

## Charles Auringer Collection, 1969-2008

7.18 cubic feet

Accession Numbers:	2014.2, 2014.9, 2016.23, 2017.4
Acquisition:	Donated by Charles (Charlie) Auringer
Rights:	All rights to individual items in the collection are retained by their original copyright holders, except where shared copyright is specified or where no known copyright exists.
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### Introduction

Charles (Charlie) Auringer served as photographer and art director for CREEM Magazine from the time the magazine was founded in 1969 through 1986 when the publishing business known as CREEM, Inc. was sold. From 1973 to 1986, the CREEM office was located in Birmingham Michigan. In 2014, Charlie donated his personal collection of CREEM photographs, corporate documents, magazine issues, promotional items, and other memorabilia to the Birmingham Museum.

### History

The Charles Auringer Collection at the Birmingham Museum is the personal collection of Charles Auringer (known professionally as Charlie), who served as the art director for CREEM Magazine and CREEM, Inc. from 1969-1986. CREEM was founded by Barry Kramer in 1969 as a counterculture voice in the Detroit arts and culture scene. It was originally published out of offices on Cass Avenue in Detroit, Michigan. By 1972, the magazine had staked a claim as “America’s Only Rock ‘n’ Roll Magazine.” Rock critic Lester Bangs’ “gonzo-style” of rock journalism and his determination to remain outside the influence of the corporate music industry shaped the magazine’s editorial style.

In 1973, Kramer moved the magazine’s headquarters to Birmingham, Michigan in suburban Detroit. The offices, on Old Woodard above the Birmingham Theater, would remain the home of

CREEM until 1986 when CREEM, Inc. was purchased by Arnold Levitt, who moved the offices to Los Angeles.

A Michigan native, Charlie Auringer first moved to Detroit in 1964 and studied photography at Wayne State University. He is known for his early photographs of local bands such as MC5 and Mitch Ryder, as well as for touring bands playing at Detroit venues like the Grande Ballroom. He served as CREEM's primary photographer until 1976 and continued as photo and art director until 1986. After CREEM was purchased and moved to Los Angeles, Charlie remained in the Detroit area, serving as art director for Detroit Metro Times and, at the time of this writing, for Big City Rhythm & Blues Magazine, which covers live music in Detroit and Chicago.

In 2014, the Birmingham Museum (formerly the Birmingham Historical Museum & Park) featured CREEM Magazine in its *Sounds of Birmingham: A Community of Music* exhibition. The exhibit initiated a reunion of former CREEM editors and photographers. The reunion was videotaped in oral history format (see Friends of the Birmingham Museum CREEM Collection). It also resulted in the donation of the Charles Auringer Collection to the museum and the development of the Charlie Auringer Reading Room and permanent CREEM exhibit at the museum.

### Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of a variety of formats including digital images, pre-production art, film negatives and prints, promotional items, correspondence, advertisements and other business materials, and publications. The collection is organized into four series: Digital-only Files, Promotional Items, Documents and Images, and Magazines.

The **Digital-only Files** (2014.9.1.X) is a group of 137 digitized images. Charlie provided these images to the museum as shared copyright, via a shared use agreement. Notable images in the digital series include candid shots of CREEM staff (Lester Bangs, Barry Kramer, Dave Marsh, Charles Auringer, Jaan Uhelszki, etc.), as well as candid shots of the band KISS without makeup.

The **Promotional Items** series includes the range of promotional items the magazine produced as giveaways and sold to fans. The "Boy Howdy!" mascot, a cartoon character created by Robert Crumb, is featured on many of the items. The red, bubble-style, CREEM logotype appears frequently as well.

The **Documents & Images** series contains photographic prints and other images, correspondence and business documents, and newspapers/magazine clippings. The prints and images illustrate the behind the scenes work required to produce a magazine in the pre-digital era of the 1970s and 1980s with production notes included on many items. The business documents offer insights into the evolution of CREEM from a regional "alternative" publication with a small audience into a consumer publication with nationwide circulation. Of special note are the condolence letters and clippings that document the 1981 death of Barry Kramer, CREEM's founder and original publisher.

The **Magazines** series includes issues of CREEM Magazine (1969-1985) and other CREEM, Inc. and music industry-related publications. It is illustrative in that these are the publications Charlie deemed worthy of keeping. Notable here are the issues of Extra CREEM (1974-1976), a supplement that covered the Midwest concert scene. The series also contains issues of VIDIOT (1982-1983), CREEM Inc.'s foray into the video game fan market.

## Related Collections

The Charles Auringer Collection was the first collection of CREEM-related materials donated to the Birmingham Museum. Other CREEM-related collections include the Larry Kaplan Collection (promotional items and 1970s-era staff interview on DVD), the Friends of the Birmingham Museum CREEM Collection (magazines and 2014 oral history recording on DVD), and other individually donated object from other sources.

## Collections List

### **Series I: Digital-only Files (137 images):**

Notable images in the shared use collection include:

- Candid shots of CREEM staff (Barry & Connie Kramer, Lester Bangs, Dave Marsh, Jaan Uhelszki, Michael Marks)
- Lester Bangs at the Playboy Club in Detroit
- Studio shoots with models wearing CREEM t-shirts
- Local musicians Mitch Ryder and Ted Nugent
- Candid shots of KISS without make-up (prints of these images exist in Series III)

### **Series II: Promotional Items with CREEM or Boy Howdy! Logo.**

Note: Many of these items are currently on display in the CREEM exhibit located in the Charlie Auringer Reading Room.

Box 1:

- Duffle bag

Box 2:

- Tank top
- Athletic shorts
- T-shirt

Box 3:

- Boy Howdy Beer cans
- CREEM Christmas Cards (postcards)
- Promotional buttons
- Matchbooks
- Playing cards
- Belt buckle
- Coffee mug
- Lighter
- Ashtray

Box 4:

- Book – *Rock Revolution: From Elvis to Elton, the Story of Rock 'n' Roll*. Edited by Richard Robinson and the editors of CREEM Magazine (Lester Bangs, Dave Marsh, Lenny Kaye, Lisa Robinson, Ben Edmonds, Jaan Uhelszki, Ed Ward, John Morthland and Greg Shaw. Published in 1976. (Currently out of print)
- Book – *CREEM: America's Only Rock 'N' Roll Magazine*. By Robert Matheu and Brian J. Bowe. Published in 2007. (Includes autographs by musicians, such as Alice Cooper, and other industry associates)

Box 5:

- Laminated cover of 1978 CREEM Magazine
- Laminated cover of July 1978 CREEM Magazine
- Laminated cover of Summer 1981 CREEM Magazine

Box 6:

- Poster, framed, black & white, features Alice Cooper, advertises CREEM fundraising show, circa 1971

**Series III: Documents & Images**

Box 1:

- Folder 1: Negatives (48), transparencies (3) and Polaroids (15) from photo shoot by Michael Marks, color and black & white, various sizes (2014.2.82)
- Folder 2: Veloxes of magazine covers, ads and catalog pages (36), color and black & white, various sizes (2014.2.83)
- Folder 3: Negatives of magazine covers (5), black & white, sizes 4 x 5 and 5 x 7 (2014.2.109)
- Folder 4: Set of magazine cover negatives (22), black & white, 8 x 10 (2014.2.110)
- Folder 5: Prints of CREEM covers (37), black & white, various sizes, some handwritten notations (2014.2.111)
- Folder 6: Prints of CREEM covers (17), black & white, various sizes, some handwritten notations (2014.2.112)
- Folder 7: Prints of CREEM covers (17) all 4.25 x 5.75 (2014.2.113)
- Folder 8: Photographic prints of CREEM covers (34), black & white, various sizes, some handwritten notations (2014.2.114)
- Folder 9: Letters, cards, newspaper and magazine clippings about the death of CREEM publisher Barry Kramer (2014.2.115)
- Folder 10: Newspaper/magazine clippings, various references, 1966 – 1983 (2014.2.116)

Box 2:

- Folder 1: Correspondence, CREEM business (2014.2.122)
- Folder 2: Correspondence, CREEM business (2014.2.123)
- Folder 3: Drawings, cartoons (2014.2.124)

- Folder 4: Advertisements for CREEM subscriptions and merchandise, consumer publications (2014.2.125)
- Folder 5: Advertisements for CREEM subscriptions and merchandise, trade publications (2014.2.126)
- Folder 6: Newspaper/magazine articles (9), written by CREEM staff for other publications (2014.2.127)

Box 3:

- Folder 1: Newspaper/magazine clippings (43), referencing CREEM, 1969 – 1975 (2014.2.117)
- Folder 2: Newspaper/magazine clippings (42), referencing CREEM, 1976 – 1979 (2014.2.118)

Box 4:

- Folder 1: Newspaper/magazine clippings (48), referencing CREEM, 1980 – 1985 (2014.2.119)
- Folder 2: Newspaper/magazine clippings (16), referencing CREEM, 1986 – 1992 (2014.2.120)
- Folder 3: Alternative newspapers (3), no CREEM reference (2014.2.121)

Box 5:

- Folder 1: Inventory of digital-only images from Series I includes content notes from Charlie Auringer. (2014.9.2)
- Folders 2-5: Prints of photographs (85) taken by Charlie Auringer as well as other CREEM photographers. These prints also have been digitized. (2014.2.1.X)
  - Notable image groups include:
    - 1984 CREEM staff Christmas party
    - CREEM Grand Prix car at the Malibu Grand Prix
    - Fans at various concerts (Steeleyo Span, Rod Steward, David Bowie, Pink Floyd)
    - Group of images from the riot at Tampa Stadium after the June 3, 1977 Led Zeppelin concert

#### **Series IV: Magazines**

Note: The publications in this series represent the subset of magazines originally owned by Charlie Auringer and that are part of the larger CREEM Collection inventory.

1969:

- May 1969, CREEM Magazine
- November 1969, CREEM Magazine

1970:

- March 1970, CREEM Magazine
- October 1970, CREEM Magazine
- November 1970, CREEM Magazine

- December 1970, CREEM Magazine

1971:

- September 1971, CREEM Magazine
- October 1971, CREEM Magazine
- December 1971, CREEM Magazine

1972:

- April 1972, CREEM Magazine
- June 1972, CREEM Magazine
- November 1972, CREEM Magazine

1973:

- February 1973, CREEM Magazine
- April 1973, CREEM Magazine

1974:

- November 1974, Extra CREEM
- December 1974, Extra CREEM

1975:

- January 1975, Extra CREEM
- February 1975, Extra CREEM
- March 1975, Extra CREEM
- April 1975, Extra CREEM
- May 1975, Extra CREEM
- June 1975, Extra CREEM
- July 1975, Extra CREEM
- August 1975, Extra CREEM
- September 1975, Extra CREEM
- October 1975, Extra CREEM
- November 1975, CREEM Magazine
- November 1975, Extra CREEM
- December 1975, Extra CREEM

1976:

- January 1976, CREEM Magazine
- January 1976, Extra CREEM
- February 1976, Extra CREEM
- March 1976, CREEM Magazine
- March 1976, Extra CREEM
- April 1976, Extra CREEM
- May 1976, Extra CREEM
- June 1976, Extra CREEM
- July 1976, CREEM Magazine

- July 1976, Extra CREEM
- August 1976, Extra CREEM
- September 1976, CREEM Magazine
- September 1976, Extra CREEM
- October 1976, CREEM Magazine

1977:

- March 1977, CREEM Magazine
- October 1977, CREEM Magazine
- December 1977, CREEM Magazine

1978:

- 1978, CREEM's Rock 'n' Roll Calendar
- March 1978, CREEM Magazine
- Spring 1978, Best of CREEM
- July 1978, CREEM Magazine
- September 1978, CREEM Magazine

1979:

- March 1979, CREEM Magazine
- April 1979, CREEM Magazine
- July 1979, CREEM Magazine
- August 1979, CREEM Magazine

1980:

- 1980, CREEM's Rock 'n' Roll Calendar
- March 1980, CREEM Magazine
- Fall 1980, Best of CREEM

1981:

- 1981, CREEM's Rock 'n' Roll Calendar
- March 1981, CREEM Magazine
- Fall 1981, CREEM Rock Shots

1982:

- February 1982, CREEM Magazine
- May-June 1982, CREEM Special Edition on Van Halen
- September-October, 1982, VIDIOT

1983:

- April-May 1983, VIDIOT
- July 1983, CREEM Close Up: New Rock
- August 1983, CREEM Magazine
- August-September 1983, VIDIOT

1984:

- July 1984, CREEM Rock Shots
- October 1984, CREEM Rock Shots
- November 1984, CREEM Magazine
- November 1984, The American Band
- December 1984, CREEM Magazine
- December 1984, CREEM Rock Shots

1985:

- January 1985, The American Band
- July 1985, CREEM Close Up: Metal Rock
- August 1985, CREEM Magazine
- October 1985, CREEM Close Up: Metal Rock

### **References:**

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