Giray and Mahamuti perform in Carnegie Hall

Dr. Selim Giray, professor of violin and viola at PSU, and Dr. Gulimina Mahamuti, PSU graduate alumna, received a standing ovation for their recent performance at Carnegie Hall in New York City. The performance was sold out and resulted in an invitation to return in the future.

The pair was invited to perform a concert in Giray’s native Turkish music at Carnegie Hall on January 8, 2012. The Mid America Productions, which presents a chamber music series every year, invited the pair after listening to their CD ‘Turkish Music for Violin and Piano.’

Mahamuti is currently part of the music faculty at Ohio Wesleyan University. She completed a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance at PSU and a doctorate in Piano Performance at UMKC.

“To not only perform there, but also be asked to appear in that concert series is prestigious,” said Giray. “This is a marvelous experience for us to get to collaborate.”

The two began performing together in 2006 and recorded music in Ohio last summer, where Giray spends his summers working with the Ohio Light Opera. He also serves as conductor of the SEK Symphony.

To prepare for the performance, Giray and Mahamuti performed a sneak-preview concert in McCray Hall at PSU as well as Oklahoma State University, the University of Kansas and City University of New York in Queens.

Although performing at the famed hall is no doubt an accomplishment, Giray says he has worked with a few alumni and even current students who have also performed there. This truly is a testament to PSU’s music program. “Our students have been performing in the greatest concert halls around the world,” he said. “It’s nothing groundbreaking for them to be successful. But we are fortunate for the caliber of music of musicianship and scholarship that our students demonstrate.”
A STUDENT FOCUS

Sophomore selected for New Paltz Festival

Out of the 200 applicants, Alheli Aranda, a sophomore music student from Asuncion, Paraguay, was one of 35 selected to spend three weeks at a prestigious piano institute in New York.

With help from faculty of the Music Department, Aranda raised money to cover the cost of the institute, including the $2,500 tuition. Alheli is a student of Dr. Reena Berger Natenberg.

The following statements are excerpted with permission from an article written on July 8, 2011, in the Morning Sun.

If Alheli Aranda’s mother hadn’t prohibited her from playing soccer when she was a child she probably wouldn’t be attending one of the nation’s premier piano institutes this month. The 18-year-old Pittsburg State University sophomore from Asuncion, Paraguay, said she was constantly playing soccer with the boys in her neighborhood. But that didn’t fly with mom.

“She didn’t want me to play soccer anymore, so she locked me in the living room,” Aranda said, laughing as she recalled the memory. “There was a piano in there. I hated it at first, but I started to play it and I liked it.”

Today, Aranda, a music major at Pitt State, will fly to New York to participate in Piano Summer at New Paltz, an international summer institute and festival dedicated solely to piano music. There, she will be one of 35 students selected to spend three weeks studying with Vladimir Feltsman, a world-renowned pianist who regularly performs with groups such as the New York Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestra.

“She’s a very talented person, there’s no doubt about that,” said professor Russell L. Jones, interim chair of the department of music. “It’s quite an honor to get accepted for that. The first time I heard her play I said, ‘If she plays like that all the time, she’s got a real career ahead of her.’”

Aranda said an instructor encouraged her to apply for institute, and that she mailed the recordings she made thinking that would be the end of it. She didn’t bother to tell her parents. Then, just weeks before the cut-off date, she learned she had been selected. But officials had not awarded her financial aid.

“So I thought, ‘OK, that was nice anyway,’” Aranda said in-between practice sessions Thursday morning.

But department faculty heard about her predicament, and, understanding the gravitas the summer program bears, they came up with a way to raise the $2,500 tuition she needed. Aranda said they gave her valuable contacts in the community and helped get her story out.

“I had 14 meetings in four days on Skype, the phone and in-person both here and in Paraguay,” Aranda said. “I missed three days of class, but the professors were encouraging. Then I waited for five, just praying, praying, praying for a miracle.”

Her efforts paid off. Within six days she had raised $1,500. On the final day, Jones found a total of $3,200 when he checked the account.

“After that I called my mom and told her, and she was like, ‘What?! You didn’t tell me?!’” said Aranda, who also plays guitar and viola.

“Being around other top-level players is always good, and it gives you an idea of what some of the other people who are very talented can do,” Jones said. “Most high-level players have had the chance to study under several different teachers. There isn’t any doubt that for people who achieve at high levels, there is a high level of commitment involved, and she seems to be willing to make that commitment,” Jones said.
from the chairperson (continued)

to see former students again and to participate musically with them in a worthy cause. Of course it is always a pleasure to participate with the Vollens.

Experiences of this type remind us that music is a live art and continues to enhance the quality of our lives.

The history of our department is rich with great students, faculty, and great musical experiences. I hesitate to mention highlights of last spring, but they included the appearance of the PSU Wind Ensemble at the state KMEA In-Service Workshop in Wichita, and the Elgar Oratorio program at the United Methodist Church. This past year, we also graduated some wonderful students who have gone on to pursue careers, many in teaching, and some in continuing their academic goals in graduate programs at other institutions. Some of these will be mentioned in Alumni Notes. We wish them all the best and will miss them.

As current chairperson of the department, I feel a great sense of responsibility to help continue the traditions of the past and build toward a greater future. Those who continue to make contributions to the department in various ways indeed have our gratitude. For example, the renowned soprano Barbara Rondelli-Perry, PSU alumna who recently retired from the University of Toledo, established a scholarship fund several years ago. The Rondelli scholarship is awarded every year for superior achievement in vocal performance.

Referring potential students to our music program is another type of contribution vital to our success. An example here is the renowned composer and PSU music alumnus Hubert Bird. Hubert continues to be an advocate for the department and to help with recruitment. We appreciate his assistance very much, as well as his compositions written for PSU premiers. We appreciate all of you who refer students for our consideration.

The importance of increasing the private support for Pittsburg State University, including both annual giving and endowments, was anticipated by former PSU President Donald Wilson, with the leadership and assistance provided by Dr. Grady Smoot as Vice President for University Advancement. Dr. Smoot’s advice through the years has been highly valued by the department.

Part of my vision for the continuing success of the Department of Music at Pittsburg State University is to continue to expand both the annual giving and the endowment resources available to the department for scholarships and other needs. Endowments are like retirement plans in some respects. Continuing investment in endowments allows us to plan for a more stable and secure future. Each year the proceeds from those funds may be used for scholarships. As tuition continues to grow faster than inflation because of reduced state support, our need to provide vital financial assistance to students grows as well.

At this time we have more than $3 million in principal in endowment funds. Many of those endowments generate earnings to support scholarships. When considering long-term goals for the department, I believe that we will eventually need at least $10 million in endowment funds to help us maximize the department’s potential. Our intermediate goals are to grow existing endowments or establish new funds when appropriate. There is a separate article spelling out some of our endowment aspirations. I hope that all of you share in our vision and will be able to help us in your own way. Thank you for all that you do on behalf of the Pittsburg State Department of Music.
Music Endowments and Department Aspirations

The Department of Music has almost 50 separate endowment funds with annual interest earnings supporting scholarships, instrument purchases and other needs of the department. A complete list of the Music Department’s endowment funds is available on the department web site www.pittstate.edu/music. Here is an overview of just some of the endowments and their purpose along with goals to expand those funds to meet departmental needs.

STRINGS: The string program receives vital assistance from the Waddill Endowment. The string program also receives support from the Best Violin Scholarship Endowment and the Paul Carlson Scholarship Endowment Fund. The Carlson Endowment was recently created in honor of our valued faculty emeritus colleague. The string program has the most substantial private support base of any of our programs, but more support is needed to reach its full potential.

BAND: The band program does not have a specified endowment fund and depends on substantial annual funding allocated by the university and the student senate. That annual funding is not guaranteed. A new endowment fund specifically designated for the band needs to be established.

WIND INSTRUMENTS: The only endowment fund designated for wind instrument scholarships is the Schott Endowment Fund, created in memory of Robert Schott, who served as a valued member of the music faculty for many years.

KEYBOARD: A number of endowments support the keyboard area, with piano designated as the primary area of choice for scholarships. Funds which designate pianists as the preferred recipients include the Baird Fund and the Gordon Fund. Dr. Ray Baird, a former university administrator and great friend of the department, established the Baird Endowment Scholarship Fund. His daughter Catherine was a piano student in the department. Dr. Baird regularly attended concerts until his death in the spring of 2010.

GRADUATE STUDENTS: There is no endowment specifically devoted to provide financial support for graduate students in music. Although graduate students do sometimes benefit from other scholarships and assistantships, there is a clear need for more help in this area.

CHORAL/VOCAL: A new Choral/Vocal Endowment was established last year. That fund needs to be expanded significantly because there is no strong base of annual funding available for vocal scholarships.

MULTI-PURPOSE FUND: The Vollen Endowment, established as a tribute to Dr. Gene Vollen, department chair for 17 years, was established in 1995 as a multi-purpose fund which could be used for scholarships as well as other departmental needs.

Endowment Goals
The Department has established the following goals for Music Department endowment funds:

- Establish two new endowment funds to support band and graduate students with a goal of increasing the principal in each to $100,000.
- Increase the principal in each of the following established endowments to $100,000 in order produce the annual earnings needed to adequately support specific programs within music: Carlson String Endowment, Choral/Vocal Endowment, and Schott Woodwind Endowment.
- Increase the principal in each of these already established endowments to $150,000 in order to produce annual earnings necessary to meet program needs: Vollen Endowment, C.R. and Anne Baird Endowment.

If you have questions, please contact the Office of University Development at 620-235-4768 or Dr. Rusty Jones, chairperson of the music department, at 620-235-4467. Your support is appreciated.

Question and Answer

Q. Can I contribute a small amount to an existing endowment fund?
A. Yes, you can. Just as with annual giving to the university, any amount that you can afford is helpful and very much appreciated.

Q. How do I make out the check?
A. A check should be made out to the PSU Foundation. The memo line should specify the fund, such as “Vollen Music Endowment – principal.” Checks should be sent to the PSU Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 4005, Pittsburg, KS 66762

Q. What if I want to establish my own endowment fund to help the department?
A. That is definitely possible. Please contact the Department of Music or the PSU Foundation. A minimum of $10,000 is required within three years of the fund being established for it to be a permanent named endowment. The fund can be set up with restrictions and preferences agreed to by the donor and the university, although the department prefers that the guidelines not be too restrictive in order to maximize the flexibility in using the endowment’s earnings to meet departmental needs.
A Dream Becoming Reality
Fine and Performing Art Center Campaign Underway

It’s been nearly three years since an anonymous donor pledged a $10 million gift to the university for the construction of a fine and performing arts center. Since that time university officials have been hard at work turning a project that had been on the drawing board since the late 70s into a reality.

“It was really the investment we needed to move this project forward,” said President Steve Scott. “It allowed us to develop building plans, but more than that it generated a great deal of interest and enthusiasm about the Fine and Performing Arts building.”

Many alumni remember the university’s previous performance facility, Carney Hall, with fond memories, but age and deterioration forced the university to demolish it in 1980.

Initial plans for the new Fine and Performing Arts Center were unveiled in October and have resulted in a great deal of excitement on campus and throughout the region.

The $30 million facility will house a 1,100 seat performance hall, a 250-seat theater, an art gallery, rehearsal hall, large lobby/reception area, dressing rooms, scene and costume shops, a catering kitchen and loading docks. “The renderings really show the scope of what we believe will be one of the finest facilities in the region,” explained President Scott. “A Fine and Performing Arts Center will make it possible for the university to more fully realize its responsibility to enrich the lives of our students and our community.”

University officials are focused on raising the remaining private dollars needed to make the project a reality. If you would like to learn more about this exciting project, please visit pittstate.edu/fpac or contact the Office of University Development at 620-235-4768.

PSU hosts Midwest Trumpet Festival

The Third Annual Midwest Trumpet Festival took place on October 9 and 10, 2011, at Pittsburg State University. Under the direction of PSU Professor of Trumpet, Dr. Todd J. Hastings, the Midwest Trumpet Festival’s mission is to gather leading performers, educators, students, and community for an intensive time of large and small continuing education sessions, master classes, recitals, and concerts. The festival also serves to bring together the community of professional trumpet pedagogues and performers from the Midwest region.

This year’s festival featured International Trumpet soloist, Vince DiMartino, Principal Trombonist of the New York Philharmonic, Mr. Joe Alessi, and the Third Street Brass Quintet, from Indiana University. Festival faculty included trumpet professors from Texas State University, The University of Denver, University of Missouri, Eastern Illinois University, Centre College (Kentucky), and Northwest Missouri State University.

The festival attracted more than 120 participants from across the United States and continues to grow into a “must attend” event. Dr. Keith Winking, professor of trumpet at Texas State University, and first-time attendee, had this to say about the Midwest Trumpet Festival, “I am writing to congratulate you on the success of your recent Midwest Trumpet Festival. All of the clinics and performances were at the highest level and inspired both the students and teachers in attendance. I have participated in numerous trumpet/brass festivals including the International Trumpet Guild Conferences (ITG), the New York Brass Conference, and the Moscow Trumpet Festival and your festival was on par with all of them.”
DR. REENA BERGER NATENBERG and PATRICK HOWLE received a $2,000 artist innovation grant from the KAC to make a CD recording of songs by Francis Poulenc with Patrick Howle. The project was completed in the summer of 2011. Dr. Natenberg presented a lecture-recital entitled “Musical and extra-musical sources of inspiration in the compositions of Sergei Rachmaninoff with focus on his second sonata for piano” at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, on Nov. 10, 2011, and for the Central Eastern Ohio Music Teacher’s Association on Nov. 11. (The presentation included a performance of this monumental sonata). On Nov. 11, she presented a masterclass for the piano students at Capital University.

DR. RUSSELL JONES played bassoon in Stravinsky’s “Rite of Spring” in October 2011 with the Ft. Smith Symphony. He also played bassoon with the Heartland Opera Theatre’s Joplin Tornado Benefit Gala, and a recent PSU Wind Ensemble concert. He performs regularly on alto saxophone with the Crowder Jazz Ensemble. He also performed a brief tenor saxophone solo with the PSU Wind Ensemble at the 2011 Four State Band Festival on John Mackey’s “Sasparilla.” He also soloed on alto saxophone with the December 1, 2011, PSU Jazz Ensemble, playing Sammy Nestico’s arrangement of “Georgia.”

In October of 2011, PATRICK HOWLE performed the lead role of Joe Gillis in Andrew Lloyd Weber’s musical adaptation of “Sunset Boulevard” with Mobile Opera. The performance was part of a multi-media concert that featured live singers, orchestra and an HD projection of scenes from the original Billy Wilder film.


ROBERT KEHLE and student Josh Tidd attended the International Trombone Festival at Vanderbilt University from June 21-26. For Josh, entering his final year at PSU, it was an invaluable opportunity to network in the trombone field and meet several prominent teachers looking for graduate students. He also performed in one of the participant trombone choirs directed by the University of Texas trombone professor Nathaniel Brickers.

Associate Professor STELLA HASTINGS joined the ranks of five-time Grammy-nominated Conspirare, to perform in a concert series featuring the choral works of Samuel Barber. Conspirare, a professional chorus out of Austin, Texas, performed as series of live performances in Austin. The program was recorded in the acoustically superb Sauder Hall at Goshen College, Goshen, Ind., for international release in fall 2012 on the Harmonia Mundi label. Conspirare is the first U.S. professional choir to record Barber’s complete a capella choral works for a major label. The CD will also be the first-ever commercial recording of “The Lovers.”

LISA MARIE GERSTENKORN was the Vocal Director for Pittsburg Community Theatre’s summer production of “Hairspray.” She recently performed a joint voice recital with PSU Alum Erin Jackson-Legris of Kansas City Kansas Community College. Ms. Gerstenkorn also recently joined the American Opera Studio in Kansas City, Mo., and just finished performing a Macabre with them in October. She performed with PSU’s Opera as the Third Lady in their November production of Mozart’s “The Magic Flute.” In January 2012, Ms. Gerstenkorn will begin her fifth year with the Tulsa Opera Chorus, performing Heggie’s “Dead Man Walking” and Puccini’s “Madama Butterfly.” She is also kept busy teaching students of her thriving private voice studio.

In February, DR. JAMES CLANTON performed at the 2011 KMEA Conference as a timpani soloist with the PSU Wind Ensemble, under the direction of Dr. Craig Fuchs. During the summer months, Dr. Clanton presented master classes and worked with various high school marching percussion sections in both Kansas and
Faculty Briefs (continued)

Oklahoma. Also in the summer of 2011, Dr. Clanton accompanied the PSU Honors College Study Abroad trip to Italy, Greece, and Turkey as a secondary faculty leader.

MRS. JOYCE MEDFORD, former PSU faculty member for several years, was coaxed out of retirement to teach elementary music courses for the 2011-12 school year. She is replacing Dr. Carol Deats, who is on leave for the year.

MR. ROB DETJEN, DMA candidate at UMKC is replacing Dr. Deats as the horn instructor for the 2011-12 academic year. He is an on-call musician for the Kansas City Symphony, the Kansas City Civic Orchestra, the St. Joseph Symphony, and the Kansas City Philharmonia. He is a member of “New Ear,” and Kansas City Contemporary Chamber Ensemble.

Substitute horn 2010-present. He is an adjunct faculty member at UMKC, teaching horn, horn methods and pedagogy, and coaching brass chamber music.

Department Staff News

KIMBERLY HARRIES, administrative specialist, joined the department a little over a year ago. She is a proud native of Maryland with a bachelor’s of science degree in elementary education from the University of Maryland. She moved to Pittsburg with her husband, Phillip Harries, who is a professor in the Biology Department, and two boys. She taught for five years and moved several times before settling down in Pittsburg. She reports, “It has been an exciting and busy first year in the department. This fall we have enjoyed being avid fans of the marching band. Time away from the department is spent with our two boys. I am also proud to say that on November 6th that I ran and completed the 32nd annual St. Louis Track Club Marathon with my personal best time.”

STEPHEN GRAHAM served in the position of Senior Administrative Assistant in the department for a little less than a year. He is also currently serving in the Kansas Army National Guard as a Sergeant and Squad Leader with the 226th Engineering Company out of Augusta, Kan. In 2010 Stephen was deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom where he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service. He has a 2-year-old son, Sean Graham. Stephen recently took a full-time investigative position as a joint appointment of the KBI and the Kansas Army National Guard.

KENDA FISCHER joined the department as Senior Administrative Assistant in January of this year. She is a Pittsburg native and graduated from PSU with a B.S. in Psychology and minor in Music in 2000. Currently, she is pursuing a Master’s Degree in Psychology. She and her husband live in Pittsburg with their nine-year-old daughter Emma. She is excited to be back involved in the department in her new position.

Alumni Notes

SHELBY HUDDLESTON (BME, Clarinet, 2001; MS, 2005) is in his first year as Technology Coordinator in USD 484 Fredonia, Kansas.

RYAN LOVELL (BME, Clarinet, 2005) is now the head band director at Neosho High School in Missouri.

MATT ESAU (BME, Percussion, 2008) is now a graduate teaching assistant at Wichita State University.

QUENTIN GILKEY (BA, Music, 2008). After an internship in Los Angeles, he was able to land a job at Paramount Recording Studios as an audio engineer. He has found himself working alongside many artists, but particularly ones in the hip hop and rhythm and blues area. Some names include Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Monica, Ray J, The Game, Fall Out Boy, Teddy Riley, Michael Jackson on the Album “Michael”, 50 cent, & Swizz Beats. One of his most recent projects was as the assistant engineer on the remix of the new Michael Jackson “Michael.” This platinum album features Jackson’s vocals and new backgrounds composed for the recording.

LOUIS MORGAN (MM, Wind Conducting, 2010) is now the band director in Baxter Springs, Kansas.

SHAWN SHIPLEY (BME, Clarinet, 2011) is Director of Bands in USD 388, Ellis, Kansas.

GREGORY CAMPBELL (MM, Viola, 2011) is a Fulbright scholarship recipient (second ever PSU student to receive that scholarship). He is teaching in Balikesir, Turkey, at Balikesir State University.

AYSEGUL GIRAY (MM, Violin Performance, 2011) is now attending Florida State University as a doctoral student in Violin. She received a teaching assistantship and was accepted to former New York Philharmonic Concertmaster Elliot Chapo’s studio.

RAMIRO MIRANDA (BM, Violin, 2011) received a full scholarship and is a member of the Faculty String Quartet at Illinois State University, studying toward MM degree in violin performance.

LUIS REYES (BM, Piano, Viola, 2011) received a full scholarship, at University of Maryland, College Park toward a MM degree in collaborative piano.

JAMES RYALS (BME, Clarinet, 2011) has accepted a position as K-4 music and 6-8 band at Granby Elementary/Middle School.

SALVADOR PRADO (BME, Percussion, 2011) has accepted a music teaching position in Jasper, Mo.

COOPER NEIL (BME, Trombone, 2011) has accepted a position teaching band and orchestra at Pittsburg High School.

CHRISTINE LOVELL (BME, Trombone, 2011) has accepted a music teaching position in Columbus, Kan.

CLAYTON DUNAWAY (BME, Clarinet, 2011) has accepted a graduate teaching assistantship at Missouri State University.

ZACH TROSPER (BME, Percussion, 2011) accepted a graduate teaching assistantship at Oklahoma City University.

BREANA SULLIVAN (BME, Voice, 2011) is teaching music fundamentals and ninth and tenth grade choir at Joplin High School.

WILL KOEHLER (BM, Trumpet, 2011) is pursuing his master’s degree in trumpet performance at the University of Denver.

Call for Alumni News! Tell us about you!

Please forward your alumni news, including your name, degree, major field of study and year of graduation to: rjones@pittstate.edu
In Memory

DR. RUSSELL PUGH
Dr. Pugh was on the faculty at Pittsburg State University from 1953-66. He was the director of bands and bassoon instructor at PSU. The following includes portions of his obituary taken from a Memphis newspaper.

“A Part of Memphis Music has died”

Dr. Russell Oris Pugh, prominent Memphis educator and musician, has died after a long illness. He died Friday, June 24, 2011, at the age of 83, in Mountain Home, Arkansas, at the Hospice of the Ozarks Hospice House. Dr. Pugh was on the faculty at Pittsburg State University from 1953-66. He was the Director of Bands and bassoon instructor at PSU.

Dr. Pugh’s life was filled with music and he, in turn, brought music into the lives of thousands of others. For more than 50 years, Dr. Pugh was an educator, teaching countless students in a wide variety of musical areas at the University of Memphis, in Memphis, Tenn.; Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Ky.; and Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kan.

Dr. Pugh was also the principle bassoonist in the Memphis Symphony and the Mountain Home Symphony Orchestras. He performed in musical productions around the world. In addition to being a life-long musician and educator, he was also a master gardener and a member of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Mountain Home, helping design St. Andrew’s Memorial Garden.

Russell Pugh was born August 10, 1927, in DeKalb, Ill. He married Mary Ellen Rossell, May 28, 1954, in Pittsburg. Pugh was a U.S. Navy veteran of World War II and a member of the West Point Military Academy Band. He received his doctor of education degree from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Ark. He was a professor emeritus for the University of Memphis and retired as chairman of the Department of Music at the University of Memphis. Dr. Pugh moved from Memphis to Mountain Home in 1996.

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