

Special Collections and
University Archives

UMass Amherst Libraries 

Charles Bestor Papers

1971-2002

2 boxes (1 half manuscript box, 1 flat oversize box) (0.75 linear ft.)

Call no.: FS 35



[About SCUA](#)

[SCUA home](#)

[Credo digital](#)

[Scope](#)

[Overview](#)

[Series 1. Suite for Alto Saxophone and Percussion](#)

[Series 2. In the Shell of the Ear](#)

[Inventory](#)

[Series 1. Suite for Alto Saxophone and Percussion](#)

[Series 2. In the Shell of the Ear](#)

[Admin info](#)

[Download](#)

[xml version](#)

[print version \(pdf\)](#)



[Read collection overview](#)

Composer and presently the Professor of Composition and Director of the Electronic and Computer Music Studios of the University of Massachusetts Amherst who has taught at Juillard School of Music and numerous other universities, won international awards for his music, and collaborated with contemporary installation artists. Includes scores and sound recordings for two of his compositions, Suite for Alto Saxophone and Percussion and In the Shell of the Ear, as well as correspondence,

concert programs, and reviews all relating to the publication and performance of the works.

See similar SCUA collections:

Landscape and gardening

Mass Agricultural College (1863-1931)

Photographs

UMass students

Background on Charles Bestor

Charles Bestor, a native of New York City, received his musical training under Paul Hindemith at Yale University, Vincent Persichetti and Peter Mennin at the Juilliard School of Music and independently under the electronic music composer Vladimir Ussachevsky. He also holds degrees from Swarthmore College (Phi Beta Kappa) and the Universities of Illinois and Colorado.

Bestor's early works were largely dodecaphonic, with a strong grounding in Hindemithian counterpoint. The New York Times described his early Piano Sonata as "a dissonant, tightly organized working out of clear and dramatic motives; explosive and vigorous declamations with sweep and power." In his more recent music, much of it in the electronic medium, Bestor has increasingly explored the integration of jazz-derived, tonally-based harmonic, melodic and rhythmic elements into the formal structures of conventional concert music. The Boston Globe spoke of his In Memoriam Bill Evans as "lush, urbane, shrewdly paced, neatly transferring some quality modern- jazz orchestration to a related and congenial symphonic territory," and the Salt Lake Tribune, writing of his earlier jazz-based orchestral work, "Until a Time", referred to its "searching treatment of melodic and percussive ideas; a witty piece, interspersed with bits of Stravinsky and Poulenc, but highly original in sound."

Bestor has been awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Composer's Fellowship and was a winner in the 1999 Bourges (France) International Electro-Acoustic Music Competition. He was also the winner of the Main Prize in the 1996 Musica Nova International Competition of the Czech Republic and first prize winner in the Omaha Symphony's 1994 International Orchestral Competition. He has also received awards in the New England Philharmonic and Quinto Maganini Orchestra Competitions, New England Composers' Orchestra Competition, LGBA National Wind Competition, the David Lipscomb Prize and the Delius Prize for Instrumental Chamber Music, among others.

His works have been commissioned by the Composers String Quartet, the Utah Symphony, the Salem Symphony and the Five-College Symphony Orchestras, the Utah Bicentennial Commission, the Peter Britt Festival, Phi Beta National Professional Fraternity and a number of individual performers.

Bestor has collaborated, as a composer, with the sculptor Sherry Healy on the installation "Pathways from the Dream Spell Series" which was exhibited at the Chicago International Art Exposition at Navy Pier, the Illinois State Museum, the Michigan Art Park and the Chicago ARC Gallery. He also collaborated with the visual artist Barbara Cornett and the lighting designer John Wade on the installation "Cycles", which was commissioned by the Maier Museum of American Art and has since toured extensively throughout the mid-Atlantic states. He has subsequently collaborated with Ms. Cornett and Mr. Wade on the installation "Into the Labyrinth", commissioned by the Fine Arts Center of the Virginia Museum in Lynchburg and "The Unfound Door", commissioned by the College Music Society, which has been widely seen and heard in its video and tape versions.

For many years Bestor has pursued a parallel career as a teacher and administrator. He was for a decade on the faculty and administration of the Juilliard School of Music and subsequently served as Dean of the College of Music of Willamette University and as Head of the Music Departments of the Universities of Massachusetts, Utah and Alabama. He has also taught on the faculty of the University of Colorado and is presently Professor of Composition and Director of the Electronic and Computer Music Studios of the University of Massachusetts.

Bestor is a Fellow of the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, the Ragdale Foundation, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Ireland. He is listed in *Marquis' Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*, the *International Who's Who in Music*, the *Dictionary of International Biography*, Joseph Machlis' *Introduction to Contemporary Music* and a number of professional who's whos.

The above biographical sketch was taken from Charles Bestor's faculty web site found at <http://www-vms.oit.umass.edu/~bestor/>

Compositions

1957

"Lord Unto Thee"

1962

"Unto Thee Do I Lift Up My Soul"

1963

"Measure for Measure"

1964

Suite from Incidental Music to the Play "J.B."
1968
"A Wind in the Willows" (flute)
1971
"In Memoriam" to texts from "The Autobiography of Malcolm X"
1972
Poem for choir and synthesizer
1972
"Music for the Mountain" for orchestra
1973
Variations for violin & piano duo with synthesizer
1976
Concerto Grosso for percussion and orchestra
1976
Twelve Short Movements for string quartet & tape
1976
"Second Moon of Venus"
1977
Piano Sonata
1977
"Until a Time..." for antiphonal orchestras
1979
Lyric Variations for oboe and tape, with viola
1979
Suite for violin & piano
1981
Four Ostinati from the Edge of Time
1981
Overture to a Romantic Comedy for orchestra
1983
Suite for alto saxophone & percussion
1984
Three Portraits for wind octet
1984
Sonata for cello & piano
1984
Variations for orchestra
1984
Sort of Love Songs (French horn octet)
1985
"Make a Joyful Noise"
1988
"Stations of the Night", three blues for S (piano)
1988
"Monday's Child" (SATB or SSAA & synthesizer)
1990
"Of Times and Their Places", five songs (sop or mezzo & piano)
1990
Incantations and Dances (contrabass, electronic keyboards & computer)
1990
Four Love Songs (SATB & chamber orchestra or piano)
1991
Soliloquies (oboe & interactive electronics)
1992
Chaconne for Chamber Winds
1992
"Five Sketches for jazz piano"
1993
"Time's Arrow" (alto sax, horn & piano or synthesizer)

1993
"Conversations with Myself" (clarinet & interactive electronics)
1993
"In Memoriam Bill Evans" for orchestra
1994
"Three Ways of Looking at the Night" for orchestra
1995
"about Her" (clarinet & interactive electronics)
1995
"Into the Labyrinth"
1998
Fantasia Sacra et Profana
1998
Partita for solo clarinet
1999
"For Ann, in Autumn" (high voice & piano)
1999
Symphony No. 1: "Three Ways of Looking at the Night" for orchestra
2000
"In the Shell of the Ear"
2000
Andantino, Canon and Blues. Concerto Grosso for percussion and wind nonet
2001
Symphony for chamber winds: "The Long Goodbye"
2002
"Music for Gerry" (clarinet & interactive electronics)
2002
Kyrie for tenor and orchestra

Scope of collection

The papers of Charles Bestor consist mainly of scores and sound recordings for two of his compositions: *Suite for Alto Saxophone and Percussion* and *In the Shell of the Ear*. The collection, dating from 1971-2002, documents for one of these works the creative process of composing a musical piece from start to finish. In addition to the scores themselves, the collection also includes correspondence, concert programs, and reviews all relating to the publication and performance of the works.

The collection is arranged into two series, including *Suite for Alto Saxophone and Percussion*, 1971-1994, and *In the Shell of the Ear*, 2000-2002.

Arrangement

This collection is organized into two series:

Series 1. *Suite for Alto Saxophone and Percussion*, 1971-1994

Series 2. *In the Shell of the Ear*, 2000-2002

Series descriptions

Series 1. *Suite for Alto Saxophone and Percussion*

1971-1994

Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.

This series contains sketches, drafts, and revisions of the score; a sound recording of the score; correspondence; concert programs; program notes; and reviews. The correspondence includes letters concerning the publication and performance of the work. In particular the series includes letters to and from Ken Dorn of Dorn Publications, Inc., the publishing company that ultimately published the piece, as well as a copy of the publishing contract.

Drafts of the score consist of early sketches and revisions of sections of the work. These drafts contain detailed notes and corrections that document the process of composing the piece, including some annotations that appear to be performance notes. Manuscript masters and the Ozalid masters show minor revisions that were made to the score right before its publication.

Series 2. *In the Shell of the Ear*

2000-2002

Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

This series contains a printed copy of the score, rehearsal and concert sound recordings of the score, a concert program and program notes, an autographed copy of Joseph Langland's book *Twelve Poems with Preludes and Postludes*, and correspondence. The correspondence includes a letter from Langland who wrote the poem "In the Shell of the Ear," from which the lyrics of Bestor's work are drawn.

Inventory

Series 1. Suite for Alto Saxophone and Percussion

1971-1994

Compact disc

ca. 1983

Box 1: 1

Correspondence

1982-1989, 1994

Box 1: 2

Correspondence: Ken Dorn

1971, 1986-1987

Box 1: 3

Program notes

1989, n.d.

Box 1: 4

Programs

Box 1: 5-6

University of Massachusetts at Amherst Faculty Chamber Music Series (Amherst, Mass.)

1984 Apr 1

Box 1

Twenty-First Annual American Society of University Composers Conference (Toronto, Canada)

1986 Mar 5-9

Box 1

Delius Festival (Jacksonville, Fla.)

1986 Mar 6-8

Box 1

York University Contemporary Ensemble

1986 Mar 6

Box 1

Washington Composers Forum

1986 Sept 27

Box 1

Contemporary Music Consortium Spring Concert (Salt Lake City, Utah)

1987 Apr 21

Box 1

Bestorfest '89 (Butler University, Indianapolis, Ind.)

1989 Mar 28

Box 1

Twentieth Century Chambers Players (University of North Carolina, Greensboro, N.C.)

1989 Dec 1

Box 1

Faculty Recital (University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass.)

1992 Mar 5

Box 1

Kevin A. Towner Recital (Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio)

1994 Mar 5

Box 1

Reviews
1986-1987
Box 1: 7
Score

Sketches
ca. 1982-1983
Box 2: 1
Miscellaneous sketches
ca. 1982-1983
Box 2: 2
Draft, with revisions and corrections

I. Prelude
ca. 1982-1983
Box 2: 3
II. Chaconne
ca. 1982-1983
Box 2: 4
III. Moto Perpetuo
ca. 1982-1983
Box 2: 5
IV. Aubade
ca. 1982-1983
Box 2: 6
V. Scherzo
ca. 1982-1983
Box 2: 7
Final corrections

Full score
1983
Box 2: 8
III. Moto Perpetuo
1983
Box 2: 9
IV. Aubade
1983
Box 2: 10
V. Scherzo
1983
Box 2: 11
Manuscript masters

I. Prelude
1983 Jan 19
Box 2: 12
II. Chaconne
1983 Jan 19
Box 2: 13
III. Moto Perpetuo
1983 Jan 19
Box 2: 14
IV. Aubade
1983 Jan 19

Box 2: 15
V. Scherzo
1983 Jan 19
Box 2: 16
Ozalid masters
1983
Box 2: 17
Master sheets, with annotations
[post-1986]
Box 2: 18
Printed score with part for the Marimba
1983, 1987
Box 2: 19
Series 2. In the Shell of the Ear
2000-2002
Book: Twelve Poems with Preludes and Postludes inscribed and signed by the author
2000
Box 1: 8
Clipping
ca. 2001
Box 1: 9
Compact discs: rehearsal and concert recordings
2000 Nov 10-12
Box 1: 10
Correspondence
2000-2002
Box 1: 11
Poem: "In the Shell of the Ear"
ca. 2000
Box 1: 12
Program and program notes
2000 Nov 12, n.d.
Box 1: 13
Score
2000
Box 1: 14

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

This collection was donated by Charles Bestor in March-April 2004.

Accruals

Additions to the collection are expected.

Processing Information

Processed by Danielle Kovacs, April 2004.

Language:

English

Acknowledgments

Encoding funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Copyright and Use (More information)

Cite as: Charles Bestor Papers (RG 40/11). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

Bestor, Charles.

Composers-United States-History-Sources.

Composition (Music)-History-Sources.

Langland, Joseph.

Music-Instruction and study-Massachusetts.

Music-Manuscripts-United States.

Musicians-United States-History-Sources.

University of Massachusetts at Amherst-Faculty.

Contributors

Bestor, Charles [main entry]

Genres and formats

Concert programs.

Letters (correspondence)

Scores.

Sound recordings.

Link to similar SCUA collections

Landscape and gardening

Mass Agricultural College (1863-1931)

Photographs

UMass students



Special Collections & University Archives

University Libraries : UMass Amherst

154 Hicks Way : Amherst, Mass. 01003-9275

Ph. 413-545-7282 (545-SCUA)

