COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Department of Music records12919225

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on April 15, 2026.
Description is written in: English.
Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027
Business Number: (212) 854-5153
Fax Number: (212) 854-1365
rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu
URL: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html

Table of Contents

Summary Information 3
Historical Note 3
Scope and Contents 4
Arrangement 4
Administrative Information 5
Related Materials 6
Controlled Access Headings 7
Collection Inventory 7
Howard Shanet's Music Department records 7

Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Columbia University. Department of Music
Title:	Department of Music records
ID:	12919225
ID:	UA#0324
Date [inclusive]:	1962-1998
Date [bulk]:	1970-1989
Physical Description:	1 linear feet 2 manuscript boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	This collection contains records of the Music Department of Columbia University and its faculty. The bulk of the collection was gathered by Professor Howard Shanet, who chaired the department from 1972-1976.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Department of Music Records; Box and Folder (if known); University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

ˆ Return to Table of Contents

Historical Note

The Columbia University Department of Music is one of the oldest university music departments in the United States. Founded in 1896 by composer and conductor Edward MacDowell, the department offers graduate and undergraduate instruction in composition, historical musicology, music theory, ethnomusicology, and music performance. From 1972 to 1976, the department was chaired by the conductor, composer, author, and pedagogue Howard Shanet. Shanet had been a professor in the Music Department since 1953, hired to conduct the Columbia University Orchestra and, from 1972, he served as the university's

first Director of Music Performance. These materials primarily relate to Shanet's service as department chair.

Shanet chaired the Music Department during a period of immense upheaval for the university. A university-wide budgetary crisis greatly restricted the department's financial means, while spatial limitations in the department's long-standing home, Dodge Hall (caused largely by the establishment of the new School of the Arts) prompted significant logistical difficulties. However, during this period, Shanet succeeded in shepherding a number of private donations to help fund the department's operations, including the burgeoning Music Performance Program. At the same time, he implemented sizable reforms in the graduate and undergraduate curriculum (including the core class, Music Humanities) and oversaw a faculty of prominent composers and academics.

ˆ Return to Table of Contents

Scope and Contents

This collection comprises administrative documents, correspondence, and notes, much of which dates from Howard Shanet's period as department chair (1972-1976). Topics covered include: the music department curriculum, bequests made to the department, budgetary and space issues, the Music Humanities course, course planning, implementation of university policy, and the relationship between the music departments at Barnard and Columbia.

ˆ Return to Table of Contents

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in one series. Howard Shanet organized these records according to activity. Box 1, folders 3-9 are arranged in their original order. The remaining folders were compiled during processing from a larger group of material that was otherwise discarded in accordance with University records management policy. The archivist has maintained the original order of documents within these groupings but has organized these groupings into folders according to activity.

ˆ Return to Table of Contents

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027
Business Number: (212) 854-5153
Fax Number: (212) 854-1365
rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu
URL: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html

Restrictions on Access

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

Restrictions on Access

One folder of Executive Committee minutes in Box 2 contains personnel and student records and is restricted until 2051.

Accruals

Additions to this collection are possible.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Donated to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library in February 2010 by Bernice Grafstein, Howard Shanet's wife, in a group of materials previously called the Howard Shanet Papers (Acc. 2009-2010-M103).

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Callum Blackmore (GSAS). Finding aid written by Callum Blackmore in July 2023.

The processing of this collection was made possible by a Graduate Internship in Primary Sources from Columbia Libraries.

This material was originally accessioned as the Howard Shanet Papers (MS#1876). Upon surveying, the collection was determined to contain records of the Columbia University

Department of Music (UA#0324) and Columbia University Orchestra (UA#0190), respectively, which had been created and used by Shanet.

This material was removed from this collection (which was originally housed and foldered in three banker's boxes) and rehoused and refoldered into metal-edged boxes and acid-free folders. All paper clips and rubber bands have been removed from the material; however material that was originally clipped or banded together has been housed together. Some material has been unfolded and removed from envelopes: these envelopes have been discarded unless they contained salient historical information (annotations, etc.).

Approximately 80-90% of the material originally housed in this collection has been destroyed. As per University Records policies, documents containing information with privacy and confidentiality concerns were shredded in their entirety. These include documents covered by HIPAA and FERPA (medical records, student records), HR documents, and financial records. Duplicate documents and library records were similarly discarded.

Box 1, folders 3-9 represent Shanet's original foldering of these materials. When folders contained only one or two items that were not earmarked for destruction, these items were rehoused in new folders; however, the archivist has maintained the original ordering and/or grouping of these items wherever possible. These newly created folders (compiled from material separated from larger folders otherwise earmarked for shredding) include: Box 1, folders 1-2, Box 1, folder 10, and Box 2, folders 1-3.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Reproductions may be made for research purposes. The RBML maintains ownership of the physical material only. Copyright remains with the creator and his/her heirs. The responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

ˆ Return to Table of Contents

Related Materials

Related Materials

Eda Rothstein Rapoport Papers: Howard Shanet oversaw and managed a significant bequest from the Rapoport family while chair of the department.

Many other Music faculty members during the 1970s also have papers at the Rare Book and Manuscript Library: Jack Beeson (MS#0094), Vladimir Ussachevsky (MS#1492), Paul Henry Lang (MS#0378), and Patricia Carpenter (MS#2053).

Columbia University Orchestra Records (UA#0190): Records relating to Howard Shanet's work with the Columbia University Orchestra (which were accessioned alongside the material in this collection) can be found in Series I.

Separated Materials

Documents containing information with privacy and confidentiality concerns were removed and shredded according to University Records policies.

ˆ Return to Table of Contents

Controlled Access Headings

- Music
- Correspondence
- Memorandums
- Music -- Instruction and study
- Shanet, Howard
- Shanet, Howard
- Beeson, Jack, 1921-2010
- Carpenter, Patricia, 1923-2000
- Chou, Wen-Chung, 1923-2019
- Christensen, Dieter
- Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center
- Columbia University. Center for Ethnomusicology
- Gumm, H. Harold
- Levi, Julian, 1874-1971
- McGill, William J. (William James), 1922-1997
- Monod, Jacques-Louis, 1927-2020
- Rapoport, Eda Rothstein, 1890-1968
- Ussachevsky, Vladimir, 1911-1990
- Sanders, Ernest H.
- Stevens, Denis, 1922-2004
- Taruskin, Richard

Collection Inventory

Howard Shanet's Music Department records, 1962-1998, (1970-1989)

Title/Description	Instances

Department events, 1971, 1973, 1983-1984, undated	box 1	folder 1

Scope and Contents

Programs, flyers, and schedules for various events at the Columbia University Music Department, or involving Columbia University Music Department faculty

Correspondence, 1969-1975, 1986, undated	box 1	folder 2

Scope and Contents

Howard Shanet's correspondence with Music Department faculty, with university administrators, with the Music Department Executive Committee, and with community stakeholders.

Documents relating to Adolf C. Robinson's 1973, 1975 and 1983 donations to the Music Performance Program and Columbia University Orchestra, 1973, 1975, 1983	box 1	folder 3

Scope and Contents

Materials collected by Howard Shanet to send to President Michael Sovern regarding a $5000 donation to the Music Performance Program and the Columbia University Orchestra: correspondence between Shanet and Robinson, a letter template sent by President Sovern, notes from a phone conversation with Robinson; notes relating to Robinson's 1975 donation of a Heckell bassoon to the Columbia University Orchestra. Notes relating to Robinson's 1973 donation to the Music Department. Tickets and programs for Columbia University Orchestra concerts are interspersed throughout this folder.

Zemlinsky Prize documents, 1975, 1981-1986	box 1	folder 4

Scope and Contents

Includes: Shanet's notes, correspondence (with Columbia Office of Deferred Giving, Office of Development and Alumni Relations, Louise von Zemlinsky), prize guidelines.

Boris and Eda Rapoport Fund documents, 1970-1978, 1980-1981, 1983-1984	box 1	folder 5

Scope and Contents

Primarily financial documents: budgets, calculator printouts, expense reports, Shanet's notes, correspondence (with Ernest Sanders), other administrative documents. In 1984, Shanet himself made a donation of $1500 to the fund: this folder includes his correspondence with Ernest Sanders

regarding this donation. Includes a 1971 finding aid for the Rapoport papers (RBML MS#1051)

Boris and Eda Rapoport Composition Prize documents, 1971-1978	box 1	folder 6

Scope and Contents

Documents relating to the selection, awarding, and funding of the Boris and Eda Rapoport Prize for composition. Includes: lists of awardees, prize guidelines, prize announcements, correspondence (with Jack Beeson, Davidson Taylor, Ruth Ihrig, Emma Stoloff [Eda's sister], George Fraenkel, William McGill, Chou Wen-Chung, Columbia Office of the Treasurer), letters notifying awardees, prize committee documents, programs for performances of Eda Rapoport's music at Columbia, press releases, Shanet's notes. Also includes documents relating to the accessioning of Rapoport's papers (RBML MS#1051).

Julian Clarence Levi Bequest documents, 1973-1975	box 1	folder 7

Scope and Contents

Mainly Shanet's notes

H. Harold Gumm Estate documents, 1975, 1978, 1985, 1990, 1998,	box 1	folder 8

Scope and Contents

Mainly Shanet's notes: also contains correspondence between the treasurer and President McGill, a copy of Gumm's will.

Robert Emmett Dolan Prize documents, 1972-1974, 1985-1989	box 1	folder 9

Scope and Contents

Contains: Shanet's reccomendations for the prize, correspondence (with Irving Berlin, Leeman Perkins, Juilliard School, university treasurer, William McGill, Robert and Casey Dolan, Nan Martin, Berlin's lawyers), awardee notices, Shanet's notes.

Administrative documents, 1973-1976	box 1	folder 10

Scope and Contents

Print documents relating to curriculum planning, class scheduling, implementation of university policy, relationship with the Barnard music program, and space management. Contains correspondence with and

memoranda from university administrators, especially Dean George Fraenkel and President William McGill.

Administrative documents, 1962, 1970-1976	box 2	folder 1-3

Scope and Contents

Print documents relating to curriculum planning, class scheduling, implementation of university policy, relationship with the Barnard music program, and space management. Contains correspondence with and memoranda from university administrators, especially Dean George Fraenkel and President William McGill.

Executive Committee meeting minutes, 1969-1975	box 2	folder 4-5

Conditions Governing Access:
Conditions Governing Access

Restricted until 2051.

ˆ Return to Table of Contents