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Preliminary Description
for the Hyde Park
Historical Society,
Joyce Turner Hilkevitch
Papers 1975-2020



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.HPHSJTH
Title	Hyde Park Historical Society. Joyce Turner Hilkevitch. Papers
Date	1975-2020
Size	6 linear feet (4 boxes)
Repository	Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.
Abstract	Joyce Turner Hilkevitch (1921-2019) founder of Mostly Music, an organization that supported young performers and composers of chamber music in Chicago. Part of the collections of the Hyde Park Historical Society.

Information on Use

Access

This collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Hyde Park Historical Society. Joyce Turner Hilkevitch. Papers, Box #, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Joyce Turner Hilkevitch was born Joyce Brown, October 19, 1921, in New York City. Although her family was comfortably off, witnessing the harshness of the Depression would be a formative influence in her life. After graduating from Hunter College in 1942, she moved to San Francisco, where she worked as a journalist.

She married Jonathan Turner in 1943, and while waiting for him to complete his army service, volunteered in the local USO. Pioneering black journalist Vernon Jarret recalled that Joyce was one of the few white hostesses willing to dance with Black servicemen, and she reprimanded a white GI who objected to her doing so.

Both Joyce and Jonathan Turner were interested in art, and after the war, they made frequent trips to Mexico, where they purchased works by emerging and contemporary Mexican artists such as Jose Clemente Orozco and David Siqueiros. Years later, Joyce would donate much of the collection of paintings and drawings to the Art Institute of Chicago, which held a special exhibition of the donated work.

After the war, the Turners moved to Chicago. In 1954, they bought a home in Kenwood where they raised their four children, Peter, David, Carl, and Susan. While electrical engineer Jonathan worked for his family's picture frame company (Turner Manufacturing), Joyce earned her Master's Degree in Social Work in 1964 from the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration. She was a social worker at Jane Addams Hull House; she became Executive Director of the Governor's Commission on the Statue of Women; and later was director of the Illinois Commission on Smoking and Health. Her volunteer activities included the Kenwood Open House Committee, the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, The University of Chicago Service League, the PTA, and the Hyde Park Art Center. Jonathan Turner died in 1971 and Joyce later married Dr. Aaron Hilkevitch. Between them they had a blended family of seven children.

In 1973, Joyce Turner Hilkevitch founded Mostly Music, a nonprofit arts organization. Its objective from the beginning was two-fold - to provide a platform for young, emerging musicians and to showcase chamber music in private homes. The performances offered talented young musicians to hone their performance skills in small and supportive venues. The initial concerts were hosted in homes in the Hyde Park-Kenwood neighborhood. In a few years, Mostly Music had chamber music series in Near North and North Shore homes, as well as noontime concerts downtown. Although the performance spaces were small, they brought chamber music to a wider audience, as it is an intimate form of music that was being performed in the kinds of spaces for which it was composed.

In 1974 Mostly Music was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization. The original mission statement called for 1. Dedication to quality professional performance with young artists; 2. Commitment to initiating multi-cultural music arts events; 3. development of new audiences for cultural events in community settings. In addition to chamber music performances in Hyde Park and Kenwood homes, Mostly Music in the 1970's featured lunchtime concerts for seniors and students at the First Chicago Center and The Vermeer Quarter Concerts at the National College of Education.

Over the years, Mostly Music grew over the years to include activities serving additional communities and venues throughout Chicago. These included residencies for chamber ensembles such as The International String Quartet in a two-year program funded through Chamber Music of America, 1991-1993; Trio Atlantique in a two-year residency funded by Lorraine Pritzker; and the Ad Hoc String quartet. Associations, sponsorships and partnerships were formed with Northeastern Illinois University School of Music and Dance starting in 1980, the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition from 1980; and with Northern Illinois University via co-sponsorship of the Calumet High School project.

Mostly Music also partnered with Sarah Zelzer to organize Chicago debut performances at Orchestra Hall and other major concert spaces and provided Meet the Composer grants to support performances of little-known works of award-winning minority composers." Learn to Listen, Learn to Plan" provided lecture demonstration concerts and field trips for school students at DuSable Museum, South Shore Cultural Center, Field Museum, KAM Isaiah Israel, St Thomas the Apostle Church Calumet High School and Kenwood High School.

When public school budget cuts forced schools to abandon arts education, Hilkevitch developed an outreach program for public school students. Working with retired schoolteacher Shirley Rosenthal, she introduced a series of classical music and education programs that reached as many as 10,000 public school children annually. Hilkevitch forged many cultural and artistic partnerships. With Professor Harold Berlinger, long-time chair of the Humanities Department at Northeastern Illinois University (and Mostly Music Artistic Director), Joyce was instrumental in forming the Jewel Box, series of concerts at NEIU. In collaboration with pianist Menahem Pressler of the Beaux Arts Trio and professor at Indiana University School of Music, the current award winners of the annual Fischhoff Competition, the largest chamber music competition in the United States, performed every year at Mostly Music concerts. For these young chamber groups, it was quite often their first professional appearance.

Another annual concert hosted by Mostly Music for the series it ran was a chamber music concert led by Samuel Magad, long-time concertmaster of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, with other first chairs of the CSO, such as violist Charles Pikler and cellist John Sharp. In 2001, at age 80, Hilkevitch stepped down as executive director of Mostly Music. The organization continued to present chamber music in homes as part of NEJU. under the aegis of Dr. Salme Steinberg. In 2008. it again became an independent nonprofit as Mostly Music Inc.

Joyce Turner Hilkevitch had a strong influence on the music scene in Chicago, revitalizing . interest in chamber music and supporting young performers of chamber music who went on to notable careers. Her championship in the 1970s and 1980s of contemporary chamber music composers, women composers, and composers of color, contributed to an increase in artistic diversity in 21st century chamber music. As the late Shirley Rosenthal summed up, “Joyce has given us some of the most beautiful afternoons of music in our lives.”

Scope Note

This collection contains photographs, administrative records, posters, publications, and correspondence documenting Joyce Turner Hilkevitch's life and accomplishments and the work of Mostly Music.

Related Resources

Browse finding aids by topic.

Hyde Park Historical Society. Collection

INVENTORY

Box 1

Recital Photos, undated

Box 1

Mostly Music Incorporated, Schedule and Photos (1 of 2)

Box 1

Mostly Music Incorporated, Schedule and Photos (2 of 2)

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 - Chamber Music Programs and Press Clippings
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 - Kenwood County Fair, Memo
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- Box 1**
 - Joyce Hilkevitch, Social Work
- Box 1**
 - Joyce Hilkevitch, Westbrook Pegler
- Box 1**
 - Learn to Listen, Teaching Materials
- Box 1**
 - Letters and Handwritten Letters, to Joyce Hilkevitch
- Box 1**
 - Paid Bills for June
- Box 1**
 - Children's Art and Thank You Notes, 1995

Box 1

Neighborhood Associations, Materials (1 of 2)

Box 1

Neighborhood Associations, Materials (2 of 2)

Box 1

Mostly Music, Flyers and Announcements

Box 1

Screenplay

Box 1

Music on Hyde Park or Philanthropy

Box 1

La Salle Bank

Box 1

Mostly Music Concert Arrangements

Box 1

Notes and Articles

Box 1

Mostly Music, Concert Series Guide

Box 1

Paid Bills

Box 1

Chamber Music

Box 1

Joyce Hilkevitch Papers, Miscellaneous

Box 1

Mostly Music, Hyde Park

Box 1

First Chicago Center, Press Releases

Box 1

Paid Bills, 1981

Box 1

Correspondence, 1992-1993

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Correspondence and Press Clippings, 1979-1980

Box 1

Come to the Cabaret

Box 1

Press Clippings, 1975-1985 (1 of 2)

Box 1

Press Clippings, 1975-1985 (2 of 2)

Box 1

Mostly Music, Mayo School

Box 2

Notes to Shirley Rosenthal at Mostly Music, from Northside Catholic Academy

Box 2

Notes to Shirley Rosenthal at Mostly Music, from Vickee Kamberos

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Notes to Shirley Rosenthal at Mostly Music, from Calumet High School
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Mostly Music, Press and Programs
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Mostly Music Day, Mayor Proclamation, February 25, 1986
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Mostly Music, Northeastern Illinois University, Press Clippings
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Mostly Music, Northeastern Illinois University News
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Mostly Music, Administration Lists
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Mostly Music, Hitchcock Court, Programs and Press
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Mostly Music, Correspondence
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Mostly Music, Newsletters and Finances
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Brochures and A Teacher's Guide to Music
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Mostly Music, Applications
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Mostly Music, Grants and Gala
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Mostly Music, Ensemble Brochures
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Pre Science Corp. Invoice (Bart Structure)
- Box 2**
Union Fidelity, Supplement
- Box 2**
Northeastern Illinois University, Items
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AARP, Quadrangle Club Dinner
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Mostly Music, Publicity, 1996-1998
- Box 2**
Brochure and Ledger

Box 2

Gift of Hope Pin

Box 3

Mostly Music, Posters, Film, and Press Clippings

Box 3

Chicago's Landmark Structures: An Inventory

Box 3

Hyde Park organizations and events -- posters, flyers, photographs

Box 3

Scrapbook – “Presented to Joyce Turner Hilkevitch, Founder of Mostly Music and Phenomenal Woman, September 22, 2001

Box 4

Personal Album – Resolution on JTH 70th birthday by Mayor, October 26, 1991;
Nominations to the Chicago Women's Hall of Fame, Photographs