



The Wittliff Collections

Southwestern Writers Collection

Southwestern & Mexican Photography Collection

A Guide to the Bill Arhos Collection of *Austin City Limits*

1974-2002

Collection 067

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Arhos, Bill
Title:	The Bill Arhos Collection of <i>Austin City Limits</i>
Dates:	1974-2002
Abstract:	The Bill Arhos Collection contains documents and artifacts relevant to <i>Austin City Limits</i> and artists connected to the show, gathered by Bill Arhos, co-creator, executive producer, and program director. It includes press clippings, publicity materials, photographs, correspondence, galley proofs for the book <i>Austin City Limits</i> by Cliff Endres, and memorabilia.
Identification:	Collection 067
Extent:	2 boxes, 1 linear foot
Language:	English
Repository:	The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

Organizational History & Biographical Sketch

Austin City Limits, a television program showcasing musicians in concert performances, was founded in 1974 by Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) affiliate station KLRU-TV in Austin, TX. The show's creators were Bill Arhos, then program director, as well as Paul Bosner and Bruce Scafe, who subsequently produced and directed programs for the series. Their aim was to develop a locally produced program that could attract national attention through distribution to PBS affiliates. Capitalizing on the growing Austin music scene of the 1970s, Arhos received PBS funding for a pilot show featuring Willie Nelson and Family.

Station executives across the country liked the pilot and funded filming for *Austin City Limits* first season, thirteen shows that were taped in 1975 and premiered in 1976. *Austin City Limits* continues to follow that filming schedule with each season taped during one calendar year and aired the next. The one-hour programs usually pair two musicians, each given thirty-minute segments in which to deliver an uninterrupted, concert-style performance to a studio audience. Nationally known artists are often paired with lesser-known regional or local performers, giving those lesser-known artists a chance to be seen by the whole country. Although the mainstream country and progressive country genres have been staples of the program, *Austin City Limits* has also featured an eclectic mix of American music: jazz, blues, folk, pop and rock. Studio 6-A in the Communications building on The University of Texas (UT) campus is the permanent home for the show. Some members of the production crew have been with the show since the beginning. In November 2003, *Austin City Limits* became the first television program ever to be awarded the National Medal of Arts by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The donor of this collection, Bill Arhos, was co-creator of *Austin City Limits* and executive producer of the show until his retirement in 1999. A Texas native and graduate of Rice University, he received his Master of Educational Administration from Texas A & M. A semi-pro baseball player and a schoolteacher for part of his career, Arhos began working at KLRN-TV, now KLRU, in 1961. He was an instructor in Radio/TV/Film at UT from 1965-1970. He served six years on the PBS Board of Directors and completed two terms on the Country Music Association (CMA) Board of Directors in 1994. Over four decades in public

television, Arhos produced and directed educational and entertainment programs, series and specials, and served as program director, general manager, and president of KLRU. He passed away on April 11, 2015 at the age of eighty.

Scope and Content Note

The *Austin City Limits* Collection spans the years from 1974 to 2002. It is a diverse collection that contains material and artifacts documenting *Austin City Limits* and artists connected with the show. The collection was compiled by Bill Arhos (co-creator, executive producer and program director for *Austin City Limits*), and also documents the Austin Film Festival and PBS-KLRU/KLRN.

The collection includes press clippings, publicity materials, photographs, correspondence, galley proofs for the book *Austin City Limits* by Cliff Endres, and ephemera such as t-shirts, hats, backstage passes, posters, and tickets. Of particular interest are the press clippings and publicity items. These materials serve as a valuable supplement for other research resources to reveal a comprehensive portrait of the operations & history of the show.

Also included in the collection is memorabilia from *Austin City Limits*, related artists, the Austin Film Festival, and the Ned Blessing film production, including t-shirts, ball caps, backstage passes, promo art, postcards, tickets, and other miscellanea. Notable is the Arhos-compiled scrapbook (box 4), which was begun in the early days of the show, but not completed. During processing of the collection, it was scanned, then disassembled.

Also included is the typewriter upon which Arhos wrote the proposal to PBS to fund the *Austin City Limits* pilot.

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Open for research

Preferred Citation

Bill Arhos Collection of *Austin City Limits*, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

Acquisition Information

Gifts donated by Bill Arhos, 2000 and 2002

Processing Information

Processed Heather Milligan and Ruth Sullivan, 2003

Finding aid revised by Maggie DeBrecht, 2011

Notes to Researchers

The Wittliff Collection has received subsequent accessions from Arhos: 2013-045, 2014-124, and 2014-143. Please contact the archives staff for access to these materials.

There is additional *Austin City Limits* material in the New Braunfels Museum of Music Collection

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Press, 1974-2002

Box	Folder	
1	1	1974-1979
1	2	198-1989
1	3	1990
1	4	1991-2002, undated
2	1-11	1975-2002, undated [oversized]

Series II: Publicity and Programming, 1975-1979

Publicity, 1975-2002, undated

1	5	<i>Austin City Limits</i> , 1975-2002, undated
1	6	Artists
1	7	Austin Film Festival
1	8-9	PBS-KLRU / KLRN, 1975-1979
Map Dr.4		Three <i>Austin City Limits</i> Lone Star Beer publicity posters, 1976 <i>Austin City Limits</i> "Where the Music Lives" poster <i>Austin City Limits</i> Budweiser beer publicity poster, "Swingin' Over the Rainbow" Willie Nelson's 3 rd Annual Fourth of July Picnic poster, 1975 3 album cover proofs for <i>The Earl Scruggs Revue: Live! From Austin City Limits</i>
Framed 16		<i>Austin City Limits</i> "A New Decade Poster"

Programming

3	1	Programming
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Series III: Photographs

3	2	<i>Austin City Limits</i>
3	3	Artists
3	4	Bill Arhos, personal
Artifacts		Mounted black and white 20" x 24" photo of Bill Arhos and others performing

Series IV: Correspondence, 1977-1996, undated

Box Folder

3 5 Correspondence, 1977-1996, undated

Series V: *Austin City Limits* by Cliff Endres, 1987

3 6 Uncorrected galley proofs

Series VI: Bill Arhos Papers

3 7 Award certificates and other papers

Series VII: Memorabilia and Artifacts, 1973-2002, undated

3 8-9 Bill Arhos Memorabilia

Austin City Limits Memorabilia

4 1 ACL scrapbook – scanned images of original book, CD and printout
4 2-8 ACL scrapbook – disassembled scrapbook material. Five oversize photographs were removed and are house in box 5
4 9 Postcards and artwork
5 Guitar pick, thumb pick, and note
6 1-5 Individual show tickets, 1983-1986, 1988, 1995, 2002
6 6 Backstage passes

Austin City Limits T-shirts

7 1 Early logo t-shirt
7 2 Logo shirt with collar
7 3 “supported by Fritos” t-shirt
7 4 Tenth anniversary shirt
7 5 Fifteenth anniversary shirt
7 6 Season 22 celebration, February 18, 1997 (2 shirts)
7 7 “PBS Select & KLRU-TV present Marcia Ball & Jack Ingram,” June 22, 1997
7 8 Season 23 t-shirt
7 9 Season 23 celebration, May 14, 1998 shirt

Series VII: Memorabilia and Artifacts, continued

Artist T-shirts

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|---|---|--|
| 8 | 1 | Nanci Griffith shirt |
| 8 | 2 | Robbie Robertson "Making Noise" shirt |
| 8 | 3 | Kenny Wayne Shepard "Deja Voodoo Tour" shirt |
| 8 | 4 | The Mavericks "What a Crying Shame" shirt |

Other T-shirts

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|---|---|---|
| 9 | 1 | New Orleans "We Be Jazzin," 1993 |
| 9 | 2 | "A Day in the Life of Country Music," May 7, 1993 |
| 9 | 3 | "Rock & Roll" Fall 1995 PBS shirt |
| 9 | 4 | "Jazz Voices," PBS shirt |

Tote Bags

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|---|---|------------------------|
| 9 | 5 | "Sundance Institute" |
| 9 | 6 | "Austin Film Festival" |

Baseball Caps

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| 10 | | <i>Austin City Limits</i>
Waylon Jennings
American Music Shop
Jerry Jeff Walker
George Strait
TNN [The Nashville Network]
The Mavericks
<i>Ned Blessing</i>
Plum Creek |
| 11 | | <i>The Arlo Guthrie Show</i> wooden ammunition box |
| Artifacts | | Life size cut-out of Kathy Mattea and Garth Brooks
Typewriter
Iron brand of <i>Austin City Limits</i> logo |