre in 1894. Around 1893 Freeman began studying theory and composition formally with Johann Beck, then the conductor of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. Beck identified Freeman's promise as a composer immediately, saying, "Freeman has some of the important qualities of character that made Wagner great. His compositions are wonderfully big in conception, the music faithfully portraying the sentiment of the words." Perhaps because of this comment, Freeman was dubbed "the colored Wagner" in the press, a sobriquet that stayed with him all his life. Freeman's music shows Wagner's influence in his use of leitmotifs and orchestration; also, Freeman planned to write a cycle of four music-dramas based on African myths, probably inspired by Richard Wagner's 'Ring Cycle' of four operas based on Norse mythology.

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Biographical Note

From about 1894-1904, H. Lawrence Freeman wrote and published a number of popular songs as "Harry Freeman," earning him a reputation as a 'hit' composer in certain circles (in his later works the composer was identified exclusively as "H. Lawrence Freeman"). From 1895-1899, Freeman toured with Ernest Hogan's Rufus Rastus company, writing some of the music for Hogan's blackface musical comedies. In 1899, Freeman married actress and singer Charlotte ("Carlotta") Louise Thomas, the daughter of a prominent black family from Charleston, South Carolina. In January of 1900, their son Valdo Lawrence Freeman was born. Also in 1900, Johann Beck conducted the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra in excerpts from three operas by Freeman, a prestigious symphonic debut for a young American composer, which generated much attention in the press. H. Lawrence Freeman then became the director of the music program at Wilberforce University in Xenia, Ohio, from 1902-1904, where he directed a student production of his opera *African Kraal* in 1903. From 1906-1907, both H. Lawrence and

Carlotta Freeman worked at the newly-formed Pekin Theatre in Chicago, the first theatre of its kind to be entirely run by and performed in by African-Americans.

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Biographical Note

Around 1908, the Freeman family moved to New York City. They founded the Friends' Amusement Guild in their Harlem brownstone, which grew from a gathering of a few neighbors every Sunday afternoon for music or readings to an organization of several hundred members that produced theatre, opera, charity concerts, and a host of other activities. Carlotta continued working as an actress and later as a stage director, with the Anita Bush Stock Company, the Lafayette Players, and other groups. According to interviews with Valdo Freeman, she also performed occasionally with 'legitimate' (i.e. Caucasian) theatre companies by passing as Latin American or of Mediterranean descent-as such, she was one of the first black actresses to work in white theatres. H. Lawrence Freeman continued to work in musical comedy in New York, while also pursuing his operatic composing, becoming interested in a fusion of the two which he called "Jazz Opera." He served as musical director for the Cole-Johnson Brothers Company from 1909-1910, which produced popular "Tin Pan Alley" musicals, and afterwards was musical director of the John Larkins Musical Comedy Company for a few years. He also founded and conducted the Negro Choral Society, a chorus of about 75 voices, starting in 1912. In 1920 the Freemans founded the Negro Grand Opera Company, a group designed to mount H. Lawrence's operas and provide performance opportunities for African-American singers. The same year, H. Lawrence Freeman founded his own music school in Harlem, the Salem School of Music, which was renamed a few years later the Freeman School of Music. From about 1920 onwards, Valdo Freeman acted as his father's business manager, seeking out opportunities for production and publication of the operas--he was the manager of the Negro Grand Opera Company and also became executive director of the Friends Amusement Guild. All three Freemans became thickly embedded in the cultural life of the Harlem Renaissance, with their brownstone serving as an impromptu salon for figures such as Eubie Blake, Noble Sissle, Marion Anderson, Muriel Rahn, and Lena Horne in later years.

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Biographical Note

By the late 1920s, H. Lawrence's work was becoming well-known in New York, through his performances, teaching, and his work as a musical critic and essayist for the *New Amsterdam News* and the *Afro-American* newspapers. In 1928 his opera *Voodoo* was produced at the 52nd Street Theater, and a concert performance of the same opera was broadcast live over the radio station WGBS. Freeman received the Harmon Award for significant achievement by

an African-American in the field of arts and letters in 1930; the other 11 recipients included Adam Clayton Powell. Later the same year he played excerpts from several of his operas at Carnegie Hall. In 1934 he was the composer and musical director of the pageant "O Sing a New Song," a high-profile event at the Chicago World's Fair which celebrated the African-American experience.

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Biographical Note

The late-1930s saw a few productions and many failed attempts at production of Freeman's operas, most significantly a production of *Vendetta* at the Park Palace in 1937. Valdo was especially interested in seeing his father's work produced at 'mainstream' rather than historically black venues, and during this period he contacted the Metropolitan opera, a few of the Broadway theatres, and several major concert halls. The Freemans' work was largely suspended during World War II, but Valdo's efforts were rewarded in 1947 by a production of *The Martyr* at Carnegie Hall. H. Lawrence conducted an interracial cast that included Muriel Rahn and Louis Rocca. The production received reviews from both mainstream and African-American newspapers; while most critics agreed that it was a historic moment, many noted that the work was unfinished (not completely orchestrated) and needed polishing. Some objected to Freeman's mixture of jazz and African song forms with more traditional elements of Western classical music such as the da capo aria. This and many other performances of Freeman's operas were criticized for having inadequate orchestras; Valdo Freeman later said that hiring and rehearsing the instrumentalists was one of the most difficult parts of his father's productions, given the need for the musicians to be comfortable with both Western classical and jazz styles.

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Biographical Note

In the late 1940s, H. Lawrence Freeman began developing the Aframerican Opera Foundation, a group that would promote black composers and singers, and also offer opera in a smaller, more accessible format to a wider audience. Among other luminaries, he asked Eleanor Roosevelt to sit on the board of directors. He also sought publication of his monograph, *The Negro in Classical Music and Opera*, in the early 1950s, but the manuscript was criticized for lack of scholarly methods and significant revisions were recommended. Both projects were cut short by H. Lawrence Freeman's death on March 24, 1954; Carlotta died only three months later, on June 11, 1954.

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Biographical Note

Valdo married Anita Grannum (1908-1999) in 1954, after the death of his parents. The Grannums were long-time friends of the Freeman family-- Hugh P. Grannum, Anita's father, was a publisher who knew H. Lawrence and Valdo professionally, and Anita's sisters Alberta and Kathlyn Grannum had sung in the 1947 production of *The Martyr*. After their marriage, Valdo and Anita became involved with the Negro Actors' Guild; Valdo served as administrative secretary from 1965 until his death in 1972, and Anita continued to work there as chairwoman of the board until about 1980. Anita was a graduate of the law school at St. John's University, and it was with her legal expertise that Valdo began the process of conserving his father's estate. After Anita's death in 1999, H. Lawrence Freeman's scores and other papers were passed to her sister Kathlyn, and then to her niece Holly Zuber-Banks.

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Summary

The Harry Lawrence Freeman Collection provides an assortment of material related to American opera and to the artistic performance and social history of African-Americans from about 1890-1950. They include the original manuscript scores to 21 of his operas. These present the fullest picture available of the composer's intentions and artistic process. Freeman's non-musical work is also represented, including drafts of his unpublished book, *The Negro in Classical Music and Opera*, plays, libretti, and journal articles. The musical scores are accompanied by documentation of the production of his operas, including programs, advertising, correspondence, clippings, schedules and budgets, and production designs. Production documentation also exists for the work of Carlotta Freeman as an actress and stage director with many historic black theatre companies, including the Lafayette Players, the Anita Bush Stock Company, and the Pekin Theatre. Images, from daguerreotypes and paintings to casual snapshots, are included in the Collection. Many prominent African-American performers inscribed headshots or publicity photos to one or more of the Freemans, which are present. There are several large-format paintings and framed photos by the artist Edward Elcha depicting the Freemans, sometimes in costume. The Freemans founded three arts organizations-- the Friends' Amusement Guild, the Negro Grand Opera Company, and the Aframerican Opera Foundation-- and records of each, comprising stock, correspondence, ephemera, and receipts are included in the collection. Valdo and Anita Freeman were also involved with the Negro Actors' Guild, and some documents relating to this organization are also present. Several scrapbooks are included, most from the early twentieth century, with clippings, programs, and other ephemera related to H. Lawrence Freeman's career. Recordings

of two interviews with Valdo Freeman talking about his father and playing excerpts from his father's work, are also present in the collection. Lastly, there is a small amount of personal documents and ephemera, including a violin that belonged either to H. Lawrence or Valdo Freeman

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in 9 series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

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Revision Description

File created. xml document instance created by Carrie Hintz xml document instance revised by Catherine C. Ricciardi EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. Links to digitized audio added. kws CDs and DVDs for the 2015 Miller Theater performance of Voodoo added to the collection by CCR. 2009-02-27 2009-04-16 2017-02-23 2019-05-20 2020-05-23 2023-02-09

Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions, with the following exception: an advance appointment must be made to view the framed paintings in Box 48 because they are oversized and require special handling.

Restrictions on Access

This collection is located on-site.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--Freeman Family. Method of acquisition--Purchase; Date of acquisition--December, 2008.

Processing Information

Papers processed Annie Holt, GSAS 2013 7/2008.

Conditions Governing Access

Unique time-based media items have been reformatted and are available onsite via links in the container list. Commercial materials are not routinely digitized.

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

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Related Materials

Related Archival Materials

Valdo Freeman interview on Harry Lawrence Freeman, Oral History, American Music Collection, Yale University: Address--310 Prospect Street New Haven, CT 06511.

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Controlled Access Headings

- African Americans in the performing arts
- African Americans -- Music -- 20th century
- Harlem Renaissance
- Opera -- United States -- 20th century
- Daguerreotypes (photographs)
- Posters
- Programs (documents)
- Scores (documents for music)
- Sound recordings
- Anderson, Marion
- Bush, Anita, 1883?-1974
- Elcha, Eduard
- Freeman, H. Lawrence (Harry Lawrence), 1869-1954
- Freeman, Valdo, 1900-1972
- Hipsher, Edward Ellsworth, 1871-1948
- Jones, Robert Edmond, 1887-1954
- Sissieretta Jones, 1869-1933
- Rahn, Muriel
- Anita Bush Stock Company
- Aframerican Opera Foundation
- Friends' Amusement Guild
- Negro Actors Guild of America
- New Lafayette Theatre
- Guo jia da ju yuan (Beijing, China)

Collection Inventory

Series I: Musical Scores, 1893-1950, undated

Scope and Contents

The bulk of the H. Lawrence Freeman Papers consists of his musical scores, including many manuscripts in his own handwriting.

Subseries I.1: Manuscript Scores by H. Lawrence Freeman, 1893-1950

Scope and Contents

The heart of the collection, this series, contains Freeman's original manuscript scores, including full scores, piano-vocal reductions, and orchestral parts in Freeman's hand. Twenty-one operas are represented, along with songs, cantatas, a "symphonic poem," and a short ballet. For some operas, many drafts are present, from initial pencil piano-vocal sketches to beautifully bound ink copies of the full score. Freeman seems to have done almost all of his copying himself, leaving a wealth of autograph

scores. Operas are organized alphabetically by title, with all drafts and parts of one work together in roughly chronological sequence.

Title/Description	Instances	
<i>African Kraal</i>		
Piano-vocal score, 1937	box 1	folder 1
Piano-vocal score, undated	box 1	folder 2
<u>Physical Description:</u> ink		
Role of Cuella, undated	box 1	folder 3
<i>American Romance</i> --piano-vocal score (pencil), 1924-1929	box 1	folder 4
<i>American Romance</i> --piano-vocal score, ink, 1924-[1929]	box 2	
<i>Athalia</i>		
<i>Athalia</i> --piano-vocal score, 1916	box 3	
<u>Physical Description:</u> ink		
<i>Athalia</i> --full score, 1917	box 4	
<i>Athalia</i> --Acts II and III--piano-vocal score,, 1916	box 5	folder 1
<u>Physical Description:</u> pencil		
<i>Battle of the Gods</i> --piano-vocal score,, 1938	box 5	folder 2
Cycle of Zululand (4 Operas)		
<i>Chaka</i> --piano-vocal score, 1917-1941	box 6	
<i>Chaka</i> --full score, 1949 (incomplete), 1949	box 7	
<i>Ghost-Wolves</i> --piano-vocal score, 1941	box 8	
<i>The Stone Witch</i> --piano-vocal score,, 1941-1942	box 9	
<i>Umslopogaas and Nada</i> --piano-vocal score,, 1942-1943	box 10	
<i>Dark Canyon</i> --piano-vocal score, 1948-1950	box 5	folder 3
"Deep River"--piano-vocal score, undated	box 5	folder 4
"Faith"--piano-vocal score, undated	box 5	folder 5
"Go Down, Moses"--piano-vocal score, undated (incomplete), undated	box 5	folder 6
"If You But Loved Me"--parts for Bass and Cornet, undated	box 5	folder 7
"Jesus, Lover of My Soul"--piano-vocal score, undated	box 5	folder 8
<i>Jezebel</i> --piano-vocal score, 1944 (incomplete), 1944	box 11	folder 1
"Jungle Birds"--orchestral parts, undated (from "O Sing a New Song), undated	box 11	folder 2

"Kentucky Home"--piano-vocal score, undated	box 11	folder 3
"Kiss Me"--piano-vocal score, undated	box 11	folder 4
Leah Kleschna--piano-vocal score, 1930 (unbound), 1930	box 11	folder 5
<i>Leah Kleschna</i> --Act I--piano-vocal score,, 1930	box 12	
<i>Leah Kleschna</i> --Act II--piano-vocal score,, 1930	box 13	
<i>Leah Kleschna</i> --Act III--piano-vocal score,, 1930	box 14	
"Like a Rose"--piano-vocal score, undated	box 11	folder 6
"Lion Hunt"--full score, undated <u>Physical Description</u> : unbound	box 15	folder 1
"Lion Hunt"--orchestral parts, undated	box 16	folder 1
"The Loves of Pompeii"--piano-vocal score, undated (song cycle), undated	box 16	folder 2
"Minstrels of the Past"--piano-vocal score, undated (scene 1), undated	box 16	folder 3
"Negro Lullaby"--piano-vocal score, undated	box 16	folder 4
<i>The Martyr</i>		
Piano-vocal score, undated <u>Physical Description</u> : pencil	box 17	
Piano-vocal score, 1893 <u>Physical Description</u> : ink	box 18	
Full score, undated	box 19	
Orchestral parts, undated <u>Physical Description</u> : (three Folders)	box 20	folder 1 to 3
Role of "Pharoh,", undated	box 20	folder 4
Role of "Rei,", undated	box 20	folder 5
"My Son"--piano-vocal score, undated (cantata), undated	box 21	folder 1
<i>The Octoroon</i> --piano-vocal score, 1902 Scope and Contents In pencil	box 22	
<i>The Octoroon</i> --full score, 1908 Scope and Contents In pencil	box 23	
<i>The Octoroon</i> --piano-vocal score, 1904	box 24	

Scope and Contents

In pen

<i>The Octoroon</i> --Orchestral Prelude, undated	box 33	
Scope and Contents		
Contains: The Octoroon, Orchestral Prelude, pp. 1-16, full score, pen; The Octoroon, Prelude, pp. 3-18, and Prologue, pp. 19-21, full score, pen (where he stopped copying in pen from his pencil full score); The Octoroon, pp. 69-72 and pp. 87-94, full score, pen		
"The Octoroon's Farewell," undated (song), undated	box 16	folder 5
"O Sing a New Song"--piano-vocal score, 1934 (fragments), 1934	box 16	folder 6
"Parted"--piano-vocal score, undated (on back "My African Maid"), undated	box 16	folder 7
Plantation--piano-vocal score, undated (incomplete), undated	box 16	folder 8
The Prophecy--piano-vocal score, undated (incomplete), undated <u>Physical Description:</u> pencil	box 16	folder 9
<i>The Prophecy</i> --piano-vocal score, undated <u>Physical Description:</u> ink	box 16	folder 10
"Salome"--ballet with chorus--piano-vocal score, 1934	box 16	folder 11
"The Slave"--piano reduction, 1919 (symphonic poem), 1919 <u>Physical Description:</u> pencil	box 26	folder 1
"The Slave"--piano reduction, 1919 <u>Physical Description:</u> ink	box 26	folder 2
"The Slave"--orchestral parts, undated	box 26	folder 3
"Sometime"--Violin I part, undated	box 26	folder 4
"Steal Away"--piano-vocal score, undated	box 26	folder 5
"Swing Low"--piano-vocal score, undated	box 26	folder 6
"Tribulation"--piano-vocal score, undated	box 26	folder 7
<i>The Tryst</i> --piano-vocal score, undated	box 26	folder 8
<i>The Tryst</i> --orchestral parts, undated	box 26	folder 9
Unidentified Score Fragments, undated	box 27	folder 1
<i>Uzziah</i> --piano-vocal score, 1931-1933		

	box 27	folder 2
<i>Uzziah</i> --piano-vocal score, 1931-1933 <u>Physical Description</u> : bound	box 25	
<i>Valdo</i> --full score, 1895	box 63	
<i>Valdo</i> --full score, 1936	box 64	
<i>Vendetta</i> --piano-vocal score, undated	box 30	folder 1
<i>Vendetta</i> --piano-vocal score, 1928 <u>Physical Description</u> : bound by Acts	box 28	
<i>Vendetta</i> --full score, 1923	box 29	
<i>Vendetta</i> --orchestral parts, undated	box 30	folder 2
<i>Voodoo</i> --piano-vocal score, 1912	box 30	folder 3
<i>Voodoo</i> --piano-vocal score, undated <u>Physical Description</u> : bound by Acts	box 31	
<i>Voodoo</i> --full score, circa, 1930	box 32	
<i>The Wolf</i> --piano-vocal score, undated <u>Physical Description</u> : pencil	box 30	folder 5
<i>The Wolf</i> --piano-vocal score, undated	box 21	folder 4
"Zulu King: Witch Hunt"--full score, 1939 <u>Physical Description</u> : unbound	box 15	folder 2

Subseries I.2: Other Scores, 1894-1942, undated

Scope and Contents

This subseries includes photocopies of three of Freeman's manuscript scores: "The Slaying of the Lion," *Voodoo* (Act III only), and "Zulu King (Witch Hunt)." It also houses all published scores by Freeman present in the collection. Most of the published scores are originals, but some are in photocopy form. All scores in this subseries are songs, not operas or symphonic works, and many are arrangements of well-known spirituals. Two of the earliest published songs (1896-1897, with only photocopies extant) were also published by a "Harry Freeman" in Chicago – they may have been self-published, or the name may be a coincidence. Two songs from 1925 were published by Valdo Freeman. The songs are arranged chronologically by publication date. Also included are printed scores by other composers. Selections range from Brahms to arrangements of spirituals; the bulk are early-twentieth-century songs by African-American composers such as T.H. Burleigh, W.C. Handy and Noble Sissle. They are arranged alphabetically by the composer's last name.

Title/Description	Instances	
Copies of Manuscript Scores by H. Lawrence Freeman		
"The Slaying of the Lion", undated	box 34	folder 1
Unidentified score copy, undated	box 35	folder 1
"Voodoo, Act III", undated	box 34	folder 2

"Yazoo River," undated	box 35	folder 2
"Zulu King," undated	box 34	folder 3
Printed Scores, 1894-1943		
By H. Lawrence Freeman, 1894-1935	box 35	folder 3
By Other Composers, 1905-1943	box 35	folder 4 to 5
<u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)		

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Series II: Performance Documentation, 1905-1964, undated

Scope and Contents

Programs, fliers, posters, scripts, receipts and other documents chronicling the performance activities of the Freemans make up the bulk of this series. Highlights include 12 exquisite watercolor costume designs by Amos Dickenson for *The Martyr*, circa 1920, and rare programs from such historic African-American theatres as the Pekin, the New Lincoln, the Anita Bush Stock Company, and others. The folder of receipts from 1920-1924 was removed from an accordion file found in the collection. The original order of the receipts has been preserved, although it is not always chronological. Many expenses relate to the formation of the Negro Grand Opera Company, which occurred during this period. Programs kept by the Freemans for events in which they did not perform, but probably attended, are also included.

Title/Description	Instances	
<i>The Martyr</i> --Costume Designs, circa 1920	box 37	folder 1
<i>Meek Mose</i> --Scripts, undated	box 36	folder 1
Posters, undated	box 37	folder 2
Performance Documentation--Freemans, 1909-1951, undated	box 36	folder 2
Programs--Others, 1910-1964, undated	box 36	folder 3
Receipts, 1920-1924	box 36	folder 4
<i>Voodoo</i> --Budgets and schedules, 1928	box 36	folder 5

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Series III: Images, circa 1870-1969

Scope and Contents

This series is an exceptionally rich gathering of early visual material of African-Americans, including paintings, daguerreotypes, and publicity photographs, and snapshots. Many images portray the Freemans or their colleagues in costume or during performance. There is a large group of 'headshot' photos of performers, many of which are inscribed to various members of the Freeman family: highlights include photographs of Anita Bush, Charles Gilpin, Dorothy Mayner, and the Cole-Johnson brothers. Because of

the lack of dates on many images, they are primarily organized by size and medium, with categorization by date or subject where possible. For a list of all identified sitters, please see below.

Scope and Contents

The following subjects (other than the Freemans) are identified in photographs:

Scope and Contents

In headshots and publicity photos: Bonn, Hugo; Brice, Carol; Brown, Ann; Brown, Lillyn; Burrell, Louise Mallory; Bush, Anita; Chenault, Lawrence; Christopher, Lillian; Cole, Bob (with Johnson brothers, see below); Criner, J. Lawrence; Decaldwell, Lavinia Mallory; DeSilva, Cecile; Dixon, Dean; Gardner, Marvin; Gilpin, Charles; Gordon, E. Taylor; Hall, Thomas R; Heyliger, Syrenus; Hines, Earle; Horne, Lena; Hubbard, Ivy; Jarbora, Caterina; Johnson, James Weldon, with J. Rosamond Johnson and Bob Cole; Johnson, Momodu; Johnson and Dean; Jones, Sisseretta ; Knight, Evelyn; Mason, Lydia; Mayner, Dorothy; Mills, Florence; Montgomery, Frank, and Florence McClain; Mores, J. Francis; Olden, Charles; Patterson, Masau; Preer, Evelyn; Price, Loys; Rahn, Muriel (in cast photo of The Martyr 1947); Rocca, Louis; Sissle, Noble; Smith, Rollin R.; Stewart, Harrison; Swarz, Lou; "Uncle Rube"; Verwayan, Percy; Walker, Rachael Lenoir; Walker, Aida Overton; Whipper, Leigh; and Woodby, Marie

Scope and Contents

In cardstock photos: Brawley, Edward Macknight; Brown, Andiaels Linsey; Chislom, F.; Gilpin, Charles; Griend, Brice, Prof.; Hayford, Casley; Kirkpatrick, Sidney; Lee, Arthur Bonneau; Lee, Laura; Martin, Reverend Charles; Singer, Fannie Wise; Thomas, Henry; Thomas, Louis; and Wills, Walter, Jr.

Scope and Contents

In postcard photos: Foster, Herman; Moss, Ethel; Thomas, Louis; Thomas, W.A.; and "Uncle Walt" (H. Lawrence Freeman's uncle)

Scope and Contents

In Oversize Photos: Anita Bush Stock Co, production still; and Negro Choral Society

Title/Description	Instances	
Photographs--Cardstock photos		
Freeman family, undated	box 38	
Others--Identified (Brawley, Brown, Chislom, Gilpin, Griend, Hayford, Kirkpatrick, Lee, Martin, Singer, Thomas, Wills), undated	box 39	
Unidentified, undated	box 40	
Photographs-- Headshot and Publicity		
Freemans	box 41	folder 1
A-K (Bonn, Brice, Brown, Burrell, Bush, Chenault, Cole, Criner, Decauldwell, DeSilva, Dixon, Gardner, Gilpin, Gordon, Hall, Heyliger, Hines, Horne, Hubbard, Jarbora, Johnson, Jones, Knight)	box 41	folder 2
M-Z (Mason, Mayner, McClain, Montgomery, Mores, Olden, Patterson, Preer, Price, Rocca, Sissile, Smith,	box 41	folder 3

Stewart, Swarz, "Uncle Rube," Verwayan, Walker,
Whipper, Woodby)

Unidentified, undated	box 41	folder 4
<i>The Martyr</i> Cast, 1947	box 41	folder 5
General, undated	box 41	folder 6
Oversize group photos (Anita Bush Stock Company, Negro Choral Society, unidentified), undated	box 42	folder 1
Photographs--Negatives, circa 1920s-1940s	box 44	
Photographs--Postcard (identified sitters: Foster, Moss, Thomas), circa 1898-1915 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 43	folder 1 to 2
Photographs--Snapshots		
Small format, circa 1910-1919	box 45	folder 1
Small format, circa 1920-1929	box 45	folder 2
Small format, 1930-1939	box 45	folder 3
Small format--general, undated	box 45	folder 4
Medium format, circa 1920-1929	box 45	folder 5
Medium format, circa 1930-1939	box 45	folder 6
Medium format, circa 1940-1949	box 45	folder 7
Large format, circa 1920-1929	box 45	folder 8
Large format, circa 1930-1939	box 45	folder 9
Large format, circa 1940-1949	box 45	folder 10
Large format, circa 1950-1959	box 45	folder 11
Large format--general, undated	box 45	folder 12
Framed photographs, undated	box 46	
Photographs--Daguerreotypes, undated <u>Physical Description:</u> 11 items	box 47	
Paintings and sketches		
Freeman, Family--Framed paintings--by Elcha, undated <u>Conditions Governing Access:</u> Conditions Governing Access [Restricted: An advance appointment must be made to view this material because it is oversized and requires special handling.]	box 48	
Freeman, H. Lawrence--painting by Elcha, undated	box 42	folder 2

Freeman, H. Lawrence--sketch (signature illegible), undated	box 42	folder 3
Still life--painting by Alan Price, 1949	box 42	folder 4

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Series IV: Correspondence, 1900-1980, undated

Scope and Contents

Contained in this series are letters to and from the Freemans over their entire adult lives. Much material survives from the 1920s and 1930s relating to production of H. Lawrence's operas. Other highlights include several letters from Carlotta to Valdo, 1915-1918, when she was touring with a theatrical company, and a letter from H. Lawrence to Edward Hipsher with a wealth of biographical detail to assist Hipsher with his entry on Freeman in his book, *American Opera and its Composers*, 1933.

Scope and Contents

Correspondents include (* Indicates outgoing correspondence only): Amato, Pasquale*; Bearden, Bessye*; Bingham, Ralph; Bogen, Hyman; Bourne, St. Claire; Brascher, Nahum; Briglia, J.; Burgoyne, Allie; Burleigh, Harry T.*; Butler, Ewan; Caldwell, Ella Mary; Chamberlin, Clarence; Chotzinoff, Samuel*; Colfer, Jessica; Copley, Richard; Cottman, Dorothea; Cushing, Bartley; Davis, Marita; Delacorte, George T., Jr.; DeMille, Cecil B.*; Downs, W. C.; Finsterwald, Maxine; Ford, Harry; Fowler, Thomas; George, Louis W.; Gregory, Oliver H.; Harris, Arthur*; Harris, George; Henry St Settlement Music School (signature illegible); Hersey, Harold; Horsey, Mabel Laws; Hubbert, James*; Hubbard, Ida Forsythe; Hurley, Edward F.; Jeter, Olyve L.; Johnson, Edward; Johnson, William; Jones, Robert Edmond; Keppel, F.P.; Kuhn, Irene*; Lee, Margurite; Madison, Hattie*; Mannes, David*; Margetson, Edward*; Matthews, Ralph; Mores, J. Francis; Moss, Paul; Murray, James; Nichols, Col. Richard; Office of Mayor LaGuardia (secretary); Perlis, Vivian; Pitcairn, Fred R.; Polacheck, Charles; Provincetown Players, The; Pryor, Arthur Jr.; Rahn, Muriel; Rathbun, Alan; Ratleffe, S.A.; Rhone, Happy; Ricordi Publishing Co (correspondent signature illegible); Roberson, Nora A.; Roberts, Beverly; Robertson, Edythe*; Robinson, Paul; Roy, L. A.; Salmaggi, Alfredo; Schrab, Mirza Ahmad*; Slonimsky, Nicholas*; Still, William; Solomon, Milton; Tannen, Lilyan; Taylor, Pearl; Theobald, Jacob; Vallee, Rudy*; Voorhees, W. P.; Wagner, Oscar; Watson, James; Weber, Henriette; White House, Secretary to the President; and Wilkinson, Robert, M.D.*

Title/Description	Instances	
1900-1980, undated <u>Physical Description:</u> (7 Folders)	box 49	folder 1 to 7

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Series V: Writings of H. Lawrence Freeman, 1921-1940s, undated

Scope and Contents

Freeman's non-musical work, including drafts of his unpublished monograph, *The Negro in Classical Music and Opera*, a newspaper article on "The Musical Outlook," libretti, several plays, and scenarios for his operas make up this series.

Title/Description	Instances	
Aframerican Opera Foundation--Letter Draft, circa 1940s		

	box 50	folder 1
Article Draft--"The Musical Outlook", undated	box 50	folder 2
Book Draft--"The Negro In Music and Drama" , undated	box 50	folder 3
Libretti, undated	box 50	folder 4
Plays, 1921, undated	box 50	folder 5 to 6
Scenarios, undated	box 50	folder 7
Scenarios--Fragment, undated	box 49	folder 12

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Series VI: Arts Organizations associated with the Freemans, 1920-1982, undated

Scope and Contents

Material relating to several different arts organizations in which the Freeman family participated is gathered in this series. The material is organized in alphabetical order by group name. Materials from the Aframerican Opera Foundation include cards, letterhead, and contracts for this organization, and a roll book of members for an earlier version of this group, the Aframerican Opera Guild, from the early 1940s. The Friends Amusement Guild folder includes tickets, fliers, a membership card, a newsletter from 1933, a list of members, and a poem by Leo Evans about the group. Valdo Freeman served as Administrative Secretary for the Negro Actors' Guild from the mid-1960s until his death in 1972; during the late 1970s Anita continued her husband's work as chairwoman of various committees. Most of the material related to the Negro Actors' Guild is from Anita's work with the group's assistance program for members who fell on hard times. It also includes a few newsletters from the period of Valdo's work with the organization, including one memorializing him shortly after his death, and a certificate of memorial for H. Lawrence Freeman. One clipping from the organization's newspaper in 1939 is present, but partially deteriorated. Documents from the Negro Grand Opera Company include contracts between the three Freemans and the company, books of stock certificates and records of stock sold, and ephemera including promotional materials about the group, an embossing press, letterhead, and a copperplate block for printing the company's logo. (For more financial records of this organization, please see Series III: Performance Documentation, Box 12, Folder 6, "Financial Documents," many of which relate to the Negro Grand Opera Company.)

Title/Description	Instances	
Aframerican Opera Foundation		
Documents and contracts, 1920-1924	box 49	folder 8
Program Draft, 1950	box 15	folder 3
Friends Amusement Guild--Documents and Ephemera, 1931-1935, undated	box 49	folder 9
Negro Actors' Guild--Documents and Clipping, 1939, 1954-1982	box 49	folder 10
Negro Grand Opera Company		
Documents and contracts, 1920-1923	box 49	folder 11
Stock certificate books, 1920	box 51	folder 1 to 2

Company records book, 1920	box 51	folder 3
Copperplate logo stamp, circa 1920	box 51	folder 4
Company embossing stamp, circa 1920	box 51	folder 5

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Series VII: Audio and Video, 1971-1972, 2015, undated

Scope and Contents

Series consists of two interviews with Valdo Freeman from the early 1970s, along with two lacquer disc copies of what is presumed to be Mr. H. Lawrence Freeman playing and/or Valdo's repeat of his father's performance. The titles for the lacquer discs below were taken from a separate container found in the AV series. There is also audio and video available for the performance of *Voodoo* at Miller Theatre in 2015.

Title/Description	Instances	
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Valdo Freeman--Interview--American Music Series, 1971 December 28	box 52	folder 1
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Physical Description: 2 open reel audiotapes

Physical Description: 7-inch tapes. 3.75 ips, full track.

Digital Object: [Valdo Freeman--Interview--American Music Series](#)

Scope and Contents

Interviewed by Vivian Perlis.

Interview with Mr. Valdo Freeman at the Negro Actors' Guild in New York City, 1972 January	box 52	folder 2
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Physical Description: 1 open reel audiotapes

Physical Description: Five-inch tape.

Digital Object: [Interview with Mr. Valdo Freeman at the Negro Actors' Guild in New York City](#)

Scope and Contents

On the tape is an interview with Mr. Valdo Freeman at the Negro Actors' Guild in New York City. The interviewer is Cassandra Willis of Jim Hatch's Black drama class at the City College of New York. Later on in the tape, Ida Fields (Mrs. Louis Jordan) enters the conversation. Date is likely January 1972.

Scope and Contents

Description on box:, which does not correspond with tape content: Originally recorded on a Sony dictaphone with cassette. Mr. H. Lawrence Freeman

playing (from record); repeat of father's performance;
Mr. Valdo L. Freeman.

Presumed to be "Originally recorded on a Sony dictaphone with cassette. Mr. H. Lawrence Freeman playing (from record); repeat of father's performance; Mr. Valdo L. Freeman", undated

box 52

folder 3

Physical Description: 1 phonograph records

Physical Description: 10-inch phono disc

Digital Object: [Presumed to be "Originally recorded on a Sony dictaphone with cassette. Mr. H. Lawrence Freeman playing \(from record\); repeat of father's performance; Mr. Valdo L. Freeman"](#)

Scope and Contents

Title information from separate box label. This record was mis-labeled as "Clarissa Aria" from the opera Vendetta by H. Lawrence Freeman. Original format: disc, lacquer

Presumed to be "Originally recorded on a Sony dictaphone with cassette. Mr. H. Lawrence Freeman playing (from record); repeat of father's performance; Mr. Valdo L. Freeman"

box 52

folder 4

Physical Description: 1 phonograph records

Physical Description: 10-inch phono disc

Digital Object: [Presumed to be "Originally recorded on a Sony dictaphone with cassette. Mr. H. Lawrence Freeman playing \(from record\); repeat of father's performance; Mr. Valdo L. Freeman"](#)

Scope and Contents

Title information from separate box label. This recording was mis-labeled as "Amita Aria" from the opera Vendetta by H. Lawrence Freeman. Original format: disc, lacquer

Voodoo, Performance at Miller Theatre, 2015 June 26-27

box 65

Physical Description: 2 compact disks

Scope and Contents

Box includes program.

Voodoo, Performance at Miller Theatre, 2015 June 26-27

box 66

Physical Description: 2 DVDs

Scope and Contents

Files copied to level 1 preservation. Contact rbml@columbia.edu regarding access.

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Series VIII: Scrapbooks and Clippings, 1898-1954, undated**Scope and Contents**

H. Lawrence Freeman or other family members compiled many scrapbooks during his lifetime— six are extant in this series, several of which overlap in dates. The scrapbooks contain clippings, correspondence, programs, and other ephemera related to the Freeman's careers; some are annotated by H. Lawrence Freeman. This series also includes a file of loose clippings. In addition to articles written by H. Lawrence Freeman or related to his career, he had a collection of clippings—articles and pictures—about African-American performing artists. A few complete issues of periodicals are also included here.

Title/Description	Instances	
Loose scrapbook pages, 1930-1935 <u>Physical Description:</u> (5 Folders)	box 53	folder 1 to 5
Loose scrapbook pages--oversize, 1935	box 15	folder 3
Loose clippings and printed materials--general, undated <u>Physical Description:</u> (3 Folders)	box 54	folder 1 to 3
Loose clippings--African-Americans in the arts, undated	box 54	folder 4
Black scrapbook, 1908-1940	box 55	
Black scrapbook, 1937, undated	box 56	
Large scrapbook with missing covers, 1920-1930	box 57	
Large brown scrapbook--50th anniversary cards, 1949	box 58	
Small marbled scrapbook, 1898-1929	box 59	
Wallpaper scrapbook, 1918-1928	box 60	

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Series IX: Personal, circa 1898-1972, undated**Scope and Contents**

This series contains resumes for H. Lawrence Freeman, invitations and programs for non-professional events he attended and for his funeral, personal documents related to other members of the family, and personal ephemera, including a violin that belonged either to H. Lawrence or Valdo Freeman. There is a folder of documentation about the "Military Boy Scouts," a Harlem group to which Valdo Freeman

belonged circa 1910-1918, with some photographs. Also included are the program and menu for a dinner in honor of W.E.B. DuBois, 1924, and program of the Fourth Pan-African Congress, 1927.

Title/Description	Instances	
Documents and photographs, circa 1915-1972	box 36	folder 6
General, 1933-1938, undated	box 36	folder 7
Ephemera		
Brass plaque	box 61	
Mirror with photo on back hhh	box 61	
Scissors	box 61	
Straight razor and Box	box 61	
Stamp with numerical wheel	box 61	
Stamps with faces	box 61	
<u>Physical Description</u> : 2 items		
Valdo Freeman's Violin--German, circa 1898	box 62	

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Series X: Additions to the Collection

Title/Description	Instances	
2023:		
Celia Elizabeth Davidson "Operas by Afro-American Composers: A Critical Survey and Analysis of Selected Works", 1980	box 45	folder 13
Scope and Contents		
(A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Music of the Catholic University of America in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements or the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy)		

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