

Andrew Charlton
1928-1997
PROFESSOR OF MUSIC, EMERITUS

B.M.Ed., Pepperdine College; M.A., Music, California State University, Los Angeles,
July 29, 1955
California State University, Fullerton From September 1, 1965 To June 4, 1987
Birth: May 16, 1928; Death: May 27, 1997

Andrew Charlton was a true polyhistor. Throughout his life he was intensely interested in all things, and his mind was a vast storehouse of information, from the vital to the trivial. He was ready, willing and able to converse or debate knowledgeably on almost any topic, and was almost unbeatable in Trivial Pursuit. He had a special fondness for the sciences, particularly astronomy; as a youth he ground the lenses for his own homemade telescope. This love of science went hand in glove with a core belief in rationalism. One of his principal and abiding frustrations was our society's enthusiastic embrace of superstition, ignorance and unreason. The lighter side of this skepticism was a keen sense of the absurd, and the whimsical aspects of his nature were never far from the surface.

In his early years, Andrew studied wind instruments, and by his high school days was supporting himself by playing in dance bands, even performing at his own prom. An early enlistment in the U.S. Navy (at age 17) provided extensive opportunities to play in servicemen's dance combos. He later toured in backup bands for Jack Benny and other noted performers.

After the war, he resumed his formal education, completing a B.M.Ed. at Pepperdine College and then an M.A. in Music at California State University, Los Angeles in 1955. During his college years his principal instrument was bassoon, but he continued to improve his skill with all the other wind instruments. His travels while in the Navy and with dancebands had offered exposure to many cultures, languages, foods and ideas, and he voraciously devoured everything with which he came into contact. His love of sharing the discovered wonders of the intellectual world led naturally to a career in teaching.

For a short period, Andrew taught music in the Los Angeles high school district. To ameliorate his son's asthma, the Charlton family moved to Bakersfield, where he became Director of Music Programs for the school district as well as a music teacher at Bakersfield College. Unfulfilled in his career at this point, he enrolled in the doctoral program at USC. In 1965 he was invited to apply for a position with the Music Department at Cal State Fullerton, and was appointed in the fall of that year. His versatility as a musician and as a scholar allowed him to teach a wide variety of courses during his tenure at CSUF, among them being instrumental music, jazz and commercial arranging, music history, early music, orchestration, composition, band arranging, music education, collegium and voice. At one point he even conducted an opera production.

During his musical researches Andrew developed a special interest in early music. He began playing recorders and quickly became a virtuoso of that instrumental family, as well as sackbut, krummhorn and other early instruments – indeed, anything with a mouthpiece into which to blow. A large number of his compositions and arrangements

are scored for recorder ensemble, and his works are treasured by the recorder community worldwide. For "The Plumbers Union," a prominent recorder ensemble he produced a series of arrangements, and the titles are typically Charlton: "Commodious Rag," "Pipe Dreams" and "Royal Flush."

Though born and raised in Los Angeles, Andrew felt that his spiritual homeland was England, and he was endlessly fascinated with all things English, from the profound (Dickens and Shakespeare) to the ridiculous (P.G. Wodehouse and Monty Python). His travels in the British Isles gave him some of his most treasured memories.

Combining two of his many passions, Andrew studied in great depth the role of music in the plays of Shakespeare, and this research led to the creation and publication of his magnum opus, *Music in the Plays of Shakespeare – A Practicum* (published by Garland Press). This comprehensive work provides detailed analysis and practical instruction for the musical aspects of all the plays of Shakespeare, including performance options based upon tunes from the period.

Having heard the great guitarist Segovia, Andrew came to appreciate and value the classical guitar, and supported its inclusion in the university curriculum. He initiated the guitar program at CSUF and was instrumental in my own hiring there. Over the years he remained an ardent advocate of the guitar, and his voice convinced enough of the other faculty to allow us to develop an unusually comprehensive program of guitar studies. After hearing Guy Horn's performance of the Schubert/Matiegka "Quartet," he decided to compose for guitar. His first contribution in this area was for "Sonata for Guitar and String Trio" (1964). Subsequently he turned out numerous compositions for guitar, both solo and in ensemble, writing in a very personal style that freely incorporated whatever techniques he found most useful and appealing from the compositional practices of several centuries. He always insisted that he was not really a composer, but rather an arranger. Even so, such original compositions as "A Medieval Tapestry" and "Partita Concerto" were important contributions to the guitar repertoire. A facile and skilled arranger, he produced voluminous collections of excellent arrangements for guitar ensemble – the earliest group of which the students fondly called "Andy's Dandys."

In "Retirement" Andrew was more active and productive than ever, working at the computer in his loft – generating a steady stream of compositions and arrangements. He took constant delight in developing the raw material of a bare melody in to a fully fleshed and satisfying work of art. He also found time to be active in the Emeriti projects aimed at strengthening the University.

This was a veritable "Renaissance Man," living life to the maximum, savoring all that the world had to offer and sharing it all with his beloved wife and best friend Kathie. To me he was a cherished friend and a constant personal inspiration, as he was to so many others. His loss leaves an unfillable void mitigated only by the indelible memories.

Submitted by
David Grimes
Lecturer in Music
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