SHARING NOTES: CURRENT MUSIC DESCRIPTION PRACTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF DACS

ELIZABETH SURLES
ARCHIVIST, INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES
JOHN COTTON DANA LIBRARY
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY—NEWARK
OUTLINE

• Definition of terms, introduction to the problem of music description, and literature review
• Methodology
• Results
• Conclusion
TERMS/CONCEPTS

- Archival Description
- Finding Aids
- Encoded Archival Description (EAD)
- Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)

EAD sample from the finding aid for The Ismay and George Duvivier Papers, Realia and Audiovisual Materials (MC 009), Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University Libraries.

Sharing Notes, Elizabeth Surles
PARTS OF A FINDING AID

• title of collection
• name of creator or collector
• dates
• name and location of the holding institution
• identifier
• access information
• size/extent
• language(s) of the materials
• scope and contents/collection summary
• arrangement note/explanation of relationship between levels of description
• biographical/administrative history
• subject headings
SINGLE-LEVEL FINDING AID

Arnold Volpe papers, 1967 | University of Miami Special Collections

By Cory Czajkowski

Collection Overview

Title: Arnold Volpe papers, 1967  
Predominant Dates: 1967  
ID: ASM0257  
Extent: 1.0 Boxes  
Formats/Genres: Sheet music  
Languages: English

Scope and Contents of the Materials

The Arnold Volpe Papers contains sheet music and scores composed by University of Miami professor Arnold Volpe.

Subject/Index Terms

University of Miami, School of Music  
Volpe, Arnold, 1889-1940

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions: This collection is open for research.  
Use Restrictions: Arnold Volpe Papers Finding Aid © 2009 University of Miami. All rights reserved. Requests to reproduce or publish materials from this collection should be directed to asc.library@miami.edu.  
Preferred Citation: Arnold Volpe Papers, Special Collections, University of Miami Libraries, Coral Gables, Florida  
Finding Aid Revision History: Container list by Marcia Evanson.

From: http://proust.library.miami.edu/findingaids/?p=collections/findingaid&id=700, accessed 5-16-15

Sharing Notes, Elizabeth Surles
## Descriptive Summary

**Creator:** Lincoln, Abbey  
**Title:** The Abbey Lincoln Collection  
**Dates:** 1949-2008  
**Quantity:** 83 boxes (30 linear feet)  
**Abstract:** The Abbey Lincoln Collection contains a range of materials collected by Ms. Lincoln herself over the course of her life including scores, photographs, collected writings, business and personal files. All of these evidence her personal and professional endeavors as well as her continuous evolution as an artist.

**Collection No.:** MC 101  
**Language:** English  
**Repository:** Rutgers University Libraries, Institute of Jazz Studies

## Biographical Sketch of Abbey Lincoln

Abbey Lincoln was born Anne Marie Wooldridge on August 6, 1930 in Chicago. The tenth of twelve children, she grew up on a farm outside of Kalamazoo, Michigan. Her

---

From www2.scc.rutgers.edu/ead/ijs/lincolnf.html, accessed 5-16-15

Sharing Notes, Elizabeth Surles
HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE THIS?

John Coltrane Music Manuscript Fragment,

Sharing Notes, Elizabeth Surles
ARCHIVAL MUSIC MATERIALS

- Notated music
- Audio and moving image recordings
“…DACS includes basic rules for the types of holdings found in many archives, but they do not include all the rules needed to describe every possible type of document. Where further guidance is required, the following standards provide more detailed rules for describing published materials and particular types of nontextual materials.” (141)

LITERATURE REVIEW

• Why music description is problematic:
  • Non-text proxy for the sound, not “about” anything
  • Variety of forms: published sheet music, conductor’s score, condensed score, sketch, lead sheet, tenor saxophone part, piano-vocal score, etc.
  • Musical style impacts description
• Bibliographic cataloging of music collections
• Describing music archives using standards other than DACS or according to user needs and local idiosyncratic practice
METHODOLOGY

• Exploratory, iterative research design

• Sampling strategy:
  • Members from
    • SAA’s Performing Arts Roundtable
    • Association for Recorded Sound Collections, and the
    • Music Library Association’s Archives and Special Collections Committee
  • Total: 256 Selected first 20 in randomized list:
    • Holy Cross Family Ministries
    • Doane College
    • Western New York Library
    • West Virginia Wesleyan College
    • West Valley College
    • Curtis Institute of Music
    • Davenport Public Library
    • Salvation Army Southern Historical Center
    • Case Western Reserve University
    • Great Songbook Initiative
    • University of Miami
    • San Jose State
    • Texas Tech Southwest Collection
    • Cornell University
    • Kansas State Historical Society
    • Bowling Green State University
    • SUNY at Potsdam
    • Marshall
    • Emerson College
    • University of Iowa
METHODOLOGY (cont'd.)

• 8 institutions did not meet criteria:
  • No finding aids online
  • No archival music collections
• Screened finding aids with the word “music” in them and identified 160 that met the sampling criteria.
• Sampling Criteria:
  • Created in 2005 or later
  • Collection must document musical activity of its creator or be comprised primarily of music materials (i.e., one series or sub-series devoted to music)
  • Excluded collections with a focus on non-musical activities
METHODOLOGY

• For each institution
  • Randomized the list of finding aids and analyzed the first one in each list.
  • Recorded finding aid word count to avoid skewed results
  • Recorded number of and types of fields containing music description
  • Transcribed the text of every part in the finding aid that described music materials

• Analysis:
  • Single- or multi-level finding aid?
  • DACS-compliant finding aid?
    • Have required information?
    • Is required information correct according to DACS?
  • Parts of finding aid containing music description (location in the finding aid)?
  • Description of notated music and/or sound or moving image recordings?
  • Applied codes to the music description
  • Most common codes

• Developed codebook:
  • Seven finding aids from two institutions
  • 820 text fields with music description
  • Text fields=coding units
# CODING UNITS

---

**Series 1. Printed Music**

**ARRANGEMENT:** Arranged alphabetically by song title. Full size scores and parts are located in boxes 1-10, letter size music is found in boxes 11-12.

**SUMMARY:** The series of Printed Music consists of much of Abbey Lincoln's repertoire, music from many of her albums and performances, as well as some published sheet music to accompany select titles. Her original music may appear in different keys and in various states of completion as there are drafts and fragments of various selections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>African Lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Afro Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ah, I See</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>All Thru (and &quot;Thou Swell&quot; on the reverse side)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>And How I Hoped for Your Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>And It's Supposed to be Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Angel Face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>As I Live and Breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>As Long as You're Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bein Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bird Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Black Butterfly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Blue Monk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Brother, Can You Spare a Dime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>&quot;But Not for Me&quot; medley: Sit Right Down (and write myself a letter); Bye Bye Blackbird</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Caged Bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Can't Help Singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C'est si Bon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chanteaux de Joux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Le Chavalier de Paris (Le Pommiers Doux)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A Child is Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A Children's Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A Circle of Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Come Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Crazy He Calls Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Danced All Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dig it!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Don't Explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Devil's Got Your Tongue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Don't Rain On My Parade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Don't Weep for the Lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Dorian (The Man with the Magic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

From www2.scc.rutgers.edu/ead/ijs/lincolnf.html, accessed 5-16-15

Sharing Notes, Elizabeth Surles
CODES

- **Title**
  - Album, Piece, Folder, Collection/Book

- **Creators**
  - Composer, Copyist, Editor, Arranger, Lyricist

- **Performers**

- **Record Label/Publisher**

- **Date**

- **Location**

- **Technical metadata**
  - Format, Material Composition, Speed, Size-Extent, Double/Single Sided, Stereo/Mono

- **Music metadata**
  - Instrumentation, Key, Parent Work, Incomplete, Notes, Language, Lyrics, Issue/Matrix #, style/genre, instructional/student

- **Rights**

- **Union Information**

- **Level of description**
  - Item
  - Aggregate

- **Other**

Sharing Notes, Elizabeth Surles
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SectionWithDesc</th>
<th>FieldName/Definition</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>173</td>
<td>Series Title</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Songs that will Live Forever, 1940’s(?);</td>
<td>Collection/Book</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175</td>
<td>Folder title</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Suddenly Its Evening (for Violoncello)</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>Folder title</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>two unidentified sketches. Handwritten Folder Title</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177</td>
<td>Folder title</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>String Quartet No. 1. Full score,</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumen</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178</td>
<td>Folder title</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>String Quartet No. 2. Violin I part,</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>179</td>
<td>Folder title</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>I’ll Never Fall,</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Arranger</td>
<td>Key</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180</td>
<td>Folder title</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Love Me With All Your Heart,</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Arranger</td>
<td>Key</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181</td>
<td>Folder title</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Popular Songs, Charlton Publication, 8 Collection/Book Date</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>182</td>
<td>Folder title</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Fourth String Quartet.</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Adagio and Rondo. Full score,</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Sing Me to Sleep; Smiles;</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Arranger, Key</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Love Me With All Your Heart,</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Arranger</td>
<td>Key</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>187</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Popular Songs, Charlton Publication, 8 Collection/Book Date</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Fourth String Quartet.</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>189</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Adagio and Rondo. Full score,</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Sing Me to Sleep; Smiles;</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Arranger, Key</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>192</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Popular Songs, Charlton Publication, 8 Collection/Book Date</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>193</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Fourth String Quartet.</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>194</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Adagio and Rondo. Full score,</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>195</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Sing Me to Sleep; Smiles;</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Arranger, Key</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>197</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Popular Songs, Charlton Publication, 8 Collection/Book Date</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>198</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Fourth String Quartet.</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>199</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Music score(s)</td>
<td>Adagio and Rondo. Full score,</td>
<td>Piece Title</td>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>Size/Extent/PageCount</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sharing Notes, Elizabeth Surles
WORD COUNTS

Multi-level Finding Aid Word Count

- Joel Rudinger Papers: 2727 words (7%)
- Maurice Goldman Papers: 3040 words (8%)
- Black Metal Music collection, 1985-2008: 1191 words (3%)
- Warren Debenham Comedy Sound Collection: 15142 words (40%)
- Ida Selby Papers: 8080 words (22%)
- Paul A. Steinberg papers, 1972-2011: 776 words (2%)
- San Jose State College Songs and Music Collection: 1024 words (3%)
- Margaret Sauter Sheet Music Collection: 3916 words (11%)
- Wilferd Kracht and Vincent C. Brann Papers: 1591 words (4%)
WORD COUNTS

Single-level Finding Aid Word Count

- William E. Koch Collection (302 words 51%)
- Irma Goebel Labastille collection, 1927-1943 (152 words 26%)
- William Tweel Papers (134 words 23%)

Sharing Notes, Elizabeth Surles
### Single-level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Unique sections with description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William E. Koch Collection</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Tweel Papers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irma Goebel Labastille collection, 1927-1943</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Multi-level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Unique sections with description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MS 1182 - Joel Rudinger Papers</td>
<td></td>
<td>includes two scope and contents--one collection, one folder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maurice Goldman Papers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Metal Music collection, 1985-2008.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Debenham Comedy Sound Collection</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Sauter Sheet Music Collection</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose State College Songs and Music Collection</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul A. Steinberg papers, 1972-2011</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ida Selby Papers,</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilferd Kracht and Vincent C. Brann Papers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average number of sections with music description in multi-level FA's</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.33</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sharing Notes, Elizabeth Surles
RESULTS

Single-level:

• DACS compliance for all three on date, extent, name/location of the repository, ID, scope and content, and creator

• 2 finding aids missing conditions governing access and language

• 2 non-compliant titles, as "Collection" isn't descriptive enough

• No finding aid completely DACS-compliant. Only one finding aid had all required parts, but its title wasn’t descriptive enough “collection” instead of “sheet music and personal papers.”
RESULTS

Multi-level:

• DACS compliance more complicated.
  • Only one completely compliant, two close
  • One missing access information, and one put access information into the scope and content note
  • Three missing language
  • Three did not indicate new creators where appropriate
  • All compliant with titles, IDs, and arrangement notes, and did not introduce new elements at lower levels of the finding aid’s hierarchical structure
  • 8 out of 9 expressed extent correctly
SECTIONS WITH DESCRIPTION

Single-level finding aids:

- scope and content 3
- subjects 3
- collection title 2
- date 2
- other (formats/genres) 1

Multi-level finding aids:

- series title 9
- folder title 7
- scope and content 7
- subject headings 5
- date 5
- collection title 4
- collection abstract 3
- other (forms, contents, box list/LP inventory) 3
- arrangement note 2
- sub-series title 2

Sharing Notes, Elizabeth Surles
TYPES OF MATERIALS

- One finding aid with description of sound and moving image recordings as well as notated music
- Two finding aids with description of music scores and sound recordings
- Four with description of music scores only
- Five for sound recordings only
COMMON THEMES IN DESCRIPTION

• Format
  • Recordings
  • Notated music
• Date
• Piece Title

• Creator
• Instrumentation

LEAST COMMON THEMES IN DESCRIPTION

• Size/Extent
• Publisher
• Location
• Rights

• Material composition
• Parent work
• Notes

Sharing Notes, Elizabeth Surles
RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus description in:
• Scope and content note
• Subject headings
• Titles for series, sub-series, folder, and item.

Describe at item level in multi-level finding aids.

Include:
• Format
• Title
• Date
• Creator
• Creator type
INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH DESIGN IN LIBRARIANSHIP (IRDL), JUNE 2014

The IRDL venue: Loyola Marymount’s William H. Hannon Library

www.IRDLONLINE.org