

Frances Marr Adaskin fonds

Compiled by Alan Doyle (2002)
Revised April 2010



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Fonds Description

Frances Marr Adaskin fonds. – 1930-1994.

14 cm of textual material.

3 audio tapes.

Biographical Sketch

Born in 1900 at Ridgetown, Ontario, the daughter of Dr. Del and Eunice Marr, Frances was the eldest of three siblings. Although the family was shaken by the death of her younger brother Charles at the age of three, and despite an early problem with stuttering, Frances Marr remained a positive and optimistic person, devoted to her father and fascinated with the piano. Frances began playing the piano at an early age under the tutelage of Whitney Scherer. Later she would study with Thomas Martin at Alma College in St. Thomas. Eventually Frances moved to Toronto to study at the Conservatory of Music under Paul Wells. Although she felt her study under Wells was unproductive, it was at this time that she had the opportunity to play her first professional accompanist engagement. At this engagement she was to meet her future husband Harry Adaskin, whom she would marry in 1926. Initially, Frances would accompany her new husband and his band, the Hart House String Quartet on their many tours throughout North America and Europe. In 1938, Harry Adaskin quit the quartet and he and Frances began to tour, with Frances' piano the sole accompaniment to Harry's violin. During this period she would strike out on her own as well, appearing in the ensemble music and comedy act "The Town Tonics".

In 1946 the couple, along with Harry's younger half-brother Gordon, whom the couple raised as a son, moved to Vancouver. Harry was offered a job with the new Music Department at The University of British Columbia, and Frances was to accompany him to every class until his retirement in 1973. Interestingly, Frances Adaskin played her first solo recital at the age of 75, and continued to play until shortly before her 90th birthday.

Frances Adaskin's accomplishments in music are many, but she was also an entertaining writer of mostly humorous anecdotes and stories, many of which were published by *Saturday Night Magazine* in the 1940s. As well, she wrote her memoirs, entitled "Fran's Scrapbook: A Talking Dream", in book form, which, as of 2002, remains unpublished. The crowning achievement of a lifetime of artistic achievement occurred in 1976 when Frances was awarded the Order of Canada. Frances Adaskin died in 2001.

Scope and Content

The fonds consists of material arranged in three series: 1) Reviews, programmes, and correspondence concerning the career of Frances Adaskin; 2) Assorted writing by Frances Adaskin; and 3) Audio Tapes.

Notes

Researchers are strongly advised to check with the University Archives regarding permission to publish or otherwise use materials from this fonds.

File list available.

Related materials can be found in the [Harry Adaskin](#) and [Gordon Adaskin](#) fonds.

Series Descriptions

Reviews, programmes, and correspondence concerning the career of Frances Adaskin series. – 1930-1994.

10 cm of textual material.

Series consists of reviews, programmes, correspondence concerning the career of Frances Adaskin, including her work in the group "The Town Tonics", as well as her work accompanying her husband and others.

Box 1 (2, 4).

The writing of Frances Adaskin series. – 1945-[199?].

4 cm of textual material.

Series consists of articles, clippings, and memoirs of Frances Adaskin.

Box 1 (1, 3).

Audio tape series. – [n.d.].

3 audio tapes.

Series consists of three audio tapes, mostly concerned with her husband Harry Adaskin:
3 3" audio tapes.

File list

Box 1

- 1-1 Memoirs of Frances Adaskin – in bound form, entitled "Fran's Scrap Book: A Talking Dream" by Frances Adaskin (181 pp.) – with rejection letter from Harbour Publishing addressed to Gordon Adaskin (199?)
- 1-2 Programmes, newspaper clipping, correspondence concerning the career of Frances Adaskin, as a piano accompanist, soloist, and as a performer in the ensemble group "The Town Tonics" (1930-1994)
- 1-3 Articles written for Saturday Night Magazine, as well as some hand-written drafts (1945)
- 1-4 Correspondence concerning Frances Adaskin receiving the Order of Canada, as well as a photograph of the event (1977)

Audio Tapes

- UBC AT 2573 1 unmarked acetate recording tape (3" reel, 150' x 1/4") – concerned with architects and artists discussing solutions to societal problems. May be connected with Gordon Adaskin's "The Creative Experience". (n.d.) (15 minutes)
- UBC AT 2574 1 acetate recording tape (3" reel, 150' x 1/4"), marked "The end of Dad's tape" – Harry Adaskin speaking regarding intolerance (n.d.) (1 minute)
- UBC AT 2575 1 unmarked polyester recording tape (4.75 cm. reel, 150' x 1/4") – Harry Adaskin speaking regarding utopian ideals in the private, artistic realm. (16 minutes)