

# Finding Aid to The World of Charlotte Moorman, 1955-1990 Archives of Women Artists

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## Overview

### Repository Information:

National Museum of Women in the Arts,  
Betty Boyd Dettre Library & Research Center  
1250 New York Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
Email: [lrc@nmwa.org](mailto:lrc@nmwa.org)  
Phone: 202-783-5000

### Title:

The World of Charlotte Moorman

### Provenance:

The Collection created by Bound & Unbound Gallery of New York City and was given to the LRC as a gift by Lois Pollard Price in September of 2000. Other records note, however, that it was purchased by the LRC in the summer of 2000.

### Collection Dates:

Inclusive Dates: 1955-1990  
Bulk Dates: 1963-1980

### Physical Description:

1 box, containing 22 folders.

### Summary:

The World of Charlotte Moorman collection includes announcements, programs, fliers, photographs, and press releases related to her work as a cellist, collaborations with Nam June Paik, Joseph Beuys and Yoko Ono, as well as items around the Avant Garde Festival of New York. Materials in the collection range in date from 1955-1990, with the majority of items dating from 1963-1980.

### Finding Aid URL:

<https://nmwa.org/learn/library-research/archives/finding-aids/moorman-finding-aid>

## **Administrative Information**

### **Access Information:**

Unrestricted

### **Preferred Citation:**

Item, Date, Series, The World of Charlotte Moorman, Archives of Women Artists, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Betty Boyd Dettre Library & Research Center.

### **Publication and Photocopies Note:**

Permission from the National Museum of Women in the Arts required for publication and reproduction of original materials. Photocopies of original materials can be made for a fee and at the discretion of the library director.

### **Related Materials Note:**

Ono, Yoko  
Fluxus (Group of artists)

### **Processed by:**

Bound and Unbound Gallery, New York City

### **Processing Note:**

The Moorman collection was acquisitioned fully processed from Bound & Unbound Gallery. No further processing is needed unless it is determined that items should be rehoused in folders consistent with other LRC collections, or that series groups should be created.

## **Biographical Note**

A cellist who frequently collaborated with Nam June Paik, Charlotte Moorman (1933-1991), described by Edgar Varèse as "La Jeanne-d'Arc de la nouvelle musique", was a fixture of the New York City avant-garde world from the early sixties until her death.

Moorman was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, on November 18, 1933 and collaborated with artists including Nam June Paik, John Cage, Joseph Beuys, Earle Brown, Sylvano Bussotti, Guiseppe Chiari, Toshi Ichiyanagi, Takehisaa Kosygi, Yoko Ono and Karlheinz Stockhausen. A member of Fluxus, an interdisciplinary group of artists, musicians, poets and designers, Moorman performed experimental art which privileged the artistic process over the finished product. In addition to her own work, Moorman planned the Avant Garde Festival with John Cage, Earle Brown, Edgar Varése, and Morton Feldman. She died in New York City on November 8, 1991, after fighting cancer for 10 years.

## **Chronology**

- 1933 Born in Little Rock, Arkansas on November 18<sup>th</sup>.
- 1963 First Avant Garde Festival held at Judson Hall.
- 1965 Collaboration with Nam June Paik, "Ty Bra for Living Sculpture."
- 1965 Performance of "Robot Opera" with Paik at the Festival of Free Expression.
- 1977 Moorman forms non-profit organization, New Ground Presentations, which sponsored the Avant Garde Festival until 1982.
- 1989 January 11 declared "Charlotte Moorman Day".
- 1989 Moorman performs at the Fluxus retrospective "Happening and Fluxus" held in Paris in June.
- 1991 Moorman passes away in New York City on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **Scope and Content Note**

This collection comprises a catalogue of the exhibition "The World of Charlotte Moorman", held at Bound & Unbound Gallery in New York City from March 28-June 30, 2000. It was published in an edition of 100 unnumbered copies in 2000.

The collection includes announcements, programs, fliers, photographs, press releases, etc., including her work as a cellist, collaborations with Nam June Paik, Joseph Beuys and Yoko Ono, as well as items around the Avant Garde Festival of New York.

## Organization and Arrangement Information

### Arrangement Note:

The collection is divided into 22 folders.

Folder 1 contains a Table of Contents.

Folder 2 deals mainly with Moorman's early career as a cellist and includes programs, fliers and announcements.

Folder 3 spans Moorman's career as a performance artist and includes fliers, programs, announcement and schedules.

Folder 4 focuses on her collaborations with Nam June Paik and includes posters, fliers, programs, announcements and press releases.

Folders 5-20 contain information and ephemera of the 15 Avant Garde Festivals held between 1963-1980.

Folder 21 contains a bibliography compiled by Moorman and copies of several newspaper articles about her, as well as a copy of New Music News from 1987.

Folder 22 contains a short press biography of Moorman, hand-cut holiday greetings and an invitation to the party to commemorate the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of her mastectomy. There is also a copy of the proclamation of Charlotte Moorman Day.

## Names and Subject Terms

Performance artists – United States – 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Women musicians – United States – 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Women artists – United States – 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Cellists – United States – 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Performance art – United States – 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Avant-garde (Music) – History.

Avant-garde (Aesthetics) – History.

Conceptual art.

New York Avant Garde Festival – History.

Festival of the Avant Garde '65 (1965 : New York (N.Y.)).

## Container Inventory

Folder Number	Folder Name	Description	Date
1	Table of Contents	Detailed record of the contents of each folder, with dates.	N/ A
2	Chronology: Early	Deals mainly with Moorman’s early career as a cellist. Includes programs, flyers, and announcements for various shows in which she played.	1955-1967
3	Chronology: General	Spans Moorman’s career as a performance artist. Includes flyers, programs, announcements, and schedules.	1963-1990
4	Chronology: Paik Collaborations	This file focuses on the many works in which she and Paik collaborated. It includes posters, flyers, programs, announcements, and press releases.	1965-1984
5	Avant Garde Festivals: General information	Provides a brief overview of the founding of the festivals and their purpose. Includes samples	1963-1980

		of letterhead produced, as well as several articles which were written about it.	
6	First Avant Garde Festival	Flyers and schedules of the activities that took place in the first Avant Garde Festival.	1963
7	Second Avant Garde Festival	A poster for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avant Garde Festival and a program listing the participating artists.	1964
8	Third Avant Garde Festival	Two schedules listing performers in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avant Garde Festival, as well as a poster with an additional schedule.	1965
9	Fourth Annual Avant Garde Festival	A poster of where the festival was located, a list of the participating artists and a flyer with more information.	1966
10	Fifth Annual Avant Garde Festival	A poster of the event and a program listing the artists who attended.	1967
11	Sixth Annual Avant Garde Festival	Features a flyer and a poster that advertises the festival, and lists the artists' names that participated.	1968
12	Seventh Annual Avant Garde Festival	A poster advertising the festival.	1969



13	Eighth Annual Avant Garde Festival	A press release, a poster, and a program.	1971
14	Ninth Annual Avant Garde Festival	A press release, a poster, and a program listing the schedule.	1972
15	Tenth Annual Avant Garde Festival	An artist's pass into the festival, an advertising poster and a program.	1973
16	Eleventh Annual Avant Garde Festival	Plans for the festival, two posters, the program, and artist's information.	1975
17	Twelfth Annual Avant Garde Festival	A poster, a program listing participating artists, and a press release detailing festival plans.	1975
18	Thirteenth Annual Avant Garde Festival	A program and an artist's pass. **It does not include a poster, contrary to the Table of Contents.	1977
19	Fourteenth Annual Avant Garde Festival	Two press releases and two posters.	1978
20	Fifteenth Annual Avant Garde Festival	A press release, a poster, artist's information, and a program.	1980
21	Bibliography	A bibliography compiled by Moorman and copies of several newspaper articles about her,	1963-1988

		and a copy of <i>New Music News</i> from 1987.	
22	Biography	A short press biography of Moorman, hand-cut holiday greetings, and an invitation to a party to commemorate the 3 <sup>rd</sup> anniversary of her mastectomy. There is also a copy of the proclamation of Charlotte Moorman day.	