

# **Finding aid for the Festival of the Arts (Grand Rapids, Mich.) collection Collection 236**

**Finding aid prepared by Brian Rozema**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department  
November 1999  
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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
<b>Creator</b>	Festival of the Arts. (Grand Rapids, Mich.)
<b>Title</b>	Festival of the Arts (Grand Rapids, Mich) collection
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1964-1994
<b>Extent</b>	12.6 Linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The Festival of the Arts (Festival) is held annually in Grand Rapids, Michigan and is said to be the largest all volunteer arts festival in the country. This collection documents some of the business and events of the Festival from 1964 to 1991. Documents include correspondence, reports, forms, meeting minutes, newspaper clippings, programs, various graphics and images, sheet music and a few audio tapes and films. A variety of different Festival years are represented, as well as many different festival committees. These are integrated with items from the Arts Council of Greater Grand Rapids, which was the umbrella organization responsible for Festival.</p>

## Biographical/Historical note

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In 1963, a small group of culture enthusiasts wanted to hold an arts festival. With \$700 borrowed from the Chamber of Commerce and no further backing the group held a modest event of juried art, musical performances, theatrical excerpts and homemade gourmet food in the parking lot of the Grand Rapids Art Museum. This event brought some eight hundred curious people and was successful enough to pay back the \$700 loan, encouraging the founders to try to make it an annual affair. Subsequent festivals were held in John Ball Park to accommodate the festival's growth.

Alexander Calder's stabile, "La Grand Vitesse," was placed in Vandenberg center in 1969 and Festival founders held the Festival downtown for what was planned to be a once-in-a-lifetime event. This Festival in 1970 drew 5,000 people and lost \$15,000. It also had to its credit 50 committee members and six food booths operating out of rented tents.

In 1984, nearly fifteen years later, the Festival continued to be held in downtown Grand Rapids, extending from Calder Plaza to the Monroe Amphitheater, drawing 500,000 visitors and making in excess of \$400,000. The administrative body consisted of 50 committees, from Adult Involvement to Youth Acts, and thousands of volunteers to make it all work.

Festival continues to succeed and grow today.

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## Scope and Contents note

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The Festival Collection is comprised mostly of a body of manuscripts including correspondence, reports, meeting minutes and internal forms, which all relate in some facet to the workings of the Festival from 1964 to 1994. Early documentation, 1965-1970, allows for a glimpse of the origin of the presently flourishing arts festival. Later documentation, 1980-1991, gives insight into the committee structure of the arts festival and specific information and suggestions for further improvement in the specified committee area — showing how changes in the structure occurred. However, there is a lack of records for many of the early years after 1970. 1972-1975 leaves much to be desired in the way of documentation, as much of the collection focuses on the 1980s and there is a great deal of documentation for food booths in these years.

Outside of the internal structure, the complaints and compliments, 1965-1991, give the impression of the community's responses to the arts festival and reflect some artists' and performers' frustration with the committee structure's limitations or refusal to include certain artists, performers and food booth applicants.

Other materials in the collection supply a tactile and visual element to the documented information. Photographs offer an impression of the look of the performances such as dancing and musical

performance, activities such as the children's area Paint-in and Glue-in, and of the arts festival overall with aerial photographs. Further, the programs show how the arts festival attendees were guided through the annual events, and offer a record of performances, food booths, art works, layout and underwriters. Finally, newspaper articles offer information pertinent to Festival growth and operation.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Information**

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department November 1999

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

Pamela Patton, September 1995, accession numbers 1995.017 and 1995.017.2

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## **Related Materials**

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### **Related Archival Materials note**

Coll. 001, Nancy Mulnix Collection, which includes Grand Rapids Art Festival materials, 1967-1978, from the perspective of this Calder focused collection.

Coll. 224, Grand Rapids Public Library Art and Graphics Collection, which includes Festival posters or graphics for 1980, 1982, 1984, 1989, 1993-1997.

Accession 1994.027 – Festival 1994 Data, unprocessed

Coll. 235, GRPL Michigan & Grand Rapids Music Collection, which includes Festival! Sound of the 1974 Greater Grand Rapids Festival of the Arts. 33 1/3 sound recording.

Coll. 046, GRPL Chamber of Commerce Collection. 3 folders

Coll. 195, Grand Rapids Jaycees. Several folders, with reference to their food booth in various years

Coll. #175, GRPL Moving Images Collection, for a film Festival 1979.

## Controlled Access Headings

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### Corporate Name(s)

- Arts Council of Greater Grand Rapids.
- Festival of the Arts. (Grand Rapids, Mich.)

### Genre(s)

- records (documents)

### Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

### Subject(s)

- Arts -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Performing arts -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Voluntarism -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Volunteer workers in the arts -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids

## Series I. Administrative Organization

## Collection Inventory

### Series I. Administrative Organization

#### Scope and Contents note

Consists of organizational manuscripts and committee pamphlets listing the committee structure and heads from year to year. Also included is personal information for each committee head such as home address, home phone and business phone numbers for Arts Council and Festival administration use. Arranged chronologically.

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Administrative Organization, 1965-1974.	1	1
Administrative Organization, 1976-1988.	1	2

### Series II. Committee Files

#### Scope and Contents note

Arranged alphabetically.

Committee file contains reports, correspondence, or other information pertinent to its focused area. Dates span from 1965-1991. As an all volunteer organization, most work is done in committee, at least in theory. Key administrative functions of the organization, which usually fall above general committee files in many organizations are currently housed within the overall alphabetical committee structure.

Some key files are:

Budget and Finance, 1965-1991.

## Series II. Committee Files

Buildings and Properties, 1970, 1984-1991.

Festival Policies, 1970-1989.

Summary Reports, 1964-1989. Arranged chronologically. Consists of co-chair reports from Festivals, examining the event as a whole and in parts before making suggestions for future Festivals. Included in the collection are reports from 1965, 1970-1975, 1981 and 1985.

Meeting Minutes. Arranged chronologically. These consists of meeting minutes and correspondence regarding meetings. For the most part these documents relate to planning for Festival in general and then in the context of committees, first in the Arts Council and as time progresses committee meetings are represented as well.

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Adult Involvement, 1983-1991.	1	5
Architectural Design Contest, 1989-1991.	1	6
Art Orientation, 1985-1991.	1	7
Art Sales and Demonstration, 1970-1991.	1	8
Art Shuttle, 1989-1991.	1	9
Arts Council Honor Award, 1971-1988.	1	10
Balloon Booth, 1985-1991.	1	11
Bathrooms, 1982-1991.	1	12
Bike Corral, 1987-1991.	1	13



## Series II. Committee Files

Budget and Finance, 1965-1991.	1	14
Buildings and Properties, 1970, 1984-1991.	1	15
Bus Information, 1983-1984, 1994.	1	16
Children's Activities, 1970-1991 [Face and Body Painting, Glue-In, Paint-In, Mad Hatter, Youth Art, etc...].	1	17
Clean-Up, 1987-1989.	1	18
Complaints, Compliments, and Arts Council General Correspondence, 1965-1991.	1	19
Dance, 1970-1991.	1	20
Drama, 1970-1991.	1	21
Ecumenical/Interdenominational Services, 1987-1988.	1	22
Electricity, 1989-1991.	1	23
Face the Art, 1991.	1	24
Festival Fanfare / Song Competition, 1989-1991.	1	25
Film/Video, 1970-1989.	1	26

## Series II. Committee Files

Food Booth/Festival 1970, 1970	2	27
Food Booth/Festival 1976-1979, 1975-1979.	2	28
Food Booth/Festival 1980.	2	29
Food Booth/Festival 1981-1991.	2	30
Graphics Committee, 1970-1989.	2	31
Handicapped Services, 1981-1991.	2	32
Hats/T-Shirts, 1976-1991.	2	33
Headquarters, 1987-1991.	2	34
Hospitality, 1991.	2	35
Indian Art, 1986-1988.	2	36
Infant Care Center, 1987-1989.	2	37
Information Booth, 1980-1991.	2	38
Insurance, 1970-1991.	2	39
Layout, 1987-1991, 1970, 1977-1978	2	40

## Series II. Committee Files

Lighting, 1989-1991.	2	41
Lost Child, 1988.	2	42
Masters of Ceremonies/Emcees, 1984-1989.	2	43
Meeting Minutes, 1967-1991.	2	44
Music Committees, 1970-1989 [Classical, Choral, Folk, Jazz, Pop/Rock, Organ].	2	45
Opening Ceremonies/Parade, 1974-1991.	2	46
Outer Fringe, 1976-1988.	2	47
Permits, 1983-1991.	2	48
Philatelic Contest/Stamp Cancellation, 1986-1991.	2	49
Photography Exhibit, 1982-1991.	3	50
Poetry, 1974-1989.	3	51
Festival Policies, 1970-1989.	3	52
Poster, 1984-1991.	3	53

## Series II. Committee Files

Printmaking, 1986-1991.	3	54
Production, 1970-1991.	3	55
Program, 1984-1991.	3	56
Programs of Events	3	56
Publicity and Media, 1965-1991.	3	58
Scheduling, 1970-1991.	3	59
Security and Emergency Medical, 1970-1989.	3	60
Sound, 1984-1991.Series II. Committee Files	3	61
Special Events, 1970-1988.	3	62
Stage Managers, 1983-1988.	3	63
Steering Committee, 1983-1989.	3	64
Storytelling, 1984-1991.	3	65
Summary Reports, 1964-1989.	3	66
Visual Arts, 1970-1991.	3	67

**Reference Publications, 1970-1989.**

Volunteer Recruitment, 1970-1991.	3	68
Weather, 1970-1993.	3	69
Wonderland Writers, 1989.	3	70
Youth Stage, 1984-1991	3	71
<b>Reference Publications, 1970-1989.</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Photocopied Pamphlet, entitled: "The Sara H. Lowry Memorial Organ."	3	57
"Accent Grand Rapids," May 1979 issue,	3	57
Grand Rapids Magazine, June, 1980 issue,	3	57
"Grand Rapids" magazine, June 1979 issue,	3	57
"Grand Rapids" magazine, August 1982 issue,	3	57
"Midwest Living" magazine, April 1988 issue,	3	57
"Greater Grand Rapids Report."	3	57
<b>Supplemental to Special Events</b>		
		<b>Box</b>

**Series III. Festival 1970 Planning**

Published Notice from Newspaper. "Summery of Official Proceedings of the City Commission, Jan. 31, 1989. "51019" = Resolution adopted accepting and approving the La Grande Vitesse Interpretive Marker ..." (formerly 236-7-103)	4.5
Alexander Calder. "A Gift to the City from the Festival Committee on June 2, 1989. "#852502. [Photocopy of verbage, believed to be for an historical marker]	4.5
Playground Sculpture Design Competition	4.5
1977	4.5
1976	4.5
1977, annotated in black pen.	4.5
1978	4.5

**Series III. Festival 1970 Planning**

**Scope and Contents note**

Consists of correspondence, notes, reports, and Arts Council Festival Executive committee propositions for program scheduling and committee structure. Reports included are reports on other communities' festivals, and Grand Rapids area information. Correspondence includes bids for the Vandenberg Center for the festival, and fundraising. Covers documents from 1968-1969. Arranged chronologically.

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Festival 1970 Planning, 1968-1969.	1	4

**Series IV. Programs of Events**

**Series IV. Programs of Events**

**Subseries A. Printed Programs.**

**Scope and Contents note**

Consists of the Arts Council releases of the Festival schedule of events. Information within the programs consists of the performance schedules, art demonstration/exhibit locations and times, map of the Festival area, and food booth locations and menus. Also included are lists of contributors, committee members, and in some cases volunteers. Programs received as part of the original gift span from 1970-1989, but also included are 1965 (Festival III) and 1991. Missing from the programs are 1975, and 1984. A few later programs have been brought in by individuals, including separate gifts of 2005 and 2006 programs, but most are still missing from the last 20 years.

**Box**

Grand Rapids Magazine, Special Edition. 1981 Festival Guide

1.5

**Programs of Events**

**Box**

1965. Festival 3, at John Ball Park

1.5

1970. Vandenberg center. Calder black sun logo

1.5

1971. Oversized. Cover graphic has Calder with black sun, with two large face figures below.

4.5

1972

1.5

Programs of Events

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1973	1.5
1974	1.5
1975	1.5
1976	1.5
1977	1.5
1978	1.5
1979	1.5
1980	1.5
1982. Calder Cutout	1.5
1983	1.5
1985	1.5
1986	1.5
1987	1.5
1988	1.5



**Subseries B. Website Program Information.**

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1989	1.5
1991	1.5
2005 (2) 00.[4001].1-2	1.5
2006 (1) 2006.056.2	1.5
2007 00.[5278].1	1.5

**Subseries B. Website Program Information.**

**Scope and Contents note**

These are select additions by staff, subsequent to the creation of the original collection.

**Box**

2007. Includes Map. 00.[5279].1	1.6
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**Series V. Publications About the Festival.**

**Scope and Contents note**

Arranged chronologically. Contains clippings mostly from the Grand Rapids Press related to Festival. There are articles covering Festival planning, volunteers, special events, performances, food booths, and growth of the Festival overall. In particular, there are published versions of Festival’s “Wonderland Writers” winning stories. Clippings cover from 1969 to 1989.

Newspaper articles

**Newspaper articles**

	<b>Box</b>
Articles from the Grand Rapids, et al., 1969-1989, n.d. [Unprocessed; un-indexed]	7

Local Legacies Project materials ADD LENGTHY NOTE 15

**Series VI. Exhibit Items.**

**Scope and Contents note**

Contains Styrofoam-backed pictures, magazine covers, manuscripts and newspaper articles used as a display entitled, "Celebrating 25 Years of Festival," 1994. Arranged by size.

**EXHIBIT ITEMS**

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	<b>Box</b>
Mixed materials	9
Mixed materials	<b>Box</b> 10
Mixed materials	<b>Box</b> 11
Mixed materials	<b>Box</b> 12
Mixed Materials	<b>Box</b> 8

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**Series VII. Graphics.****Series VII. Graphics.****Subseries A. Photographs****Scope and Contents note**

Consists of 3”X5”, 5”X7”, and 8”X10” photos, both color and black and white. For the most part, the photos depict musical performances, dancing, children painting and making wooden sculpture, some displayed artwork, food booth vendors, and the Festival crowds around the Calder Plaza and “La Grand Vitesse.” Primarily covers the 1980s. Arranged by size, color and subject.

Oversized Arranged by size. Contains maps, flyers, posters, and other large items that supplement the committee files. Also included in this series are two early Festival informational posters from 1964 and 1965 which do not supplement the committee files but stand alone. Dates spanned are 1964-1994.

**3x5 Black and White Photographs**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
[1-8] Children’s Activities, 1988.	6	83
[9-21] Dance, 1988-89, n.d.	6	84
[22-40] Festival Crowds and Stages, 1988, n.d.	6	85
[41-49] Festival Contests and Services, 1988, n.d.	6	86
[50-61] Food Booths, 1988, n.d.	6	87

**3x5 Color Photographs**

[62-70] Musical Performances, 1988-89, n.d.	6	88
[71-75] Visual Arts, 1988-89.	6	89
<b>3x5 Color Photographs</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
[76-81] 15th Steering Committee Celebration, 1984.	6	90
[82-83] Aerial View of Festival, n.d.	6	91
[84-86] Festival Promotion, 1970.	6	92
<b>5x7 Black and White Photographs</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
[87-89] Aerial View of Festival, n.d.	6	93
[90-101] Children's Activities, n.d.	6	94
[102-108] Dance, n.d.	6	95
[109-119] Musical Performances, n.d.	6	96
[120-127] Visual Arts, etc..., n.d.	6	97

**8x10 Black and White Photographs**

**8x10 Black and White Photographs**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
[128-129] Szot and Meko, 1986, 1989.	6	98

**8x10 Color Photographs**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
[130] Aerial View of Festival '77, 1977.	6	99
Contact Proofs, 1986-1989.	6	100

**Photography Exhibit**

	<b>Box</b>
1981	4.5
1982	4.5
1984	4.5
1985	4.5
1986	4.5
1987	4.5

**Subseries B. Negatives**

1988	4.5
1989	4.5
1991	4.5
<b>Subseries B. Negatives</b>	
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>	
35 mm. Negatives, not currently matched to any photoprints within the collection.	
	<b>Box</b>
[1-48] 35 mm. Negative Strips	13
<b>Subseries C. Slides.</b>	
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>	
Over 200 slides of select performance groups and general Festival scenes.	
<b>Slides/One</b>	
	<b>Box</b>
[1-15] Die Fledermaus, 1971.	13
[16-32] La Traviata, 1972.	13

**Slides/Two**

[33-51] Doug Reuben Originals, 1975.	13
[52-60] Civic Theatre, 1975.	13
[61-86] Matusko Originals, n.d.	13
[87-104] Falstaff, 1973.	13
[105-133] Calvin College, 1975.	13
<b>Slides/Two</b>	
	<b>Box</b>
[134-138] Bill Andrews, 1975.	13
[139-145] Festival '85 Photos, 1976, 1985.	13
[146] Festival '86 Photos, 1986.	13
[147-150] Festival '88 and '89, 1988-1989.	13
[151-206] Unidentified Slides, 1978-1987.	13
<b>Subseries D. Drawings</b>	
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>	

**Subseries E. Maps**

Two oversized drawings which are site plans, housed in flat file storage.

**Box**

Architectural Drawings, Site plans (2)

FF.XV.B

**Subseries E. Maps****Scope and Contents note**

Arranged by year, 1970-1989. These graphics of the Festival layout may be the best visual representation of the scope of the Festival and the participants over the years.

**Box**

1970

4.5

1971

4.5

1982

4.5

1984

4.5

1986

4.5

1987, see also a larger blackline process print housed at Collection 224, Box 33

4.5

1988

4.5

1989

4.5



**Subseries F. Festival Posters**

4.5

Unidentified

**Subseries F. Festival Posters**

**Scope and Contents note**

1964-65, 1979-1981, and 1982-1989, 1991, 1994

See also oversized Festival posters listed in Coll. 224, which may be associated with this collection, or may have been received separately. Information on Alexander Calder associations with the early Festival may be found in Coll. 001.

**Box**

**Folder**

Festival Posters. 1964-1965.

7

104

**Poster Contest (4)**

**Box**

1979

4.5

1980

4.5

1981

4.5

1989

4.5

**Festival Visual Arts Exhibition / Competition**

**Box**

**Series VIII. Audio visual**

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1982	4.5
1983	4.5
1984	4.5
1985	4.5
1986	4.5
1987	4.5
1988	4.5
1989	4.5
1991	4.5
1994	4.5

**Series VIII. Audio visual****Scope and Contents note**

Consists of negatives, roll of film and slides (housed in Subseries C) from various Festival events including dramatic productions, musical performances, and visual arts displays to name a few. Dates spanned are 1971 to 1989. Some content appears to be associated with the Visual Arts competitions. Also found here is an audio tape for Ellington in South Africa. Arranged by type.

**Subseries A. Film**

<b>Subseries A. Film</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	
Film [1-3] Rolls of Film. Supplemental to Committees: Film/Video, Photography. Exhibit, Poster, Visual Arts, 1979-1994.	13	
<b>Film Video Competition</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	
Competition poster 1982	4.5	
Call for entries poster 1989	4.5	
Competition 1991 Results flyer	4.5	
<b>Subseries B. Audio Tapes</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	
"Ellington in South Africa," 1991. (2 1/13/2005)	5.5	
<b>Series IX. Sheet Music</b>		
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
Contains sheet music arranged for Festival competitions, the Grand Rapids Festival Song, and music performed at the Festival Sesquicentennial celebration. Arranged alphabetically.		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>

## Sesquicentennial Music

“Wind Dectet,” Master Score, 1990.	4	72
“Wind Dectet,” Bassoon, 1990.	4	73
“Wind Dectet,” Clarinet, 1990.	4	74
“Wind Dectet,” Flute, 1990.	4	75
“Wind Dectet,” Horn, 1990.	4	76
“Wind Dectet,” Trumpet, 1990.	4	77
<b>Sesquicentennial Music</b>		
		<b>Box</b>
I am Michigan : 150, 1837-1987 / arranged by Kurt Miller. Conductor’s Score (2 copies)		4.5
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
I am Michigan. Parts scores	5	1
The State of Michigan Sesquicentennial March for Concert Band / by Bruce Campbell. Published and distributed with the cooperation of Michigan Council for the Arts, Arts Foundation of Michigan, Michigan School Band and Orchestra Assoc., Interlochen Center for the Arts, and Marshall Music, Inc. 1837-1987.	5	2
Michigan: SATB Mixed Chorus, Unison treble choir, SSA Treble Chorus	5	3

## Festival Music

<b>Festival Music</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Festival (2 copies, full score)		4.4
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Festival. (various items with "H.B. Publishing" on most. + Festival '89 Fanfare Competition Entry Form. Jon R. Montgomery + Letter July 22, 1988 from Dennis Svendsen	5	4
Festival Fanfare. Individual parts. On ½ sheets.	5	5
Grand Rapids Festival Song / words and music by Ralston Bowles; arrangement by Brad R. Wildey. GR : Arts Council of Greater Grand Rapids, c. 1977. (6 copies)	5	6
Ellington in South Africa for Jazz Chamber Ensemble, Ivory Peaks Music: BMI, c. 1991. [Conductor's score]	5	7
<b>Series X. Miscellaneous</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	
Addendum. GRPL Miscellaneous Festival materials. [See Inventory]		14