

Collection #
M 1216
CT 2352-2353

**THEODORE L. GENTRY
PAPERS, CA. 1955–2003**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: .5 manuscript box, 2 cassette tapes, 2 videocassette, 3 photograph folders

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1956–2003

PROVENANCE: Sheila A. Cooper, Indianapolis, Ind., 2009.

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ACCESSION NUMBER: 2009.0336

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Theodore Lavelle Gentry (November 22, 1939–September 18, 2003) was born to Theodore Gentry, Sr. and Dorothy M. Logan Gentry in Indianapolis, Indiana. He attended local schools and joined Mt. Zion Baptist Church, where he was active in the choir and other organizations.

Gentry graduated from Crispus Attucks High School where his musical talent continued to develop under the direction of Norman Merrifield, his Acappella Choir teacher. During the Senior Vespers service held at the school on Sunday, June 3, 1956, the tenor sang “Beloved It is Morn,” accompanied by his classmate, Richard Bailey on piano. Five days later, his graduation was at the Cadle Tabernacle auditorium.

Gentry attended Indiana University. Honorably discharged, he served in the United States Army from 1963 to 1965. Most of his adult life was spent in Toronto, Canada, where he worked as a professional musician. He received a Bachelor of Music in Performance degree from the University of Toronto in 1992.

In various contemporary publications, Ted Gentry was described as one of the world’s leading counter tenors. He appeared with the Toronto Symphony, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Choir, Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, English Chamber Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra and Choir, Canadian Opera Company, Opera Atelier, Rochester Bach Festival, Skidmore College Music Festival, and the Holland Festival. He performed the leading roles in the premieres of RA and Hermes Trismegistos, created especially for him by R. Murray Schafer. He also participated in Britten’s Canticale II–Abraham and Isaac, Canticale IV–The Journey of the Magi, and Humphrey Searle’s opera, Hamlet.

Ted Gentry toured Canada, Europe, and the United States. In addition to English, he could sing in German, French, and Italian. Gentry was a founding member of “Two Plus One,” a trio that featured him as a counter tenor, Cristen Gregory as soprano, and William O’Meara as an accompanist on piano, organ, or harpsichord.

Very comfortable in an array of musical genres, Gentry especially performed in the realm of jazz and classical music. He was a recorded artist, who also taught voice. During a very busy season in the fall of 1996 that included teaching at least 20 voice students, hosting a weekly jazz concert series, and plans to sing in a movie, he suffered a stroke. “Tunes for Theo: A Musical Tribute to Theodore Gentry,” a tribute and benefit for the singer was performed at the St. George the Martyr Anglican Church in Toronto on September 20, 1997.

Before his death, Theodore Gentry returned to his native Indianapolis. His funeral was held at Mount Zion Baptist Church.

Sources:

Materials in the collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of material pertaining to counter tenor, Theodore Gentry, including programs, photographs, press releases, and news articles. There are materials related to his musical group, "Two Plus One." Gentry spent most his adult performance life in Canada. There are programs from festivals and concerts that he played while living there including the Summerville Consort and the Toronto Spring Festival of the Arts.

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