Boynton Beach man donates rare Glenn Miller scores to FAU

By Mike Rothman

A Boynton Beach man has donated three pieces of music history to The Special Collections and Archives at the Florida Atlantic University Libraries on the Boca Raton campus.

Martin Winner donated a gift of three unpublished music scores by American jazz musician Glenn Miller, who died in a plane crash on the way to Paris in 1944 at age 40.

The titles of the music scores are "Hallelujah," "Candy" and "There Goes that Song Again." The scores are on faded, brittle 14-inch-by-17-inch pages.

Several pages contain notations, such as "Johnny sings," in barely legible writing, indicating where vocalist Johnny Desmond was to sing, said Aaron Kula, director of music collections and performance at FAU Libraries.

Winner's sister Dorothy Demby-Lasky worked for a Glenn Miller agency in New York during the 1940s as a secretary for Desmond.

Winner, 76, who has a background in music, said his sister found the music among old office materials in the agency's offices after it relocated to California following Miller's death. Winner contacted the agency, but said officials showed no interest in retrieving the music.

Winner said he has done nothing with the lost scores since they came into his possession, except to treasure them. He said he donated the items so they will be treasured by future generations.

FAU Libraries spent months researching the authenticity of the music scores, contacting Glenn Miller scholars across the country, including Jazz at Lincoln Center, the University of North Texas and the University of Chicago, and only found evidence that "Candy" and "There Goes that Song Again," with Desmond singing the solos, aired on the radio in 1945.

The songs were never published in any format, according to the Glenn Miller Birthplace Society in Clarinda, Iowa.

Miller was the first composer to use a big band with strings section, said Kula. Among his most known works are "Chattanooga Choo Choo," which sold 115,000 copies in the first week, "In the Mood" and "Pennsylvania 6-5000."

Kula said the Glenn Miller orchestrations have a distinct signature sound unlike any other composer of his time.

He said the manuscript scores further boost the reputation of FAU Libraries' prestigious music collection among scholars nationwide.

For information about the Miller scores, call Aaron Kula at 561-297-3742.

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