



CLARA THOMAS ARCHIVES

**Inventory of the
Jack Kane fonds**

Inventory #F0547

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F0547 - Jack Kane fonds

Fonds/Collection Number: F0547**Title:** Jack Kane fonds**Dates:** 1950-[200-], predominant 1953-1962**Extent:** 14.3 m of textual records
15 photographs : b&w ;
3 audio discs : 78 and 33 1/3 rpm

**Biographical Sketch/
Administrative History:** John Kane (musician, composer, arranger, and conductor) was born in London, England on 29 November 1924, the son of Barry Kane, a British music-hall entertainer. The family emigrated to Toronto in 1933, and Kane was soon singing with his father in local vaudeville. He studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music between 1939 and 1942, learning clarinet from Herbert Pye. He later graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Toronto in 1950. Kane served with the Royal Canadian Signals Corps Band from 1942 to 1945, and led the Khaki Kollegians in the "Army show" during 1945 and 1946. He played with orchestras of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) after leaving the army in 1946. While studying composition with John Weinzweig, Kane started composing several concert works for woodwinds, strings, and saxophone, as well as a symphony that was never finished. He was appointed assistant arranger-conductor to Howard Cable in 1949, and became the chief arranger for CBC Radio's "Startime" the following year. His work led to the Maurice Rosenfeld Prize for most promising newcomer to Canadian radio in 1951. Kane soon moved over to television. He was the music director for CBC shows "On stage" (1954), "The Jackie Rae show" (1955), and "Summertime '57", and was featured on "Music makers '58," "Music makers '59," and "Music '60 presents the Jack Kane hour." His success as an arranger attracted the attention of American singers Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme, and when NBC offered them a television show as a summer replacement for Steve Allen in 1958, they insisted that Kane join them as music director. He also served in this role for Andy William's variety show with CBS in 1959 and for a NBC special featuring Ethel Merman 1959, commuting to New York from his home in Toronto. Kane recorded several albums during this period, including "Kane is able" (1958; nominated for a Grammy award for best orchestra performance), "Jack Kane salutes the women of show business" (1960), and "Raisin' Kane" (1961), and performed in recordings by Steve Allen and Dorothy Collins during the late 1950s. Highly respected for the excellence of his arrangements, the vigour of his conducting, and his exhausting work schedule, Jack Kane died in Toronto on 27 March 1961 after a short battle with cancer. His career was celebrated through a recording of his big band arrangements by Bert Niosi leading the Jake Kane Band for the Canadian Talent Library Trust in 1963.

Scope and Content: Fonds consists of correspondence, contracts, newspaper articles, and musical arrangements created or accumulated by Jack Kane between 1950 and his death in 1961, with some material added or reproduced in subsequent years. The letters focus on his relationship with his fans across Canada and in the United States, particularly during the late 1950s and early 1960s while Kane was appearing on television. The correspondence deals with the popular reaction to Kane's music (including differences in generational tastes between classical and jazz music) and the aspirations of amateur song writers, performers and often their parents seeking advice on getting into show business; much of it was answered in sometimes lengthy letters that include Kane's insights on composing and his decision to stay in Canada after achieving success in New York. One file contains promotional material and contracts with the CBC for "Music makers '58" and "Music '60"; the contracts list the musicians who played with Kane, such as Moe Kaufman, Ellis McClintock, Murray Ginsberg, and John and Joe Niosi. Photographs include promotional portraits and images of Kane with Steve Lawrence and Duke Ellington. This graphic material is considerably supplemented by a photocopied album of newspaper clippings that trace Kane's career on radio and television from 1950 to 1961, as well as national coverage of his death. Three audio discs capture two of Kane's original compositions in 1950 and 1951, as well as his first and last recordings with commercial labels. The bulk

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of the fonds consists of Kane's musical arrangements with manuscript annotations, arranged by the title of the score and usually attributed to the television show on which it was performed.

Restrictions on Access and Use: No restrictions on access.

Finding Aid: File list is available online.

URL of Finding Aid: <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/fonds/ON00370-f0000547.htm>

Accruals: The fonds comprises the following accessions: 2008-052. No further accruals are expected.

Immediate source of acquisition: Donated by Allan Kane.

Provenance Access Points: Kane, Jack, 1924-1961

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