

# The Ben E. Holt, Jr. Collection

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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.



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 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 Risselty ..... Scottish

Soloist: Ben Holt

Close Your Eyes and Point Your Finger ..... Contemporary

Soloists: Christy DeBoe, Ben Holt, Amy Piorko

*"One World of Song"*

The Community Singers  
of Washington, D. C.

## SPRING CONCERT

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

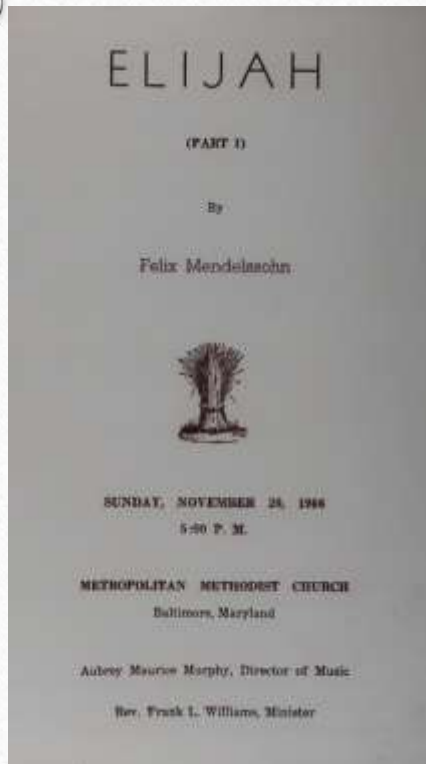
TOBY SINGER, Director

MARTHA MARKUSH  
Accompanist

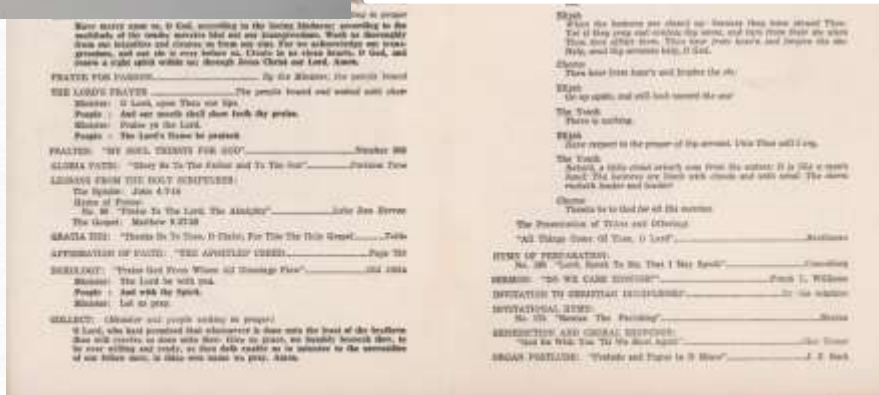
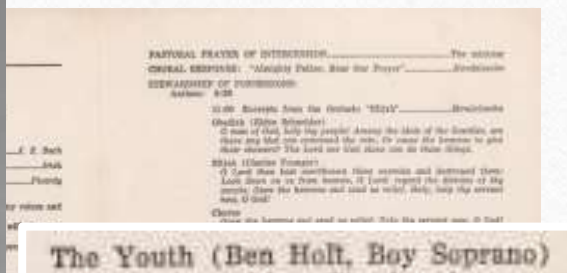
Friday, June 3, 1966, 8:00 P. M.

Barker Hall





By November 1966, at age 11, Ben was performing in the role of The Youth, as a boy soprano, in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, in Baltimore, MD.



## Springfield Symphony Orchestra

Raymond Harvey, Music Director  
Saturday, January 15, 1989  
Symphony Hall, 8:00 p.m.

Union-News  
Sunday Republican

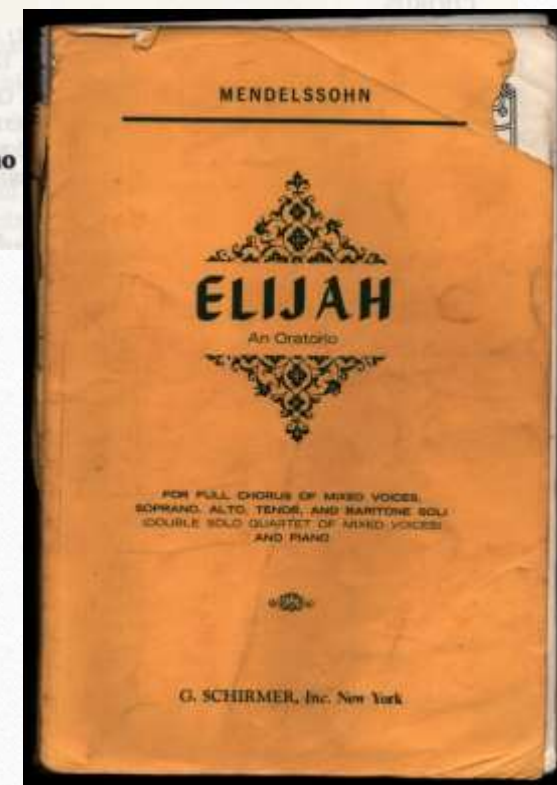
SPRINGFIELD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
SPRINGFIELD SYMPHONY CHORUS  
RAYMOND HARVEY, conductor

**BEN HOLT, baritone (Elijah)**

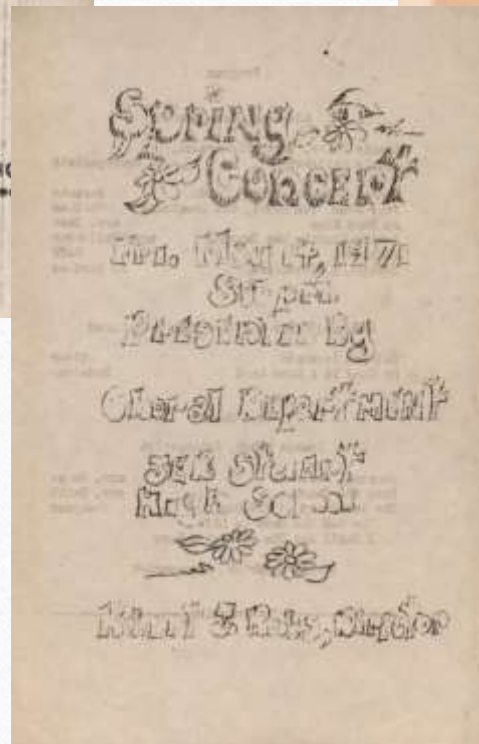
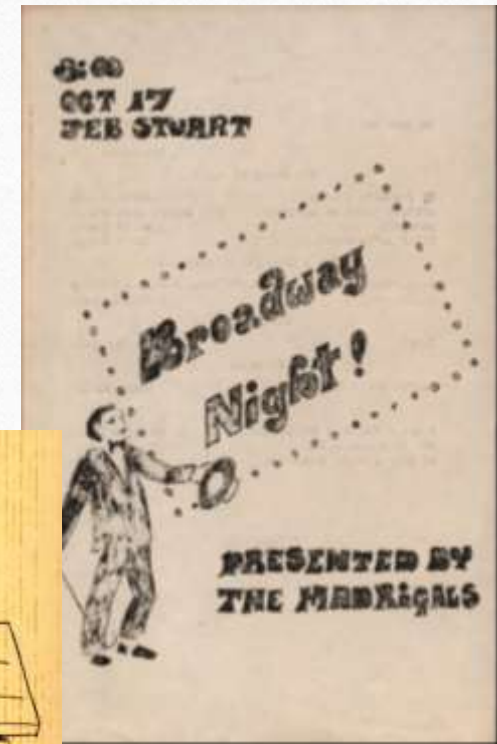
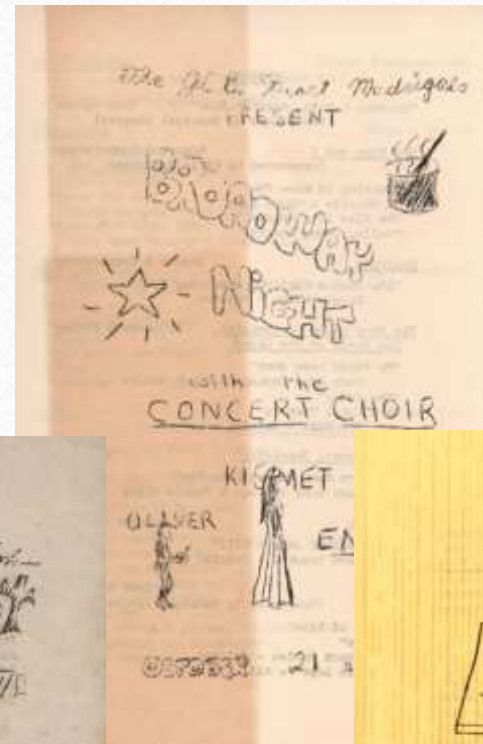
TERESA CAMILL, soprano  
(the Widow, the Angel)  
MELISSA THORBURN, mezzo soprano  
(the Angel, the Queen)  
RODNEY NOLAN, tenor (Obadiah)

He performed in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* several times throughout his career, including in the role of Elijah in 1989 with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra, Massachusetts.

This well-thumbed copy of the work belonging to Ben is marked up for the role of Elijah.







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



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 24 at 8 p.m. in the auditorium.

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





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

By H. PAUL MULLER

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.

That 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.

Frank Desloge, who has the most beautiful voice in the chorus and he deserves, besides Susan and Vince Hammond and a special word of praise for the song-writing role of the Page done by Chuck Knoles.

The orchestra was made up largely of adults. They played the score smoothly and competently and didn't overpower the singers.

We are told that this same group will perform the opera again on December 27th in the Kennedy Center, for special invitation. This was

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

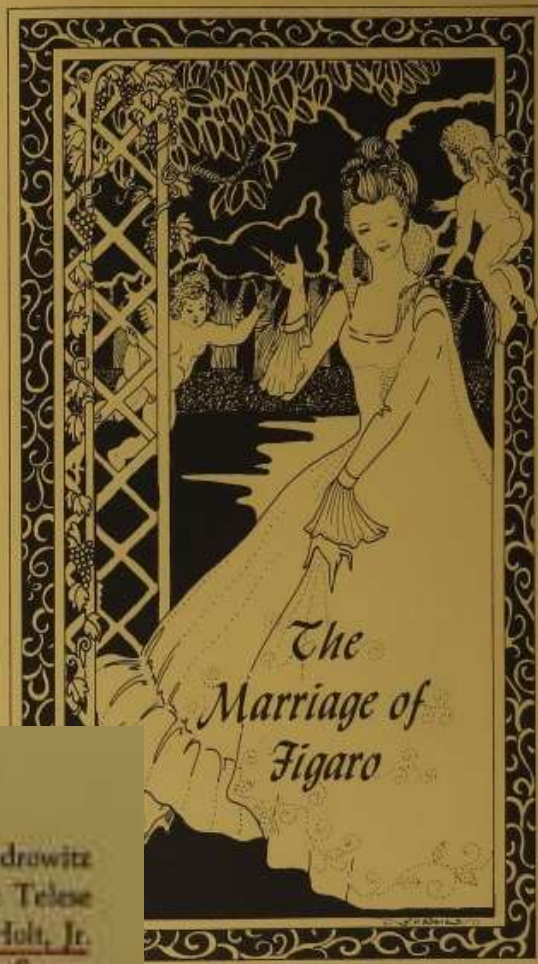
I. AM AHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS Gian-Carlo Menotti

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<br>in order of singing |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Figaro                      | Mitchell Sendrowitz  |
| Susanna                     | Maryanne Teleso      |
| <u>Dr. Bartolo</u>          | <u>Ben Holt, Jr.</u> |
| Marcellina                  | Annette Spann        |

**JUILLIARD 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**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>CAYLUS<br/>LIANCOURT<br/>MAUGIRON<br/>VILLEQUIER<br/>D'ELBEUF</p> <p>THE COUNT OF NANGIS<br/>HENRI De VALOIS, KING OF POLAND<br/>THE DUKE of FRITELLI<br/>MINKA, LASKI'S DAUGHTER<br/>A SOLDIER<br/>ALEXINA, DUCHESS OF FRITELLI<br/>LASKI<br/>THE PRINCESS LODOVSKA<br/>VASSILIY</p> | <p>French Noblemen</p> <p>Robert Briggs<br/>Lawrence Bakst<br/><u>Ben Holt</u><br/>Meir Turner<br/>Steven Pearlston</p> |
|--|---|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>James Schwinow<br/>Tonio di Paolo<br/>Gilbert Price<br/>Kathryn Bouleyn (Nov. 18, 22)<br/>Sheila Barnes (Nov. 20, 21)<br/>Nicholas Karouastios<br/>Susan Peterson<br/>James Tyeska<br/>Mari Schatz<br/>Rainer Lokken</p> | <p>Pages, Ball Guests, Soldiers, Peasants<br/>Chorus Master, Martin Smith<br/>Musical preparation, Hal France<br/>Assistant Director, Teddy Kern</p> |
|---|--|

\* \* \*

School of American Ballet Corps de Ballet  
American Opera Center Chorus  
JUILLIARD 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

Conducted 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 Dornbusch  | Linda Morel      |
| 2nd LADY on the Queen of the Night         | Kay Schenfeld        | Leslie Goldstein |
| 3rd LADY of the Night                      | Twiny Patrick        | Zachary Gal      |
| PAPAGENO, a BIRD-CATCHER                   | Nicholas Katsavounis | Ben Holt         |
| THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT                     | Susan Rafferty       | Karon 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                                    | Gail Orshah          | Ariel Rubenstein |
| 2nd BOY                                    | Chia-Ja Lin          | Marta Marquez    |
| 3rd BOY                                    | Laura Campbell       | Laura Campbell   |
| SPEAKER                                    | James Tyneke         | Angel Cruz       |
| 1st PRIEST                                 | Joseph Wilson        | Joseph Wilson    |
| 2nd PRIEST                                 | Paul Mosteller       | Paul Mosteller   |
| SARASTRO                                   | Freeman Davis        | Robert Briggs    |
| 1st MAN IN ARMOR                           | Joseph Wilson        | Joseph Wilson    |
| 2nd MAN IN ARMOR                           | Paul Mosteller       | Paul Mosteller   |
| PAPAGENA, Papageno's sweetheart            | Marta Marquez        | Gail Orshah      |

Animals, Slaves, Priests, People

— DANCERS —  
Kristen Ring, Deborah Green, Jane Matney, Sara White  
Musical Preparation, Vicky Peters, Susan Marks  
English Diction, Madeline Marshall  
Assistant Director, Teddy Korn  
Stage Manager, Linda Vlaschik  
National Parents, Kenneth Muller, Judy Johnson

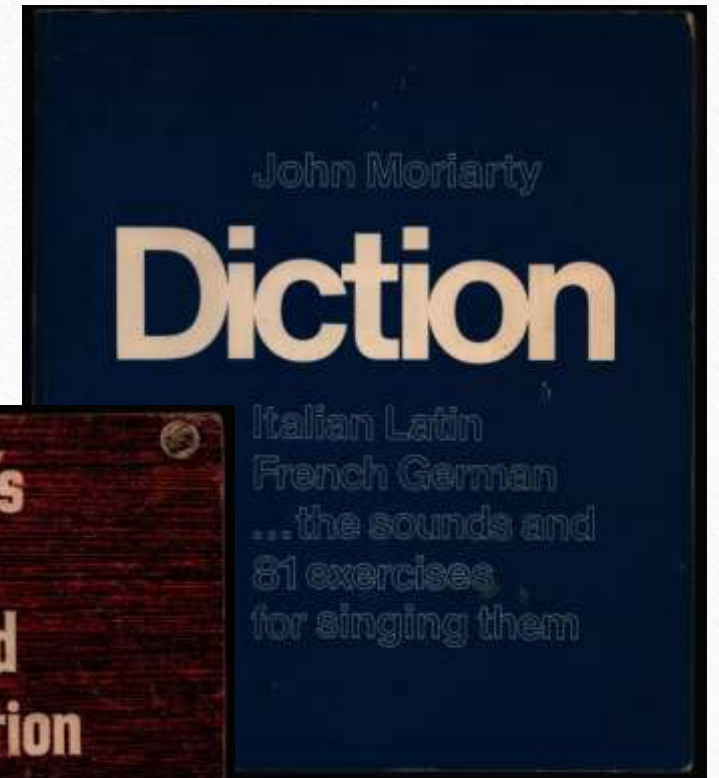
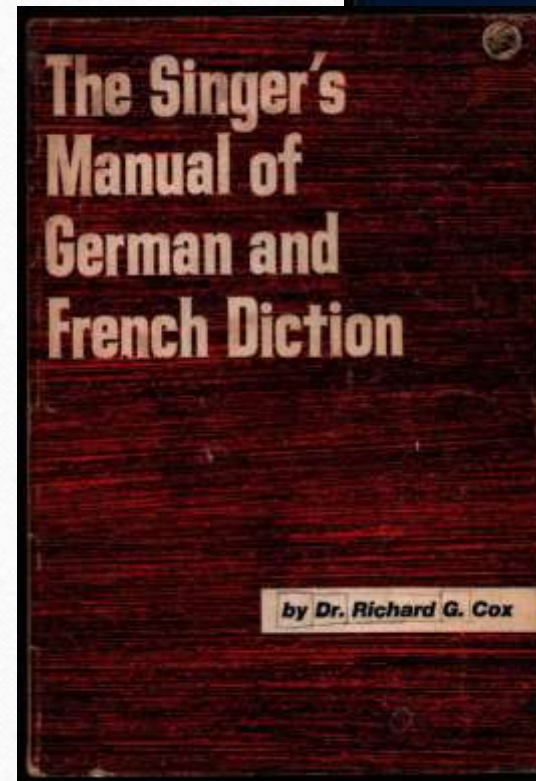
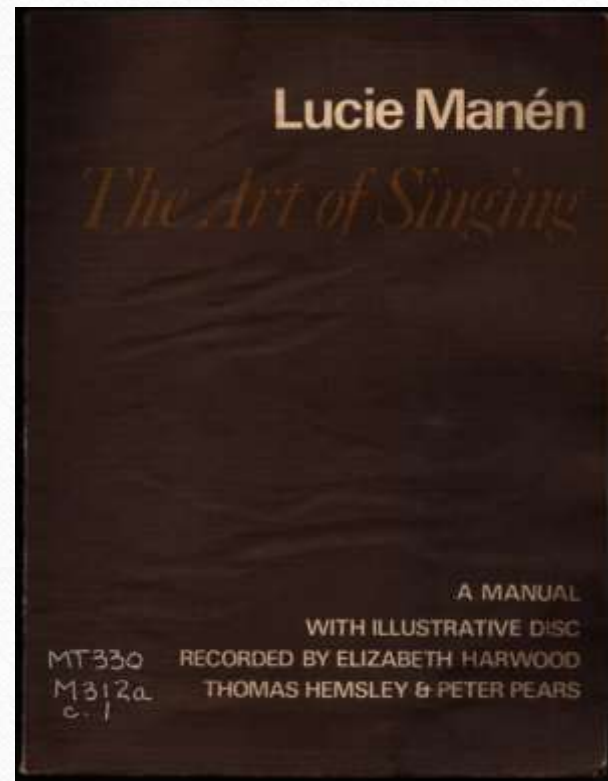
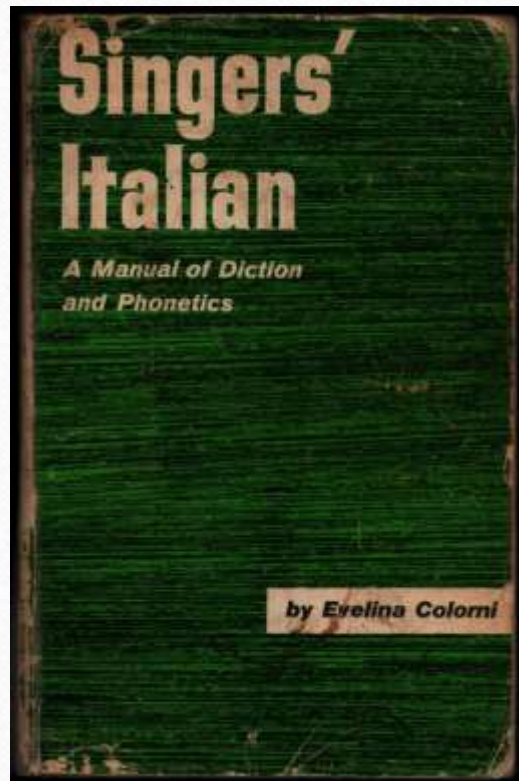
THERE WILL BE ONE INTERMISSION

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.

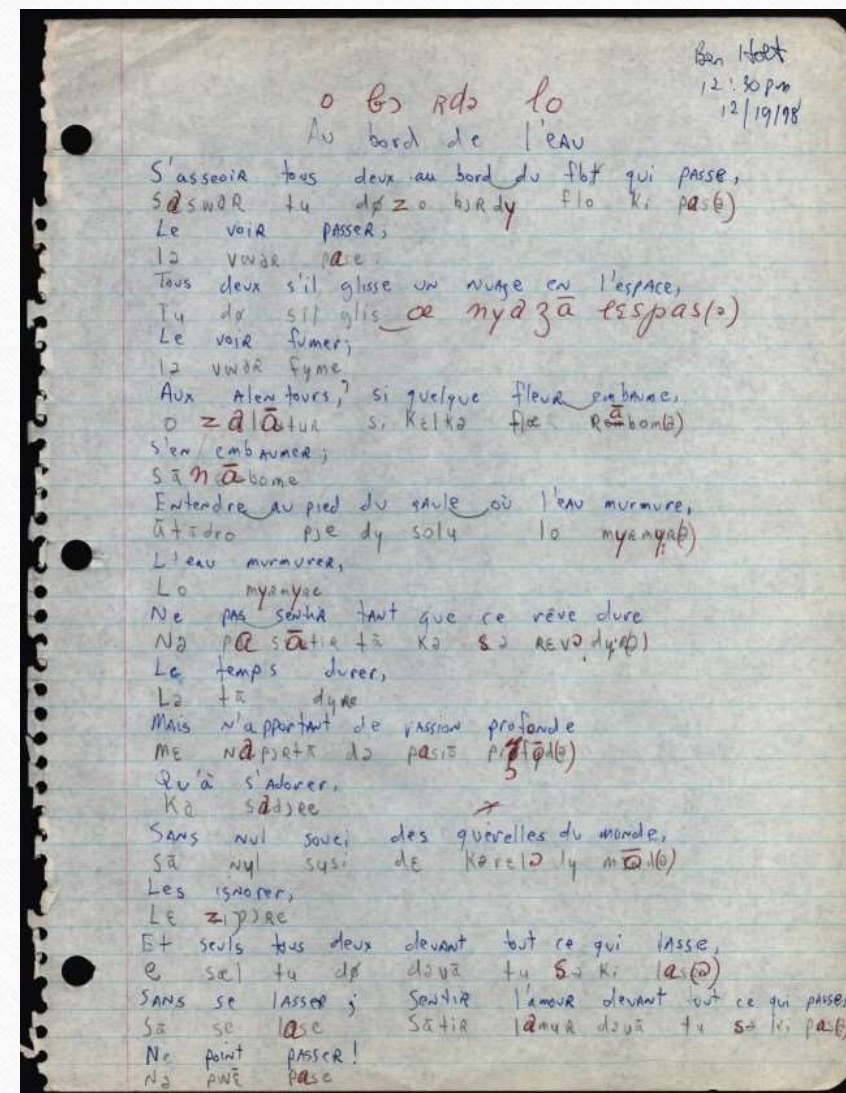
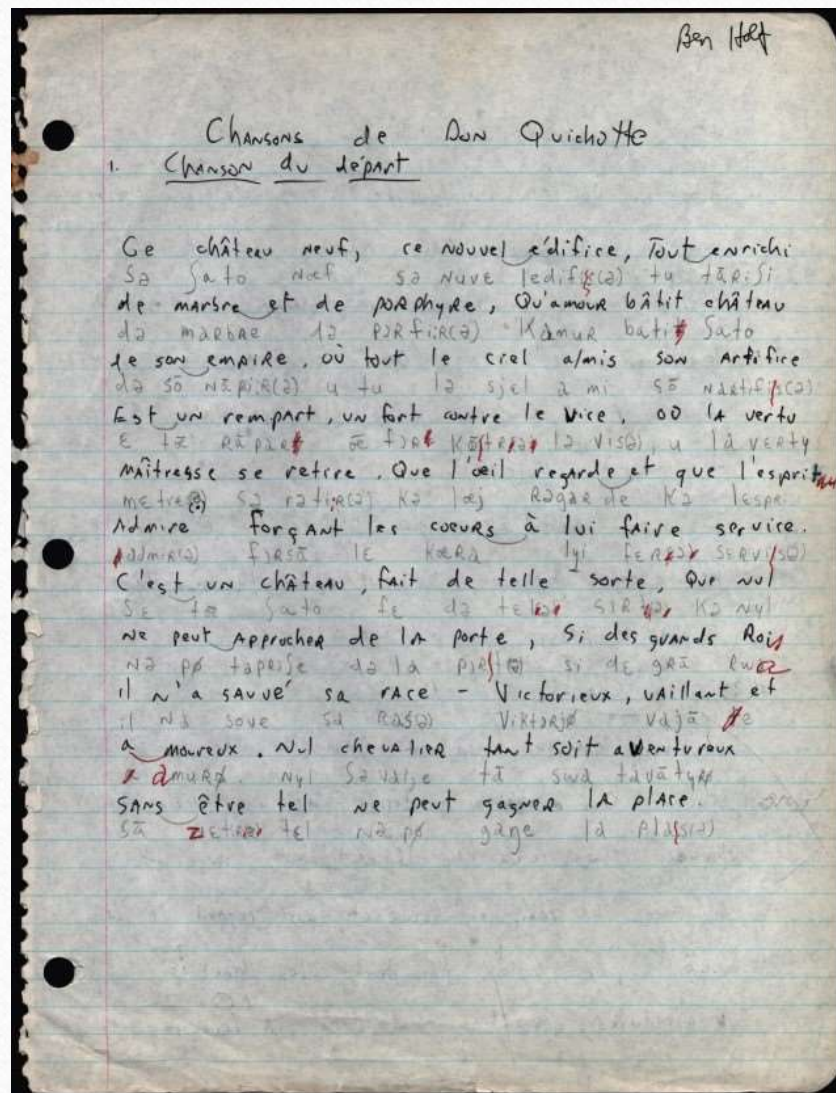


In the collection are several volumes devoted to the craft of singing in this different languages.



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!)





[illegible][illegible]

SPECIAL CASE — I closed <sup>au</sup>  $\text{je [e]}$   $\text{savoir (to know)}$   
 $\text{je sais}$   $\text{je se}$   
 $\text{tu sais}$   $\text{tu se}$   
 $\text{il/elle sait}$  "

If ending  $\text{eille} = \text{open e plus j}$   
 $\text{eille}$

SPECIAL CASE — I.

ending eille = open  
eil,

④ wait wul ov, to, folo, wul = [e] lund wul  
close 1<sup>st</sup> d u o f o l y [e] [o] [K] [X]

⑤ d e o l a n d e n d y - more "o" in mouth - just close lips  
a [e] d e t d e l y e t r a d e

(caked) red      caked  
 (K2O)      layer  
 (P2O5)      (G) (K2O) (P2O5) (F)  
 (MnO2)      layer  
 (FeO)      exchange  
 (MgO)



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.



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





- 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~~ 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 ~~in~~ 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!

9/15/84

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      | Sounded the Trumpet  |
| FELIX MENDELSSOHN  | Abendlied  |
| HALL JOHNSON       | Ride on, King Jesus  |
| WOLFGANG A. MOZART | Papageno, Papageno ("Die Zauberflöte")                       |
| GIUSEPPE VERDI     | Stille amare ("Tolomeo")                                     |
| GIACOMO PUCCINI    | Dovunque al mondo ("Madama Butterfly")                       |
| WOLFGANG A. MOZART | Ich habe ganz ("Die Entführung aus dem Serail")              |
| MARGARET BONDS     | Minstrel Man ("Three Dream Portraits")                       |
| GIUSEPPE VERDI     | Eri tu che macchiavi ("Un Ballo in maschera")                |
| WOLFGANG A. MOZART | To doubt Dorabella ("Così fan tutte," Scene and Trio Act II) |
| GIUSEPPE VERDI     | Sacra la scena e d'un concerto ("Luisa Miller")              |
| GIACOMO PUCCINI    | Bell'Imago ("Semiramide")                                    |
| GIUSEPPE VERDI     | Ch'ella mi creda ("La Fanciulla del West")                   |

Intermission

GIUSEPPE VERDI  
Dio mi potevi ("Otello")



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.





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**  
PRODUCT  
D.C.  
PUBLIC  
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 THEATRE  
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"**

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Art. JOHNSON | American Negro Spirituals<br>My God is So High<br>I Got to Lie Down<br>Two Wings<br>Ain't Got Time to Die  |
| Art. HAYES   |  |
| Art. JOHNSON |  |
| Art. BRAHMS  | Deutsche Volkslieder<br>In stiller nacht<br>Ach englische Schäferin<br>Schwesternlein<br>Mein Mädel hat einen Rosenmund                                    |
| RAVEL        | Five Greek Folksongs<br>Chanson de la Marée<br>Là-bas, vers l'église<br>Quel Galan m'est comparable?<br>Chanson des cueilleuses des lentilles<br>Tout Gai! |
|              | Intermission   |
| Art. BRITTEN | Folksongs of the British Isles<br>The Ash Grove<br>The Trees They Grow So High<br>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 Felicia 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<br>Founder-President  |  |                      |
| January 9, 1984  | The Home of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Schwab |                      |
|  | BEN HOLT, baritone                     | Cliff Jackson, piano |
| PROGRAM  |  |                      |
| Aria, Willkommen, werter Schatz<br>(from Cantata BWV 36)   | ....                                   | J.S. Bach            |
| Aria, Hush, no more<br>(from The Fairy Queen)  | ....                                   | Henry Purcell        |
| Recit. and Aria, Pende il ben dell' universo<br>(from Apollo and Daphne)   | ....                                   | G.F. Handel          |
| Der Hidalgo Op. 30, no. 3<br>(Geibel)  | ....                                   | R. Schumann          |
| Romanze Op. 138, no. 5<br>(Ebro caudoloso)   | ....                                   | R. Schumann          |
| Trunken müssen wir alle sein!<br>(Goethe)  | ....                                   | Hugo Wolf            |
| Ich trage meine minne Op. 32, no. 1<br>(Henckell)  | ....                                   | R. Strauss           |
| Nachtgang Op. 29, no. 3<br>(Bierbaum)  | ....                                   | R. Strauss           |
| Ich liebe dich op. 37, no. 2<br>(von Liliencron)   | ....                                   | R. Strauss           |
| Aria, Non piu andrai<br>(from Le Nozze di Figaro)  | ....                                   | W.A. Mozart          |
| -INTERMISSION-   |  |                      |
| Zion's Walls<br>The Little Horses (from Old American Songs)<br>At the River  |  | A. Copland           |
| What Kinda Shoes you Goin' to Wear<br>Hymn to Parnassus<br>Go On Brother<br>In That Mornin'<br>I'm a Travellin' to the Grave | (from Six Spirituals)                  | R.N. Dett            |
| (The next concert will be February 20, 1984 at the Home of<br>Mr. and Mrs. Alfredo Halperin<br>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<br>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 |  |
| 10:00 | Love, Sidney  | News         | Dynasty                    |                                       |  | Linda Mabbs & Ben Holt in Recital  |
| 11:00 | Quincy        |              |                            |                                       | Love, Am. St. Benney Hill                          | Dick Cavett<br>Captioned ABC News  |
|       | News          | M*A*S*H      | News                       | News                                  |  |  |
|       | 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



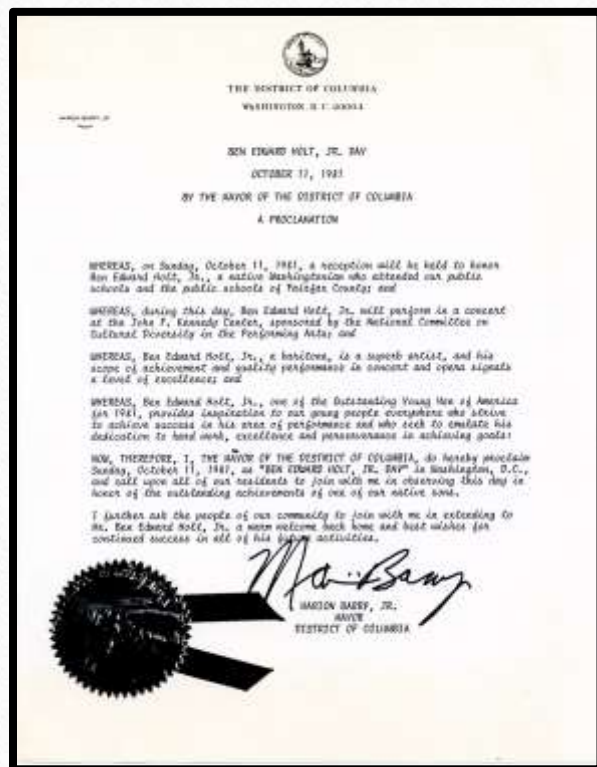
In 1981, Ben appeared on WETA 26's *Art Beat* performing arts show. Above is a photograph from the broadcast.

THE WASHINGTON POST Wednesday, October 28, 1981 B7

**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...



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RAIDERS' DIGEST

## Holt Honored by Mayor Barry

By Christy Nugent

Ben Holt, a professional opera singer and member of the class of '73, has added yet another honor to his long list; D.C. Mayor Marion Barry recently proclaimed October 11 as *Ben Edward Holt, Jr. Day* and held a reception in his honor.

After attending Oberlin Conservatory, Mr. Holt won a scholarship at the Julliard School and became a Tanglewood Fellow for two consecutive seasons. As the winner of both the 1980 Friday Morning Music Club International Competition and the Independent Black Opera Singers Auditions, the young

artist performed at the Phillips Collection in Washington and the Carnegie Recital Hall in New York. He has also had engagements with the Tulsa Philharmonic, Opera South, the Greenwich Philharmonic, the San Francisco Opera, and several other prominent companies in America and abroad.

Most recently, Mr. Holt performed for the Library of Congress Chamber Music Series and was a guest of the Washington arts show, Art Beat, on WETA channel 26. Although he was not able to return to Stuart during his latest trip to Washington, the former madrigal singer

has come back several times in the past few years to talk to students about careers in music and sing for them.



...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

"Summertime"  
"A Woman Is A Sometime Thing"  
Porgy

"Gone, Gone, Gone"  
"Overflow, Overflow"  
"My Man's Gone Now"

Bess  
"Leavin' for the Promise Lan"  
Bess

"I Got Plenty of Nothin'"  
Porgy  
"Bess, You Is My Woman Now"  
Porgy

Bess

George Gershwin (1896-1937)

Patricia Rogers, soprano

Ben Holt, bass-baritone  
Chorus  
Chorus  
Chorus

Aleesaa Foster, soprano

Aleesaa Foster, soprano  
Chorus

Ben Holt, bass-baritone

Ben Holt, bass-baritone  
Aleesaa Foster, soprano

fairleigh  
dickinson  
UNIVERSITY

THE  
bicentennial  
CONCERT

FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY CONCERT CHOIR  
and Orchestra

Prof. Louis Hooker, conducting

THE BICENTENNIAL CONCERT

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

CHICHESTER PSALMS Leonard Bernstein (1918 - )

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  
Summertime  
A Woman Is A Sometime Thing  
Gone, Gone, Gone  
My Man's Gone Now  
Promised Land

I Got Plenty O' Nothin'  
Bess You Is My Woman Now  
Oh I Can't Sit Down  
It Ain't Necessarily So  
There's A Boat Dat's Leavin'  
Oh Lord, I'm On My Way

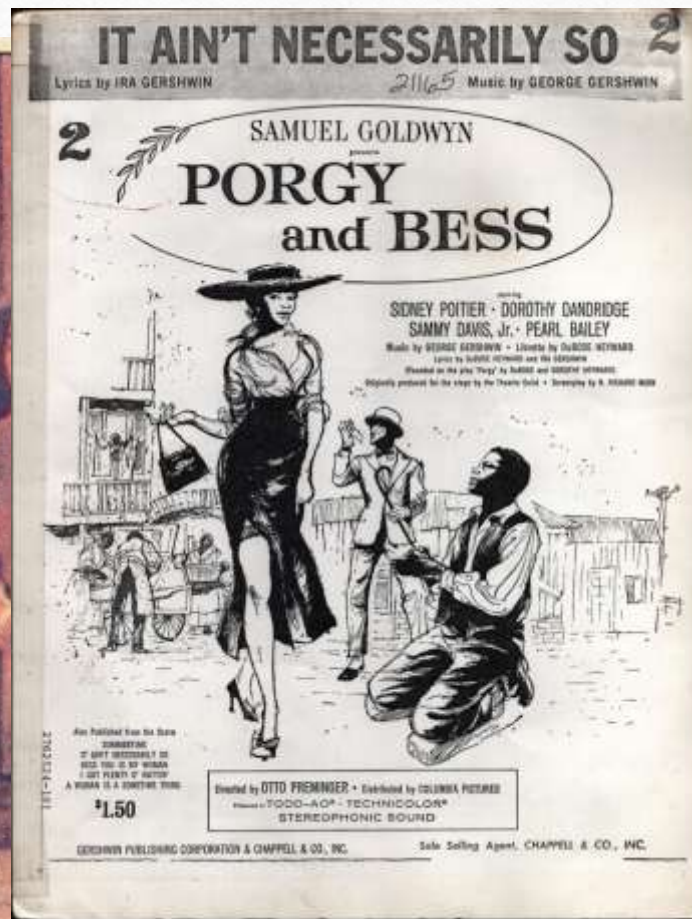






Bruce Stotesbury, Calgary Herald

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



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 Designed, 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 Plattler  
Musical Preparation: Susan Woodruff Versage  
Supertitles 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                      |                       |
| Muslim                    | Marietta Simpson      |
| Reginald                  | Mark S. Doss          |
| Young Malcolm Little      | Armood Pressley       |

(and in order of appearance)

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| Garvey Preacher, Father, Player, Inmate, Garvey Orator, Muslim             | Raymond Basamora    |
| 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                                 | Kevia 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 Moise       |
| 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.historicalexandriacollections.org/)

