
Charles Shere Papers

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Mills College

Special Collections, F.W. Olin Library, 5000 MacArthur Blvd.

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2017

Descriptive Summary

Title: Charles Shere Papers

Dates: 1960-1996

Collection Number: Consult repository.

Creator/Collector: Shere, Charles, 1935-

Extent: Approximately 30 linear feet.

Repository: Mills College
Oakland, California 94613

Abstract: Collection consists of compositions, writings, reference materials, correspondence, and subject files documenting Shere's career as journalist and composer.

Language of Material: English

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

Contact the Special Collections Curator, F.W. Olin Library, Mills College, for copyright information and permission to publish.

Preferred Citation

Charles Shere Papers. Mills College

Biography/Administrative History

During his professional life Charles Shere pursued three closely related careers: journalism, teaching and musical composition. In the summer of 1964, he became Music Director at KPFA-FM, Berkeley, where he produced a number of radio programs. As well as live and recorded concerts and documentary programs, he conducted interviews and panel discussions. Though he succeeded a half-dozen distinguished music directors, "for intensity of production and richness of quality, no term at KPFA" was "more productive" than his. Shere "produced the first radio biography of composer Charles Ives, the Third Annual Festival of the Avant-Garde, weekly broadcasts on the Jura-Paris Road, and broadcasts of the Cabrillo Music Festival which tradition for KPFA he himself initiated." (KPFA Folio, April 1982) He moved to KQED-TV, San Francisco, in 1967, where he remained until 1972. In this setting his interests widened to the visual arts. Shere produced and occasionally directed programs, appearing often as a program host and, from 1970 or so, as an on-camera critic of various cultural phenomena. He continued to conduct interviews and panel discussions while also writing and hosting documentaries on a variety of subjects. In 1972 he moved to the Oakland Tribune. For about seven years he was a generalist on the Trib, covering the visual arts, music, and theater, and writing general assignment culture stories. He became Art and Music critic around 1980, composing from four to eight reviews a week, usually including at least one Sunday "think piece." He retired from what he terms "this sort of journalism" at the end of 1987, though he worked for a season or two as music critic for the Santa Rosa Press Democrat in the early 1990s. Shere had also been founding editor and publisher of Ear, a west coast new-music tabloid (1973-1978). Meantime, from 1972 to about 1985, he taught one class per semester at Mills College. His chief responsibility was the history of twentieth-century music, but he also taught the Beethoven survey offered every fourth semester. During one inter semester he taught a course in critical writing and at another time took on a composition class. During his last year at Mills he taught a semester class on John Cage and another on Marcel Duchamp. Charles Shere's third vocation was as a composer. Beginning in 1964 his music was performed in public concerts in the Bay Area. His music was "experimental" until the mid-1970s, when performances by larger forces occasioned a turn toward less improvisatory or aleatoric methods. He composed in a wide variety of forms: songs, chamber music, orchestral music, concertos, and opera. Almost all of his musical manuscripts are archived at the University of California, Berkeley unless related to "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even." This opera, upon which he worked from 1963 to 1987, was performed at Mills College and is included in the Mills archive. He and his wife, Lindsey Remolif Shere, were on the board of Chez Panisse in Berkeley, where Lindsey was pastry chef for many years. The Sheres retired to Sonoma county, to a house in the country that he co-designed and constructed from 1986 to 1992. (Gleaned from a memo written by Charles Shere to Janice Braun on March 19, 2002)

Scope and Content of Collection

Collection consists of compositions, writings, reference materials, correspondence, and subject files documenting Shere's career as journalist and composer. Series 1, Career, consists of early encouragements, résumés, grant applications and projects relating to Duchamp's Bride, of programs, publicity and press reviews relating to performances of Shere's works, of his speaking engagements, some scripts and reviews, together forming an overview of his many activities found in more specific form elsewhere in the collection. Series 2, Compositions, consists of scores, notes, production and publicity

materials. Series 3, Writings, contains a variety of drafts or completed works, speeches, and radio scripts. Series 4, Art Reference Materials, consists of invitations, catalogs, press releases, photographic reproductions, correspondence, commentary, notes, drafts, and copies of Shere reviews. Series 5, Music Reference Materials, consists of photographs, correspondence, programs, notes, reviews, clippings, photocopies of scores and of works on music. Series 6, Subjects Files, consists of topics reflecting Shere's extensive range of interests and of background material not contained within other series. Series 7, People, consists primarily of correspondence, with photographs and occasional information on the arts. Detailed inventory available upon request.

Indexing Terms

Composers -- United States.

[Collection Inventory](#)
