

The Ben E. Holt, Jr. Collection



Ben E. Holt, Jr. was a successful opera singer, playing iconic roles such as Malcolm X in the Anthony Davis opera in the 1980s in New York.

His career, from childhood performances to the stages of New York and Tanglewood, was lovingly immortalized in scrapbooks by his devoted mother.



In 2020, Ben's mother, Mrs. Holt, ensured these memories would sustain, donating scrapbooks, programs and other ephemera to the Alexandria Black History Museum.

Later that year, thanks to funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Museum began the task of digitizing and cataloguing the entire collection. Now that collection is available to view at [Historic Alexandria Collections Online](#).

This wonderful collection allows the Museum to share the history of this remarkable local talent...



A PIANO RECITAL
 presented by
Lillian M. Brent
 October 10, 1965
 6:00 p.m.
 St. Monica's Episcopal Parish
 Washington, D.C.

-- PROGRAM --

PART ONE

Jack and Jill	James Bryant, Jr.
Medley	William Lieberman
Sing a Song of Sunshine	Wilma Jones
Medley	Theodore Shell, Jr.*
Song Without Words	Karen Metcalf
For Eloise	Iris Lieberman
Singing Cowboy	Patricia Parham
Surf Riders	Janet Lasky
Tarantella	
Delores	

*Due to illness, Theodore Shell, Jr. will have a speedy recovery.

PART TWO

He	Gail Shell
Progress	Melanie Moorehead
Irish Jig	Audrey Jones
Dream of Love	
Little Polish Dance	Ben Holt, Jr.
The Breakers	

PART THREE - Scholarship Performance

This scholarship is awarded to a senior high school student who has made musical progress and shares these musical experiences in a performance. I am very pleased to award the first scholarship to Miss Brenda Jean Cox. Miss Cox is a graduate of the Wakefield High School in Arlington, Va., and is presently a freshman at Howard University in the School of Liberal Arts. Miss Cox has studied with Lillian M. Brent for three and one-half years, and worked as her assistant. During this training period she showed a great love for music and a desire to achieve.

1 Praeludium	Hook
Sheep May Safely Graze	Bach
To A Wild Rose	MacDowell
Guitarre	Aaron
Forgotten Dreams	Anderson

Note: Please hold your applause for the end of each group played by Miss Cox.

Born in Washington, D.C. in 1955, Ben E. Holt, Jr.'s musical talent was clear from a very young age.



Little Polish Dance Ben Holt, Jr. ★

The Breakers



Ben began piano lessons at 5 years old with Ms. Lillian Brent and his performing career took off...

"One World of Song"

The Community Singers
of Washington, D. C.

MAY CONCERT

A Children's Chorus with Music and Dances
from Many Lands

TOBY SINGER, Director

MARTHA MARKUSH
Accompanist

Friday, May 21, 1965, 8:00 P. M.

Barker Hall

It soon became clear that singing was Ben's true calling.

Ben performed with The Community Singers of Washington, D.C. He is listed among the soloists in these programs from 1965 and 1966.

"One World of Song"

The Community Singers
of Washington, D. C.

SPRING CONCERT

A Children's Chorus with Music and Dances
from Many Lands

TOBY SINGER, Director

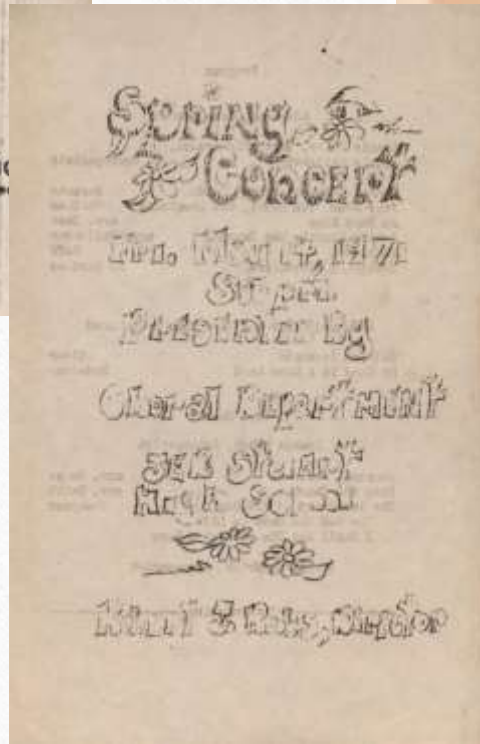
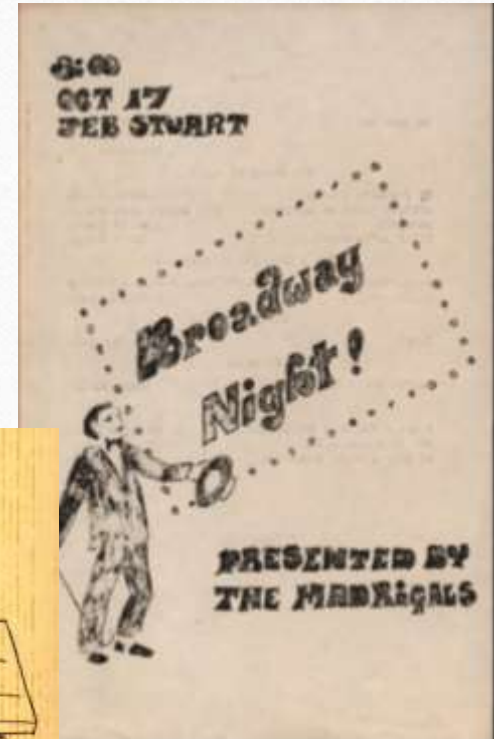
MARTHA MARKUSH
Accompanist

Friday, June 3, 1966, 8:00 P. M.

Barker Hall

ONE OF A KIND
 Stodola Pumpa _____ Czech
 Soloist: Ben Holt
 Manuel Road _____ Jamaican
 Lullabye Carol _____ Polish
 Soloists: Dana Berkus, Karen Singer

SONGS OF AMERICA—"THE MELTING POT"
 Oleana _____ Norwegian
 Soloists: Dana Berkus, Christy DeBoe, Ben Holt, Tanya Hunter, Linda Markush, Amy Piorko, Sharon Washington
 Sourwood Mountain _____ American
 Tramping _____ Negro
 Risselty Rosselty _____ Scottish
 Soloist: Ben Holt
 Close Your Eyes and Point Your Finger _____ Contemporary
 Soloists: Christy DeBoe, Ben Holt, Amy Piorko



High school provided Ben with numerous opportunities to "tread the boards" ...

...singing Broadway standards and madrigals and acting in plays.



BROADWAY
NITE
October 18, 19 & 21, 1972
Presented by the
MADRIGAL SINGERS
CONCERT CHOIR
GIRLS ENSEMBLE
J.E.B. Stuart High School
Auditorium
3301 Peace Valley Lane
Falls Church, Virginia
Robert J. Rooks, Choral Director



“Broadway Nite” in October 1972, saw Ben performing as the Lion in *The Wizard of Oz*, Don Quixote, complete with “horse,” in *Man of La Mancha*, and as The Russian in *Fiddler on the Roof*.

RAIDERS' DIGEST

VOL. XIV NO. 9

J.E.B. Stuart High School, Falls Church, Va.

May 18, 1973

These high school performances were covered by the school's paper, *Raiders' Digest*.



Photo by Steve Parker

MADRIGALS JIM BRODEUR, Susan Blakeslee, Chuck Morn, Debbie Schneider, Ben Holt and Rod McLucas can be seen tonight in the musical production of "Your A Good Man, Charlie Brown." Profits go to Gary Denbo Fund.

Page 4

RAIDERS' DIGEST



SENIORS ROD MCLUCAS, Ben Holt, John Jennings, and sophomore Charlie Rowan prepare enthusiastically for their vocal-instrumental appearance in the

upcoming Kiwanis Kapers. The Kapers, sponsored by the Falls Church Kiwanis Club, will be presented May 21 at 8 p.m. in the auditorium.

Program
AM AHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS
 by Gian-Carlo Menotti
 Presented by
 J.E.B. Stuart Madrigal Singers
 Robert J. Rooks, Director
 William C. Parrish, Principal



Holt's performance as King Kaspar in the school's 1971 production of the opera *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, was reviewed by a local newspaper.



The reporter was very complimentary about the performance and called out Ben as the star of the show!

The cast performed the work at school and then again, a few weeks later, at the Kennedy Center.



JEB Stuart Drama Gets Good Marks

But the most effective actor-singer on stage was Ben Holt as the African King Kaspar. He has a firm secure singing voice and was completely, convincingly, and amusingly in character every moment.

Mary Anne and Frank Desloge. Frank is about 12 and has a fine, pure soprano. Mary Anne, who is about 16, has a clear, well-projected voice which still has extra youthful qualities. Both were secure and convincing in their roles which says quite a lot for their natural abilities. The most effective actor-singer on stage was Ben Holt as the African King Kaspar. He has a firm secure singing voice and was completely, convincingly, and amusingly in character every moment.

JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

PRESENTS

MADRIGAL SINGERS
 J.E.B. STUART HIGH SCHOOL
 FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA

ROBERT J. ROOKS, Director

Monday, December 27, 1971
 Concert Hall -- 3:00 p.m.

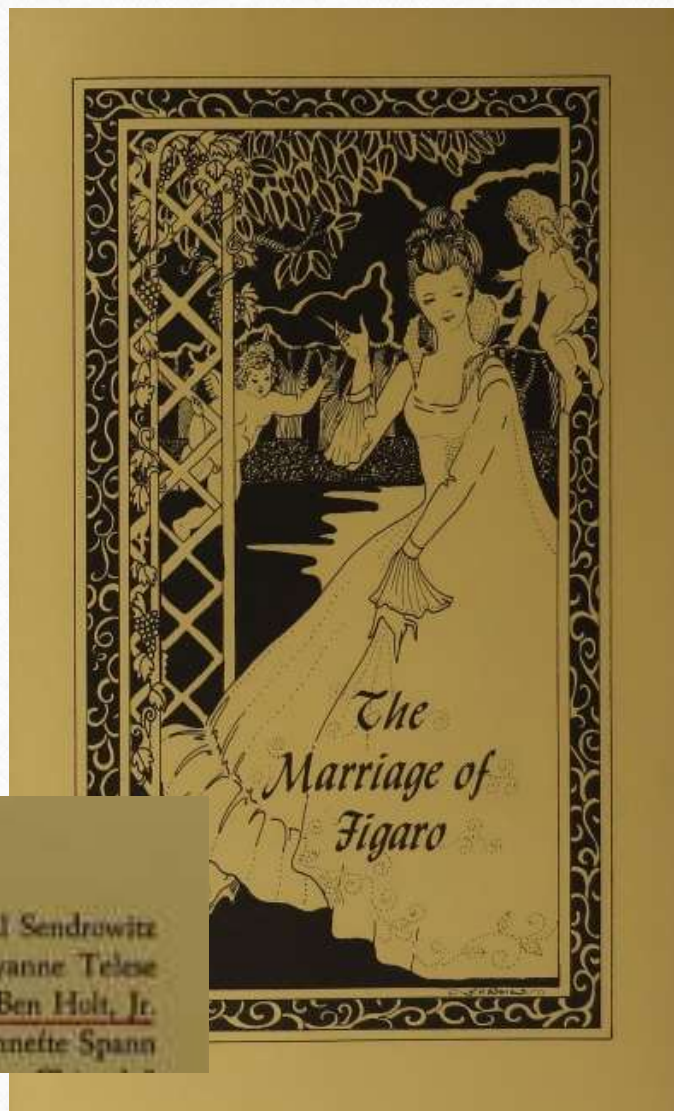
HOLIDAY CONCERT SERIES - ADMISSION FREE

I. AM AHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS Gian-Carlo Menotti

Amahl.....Frank Desloge
Amahl's Mother.....Mary Anne Desloge
King Balthasar.....Bob Toma
King Melchior.....Tom Wayne
King Kaspar.....Ben Holt
The Page.....Chuck Knoles

After high school, Ben enrolled in the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Ohio, but later transferred to the Juilliard School in New York, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Music in 1981.

While at these music schools, he continued to perform, including in the Oberlin's 1975 staging of *The Marriage of Figaro*, a work he performed in numerous times during his career.



CAST in order of singing	
Figaro	Mitchell Sendrowitz
Suzanna	Maryanne Teleso
<u>Dr. Bartolo</u>	<u>Ben Holt, Jr.</u>
Marcellina	Annette Spann

JULLIARD AMERICAN OPERA CENTER
Peter Mennin
The United States Premiere of
THE RELUCTANT KING
(Le Roi Malgré Lui)
Opera Comique in Three Acts by Emmanuel Chabrier
(Original Version of 1887)
Libretto by E. de Najac and P. Burani
A new English version by MAURICE VALENCY

Conducted by MANUEL ROSENTHAL
Directed by BLISS HEBERT
Choreography by GEORGE BALANCHINE
Sets designed by ROBERT YODICE
Lighting designed by JOE PACITTI

CAST IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

CAYLUS LIANCOURT MAUGIRON VILLEQUIER D'ELBEUF	} French Noblemen	Robert Briggs Lawrence Bakst <u>Ben Holt</u> Meir Turner Steven Feurlston
THE COUNT OF NANGIS HENRI De VALOIS, KING OF POLAND THE DUKE of FRITELLI MINKA, LASKI'S DAUGHTER A SOLDIER ALEXINA, DUCHESS OF FRITELLI LASKI THE PRINCESS LODOVSKA VASSILY		James Schwisow Tonio di Paolo Gilbert Prior Kathryn Bouleyn (Nov. 18, 22) Sheila Barnes (Nov. 20, 21) Nicholas Karoustantos Susan Peterson James Tyeska Mari Schatz Rainer Lokken

Pages, Ball Guests, Soldiers, Peasants
Chorus Master, Martin Smith
Musical preparation, Hal France
Assistant Director, Teddy Kern
* * *

School of American Ballet Corps de Ballet
American Opera Center Chorus
JULLIARD ORCHESTRA

Thursday, November 18, 1976 at 8:00 p.m. Sunday, November 21, 1976 at 3:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 20, 1976 at 8:00 p.m. Monday, November 22, 1976 at 8:00 p.m.
* * *

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in this auditorium.
* * *

This program was printed as a contribution of the Gulf + Western Industries Foundation.

At The Juilliard School, Ben performed in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* in the role of Papageno, a bird catcher.



THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL
 Opera Training Department
 Workshop Production

Mozart's
"THE MAGIC FLUTE"

Friday, March 4, 1977
 8:00 p.m.

THE JUILLIARD THEATER
 Please use main School entrance at
 144 West 66th Street, New York, N. Y. 10023

THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL

JUILLIARD OPERA TRAINING DEPARTMENT
 Martin Isopp
 Director
 presents
 A WORKSHOP PRODUCTION OF
THE MAGIC FLUTE
 Opera in Two Acts by
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Text by Emanuel Schikaneder and Carl Ludwig Giesecke
 English Version by Ruth and Thomas Martin

Conductor by **Martin Isopp**
 Directed by **Theodor Uppman**
 Sets designed by **Robert Yodanis**
 Costumes designed by **Andrew Marley**
 Lighting by **Joe Pacitti**

Characters in Order of Appearance

	MARCH 3	MARCH 4
TAMINO, a Prince	Steven Pearlston	James Schwilke
1st LADY in attendance	Christine Dunathan	Linda Morel
2nd LADY on the Queen of the Night	Kay Schenfeld	Leslie Goldstein
3rd LADY of the Night	Terry Patrick	Zehava Gal
PAPAGENO, a BIRD-CATCHER	Nicholas Kartanovics	Ben Holt
THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT	Susan Rafferty	Karen Nierenberg
MONOSTATOS, in the service of Sarastro	Lawrence Bakst	Lawrence Bakst
PAMINA, daughter of the Queen of the Night	Awilda Vertajo	Linda Wall
1st BOY	Gael Dobish	Ariel Rubinsten
2nd BOY	Ch-Ja Lim	Marta Marquez
3rd BOY	Laura Currenwell	Laura Campbell
SPEAKER	James Tyeoika	Angel Cruz
1st PRIEST	Joseph Wilson	Joseph Wilson
2nd PRIEST	Paul Mosbacher	Paul Mosbacher
SARASTRO	Freeman Davis	Robert Briggs
1st MAN IN ARMOR	Joseph Wilson	Joseph Wilson
2nd MAN IN ARMOR	Paul Mosbacher	Paul Mosbacher
PAPAGENA, Papageno's sweetheart	Marta Marquez	Gael Dobish

Animals, Slaves, Priests, People

— DANCERS —
 Kristin Berg, Deborah Dawson, Sara Matron, Sara White
 Musical Preparation, Yachi Futera, Sorfini Nabb
 English Diction, Madeline Marshall
 Assistant Director, Teddy Kim
 Stage Manager, Linda Witschik

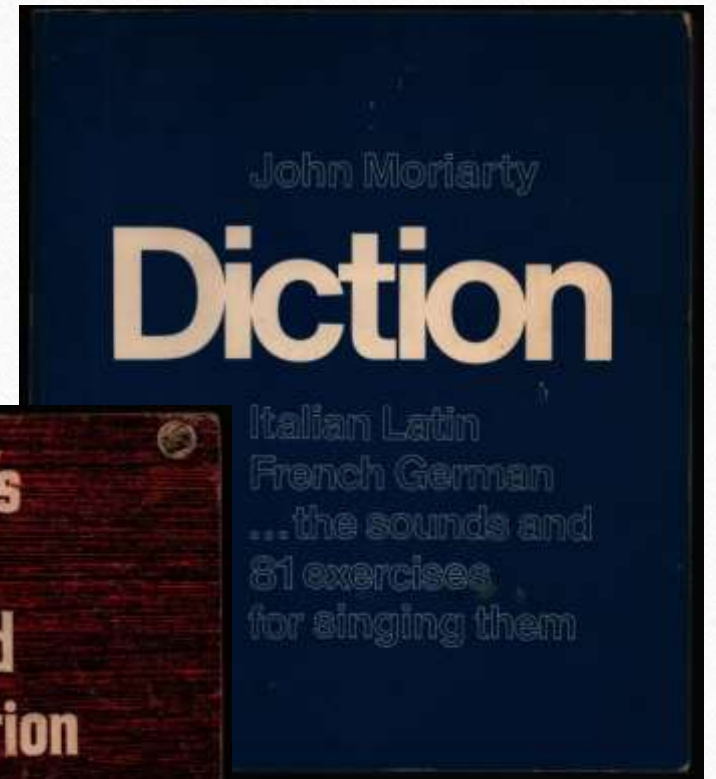
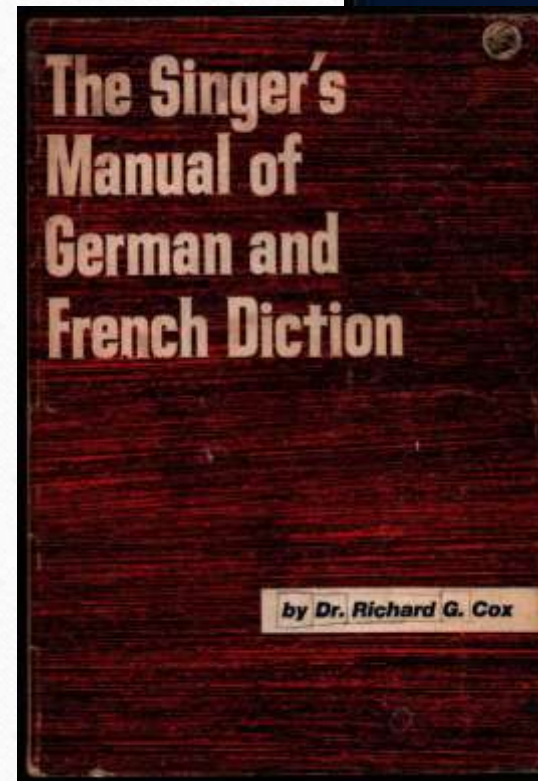
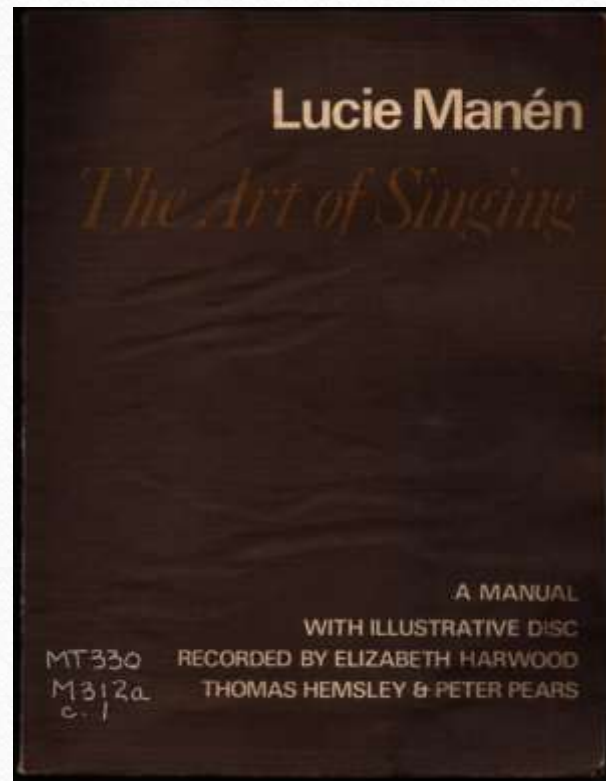
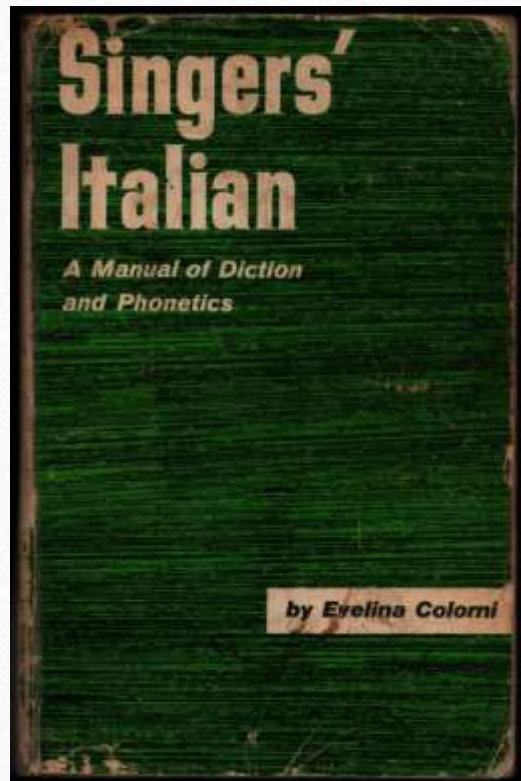
Patronal Parents, Kenneth Muller, Judy Johnson

THERE WILL BE ONE INTERMISSION

THE JUILLIARD THEATER
 Thursday and Friday Evenings, March 3 and 4, 1977, at 8:00 p.m.

Part of Ben's studies at music school was devoted to languages, especially pronunciation and diction.

Many of the operas he sang were in Italian, German, or French, and he had to learn how to perform these works with clear and accurate diction.



In the collection are several volumes devoted to the craft of singing in this different languages.

In this schoolwork, Ben wrote the lyrics to *Chanson du Depart*, one of four songs from Jacques Ibert's *Chansons de Don Quichotte* and Gabriel Fauré's *Au Bord de L'eau*, and then provided the phonetic pronunciation below.

The original lyrics are written in black/blue ink and the phonetic pronunciation are in pencil (with corrections in red ink!)

Ben Helt

Chansons de Don Quichotte
1. Chanson du depart

Ce château neuf, ce nouvel édifice, tout enrichi
 Sa Sato nef sa nuve ledifis(a) tu tã:pi si
 de marbre et de porphyre, Qu'amour bâtit château
 da marbre la porfir(a) Kamur bati Sato
 le son empire, où tout le ciel amis son artifice
 da so nã:pir(a) u tu la sjel a mi se nã:ti fã:si(a)
 Est un rempart, un fort contre le vice, où la vertu
 e tã rã:piã se fort kã:tiã la visã, u la vertu
 Maîtresse se retire, que l'œil regarde et que l'esprit
 mã:trã se rã:tiã kã laj Rã:tiã kã lespe
 admire forçant les cœurs à lui faire service.
 admã:ã forã le kã:ã lyi le rã:ã se rã:ã
 C'est un château, fait de telle sorte, que nul
 se tã Sato fe da tã:ã sã:ã kã nã:ã
 ne peut approcher de la porte, si des grands Rois
 nã pã tã:ã se da la pã:ã si de grã lã:ã
 il n'a sauvé sa race - Victorieux, vaillant et
 il nã sã:ã se rã:ã victã:ã vã:ã
 amoureux. Nul chevalier tant soit aventureux
 x amã:ã nã sã:ã tã sã:ã tã:ã tã:ã
 Sans être tel ne peut gagner la place.
 sã zã:ã tã nã pã gã:ã la plã:ã

Ben Helt
12:30 pm
12/19/98

o Es rds lo
Au bord de l'eau

S'asseoir tous deux au bord du flot qui passe,
 Sã sã:ã tu dã:ã kã:ã flo ki pã:ã
 Le voir passer,
 la vã:ã pã:ã
 Tous deux s'il glisse un nuage en l'espace,
 Tu dã:ã sã:ã glisã e nyã:ã e sã:ã
 Le voir fumer;
 la vã:ã fã:ã
 Aux alentours, si quelque fleur embouée,
 dã:ã tã:ã si kã:ã flo eã:ã
 s'embouée;
 sã:ã eã:ã
 Entendre au pied du saule où l'eau murmure,
 tã:ã pã:ã dy solã la nyã:ã
 L'eau murmurer,
 la nyã:ã
 Ne pas sentir tant que ce rêve dure
 nã pã sã:ã tã kã sã:ã rã:ã
 Le temps durer,
 la tã dyã
 Mais n'apportant de passion profonde
 mã nã pã:ã da pã:ã pã:ã
 Qu'à s'adonner,
 kã sã:ã
 Sans nul souci des querelles du monde,
 sã nã sã:ã de kã:ã ly mã:ã
 Les ignorer,
 le zã:ã
 Et seuls tous deux devant tout ce qui passe,
 e sã:ã tu dã:ã dã:ã tu sã:ã ki la:ã
 Sans se laisser; sentir l'amour devant tout ce qui passe
 sã se la:ã se sã:ã lã:ã dã:ã tu sã:ã ki pã:ã
 Ne point passer!
 nã pã:ã pã:ã
 Nã pã:ã pã:ã

Here are some of Ben's handwritten course notes about how different letters are pronounced differently depending on how and where they are found in a word in French.

close [ɔ̃] eol, ed, f, pied, Sud,
 (de), first syllable before final consonant - je, se, ge, se,
 all other places where it occurs - je, se, ge, se,
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables - eol, ed, f, pied,
 others: eol, ed, f, pied, Sud,
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables
 * [ɛ] before d, r, n, l, s, z, etc.
 eol, ed, f, pied, Sud, etc.
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable

SPECIAL CASES: eol, ed, f, pied, Sud
 eol, ed, f, pied, Sud, etc.
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables

close [ɔ̃] eol, ed, f, pied, Sud,
 (de), first syllable before final consonant - je, se, ge, se,
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 (e) in open syllables
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables

I closed e [e] savoir (to know)
 je sais je se
 tu sais tu se
 il/elle sait
 eil, eille = open e plus j
 eil, eille = open e plus j
 eil, eille = open e plus j
 eil, eille = open e plus j

close [ɔ̃] eol, ed, f, pied, Sud,
 (de), first syllable before final consonant - je, se, ge, se,
 all other places where it occurs - je, se, ge, se,
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables

close	[ɔ̃]	close	[ɔ̃]
open	[ɛ]	open	[ɛ]
close	[ɔ̃]	close	[ɔ̃]
open	[ɛ]	open	[ɛ]

close [ɔ̃] eol, ed, f, pied, Sud,
 (de), first syllable before final consonant - je, se, ge, se,
 all other places where it occurs - je, se, ge, se,
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables
 (e) at beginning of word or syllable
 (e) in open syllables

Ben was dedicated to bringing opera to a wider audience and breaking down the stereotypes that alienated people from the “elitest” art form.

As part of this work, he performed at schools, including making an appearance at his former public high school in Falls Church, VA, as documented here in the school’s newsletter from Spring 1981.



ALUMNI SPEAK TO STUDENTS

During the past three months, four alumni of the Stuart Madrigal Singers returned to school and took time to sing and speak to students about careers in performance.

Cliff Williams '72, Mike Wilson '72 and Ben Holt '74, all arrived in town on the same day to audition for the summer opera company at Wolftrap Farm Park. Cliff Williams was the second place winner in the Eastern regional Metropolitan Opera auditions held in Washington D.C. in 1980, and has been performing in operas mostly in the Virginia area near his home in Williamsburg.

Ben Holt won first place in the Friday Morning Music Club's International Competition in Washington D.C. in 1980, and has been appearing in productions in the U.S. and Europe, including the prestigious international music festival in Spoleto, Italy. Ben was presented in concert at the Phillips Collection in Washington D.C. January 25th. The recital will be broadcast on WETA-FM, probably in late June.

This program and newspaper clippings document Holt's performances with Opera/South's Mississippi Showboat in 1979 and 1980. The opera company performed in a range of venues, including shopping malls and university campuses.



SAVITRI	
Music and words by Gustav Holst	
Savitri	Donna Casella
Satyavan	Irwin Reese
Death	Ben Holt
 MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE 	
Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Libretto by F. W. Weiskern English adaptation by Donald Dorr	
Michele	Donna Casella
Nick, the Magician	Ben Holt
Mike	Irwin Reese



Ben Holt as Nick the Magician in Opera/South's "More than Meets the Eye"

A Saturday, August 4, 1979 JACKSON DAILY NEWS 5

Daily News/STEVE GARDNER

Opera/South Showboat Ends

Opera/South's 1979 Mississippi Showboat is coming to a close Sunday, after 20 live performances and a four-week tour schedule. The production company has played in a variety of places ranging from shopping malls to university campuses throughout the state, even videotaping several performances for future use. The production of Gustav Holst's *Savitri* (above) features l. to r. Irwin Reese as Satyavan, Ben Holt as Death, and Donna Casella Savitri.

The collection includes letters from students at a middle school in Syracuse, N.Y., following a visit that Ben made to the school when he was in town for a performance.

These are some excerpts from the students' letters to Ben following the event.

Dear Ben,

I really enjoyed your performance at our school. You were funny as well as a great singer. I wished you could stay longer, but I can't have everything. I admit, I thought you were going to be rather boring. You sure did ~~prove me wrong~~. You made me laugh and impressed me with your singing. I loved your last song, it was very comical.

Dear Mrs. Ben Holt,

Thank you for stopping by at our school. I wasn't really interested ~~to~~ when Ms. Hester said an opera singer was coming, but when you came it was very interesting. I liked all of your songs. When you talked it was funny also. I liked when you ~~was~~ were dancing. I hope you stop by again.

Many of them comment on his casual clothing and how funny and engaging he was, and how this was definitely not what they were expecting from a visiting opera singer!

9/15/88

Dear Mr. Holt,

Your performance was wonderful. I liked all of the songs. You have a wonderful personality on & off the stage. I never really enjoyed a opera performance before, but because you dressed so casual & your personality was so nice & pleasant to us all.

9/15

Ben,

I'm in music class writing this note and I have a idea. (better hurry before the end of the world happens again) If you ever lose your VOICE you could become a comedian. To tell you the truth, I thought you were going to be some stiff in a three piece suit. But you weren't a stiff you acted like a regular guy and that's what makes you the best

Dear Mr. Holt,

I really enjoyed your performance. It was very funny. I was shocked to see you come out to us kids and make us laugh. And the way you were dressed, you looked very comfortable. I was expecting you to come in a suit and dress shoes. And when you began to talk, I felt like I could relax.

Ben won many awards. He was winner of the First Annual Vocal Competition of the Independent Black Opera Singers Inc., (IBOS), an organization created to aid the careers of Black male singers.

IBOS, Inc., presents

BEN HOLT, Baritone

Award Recital

CLIFF JACKSON, PIANO

ASSISTING ARTISTS: DAVID BOWLES, CELLO
LINDA LIPSY, FLUTE

Sunday Afternoon at 2:30

February 1, 1981

Carnegie Recital Hall
154 West 57th Street
New York City

IBOS, Inc. presents



MEN OF IBOS
Independent Black Opera Singers
IN CONCERT

Sunday Evening, June 6, 1982
at 8:30 p.m.

ALICE TULLY HALL Broadway at 65th Street • New York, N.Y. 10023

Tickets: \$10.00 and \$12.00 on sale at Alice Tully Box Office as of May 3rd.
Mail Orders: Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope and send to:
Box Office
Alice Tully Hall
Broadway & 65th Street New York, N.Y. 10023

Later, he performed with the "Men of IBOS" group.

Alice Tully Hall
Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

Men of IBOS

Sunday Evening, June 6, 1982 at 8:00

CLIFF JACKSON, Piano

HENRY PURCELL *Handwritten: Miss Holt* Sould the Trumpet

FELIX MENDELSSOHN *Handwritten: Miss Holt* Abendlied

HALL JOHNSON *Handwritten: Miss Holt* Ride on, King Jesus
JAMES WENDELSON, Tenor
WILLIAM WELLS, Bass

WOLFGANG A. MOZART *Handwritten: Miss Holt* Papageno, Papageno ("Die Zauberflöte")
BEN HOLT, Tenor

Handwritten: Ben Holt GEORGE F. HANDEL *Handwritten: Ben Holt* Stelle amare ("Tolomeo")
CHARLES COLEMAN, Contralto

GIACOMO PUCCINI *Handwritten: Ben Holt* Dovunque al mondo ("Madama Butterfly")
MICHAEL AGOSTINI, Tenor
PETER LIGHTFOOT, Bass

WOLFGANG A. MOZART *Handwritten: Ben Holt* Ich habe ganz ("Die Entführung aus dem Serail")

MARGARET BONDS *Handwritten: Ben Holt* Minstrel Man ("Three Dream Portraits")
KEMAL SCOTT, Tenor

GIUSEPPE VERDI *Handwritten: Ben Holt* Eri tu che macchiavi ("Un Ballo in maschera")
PETER LIGHTFOOT, Bass

WOLFGANG A. MOZART *Handwritten: Ben Holt* To doubt Dorabella ("Così fan tutte," Scene and Trio Act II)
DAVID BOWLES, Cello
LINDA LIPSY, Flute
KEMAL SCOTT, Tenor
Ben Holt

Intermission

GIUSEPPE VERDI *Handwritten: Ben Holt* II Sacta la signora e d'un consorte ("Luisa Miller")
MARGARET BONDS, Bass

GIACOMO PUCCINI *Handwritten: Ben Holt* Bell'imgo ("Semiramide")
CHARLES COLEMAN, Contralto
BEN HOLT, Tenor

GIUSEPPE VERDI *Handwritten: Ben Holt* Ch'ella mi creda ("La Fanciulla del West")
GEORGE BOWLES, Tenor

Ben's career took him across the country, and the world.

In this photograph, Ben is in the character of Dr. Falke in a San Francisco Opera performance of Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, at the Paul Masson Mountain Winery in Saratoga, CA.

The Mercia Fund
under the supervision of
Kurt Herbert Adler
presents

Die Fledermaus

[The Bat]
by Johann Strauss, Jr.
English version by Ruth and Thomas Martin
(libretto by arrangement with G. Schirmer, Inc.,
publisher and copyright owner.)

Walter Anthony Waters
Conductor

Matthew Carrizosa
Stage Director

Thomas Woodruff
Set Designer

Melika Stokathinos
Casting Director

CAST

Frederick	Salvatore (B. 18)	Suzette (B. 18)
Alcindor	Ruth Golden	Rubin Marks Rosen
Gabriel Eisenstein	Barbara Hirschman	Lisa Griffith
Alfred	Nolan Hirschman	Peter Halmann
Dr. Falke	Robert Powell	Gary Lurie
Frank	David Hirschman	David Hamilton
Sally	Ben Hill	Ben Hill
Prusoff	Michael von Engen	David King
Wassertrichter	Ruth Ann Swenson	Cheryl Parrish
	Michael Hirschman	Michael Hirschman
	Wendy Hillman	Wendy Hillman

Guests of the party
Ann L. Bell, Michael Barrett, John Fiverson, Mark Fox,
Norella Hirschman, Ben Hill, Carol Kasser, Dr.
Carol Weller-Palco, Julian Reed, Robin Reed, Fr.
Ruth Ann Swenson, Michael von Engen, Denis

Baker
Arlene Egner, Peter S.

ACT I Scene 1 Ex-
Scene 2 Re-
ACT II The prison

PRODUCTION

Medical Presentation Master Coaches
Apprentice Coaches

Language Preparation
Assistant Director
Stage Manager
Technical Director
Assistant Set Designer
Set Constructors
Carpenter
Wardrobe
Makeup and Wig Design

At the conclusion of Sorelle's performance, Karl Hecht
-Karl Hecht Memorial Award
Barry Ford Jr. -Barry Memorial Award
-Grisoper Memorial Award

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In this photograph (right) Ben is in the character of Harlequin from Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the famous Spoleto Festival, USA, 1984.



Ben also performed at the Spoleto Festival in Italy in 1980 and 1984. These photographs are from his 1980 appearance when he performed in Cavalli's *L'Erismena*.

Also in the collection is his Italian train ticket to Spoleto!



Ben would often return to perform in Washington, D.C. throughout his career, including numerous performances back at the Kennedy Center, where he had appeared as a high school student.

In this 1981 recital, Ben and his accompanist, Cliff Jackson, combined American Negro Spirituals with folk songs from Germany, Greece, the United Kingdom, and Spain.



BEN HOLT.



The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
through its
National Committee on Cultural Diversity in the
Performing Arts
presents

BEN HOLT, Baritone

in a Recital of

MULTI-ETHNIC FOLK SONGS

Cliff Jackson, Pianist

• •

This unique program of multi-ethnic folk songs by Hall Johnson, Johannes Brahms, Maurice Ravel, Benjamin Britten and Manuel de Falla will take place at:

7:30 p.m., Sunday, October 11, 1981 in the Terrace Theatre.

• •

Tickets, \$7.50, are available at Kennedy Center Concert Hall Box Office or call Instant-Charge (202) 857-0900

Black

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D.C.
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SCHOOLS

BEN HOLT, baritone, comes from Washington, D.C. and attended the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and the Juilliard School of Music as a scholarship recipient. As a Tanglewood fellow for two consecutive summers, he performed solo recitals, chamber music repertoire and initiated a supportive collaboration with English baritone John Shirley-Quirk. Mr. Holt won first prize in the Washington International Competition; he will be presented in a recital at the Phillips Collection on January 25, 1981. Mr. Holt has appeared as soloist with the Tulsa Symphony, Opera Orchestra of New York, and Opera South. Last summer he made his European debut at the Spoleto Festival, Spoleto, Italy. Following performances of Monteverdi's *Incoronazione di Popea* in Venice, he was asked to record the work under Baroque specialist, Alan Curtis. Mr. Holt won first place in IBOS' First Annual Vocal Competition.

John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

ROGER L. STEVENS, Chairman
MARTA ISTOMIN, Artistic Director

TERRACE THEATER

Sunday Evening, October 11, 1981, at 7:30

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
through its
National Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Performing Arts
presents

Ben Holt

Baritone

with

CLIFF JACKSON

Piano

in a recital of

"Multi-Ethnic Folk Songs"

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Arr. JOHNSON | American Negro Spirituals
My God is So High
I Got to Lie Down |
| Arr. HAYES | Two Wings |
| Arr. JOHNSON | Ain't Got Time to Die |
| Arr. BRAHMS | Deutsche Volkslieder
In stiller nacht
Ach englische Schäferin
Schwesterlein
Mein Müdel hat einen Rosenmund |
| RAVEL | Five Greek Folksongs
Chanson de la Marele
Là-bas, vers l'église
Quel Galan meut comparable?
Chansons des cueillouses des lentiques
Tout Gai! |
| | Intermission |
| Arr. BRITTEN | Folksongs of the British Isles
The Ash Grove
The Trees They Grow So High
Come You Not From Newcastle |

40A The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in this auditorium.
Baldwin is the official piano and electronic organ of the Kennedy Center.

Ben also performed at the Monday Night Musicales. This program is for his performance in January 1984.

This ongoing concert series was founded by Felicja Rybier-Borisow, pictured here with Ben Holt.

The performances were originally held in the homes of Washingtonians, but later included recital halls and embassies.

The concerts provided a venue and revenue for young, up and coming artists.

MONDAY NIGHT MUSICALES

Felicia Rybier-Borisov
Founder-President

January 9, 1984 The Home of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Schwab

BEN HOLT, baritone Cliff Jackson, piano

PROGRAM

<u>Aria</u> , Willkommen, werter Schatz (from Cantata BWV 36)	J.S. Bach
<u>Aria</u> , Hush, no more (from <u>The Fairy Queen</u>)	Henry Purcell
<u>Recit. and Aria</u> , Pende il ben dell' universo (from <u>Apollo and Daphne</u>)	G.F. Handel
Der Hidalgo Op. 30, no. 3	R. Schumann (Geibel)
Romanze Op. 138, no. 5	R. Schumann (Ebro caudolose)
Trunken müssen wir alle sein! (Goethe)	Hugo Wolf
Ich trage meine minne Op. 32, no. 1	R. Strauss (Henckell)
Nachtgang Op. 29, no. 3	R. Strauss (Bierbaum)
Ich liebe dich op. 37, no. 2	R. Strauss (von Lillencoron)
<u>Aria</u> , Non piu andrai (from <u>Le Nozze di Figaro</u>)	W.A. Mozart
-INTERMISSION-	
Zion's Walls The Little Horses (from <u>Old American Songs</u>) At the River	A. Copland
What Kinda Shoes you Goin' to Wear Hymn to Parnassus Go On Brother (from <u>Six Spirituals</u>) In That Mornin' I'm a Travellin' to the Grave	R.N. Dett

(The next concert will be February 20, 1984 at the Home of
Mr. and Mrs. Alfredo Hale ^{guy}
Ann Schair - Pianist)



Ben also performed on the radio and television in the Washington, D.C. area.

In 1982, he performed with Linda Mabbs in a recital broadcast on local PBS television channel WETA 26 with a simulcast on WETA's radio station FM 91.

8:00	Real People	The Waltons	The Greatest American Hero	She's a Good Skate Movie: "Hooper"	Love, Amer. Style	Great Performances: "Live From Lincoln Center: An Evening With Itzhak Perlman"
9:00	Facts of Life	Merv Griffin	The Fall Guy		Basketball: Washington Bullets at Dallas Mavericks	Linda Mabbs & Ben Holt in Recital
10:00	Quincy	News	Dynasty			
11:00	News	M*A*S*H	News	News	Love, Am. St. Benny Hill	Dick Cavett Captioned ABC News
11:30	Tonight	Odd Couple	ABC News Nightline	Movie: "The Last	Saturday Night	

THE WASHINGTON POST Wednesday, February 10, 1982 C11

Linda Mabbs and Ben Holt in Recital



Two of Washington's award-winning vocal talents, soprano Linda Mabbs and baritone Ben Holt star in a special evening of music. The program includes classics from Handel, Britten and others, with a moving duet from Gershwin's Porgy and Bess. Tune in for a command performance during this special stereo simulcast with FM 91.

Tonight at 10

WETA 26
STEREO SIMULCAST WITH FM 91



THE WASHINGTON POST Wednesday, October 28, 1981 B7

In 1981, Ben appeared on WETA 26's *Art Beat* performing arts show. Above is a photograph from the broadcast.

P.T.W.: When baritone Ben Holt finished singing for a sound check on the Channel 26 "Art Beat" show last week, the camera and sound crews broke out into loud and long applause. "I have never seen anything like it," says the show's producer, Jackson Frost. "This crew probably knows performing arts better than any other in Washington, but for them it's usually just business and they never applaud." Put Holt's name on the list of Performers To Watch.

Marion Barry, Jr., then Mayor of the District of Columbia, proclaimed October 11, 1981, as Ben Edward Holt, Jr. Day!



The presentation was delivered on stage during one of Holt's performances and was reported by the local press...



...including his high school newspaper, complete with his student photo!

Throughout his career, Ben performed songs from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* numerous times, either as a staging of the complete work, the concert version, or as part of a group of selected songs.

The photograph of Ben is from a rehearsal for the 1976 FDU performance.

LAFAYETTE AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Lafayette Avenue and South Oxford St.
Brooklyn, N. Y.

The Rev. George Litch Knight, D. D., Minister

March 20, 1977

4:00 P.M. (Underwood Chapel)

FESTIVAL OF MUSIC FROM BLACK COMPOSERS,
OPERAS, CHAMBER MUSIC AND ORATORIO

From: PORGY and BESS	George Gershwin (1898-1937)
"Summertime"	Patricia Rogers, soprano
"A Woman Is A Sometime Thing"	Ben Holt, bass-baritone
Porgy	Chorus
"Gone, Gone, Gone"	Chorus
"Overflow, Overflow"	Chorus
"My Man's Gone Now"	
Bess	Aleesaa Foster, soprano
"Leavin' for the Promise Lan"	
Bess	Aleesaa Foster, soprano
Chorus	Chorus
"I Got Plenty of Nuthin'"	Ben Holt, bass-baritone
Porgy	
"Bess, You Is My Woman Now"	Ben Holt, bass-baritone
Porgy	
Bess	Aleesaa Foster, soprano

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THE
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CONCERT

FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY CONCERT CHOIR
and Orchestra

Prof. Louis Hooker, conducting

THE BICENTENNIAL CONCERT

Sunday, May 16, 1976 3:00 p.m. Rutherford Campus Gymnasium

CHICHESTER PSALMS Leonard Bernstein (1938 -)

I Psalm 106, vs 2
 Psalm 100, entire

II Psalm 23, entire
 Psalm 2 vs 1-4
 Lee Cooper-Smith '77, soloist

III Psalm 131, entire
 Psalm 133, vs 1

RHAPSODY IN BLUE George Gershwin (1898 - 1937)

Paul Kuster, piano soloist

INTERMISSION

PORGY AND BESS (concert version) George Gershwin

Ben Holt, Jr., Baritone Sylvia Coulter, Soprano

Introduction I Got Plenty O' Nuthin'
Summertime Bess, You Is My Woman Now
A Woman Is A Sometime Thing Oh I Can't Sit Down
Gone, Gone, Gone If Ain't Necessarily So
My Man's Gone Now There's A Boat Dat's Leavin'
Promised Land Oh Lord, I'm On My Way





Bruce Stofesbury, Calgary Herald

This newspaper clipping image is from a 1988 performance with the Calgary Opera, in which Ben played the role of Jack.

IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO 2
 Lyrics by IRA GERSHWIN Music by GEORGE GERSHWIN

21165

2 SAMUEL GOLDWYN
 presents
PORGY and BESS

with
SIDNEY POITIER · DOROTHY DANDRIDGE
SAMMY DAVIS, Jr. · PEARL BAILEY

Made by GEORGE GOLDWYN • Lyrics by DUFFLE HEYWARD
 Lyrics by DUFFLE HEYWARD and IRA GERSHWIN
 Founded on the play 'Porgy' by LUDWIG and GUSTAVE WEINSTEIN
 Specially prepared for the stage by the Theatre Guild • Staged by G. ROBERTS SMITH

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METROPOLITAN OPERA

Wednesday Evening, September 27, 1989, 8:00-11:00
FIRST TIME THIS SEASON
 The 13th Metropolitan Opera performance of
Porgy and Bess
 Opera in three acts

Music by George Gershwin
 Libretto by Duffie Heyward
 Lyrics by Duffie Heyward and Ira Gershwin
 Founded on the play Porgy by Dorothy and Duffie Heyward

Conductor: James Levine
 Production: Arvid Branson (Debut)
 Original Production: Nathaniel Merrill
 Set and Costume Design: Robert O'Hara
 Choreography: Arthur Mitchell
 Lighting Design: Ed Wachler

Characters in order of appearance:
 Jack Brown, a pianist Joseph Anderson
 Clara Mervyn Martin
 Jelo, a fisherman for landlady Gordon Hawkins (Debut)
 Myra Michael Forest (Debut)
 Sportin' Life, a bootlegger Ben Hall
 Maria, a waitress at Catfish Eater Maryette Wharton (Debut)
 Seroo Cassella Johnson
 Edwina, Art landlady Edward Foyles (Debut)
 Doc, a musician Michael Luffus
 Peter, a longshoreman Mervyn Wallace
 Lily, the wife Karla Burns (Debut)
 Porgy, a crippled beggar Carl Finley
 Cozzie, a prostitute Michael Strattin
 Ben, the girl Gregg Baker
 Clutterbuck Frieda Bankerville
 Polverone Harriett Rovee
 Isidore Andrew Murphy
 Mr. Archibald Edward White (Debut)
 Madgeberry woman Raymond Barmore (Debut)
 Cozzie's mother Jack Debbusch (Debut)
 Cozzie Linda Thompson (Debut)
 Cozzie Lynn Randolph (Debut)
 Cozzie Jack Sims

Porgy and Bess Chorus
 Workshop Ensemble of Music Theatre of Boston

Stage Manager: David Strouder
 Dance Sequence Stage Manager: Arthur Mitchell and Walter Ranner
 Musical Preparation: Craig Rubenberg, George Dardos, and Dorena Rasik
 Assistant Stage Director: Michael Edwards and Talavage Fassiberos
 Fight Coach: B.H. Barry
 Properties: Dorena Rasik

This production was made possible by generous and deeply appreciated gifts from the late Mrs. Edgar Tobin, Robert L.B. Tobin, Mr. and Mrs. John L. Forester, Mr. and Mrs. Ira J. Hobbie, and Wilmer J. Thomas, Jr.

The revival of this production was made possible by a generous gift from the Duffie and Dorothy Heyward Memorial Fund.

Seating in the different parts of the Metropolitan Opera Auditorium will not be identical during the performance.

In the 1989 Metropolitan Opera's performance, Ben was cast in the role of Sportin' Life.



However, arguably Ben's most important role came in 1986, when he took on the title role in Anthony Davis' opera "X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X". Ben received a ten-minute standing ovation on his opening night, and he received numerous stellar reviews.

Wednesday Evening, October 8, 1986 at 8:00-11:20 PM

X (THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MALCOLM X)

World Premiere: September 28, 1986, New York City Opera

Music by Anthony Davis
 Libretto by Thulani Davis
 Story by Christopher Davis
 Creative Consultant: Rhoda Levine

Conductor: Christopher Keene
 Production Devised, Directed and Choreographed by Rhoda Levine
 Set Designer: John Cooklin
 Image for Backdrop Created by Romare Bearden
 Costume Designer: Frances Nelson
 Lighting Designer: Curt Ostermann
 Ensemble Preparation: Joseph Colaneri
 Assistant Stage Director: David Platfar
 Musical Preparation: Susan Woodruff Versage
 Superlatives Prepared by Roberta Vincent Edles
 Assistant Choreographer: Sylvia Byrd-Leitner

CAST

Malcolm Little, Malcolm X	Ben Holt
El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz	
Street	Thomas Young
Elijah Muhammad	
Louise Little	
Queen Mother	Priscilla Baskerville
Betty Shabazz	
Ella	Marietta Simpson
Muslim	
Reginald	Mark S. Deas
Young Malcolm Little	Armond Prinsley

(and in order of appearance)

Garvey Preacher, Father, Player, Inmate, Garvey Orator, Muslim	Raymond Basmore
Neighbor, Malcolm's Sweetheart, Teen, Muslim, Pilgrim	Janice Dixon
Neighbor, Beautician, Mother, Muslim, Pilgrim	Sbery Melvin
Teen, Dancer, Student, Muslim Rioter	Sonja Small
Young Man, Ballroom Dancer, Basketball Player, Muslim, Rioter	Robert Dixon
Teen, Dancer, Student, Muslim, Pilgrim, Rioter	Sylvia Byrd-Leitner
Neighbor, Preacher, Player, Inmate, Muslim, Pilgrim, Fruit of Islam	Reginald Findell
Mother, Dancer, Muslim, Rioter	Raven Wilkison
Dancer, Young Businesswoman, Rioter	Kathleen Sanders
Neighbor, Bootblack, Player, Inmate, Youth, Paper Peddler, Muslim, Pilgrim	Michael Gray
Neighbor, Laborer, Inmate, Muslim, Pilgrim	Kevin Deas
Neighbor, Player, Inmate, Professor, Muslim, Pilgrim, Fruit of Islam	Irwin Reese
Delivery Boy, Fruit of Islam, Rioter	Frank Walker
Used Clothes Salesman, Dancer, Drunk, Muslim, Rioter	Ihsan Abdul-Rahim
Dancer, Young Woman, Rioter	Katherine White
Salesman, Fruit of Islam, Rioter	Federico Edwards
Neighbor, Player, Inmate, Muslim, Pilgrim	William Moize
Neighbor, Church Woman, Muslim, Pilgrim	Vanessa Ayers

Continued on following page

National Association of Teachers of Singing

(New York Chapter)
presents

**A Concert of Vocal Music by
LEE HOIBY**

with

Margaret Payner, soprano

Cynthia Miller, soprano

Peter Stewart, baritone

Ben Holt, baritone

Lee Hoiby, piano

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1988
2:30 p.m.**

**Mannes School of Music
150 West 85th Street, NYC**

**III. I HAVE A DREAM (Martin Luther King, Jr.)
(first performance)**

Ben Holt

I think you might like to know a little about my brief acquaintance with Ben. At the first rehearsal together (and I think there may have been only one), when I heard him sing "I Have a Dream" for the first time, I said "I'm going to do something impetuous," and I got up and wrote "to Ben Holt" on both our copies. Next time we met, he told me he had gone home that evening with a big smile on his face, because it was the first time anybody had dedicated a piece to him. Now I am so glad I was impetuous that day, rather than have waited til we knew each other before making so personal a gesture.

In 1988, Ben's career touched on the words of another icon of the Civil Rights movement, when he sang the words of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as set to music by Lee Hoiby.

In a letter to Ben's mother after his death, Hoiby recounted how Ben's performance at their first rehearsal inspired him to dedicate this work to the singer.

Tragically, at age 26, Ben received a diagnosis of Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Careful to protect his voice, he continued to perform and lived with the disease for 8 years. Following his death, in 1990, his mother and a group of friends set up *The Friends of Ben Holt Society, Inc.* Through performances and donations, the Society was able to raise enough funds to create a *Ben Holt Memorial Scholarship* at the Juilliard School.



Through the tireless collecting of memorabilia, Ben's mother ensured that his legacy would be preserved, and through her generous donation to the Alexandria Black History Museum, we are delighted that his work can continue to be shared with the public.

Explore the collection at: [Historic Alexandria Collections Online](https://www.history.org/alexandria/collections)

