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**Music Division**

Guide to the

**Charles Turner papers**

1921-2003 (bulk 1933-1992)

JPB 12-05

Compiled by Matthew Snyder, May 2012

## **Summary**

**Creator:** Turner, Charles

**Title:** Charles Turner papers, 1921-2003 (bulk 1933-1992)

**Size:** 8.46 linear feet (25 boxes)

**Source:** Donated by Christine A. Turner, 2005.

**Abstract:** The papers of the composer Charles Turner, one of Samuel Barber's few students, contain scores, sketches and notes, libretti, correspondence, diaries, photographs, programs, scrapbooks, yearbooks, clippings, and audio recordings documenting his life and career as a violinist, composer and pedagogue.

**Access:** Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying and photography will apply. Advance notice may be required.

**Copyright information:** For permission to publish, contact the Chief, Music Division, New York Public Library.

**Preferred citation:** Charles Turner papers, JPB 12-05. Music Division, New York Public Library.

**Processing note:** Processing consisted of foldering and arranging scores, correspondence, and other personal files. □

## **Creator history**

Charles Turner (1921-2003) was a composer, violinist, and teacher. Born in Baltimore, his family moved to Anderson, Indiana in 1926. Turner demonstrated an interest and talent in music from the age of three, and began studying piano at five and violin at seven. When he was twelve, Turner's family moved to Pontiac, Michigan, where he studied violin at the Detroit Institute of Musical Art. He graduated from Baldwin High School as class valedictorian in 1939, after which he won a scholarship to study for a year at the Curtis Institute of Music with Lea Luboschutz.

After his studies at Curtis, Turner entered the Navy, serving in the Pacific, and returned home at the end of World War II. He immediately moved to New York where he entered the Juilliard School, studying with Louis Persinger, Peter Mennin and Stefan Wolpe.

Gore Vidal introduced Turner to Samuel Barber in 1950, after which Turner joined the circle of musicians, artists, and intellectuals based around Capricorn, Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti's home in Mount Kisco, New York. In 1951, Turner performed Barber's Violin Concerto under the composer's direction while touring Europe. Turner became close to Barber, who encouraged the violinist to take up composition. After studying with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, Turner returned to the United States and studied with Barber for five years (he may have been Barber's only pupil). Barber dedicated his piano piece *Souvenirs* (1952) to Turner, and delegated Turner to orchestrate one of his final works, *Canzonetta for Oboe and Strings* (1978), after his death. In the weeks before the composer's death from cancer in 1981, Turner helped take care of Barber.

Turner's first successful piece, *Encounter* (1954), was premiered in 1955 by the Cleveland Orchestra under the direction of George Szell, and was also conducted by Fritz Reiner, Dmitri Mitropoulos, and Thomas Schippers. Schippers, a friend from the Capricorn scene, continued to perform Turner's music in later years. Turner's ballet *Pastorale* (1957), commissioned by Lincoln Kirstein, was created for Francisco Mancion and the New York City Ballet; it was also performed by the Joffrey and several other ballet companies. His other works include *Serenade for Icarus* (1960) for violin and piano; *The Marriage of Orpheus*, an orchestral work; *The Ballad of Barnaby*, a setting of a W.H. Auden play; chamber pieces; and songs for voice and piano.

Turner was a MacDowell Colony fellow in 1958. Throughout his career he taught composition, harmony, counterpoint and orchestration at schools in New York City, Connecticut and Long Island. One of his students, at the United Nations International School, was the saxophonist and composer John Zorn.

Dickinson, Peter. Charles Turner: Interview with Peter Dickinson, New York City, May 13, 1981. In Dickinson, Samuel Barber Remembered: A Centenary Tribute. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2010, pp. 73-79.

Wittke, Paul. "Samuel Barber." G. Schirmer Inc.

### **Scope and content note**

The Charles Turner papers contain scores, sketches and notes, libretti, correspondence, diaries, photographs, programs, scrapbooks, yearbooks, clippings, posters, and sound recordings documenting Turner's life and career as a violinist, composer and pedagogue. Scores and sketches, mostly unpublished, constitute over half of the collection. The correspondence contains letters from his colleagues and friends, including Samuel Barber, Noël Lee, Gian Carlo Menotti, and Ned Rorem, as well as from students and family. The scores hold Turner's marked-up copy of the violin part for Barber's Violin Concerto, performed under Barber's direction; and Turner's music, including the sketch for his orchestral piece *Encounter*; his ballet *Pastorale* and its re-orchestrations, and the orchestral work *The Marriage of Orpheus*.

The collection also contains unique audio recordings of Turner's music. The recordings hold four tape cassettes and a vinyl disc of various versions of *Pastorale*; two tape cassettes of Turner's Cello Sonata; an open reel tape of the 1969 performance of *The Ballad of Barnaby*; a vinyl demonstration disc of the songs *In Youth And May* and *Un Jour Vendu Dire Printemps*; four vinyl discs containing Turner violin performances; two vinyl discs and an open reel tape containing a 1966 performance of *The Marriage of Orpheus*; six vinyl discs of a performance of *Encounter* by the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell; an open reel tape of songs by Turner; and nine identically-labeled vinyl discs of a chamber group featuring Turner on piano.

Further contents include four cassette tapes of music by Samuel Barber, likely published; a cassette tape of a BBC program on Barber; one cassette tape of the music of Phillip Ramey; one cassette tape labeled "student compositions;" a vinyl disc titled "A Choral Concert," contents unknown; and four unlabeled vinyl discs; three unlabeled open reel tapes; and one unlabeled tape cassette.

Inquiries regarding audio materials in the collection may be directed to the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound (rha@nypl.org). Audio materials will be subject to preservation evaluation and migration prior to access.

## Arrangement

The Charles Turner papers are organized into the following series:

Series I: Personal Files, 1921-2003

Series II: Scores, 1948-1983

## Key terms

### Names

Auden, W. H. (Wystan Hugh), 1907-1973  
Barber, Samuel, 1910-1981  
Corigliano, John, 1938-  
Diamond, David, 1915-2005  
Hollingsworth, Stanley  
Lee, Noël, 1924-  
Menotti, Gian Carlo, 1911-2007  
Perle, George, 1915-2009  
Pollack, Howard  
Rorem, Ned, 1923-  
Rothstein, Edward, 1952-  
Runciman, Steven, 1903-2000  
Styron, William, 1925-2006  
Thomson, Virgil, 1896-1989  
Turner, Charles

### Occupations

Composers  
Teachers  
Violinists

### Special formats

Appointment books  
Black-and-white negatives  
Black-and-white photographs  
Clippings (information artifacts)  
Color photographs  
Commercial correspondence  
Correspondence  
Diaries  
Military records  
Posters  
Programs (documents)  
School yearbooks  
Scores  
Scrapbooks

## Container list

### **Series I: Personal Files, 1921-2003** (10 boxes)

This series holds correspondence, photographs, concert programs, scrapbooks, diaries, datebooks, an address book, clippings, teaching material, writings, drawings, posters, official records, and information on Turner's family history.

The correspondence is with Turner's friends, colleagues and family. It includes letters from the composers Samuel Barber, Noël Lee, Gian Carlo Menotti, Ned Rorem, John Corigliano, Stanley Hollingsworth, George Perle, Virgil Thomson, and David Diamond; the British historian Sir Steven Runciman; the musicologist Howard Pollack; the author William Styron; the poet W.H. Auden; and Turner's publisher G. Schirmer, Inc. Of these names, Barber, Lee, Menotti, Rorem and Runciman have the most content. The correspondence from Barber includes a 1981 letter from Barber's estate regarding the bequest he left to Turner, as well as letters to Barber from other parties. The letters from Turner consist primarily of correspondence to and from his parents.

The photographs consist mostly of small black and white snapshots, though there are larger images as well (there is also a folder of black and white negatives). The larger images include portraits of Turner and Samuel Barber. The Barber folder holds pictures of Barber and Turner together in the 1950s. The general photos of Turner are mostly informal and date from his childhood to the 1960s, often showing him with friends and lovers. Later images are in color. The photos with unidentified subjects may feature Turner as well.

The concert programs are thorough and date from throughout Turner's life, from his first public performances at age seven to a 1989 performance of *Pastorale*. The scrapbooks, containing clippings and photographs, document Turner's early career (1933 to 1943), and a trip to Italy in 1962. The loose clippings are more inclusive, dating from 1934 to 1969. The clippings file also contains Turner's resume, ca. 1978.

Turner's teaching material holds his notes and exams on music history, cello and violin studies, and composition exercises. His writings contain autobiographical essays; a libretto by John Van Meter for an opera called *Dracula* (possibly intended for music by Turner); an essay about Turner's piece *The Ballad of Barnaby*; an essay on Turner's year in Italy as an exchange fellow in 1955; poetry; and the typescript of a chapter (author unknown) of a book about Samuel Barber discussing the opera *Antony and Cleopatra*. The typescript has Turner's notes and corrections. Turner's diaries are fragmentary do not document his life in great detail.

The official records consist of school transcripts, Navy records, and Turner's passport.

The drawings are presumably by Turner, but they also contain a published book of drawings by Rob Tobin, inscribed by the artist to Turner. The posters advertise Turner's performances of Barber's *Violin Concerto*, his appearances at the Spoleto Festival in Italy, and the New York City Ballet's performances of *Pastorale*.

- b.8 Address Book
- b.1 f.1 Clippings, 1934-1969, 1978, 1989
- Correspondence
- b.1 f.2-3 A - D, 1951-2003
- b.1 f.4 American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, 1959, 1988, 1995-1997

**Series I: Personal Files, 1921-2003** (cont.)

Correspondence (cont.)

- b.1 f.5-6 Barber, Samuel, 1951-1981
- b.2 f.1-2 E - H, 1944-2000
  - b.2 f.3 G. Schirmer, Inc., 1955-1969, 1989
  - b.2 f.4 Holden, Stephen, 1955-1968
- b.2 f.5-6 I - P, 1954-2001
- b.20 f.1 Lee, Noël, 1953, 1972-1997
- b.20 f.2 McIlhenny, Henry, 1963-1965
- b.20 f.3 Menotti, Gian Carlo, 1953-1959, 1991
- b.20 f.4-5 R - Z, 1953-1991
  - b.20 f.6 Ranch, Peter, 1964-1966
- b.21 f.1-2 Roberts, Jonathan, 1965-1967
  - b.21 f.3 Rorem, Ned, 1966, 1979-1992
  - b.21 f.4 Runciman, Sir Steven, 1956-1965, 1983-1989
- b.22 f.1-4 Turner, Charles, and Family, 1944-1994
- b.23 f.1-3 Turner, Charles, and Family, 1944-1994
- b.23 f.4-5 Unidentified, 1954-1987
- b.24 f.1-5 Unidentified, 1954-1987
- b.25 f.1-2 Unidentified, 1954-1987

Diaries and Datebooks

- b.7 1950-1956, 1973-1975
- b.8 1960
- b.3 f.1 Drawings, 1974
- b.4 Drawings
- b.5 f.1 Family History, 1994

Personal Records

- b.5 f.2 Navy, 1945-1958
- b.25 f.4 School Transcripts and Passport, 1933-1948, 1960

Photographs

- b.5 f.3 Barber, Samuel, 1950s
- b.5 f.4 Turner, Charles, 1921-1960s
- b.3 f.2 Turner, Charles, 1939
- b.5 f.5 Turner Family
- b.5 f.6-9 Unidentified, 1940s-1990s
- b.6 f.1-2 Unidentified
- b.25 f.5 Unidentified
- b.6 f.3 Negatives

**Series I: Personal Files, 1921-2003** (cont.)

- b.3 f.3 Posters, 1950-1969
- b.6 f.4-6 Programs, 1928-1989
- b.25 f.3 Programs, 1928-1989
- Scrapbooks
  - b.9 f.1 1933-1934
  - b.10 f.1 1935-1943
  - b.10 f.2 Italy, 1962
- Teaching Material
  - b.9 f.2 Cello Studies
  - b.9 f.3 Composition, Harmony and Rhythm Exercises
  - b.10 f.3 Music History
  - b.9 f.4 Violin Bowing
- Writings
  - b.10 f.4-5 General
  - b.10 f.6 Notes on Manuscript of Chapter of Book on Samuel Barber

**Series II: Scores, 1948-1983** (9 boxes)

This series contains sketches, score manuscripts and parts, and publishing proofs and final published versions of Turner's music. It also holds a small portion of score manuscripts by Turner's colleagues and students.

The pieces by Turner with the most content are *The Marriage of Orpheus*, an orchestral work, and *Pastorale*, an orchestral ballet which he later arranged for other instrumentations, and renamed *Dark Pastorale*. Other compositions in the series include *Encounter* (in sketch form); piano pieces; songs for voice and piano spanning Turner's career; early chamber music and songs from the 1940s; an unfinished opera called *Titanic*; *Pathetique*, an undated orchestral piece; and untitled sketches. Most of Turner's scores are undated. The Christmas Carols are Turner's arrangements of traditional carols, and also include Turner's notes on how to write them.

Scores by other composers consist of the published violin part for Samuel Barber's *Violin Concerto* (marked up by Turner and used in preparation for his performances with Barber conducting); Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, with different text written in by Turner; Patrick Douglas-Hamilton's *True Thomas*, an opera performed on the same program with Turner's *The Ballad of Barnaby* at St. Mary's Parish Church, Haddington, England in 1969 (see program in Series I); and a manuscript of Stanley Hollingsworth's *Sonata for Flute and Piano*.

The student scores are all by pupils of Turner from the Wykeham Rise School in Washington, Connecticut, written ca. 1968-1969. Most are choral pieces.

By Turner

- b.11 f.1 *Adagio and Rondo* (For piano. Score manuscript.)

**Series II: Scores, 1948-1983** (cont.)

By Turner (cont.)

- b.11 f.2 *Alleluia* (For chorus and piano. Score manuscript.)
  - b.3 f.4 *Canon at the Octave*, 1956 (For two pianos. Score manuscript.)
  - b.11 f.3 *Chameleon* (For piano. Copy of score manuscript.)
  - b.11 f.4 *Chanson D' Automne*  
For voice and piano. Text by Paul Verlaine. Score manuscript.
  - b.10 f.7 *Christmas Carols*
  - b.11 f.5 *Concerto for Violin and Piano in G Minor* (Manuscript score and violin part.)
  - b.3 f.5 *Encounter*, 1954 (For orchestra. Sketch.)
  - b.11 f.6 *For Dr. John Brennan*, 1983 (For voice and piano. Score manuscript.)
  - b.11 f.7 *Gigue* (For piano. Score manuscript.)
  - b.11 f.8 *Heaven-Haven*  
For voice and piano. Text by G.M. Hopkins. Score manuscript.
  - b.11 f.9 *Hunting Song*, 1940  
For voice and piano. Text by Marcia Bradley.
  - b.11 f.10 *In Youth and May*, 1953  
For voice and piano. Text by A.E. Houseman.
  - b.11 f.11 *Läudler*  
For voice and piano. Unknown text author. Sketch and score manuscript.  
*The Marriage of Orpheus* (For orchestra.)
  - b.11 f.12-15 Sketches  
Sketches also contain piano reduction score.
  - b.3 f.6-7 Full Scores (Manuscripts and manuscript copies.)
- Pastorale*
- Pastorale (A Ballet)*  
For Orchestra, 1957
  - b.12 f.1-5 Full Score Manuscripts
  - b.12 f.6 Published Full Score
  - b.13 f.1 String Parts
  - b.14 f.1 For Piano (Score manuscript.)
  - b.13 f.2 For Piano Four Hands (Score manuscript.)
  - b.13 f.3 For Viola and Piano or Piano Four Hands (Score manuscript.)
- Dark Pastorale*, 1978  
Re-arrangement for orchestral performance only.
- Full Orchestration
  - b.14 f.2-3 Full Scores (Publishing proof and masters)
  - b.13 f.4-5 Parts
  - b.15 f.1-2 Parts
  - Reduced Orchestration

By Turner (cont.)

*Pastorale* (cont.)

*Dark Pastorale*, 1978 (cont.)

Reduced Orchestration (cont.)

- b.14 f.4 Full Score (Manuscript copy.)
- b.15 f.3-4 Parts
- b.16 f.1 *Pathetique* (For orchestra. Full score manuscript.)
- b.16 f.2 *Quartet and Invention for String Quartet*, 1948 (Score and part manuscripts.)
- b.16 f.3 *Renascence: Un Jour Venu Dira Printemps*  
For voice and piano. Text by James Lord. Score manuscript and copies.
- b.16 f.4 *Serenade for Icarus*  
For violin and piano. Sketch, copy of score manuscript and copy of published score.
- b.14 f.5 *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (Full score manuscript and copy.)
- b.16 f.5 *Songs*  
Labeled "old songs." For voice and piano. Texts by Emily Dickinson, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Paul Verlaine. Score manuscripts.
- b.16 f.6 *Sophisticated Waltz* (Orchestral sketch.)
- b.16 f.7 *Sound the Flute*  
For flute, two sopranos, guitar, piano and bass. Text by William Blake. Score manuscript.
- b.14 f.6 *Spanish Carol*  
Arranged by Turner for two violins, two celli, percussion, piano, and soprano and alto voices. Sketches, score and part manuscripts.
- b.16 f.8 *String Quartet* (Unfinished sketch.)
- b.16 f.9 *Theme and Variations* (For piano. Sketch and score manuscript.)
- b.16 f.10 *Titanic* (Opera. Sketch and libretto.)
- b.16 f.11 *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano* (Sketch, score and part manuscripts.)
- b.16 f.12 *Trio for Violin, Clarinet and Cello*, 1948 (Score manuscript.)
- b.17 f.1 *Variation for Piano* (Score manuscript and copy with changes.)
- b.17 f.2 *The Waves* (For violin and piano. Sketches.)
- b.17 f.3 Untitled Pieces for Piano, 1948-1949 (Score manuscripts.)
- b.10 f.8 Sketches
- b.17 f.4-8 Sketches
- b.18 f.1-2 Sketches
- b.14 f.7 Orphan Score Pages

By Others

General

- b.18 f.3 Barber, Samuel. *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*, Op. 14, 1951
- b.18 f.4 Bernstein, Leonard. *Chichester Psalms*, 1965
- b.18 f.5 Bowman, Mary. *The Four Marys* (For choir. Score manuscript copy.)
- b.19 f.1 Douglas-Hamilton, Patrick. *True Thomas*, 1969  
Opera. Sketches, score manuscript and parts.
- b.18 f.6 Hollingsworth, Stanley. *Sonata for Flute and Piano* (Score manuscript.)



**Series II: Scores, 1948-1983** (cont.)

By Others (cont.)

General (cont.)

- b.18 f.7           Smith, Tina. *Snow Poem*  
For strings. Incomplete score manuscript.
- b.18 f.8           Tisher, P.  
*Hodie* for choir and *Prelude* for flute, oboe, French horn, bass clarinet, bassoon and organ.  
Score manuscript copies.
- b.18 f.9           Unidentified. *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (Score manuscript copy.)

Students

- b.18 f.10          General, 1968  
Program for *A Collection of Christmas Music* performed at the Wykeham Rise School.  
Includes scores for all pieces, all for choir.
- b.18 f.11          Green, Melissa (Choral pieces. Score manuscripts.)
- b.18 f.12          Matel, Mary J. *Hodie* (For choir. Score manuscript copy.)
- b.18 f.13          Riley, Susan. *Elegy for Strings* (Printed score. )
- b.18 f.14          Spangler, Janet, 1969  
*String Quintet in E-flat* and *Herrick's Carol* for flute, castanets, soprano, alto and piano.  
Score manuscript copies.