MUSIC AT PITTSBURG STATE
Part 2: The Great Tile Mystery

John McCray, Walter's son, visited Pittsburg State University for the last time late in the spring of 1982. His purpose was to deliver the remainder of his father's memorabilia to Gene DeGruison, curator of special collections in Axe Library. Another of John's purposes in visiting PSU was to reorganize the committee that he had established to govern the disbursement of the McCray Scholarship funds. When he first organized the committee, he had named specific people to act on his behalf. In the reorganization, he established the principle that those who held certain positions--such as President of the Treble Clef Club, Chairperson of the Department of Music, and persons who represented various interested constituencies, such as a member of the community, a member of the faculty, etc.--would constitute the committee. This, of course, would allow the committee to continue in perpetuity.

During his visit, John and I had many opportunities to discuss various aspects of his father's career. One of the most interesting, at least to a music historian, was the building of "Music Hall," which remained "unnamed" until it was dedicated to the memory of Walter McCray by act of the Kansas State Board of Regents in 1960.

John had already graduated and was working for a company that manufactured art tile and other decorative ceramic ware. The owners of this company had their roots with the famous Rookwood Pottery's of Cincinnati, Ohio. John was visiting his father during the construction of Music Hall in 1928-29, and, in going over the blueprints, noticed

that the lobby was to have the soft stone walls of the recital hall, and a floor covered with ship's linoleum. This latter material will be familiar to those who have visited hospitals and other public buildings before the advent of modern floor coverings. The second floor lobby of the Porter Building is still covered with this material.

John's position with his company was that of a publicist or public relations specialist, but he was not above trying his hand at sales. He showed his father the catalog he had brought along and discussed, in glowing terms, the advantages of art tile for the lobby of Music Hall. Walter was impressed and immediately took John in to see President Brandenburg (the music department was in Russ Hall in those days). Together, John and Walter sold the President on the idea of art tile wainscot and floor.

Most of the pattern was chosen from the catalog, but certain items are somewhat unique. The musical insets, for instance, were used for the first time in Music Hall. A man in California had just invented a machine that could carve and color this type of relief art tile. Up until that time, all makers of this relief work had to do it by hand and color it in a second firing. John's company was not only the first to take advantage of this technology, they were to use it for the very first time for our "McCray Hall." While these insets were added to the catalog and used in other buildings at a later time, they were designed specifically for use in McCray Hall.

The other item that is truly unique, although it was cast twice, is the lyre that is located in such a position in the floor as to inform any visitor entering by the north doors (designed to be the principal entrance) that the purpose of the building is to teach and display the art of music. The fact that the lyre had to be manufactured a second time is due to one of those mysteries that has remained unsolved to this day.

In telling the story, John could hardly control his laughter, so that it was difficult at times to understand what he was saying. It seems that, just when the workmen were ready to lay the tile that forms the lyre, these pieces disappeared. No one knew--indeed, no one still knows--what happened to them. There was no notice of a sale discovered, and no mention of their use in another building has ever been located. John said that the rumor circulating at the time held that the faculty, or certain members thereof, had spirited the tile away and either hid or destroyed it. I expressed my disbelief that the faculty would do such a thing, since the faculty of today is quite proud of this symbol. John could not offer proof, but I think he held firm to the idea that the faculty did not want a lyre in the middle of the lobby floor.

It is interesting to note that, when the lyre was finally installed, the second to the top row of the tiles that make up the design was inverted, making a slight distortion to the basic outline. This flaw is so minor, however, that it has to be pointed out to visitors who, because of the overall effect of the impressive display of art tile in McCray Lobby, would never have noticed it on their own.

--Gene Vollen

-to be continued-
Faculty Focus
Gary Corcoran

Gary Corcoran, Director of Bands, is one of several members of the music faculty whose roots are in the northeastern corner of the United States. He recalls many rich and varied experiences from his days as a young musician in Boston; included among these were memberships in the Chorus Pro Musica of Boston and the choir of Old South Church.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Maine, he began graduate studies at the University of Illinois in 1967, completing an MS in music education the next year. He taught in the North Andover High School, Massachusetts, from 1968-70, before returning to Illinois to begin work on his doctorate.

Dr. Corcoran's appointment to the Pittsburg State University faculty came in 1972. Beyond his primary responsibility as Director of Bands, his duties have included applied teaching—both trumpet and percussion—and related coursework within the instrumental music education curriculum.

Dr. Corcoran is known as a person who possesses great personal vision and a deep concern for the maintenance of excellence in education. Much of his published writing has, in some way, reflected that concern. His latest work, *The Addition System*, focuses on the perennial problem of teaching rhythmic concepts to young musicians. An article entitled "The Role of Bands in Kansas High Schools" was adopted as a position paper by the Kansas Bandmasters Association in 1983, and it subsequently received reprintings by several national associations.

Dr. Corcoran's administrative skills have been well noted by his colleagues across the state and beyond. He is a Past President of the Kansas Bandmasters Association and has served on the Executive Board since 1980. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the *College Band Directors National Association Journal* and is currently serving as Editor of the *CBDNA Report*.

Understanding the importance of a close relationship with area public school directors and their programs, Dr. Corcoran spends a considerable amount of time visiting schools and serving as guest conductor/clinician. He conducts 25-30 high school bands each year and is extremely active as an adjudicator in Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Arkansas.

Efforts to improve the performance of a high school band on its own turf are, without question, vital to the health of the ensemble as a whole. Equally important to the stimulation and development of individual players, however, is the opportunity for them to join in music-making activities with students of similar abilities. This concern was the motivating force behind the genesis of the Four State Band Festival in 1983 (see separate article, this page).

When asked what he sees as the greatest challenges facing the department over the next decade, Dr. Corcoran responded, "We need to strike the proper balance between our need to increase enrollment of music majors in all areas of our department and our commitment to maintaining academic and performance standards of which we, as well as our alumni, can be proud."

Four State Band Festival—A Growing Success

In 1983 Director of Bands Dr. Gary Corcoran was looking for a somewhat different musical activity for the members of the University Concert Band. At the same time, he was examining ways in which the Department of Music might provide additional service for high schools within our region. Fortunately, these two needs merged, and the Four State High School Festival was born.

Applications for the festival are sent to high school band directors within a 90-100 mile radius of the PSU campus. The directors submit a very thorough performance profile on students who may qualify for a position in the festival band.

According to Dr. Corcoran, the first 75-member festival band in 1983 was selected from 137 applications. Because of the positive response and the substantial increase in applications during the second year, an additional honor band has been included since 1985. This year a total of 150 student musicians from 40 high schools were selected from among 351 applications to perform with these festival bands.

"I am very happy that the Four State Festival has become one of the more prestigious events in which a high school band musician may participate. Band directors from an increasingly wide area have supported this event because it is not only very educational, but fun as well."

The guest conductors who are selected for the Four State Concert Band and the Four State Symphonic Band each year have international reputations as composers of band music. Past conductors have included Jared Spears, Robert Jager, James Swearingen, Jim Curnow, James Barnes, David Shaffer, Anne McGinty, and John Edmondson.

The festival guest conductors also rehearse and perform one of their own compositions with the University Concert Band. "Part of the underlying concept of the Four State Festival," says Corcoran, "is that the high school and university students alike have this invaluable opportunity to perform music with the composer conducting."

An additional feature of the festival is that a clinic is provided for those high school directors who accompany their students to campus. A formal banquet at the Overman Student Center precedes the evening concert which includes the University Band as well as the two high school festival bands.

The university has supported this activity generously, according to Dr. Corcoran, because of the interest of constituencies on and off campus who benefit from the event. "Although our Four State Festival requires a lot of detailed preparation and hard work on our part, I am gratified that this exciting experience has come to mean so much to so many people."
### ART AND ANTIQUES AUCTION

The Pittsburg State University Music Advisory Council's first annual Art and Antiques Auction took place on Friday, April 29. The auction, which was held in McCray Hall, was preceded by a preview gala that featured live entertainment, champagne, and hors d'oeuvres. Dr. Gene Vollen, chairman of the Department of Music, reports that the event raised $5200 for the Music Scholarship Endowment Fund, this being the first in a series of fundraising events designed to build a significant endowment for the funding of music scholarships at Pittsburg State.

The Department of Music is indebted to Mrs. Eunice Gariglietti, chairperson of the auction, and the many other members of the Advisory Council whose hard work and enthusiasm contributed to the success of this event.

### GALA BENEFIT CONCERT TO OPEN '88-'89 SEASON

The opening of the 1988-89 concert season will be marked by a gala benefit concert and reception on September 20. Guest artists for this event will be the Central Plains Brass Quintet. The ticket price for all seats for this concert will be $5.00, and the proceeds will benefit the Solo and Chamber Music Fund. A reception honoring the artists, and celebrating the new season, will follow in McCray Lobby. Members of the quintet are: Steve Harry and Marilyn O'Shields, trumpets; Wayne Harrell, horn; Robert Kehle, trombone; and Thomas Mahan, tuba.

The series continues on October 4, with the appearance of John Aler, tenor. Mr. Aler, who was the recipient of a Grammy Award in 1985 for his performance in the Berlioz Requiem under the baton of Robert Shaw, was the featured recitalist at last year's national NATS convention. Included in his many operatic roles last season was that of Percy in Anna Bolena opposite Dame Joan Sutherland at Covent Garden.

November will mark the residency of English pianist/composer John McCabe. While he is best known for his complete recording of the Haydn piano sonatas, Mr. McCabe has also recorded an extensive and unusual repertory beyond that. He will perform the Dallus piano concerto with the Southeast Kansas Symphony on Sunday, November 13; this program will also include a McCabe orchestral work. Then, on Tuesday, November 15, he will perform on the PSU Solo and Chamber Music Series.

In February, we will be visited by the Fresk Quartet, a distinguished Swedish ensemble. Formed in 1965, the quartet made its American debut tour in 1977, and in recent years has toured around the world. Their February 21 concert will offer a sampling of old and new works, from the popular Borodin Quartet No. 2 to several compositions by contemporary Scandinavian composers.

Closing out the roster of guest artists, Thomas Stacy will be on campus during the first week of May. Mr. Stacy is English Horn soloist with the New York Philharmonic, and he has earned a reputation as this country's premiere performer on this unusual and beautiful instrument. He will perform a series concert on Thursday, May 4; he will appear in concert with the Southeast Kansas Symphony on Sunday, May 7.

### MARCHANT NAMED CHORAL DIRECTOR

Susan Marchant, Associate Professor, has been named Director of Choral Activities, effective with the Fall '88 semester. She succeeds Marshall Turley, Associate Professor, who will continue in the area of vocal music education and will begin new responsibilities in chairing the class piano program for music majors.

Marchant, who has been involved in the direction of church choirs during the last 15 years, received her training at Oberlin Conservatory and Yale University. Her principal mentor in the area of choral conducting was Daniel Moe, of the Oberlin faculty.

She also serves as director of Pittsburg's Centennial Choir and as director of music at the First United Methodist Church. The FUMC Chancel Choir, a 30-voice choir comprised of adult church members and a number of PSU music students, will make a two-week tour of England this July.

---

**Calendar of Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>July</th>
<th>November</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11-15 Kodaly Curriculum Workshop</td>
<td>6 Performing Arts &amp; Lecture Series: Pump Boys &amp; Dinettes, Memorial Auditorium, 8:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 Collegium Musicum, 8:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 *SEK Symphony, 3:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 *Solo and Chamber Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Series: John McCabe, piano, 8:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 Jazz Ensemble, 8:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Tickets required. For further information, contact the PSU Department of Music (319/231-7000, Ext. 4466).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All events take place in McCray Recital Hall unless noted otherwise. Please consult local news media for any changes in the above information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**PSU Music Notes** is published three times a year by the Department of Music at Pittsburg State University.

Gene Vollen  
Chairman, Department of Music

Susan Marchant  
Newsletter Editor
ALUMNI NEWS

Ling Chao Chen (BM '85, MM '88) has moved to Minneapolis, where she will work in the offices of the Hollander Corporation. She also hopes to freelance as a piano technician in the Twin Cities area.

Chris Coots (BME, MS '69) continues to serve as band director for Pittsburgh High School, USD #290.

Jeanne Fiene (BME '83) will begin a position as principal of the Wheaton, MO High School (grades 6-12) next fall.

Cathy (Smith) Gilford (BME '77) is currently teaching elementary music (1-8) and beginning band at Pretty Water School, Sapulpa, OK. She also teaches piano privately and is church pianist at Prattville United Methodist Church. Her two children are named Lindsay (4) and Paige (2).

Gail Hamilton (MM '78) was awarded a $1,000 prize as the winner of the National Federation of Music Clubs' Handicapped Artists Competition this year. At present, she is teaching privately in Denver, CO and making use of a new Braille computer in her studio. She will soon begin graduate studies in the area of psychology/wellness therapy, her objective being to someday work with newly-blinded persons, assisting them with their various adjustments in daily living skills.

Kristin Hurn (BBA '88) was married to Michael Chermok on May 28 at Pittsburgh's First United Methodist Church. Soloists included both Kristin and former PSU music student, Gena Patchin.

Mark Keltner (BME '84) has accepted a position with the Olathe, KS public schools. He leaves a position as director of instrumental music at East Newton High School in southwest Missouri.

Andre Duane Lash (BME '69) holds a position as organist and Associate Minister of Music at St. John's Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC. He is sub-dean of the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists and is also kept busy as a freelance accompanist and lecturer on practical aspects of service playing. A specialist in the organ works of Correa de Arauxo, he completed his DMA in May '87 at the Eastman School of Music, where he studied with Russell Saunders.

Fern Marsh (BME '69) is retired from teaching elementary music in USD #257, Iola, KS. She continues to direct the choir at First Presbyterian Church, Iola. Her other activities include membership in the Iola Music Club and Community Theater. She is also the personnel director/secretary and a violist with the Iola Area Symphony Orchestra.

Patsy Blair Morris (BS '68, MS '71) provides piano music for Kingsmill Conference Center Restaurant in Williamsburg, VA. She also serves as music consultant for Williamsburg Landing, a retirement home, and she spends several months a year as an entertainer aboard the Carnival Cruise Lines. Patsy would love to hear from other former members of the Collegiates, 1966-68. Her address: 5 Woodlake Circle, Newport News, VA, 23606.

Terry O'Brien held an apprenticeship with the Sarasota Opera from January through March, singing the role of "Camille" in their touring production of The Merry Widow. He returned to Pittsburgh in May for an appearance as guest soloist with the Centennial Choir, singing Frederick's Aria from The Pirates of Penzance.

Mark Powis (BME '84, MM '86) has accepted a position as director of instrumental music for the Garnett, KS High School. He leaves a similar position at Unionswe, KS.

Mary Lee (Coleman) St. John (BM '52) has been elected president of the Florida State Music Teachers Association. Currently a private piano teacher residing in Anna Maria, FL, she has had a distinguished career as piano teacher in academia as well. She is a life member of Sigma Alpha Iota and is also an adjudicator for the National Guild of Piano Teachers.

Iralene Swain (BME '70, MM '72) sang the role of "Serena" in Gershwin's Porgy and Bess in Europe for three months this spring, touring with the Houston Opera Association.

Rick Walker (BME '86) is being kept busy these days as director of the Leavenworth Community Band and the Abdallah Shrine Band of Kansas City.

Joyce (Tweedey) Webster (BME '64) is active as a private piano teacher and substitute teacher in Rose Hill, KS. She also directs two church choirs and is accompanist for the Boeing Stratingers.

Keith Welty (BME '85) and Donna (Boever) Welty (BME '86) announce the birth of a daughter, Audra Gayle, on Friday, March 4.

Obituaries

Jane Roberts (BME '53), November 30, 1987, of cancer. She had taught in the Altamont Elementary School for the past ten years.

Shirlee A. Patrick (BME '49), December 4, 1987, in an automobile accident. She had been employed as a teacher in the Special Education Co-op of the Pittsburgh Schools, working at both George Nettels and Lakeside Schools.

PSU Printing-10912MUS-6-86-4M-38E

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED