MUSIC AT PITTSBURG STATE
An Historical View
—by Gene Vollen

While there was music at Pittsburg State from its founding as the Auxiliary Manual Training Normal School in 1903, the Department of Music per se traces its beginning to the separation from Emporia State in 1913 and the arrival of President William Brandenburg in 1914.

The first musical activity was an orchestra founded in September, 1904, by Clayton Hale, a student. Professor Shepardson, a member of the Normal School faculty, played trombone and directed the group. It is interesting to note that three of the members of this ensemble played mandolin.

The first course in music was added as the curriculum was expanded from a two-year to a three-year program in 1906. Vocal music was the official title of this course which consisted primarily of Glee Club as choral experience. This was also organized under the direction of Professor Shepardson.

With the audition of the Life Diploma curriculum in 1908, music became a required first year subject. In that year, the Kansas Board of Regents authorized the creation of the Department of Music, with C. Guy Hoover as director. The announcement of courses for the seventh year (1909-1910) contained the first mention of this new department, the purpose of which was “to offer instruction in the most practical fields of music work, with a view of training not only performers of merit, but first-class teachers of music.”

Mr. Hoover resigned in the summer of 1914, due, it is said, to the requirement of moving from a contracted position to a salaried one. He moved to Chicago, where he opened a publishing house specializing in materials for music education.

It was at this point that President Brandenburg called upon Walter McCray to head and develop the Department of Music. Dr. McCray, a trumpet player, came from a musical family and was, at the time of his appointment, the director of a professional band in Independence, Kansas. With McCray’s arrival, the musical life of the college entered a new era. In the spring of 1951, he inaugurated the Annual Music Festival, the first undertaking of its type among the institutions of higher learning in Kansas or, indeed, anywhere in the midwest. Each year from 1915-1946, the Department of Music produced Handel’s Messiah, under the direction of Dr. McCray.

This new department head was a musical entrepreneur and public relationist par excellence, one of the most notable examples of his power of persuasion being the appearance of a quartet of principal singers from the Metropolitan Opera, both in recital and as cast members in the college’s performance of Gounod’s Faust during the Fifth Annual Music Festival in April, 1919.

It was this sort of leadership that Brandenburg sought when he convinced McCray to head the music program. One of Brandenburg’s avowed intents was the establishment of a liberal arts program to parallel and support the manual arts training mission of the institution. He placed music at the phalanx of this effort, allowing an unprecedented degree of freedom of action on the part of McCray. This enabled McCray to draw upon the multi-cultural resources of the region, creating a strong legacy for those who were to follow.

A strong indication of the respect that Brandenburg held for McCray was the decision to build “Music Hall” in 1928. The State Legislature had voted to divide excess revenue, so that a new building could be constructed on each of the Regents’ campuses. The decision in Pittsburg was to build a music building.

Because it was necessary to move rapidly, the design of the building was entrusted to the architects who had just completed the design of Porter Library. They designed the new building, using the specifications of Porter Hall adapted to the use of music. The same method of construction was used, but McCray was able to convince them that music had special needs. The design and materials of the most notable and modern music buildings were studied. The result was a basically sound-proofed building (at least, according to the standards of the day), resonant floors, the famous Eastman studio doors with their drop seals, and a recital hall which has become renowned for its superb acoustics.

—to be continued—
Faculty Focus
James Poulos

Dr. James Poulos, a native of Pennsylvania, began his training on the violin at the age of twelve with Albert Illias, formerly a student of Franz Kneisel, the first violinist of a well-known European string quartet bearing his name.

He began his studies in basic engineering at Penn State University, but abandoned this pursuit when called to serve in the armed services in the Pacific theatre during World War II. After the war, he decided to pursue music as a career by taking a BM degree in performance at Illinois Wesleyan University. The two subsequent degrees in the chain of traditional education were taken at Ohio State and Indiana University.

It was while he was at Indiana that his acoustical work, which he was allowed to take because of his background in the sciences, followed along the lines initiated by Frederick Saunders some years earlier at Harvard. This interest in acoustics has continued to the present. Dr. Poulos is a member of the Catgut Acoustical Society, an international organization that actively investigates the acoustical behavior of string instruments.

His early years as a professional musician included a variety of activities, from solo recitals and chamber music performances to his role as conductor and musical director of orchestras in Louisiana and Michigan.

Dr. Poulos began his affiliation with Pittsburg State University in 1969. His rich and varied background had prepared him well for the diverse demands of this position. He has taught music history, music theory, conducting, and applied music. He currently serves as director of graduate studies for the Department of Music and acts as liaison with the graduate division of the university. As second violinst in the PSU Resident String Quartet and director of the Collegium Musicum, he continues to be an active performer.

Dr. Poulos has also made a significant contribution to the life of our program as an unofficial departmental artist, having designed numerous brochures, programs, posters, logos, and stage scenery.

After coming to Pittsburg, he began studies on the viola da gamba with Peggy Sampson of Toronto, Ontario, and he has performed on that instrument on collegium and like programs. His interest in early music has led him to build a rebec, a vielle, and a Celtic harp, all of which have been featured in collegium programs and in the Timmons Chapel Christmas concerts. He is currently working on a somewhat larger harp and hopes to become proficient in the building of historic models.

It is in directing the PSU Collegium Musicum and co-ordinating the Timmons Chapel Christmas concerts that his particular gifts find their most natural expression: musicologist, performer, instrument builder, and artist/designer all come together to produce programs that are creative, witty, informative, and entertaining. In short, Jim Poulos is the kind of person every well-rounded community of musicians needs—but few are lucky enough to have.

SPRINGFIELD SYMPHONY ATTRACTS PITTSBURG MUSICIANS

In recent years, the city of Springfield, MO has watched its symphony orchestra grow in stature and activity. The 1987-88 season will include nine regular subscription concerts, along with a handful of school programs, tour concerts, and chamber programs. Charles Bontrager serves as artistic director of the Springfield Symphony.

Making the weekly 180-mile roundtrip drive through southwest Missouri are a number of Pittsburg musicians who make significant contributions to the organization: Carol Cook, Kirt Duffy, Cecily Noel, Beth Sorenson, Keching Tang, strings; Kenda Corcoran, oboe; Virginia Steltzner Ormsby, bassoon; and Robert Kehle, trombone. Several of these people have held their positions in the orchestra since the late '70s. In recognition of his artistry, Professor Kehle was invited to perform a solo work with the symphony last season.

The Pittsburg connection may be seen in other areas of the orchestra as well. PSU alums Marc Fulgham and Larry Bridges serve as co-principal trumpet and principal flute, respectively, and former PSU faculty member Wayne Harrell plays third horn. When the orchestra programs a work such as a Mahler Symphony, which requires the services of a number of extra wind and brass players, other Pittsburg musicians often serve in this capacity.

This season affords a special honor for PSU pianist Steven Edmund, who has been invited to appear as soloist in the Grieg Piano Concerto with the Symphony this fall. A student of John MacKay, Steve holds a graduate assistantship in the Department of Music.

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Gene Vollen
Chairman, Department of Music

Susan Marchant
Newsletter Editor
Calendar of Events

November
15 *SEK Symphony, 3:00 p.m.
16 +Jazz at McCarthy's, 8:00-11:00 p.m.
17 Collegium Musicum, 8:00 p.m.
19 Jazz Ensemble, 8:00 p.m.

December
1 Sophomore Recital, Tomoko Aoyama, saxophone, 7:00 p.m.
1 Senior Recital, John Oberley, piano, 8:30 p.m.
2 Symphonic Choir, 8:00 p.m.
3 Concert Band, 8:00 p.m.
4 +Jazz at McCarthy's, 9:00 p.m.-midnight
5 *Performing Arts & Lecture Series: Mid-America Dance Company, in The Madcracker, Memorial Auditorium, 8:00 p.m.
9 Timmons Chapel Christmas Concert, 8:00 p.m.
11 Timmons Chapel Christmas Concert, 8:00 p.m.
13 Centennial Choir, 3:00 p.m.

January
17 Guest Recital, Nancy Granert, organ, 3:00 p.m. Co-sponsored by the SEK Chapter, American Guild of Organists.
26 Recital, Kathryn Parke, soprano, 8:00 p.m.

February
2 Resident String Quartet, 8:00 p.m.
9 *Solo & Chamber Music Series: David Evitts, baritone, 8:00 p.m.
11 *Performing Arts & Lecture Series: National Black Touring Circuit, in Brother Malcolm X, 8:00 p.m.
13 State Piano Festival, all day
14 Faculty Recital, Susan Marchant, organ, 8:00 p.m.
17 *Opera, The Threepenny Opera, Memorial Auditorium, 8:00 p.m.
19 *Opera, The Threepenny Opera, Memorial Auditorium, 8:00 p.m.
26 *Performing Arts & Lecture Series: The Ramsey Lewis Trio, 7:00 & 9:00 p.m.

March
3 Concert Band, 8:00 p.m.
8 Symphonic Choir, 8:00 p.m.
9 *Performing Arts & Lecture Series: Famous People Players, Memorial Auditorium, 8:00 p.m.
11 Jazz Festival, all day
22 Junior Recital, Edward Good, organ, 8:00 p.m.
25 Guest recital, Bishop Carroll, High School Choirs, 8:00 p.m.
27 *SEK Symphony, 3:00 p.m.
29 Graduate Recital, Kecheng Tang, violin, 8:00 p.m.
31 Guest Recital, Ronda Vickers, trumpet, 8:00 p.m.

NOTES FROM THE MUSIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

Established one year ago in conjunction with the music component of the University’s Campaign for Distinction, the Music Advisory Council has, in its initial meetings, begun to examine the strengths, weaknesses, and special needs of the Department of Music. The group met on August 26 at the home of Lois Bellin, where several important issues were discussed.

Members were brought up to date on the progress toward the establishment of the University’s FM radio station, KRPS-FM, which will operate at 100,000 watts, its signal traveling throughout an 80-mile radius of Pittsburg. Studio operations will be in a newly-designed space in Shirk Hall. A major grant in excess of $400,000 has been secured from the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program of the National Telecommunications Information Administration. A campaign to raise the $300,000+ balance needed for start-up costs is now underway. Plans call for KRPS to be on the air sometime around March 30, 1988.

Council members also received a report on the progress of the University Music Campaign. Donations, bequests, and gifts-in-kind received through the end of the fiscal year totaled more than $110,000, much of which has been designated for the Music Scholarship Endowment. It was generally agreed that fundraising needs to be a continuing concern, and various means of doing this were brought forward for discussion. The Council voted to focus its efforts on an antique auction, to be held in the spring of 1988.

Dr. Vollen next outlined plans for the organization of a group known as the Friends of Timmons Chapel. Timmons Chapel has been a campus spot of special significance for many persons associated with Pittsburg State University. Membership in this organization will afford each of us an opportunity to express our gratitude for this very special gift of the late Bess Timmons. A series of afternoon concerts this spring will mark the establishment of the Friends group. Further information will be forthcoming. University liaison with the Friends of Timmons Chapel will be Dr. Paul Carlson.

The final matter for discussion was the formation of several subcommittees whose purpose will be to focus specifically on one aspect (i.e. long-range planning, fundraising, arts advocacy, parents’ group, McCray Hall organ) of the larger Council’s mission. These groups will work independently and report back to the Council at regular intervals.

FACULTY BRIEFS . . .

Paul Carlson, professor, will appear as soloist with the Southeast Kansas Symphony in the world premiere of Nancy Van de Vate's Violin Concerto No. 1. This performance is set for Sunday, November 15, at 3:00 p.m. Tickets for this orchestra concert are available now at the university ticket office.

Robert Kehle, assistant professor, will travel with the Pittsburg Posaunen Ensemble for its performance at the KMEA convention in Wichita this February. The session will be equally divided between classical and jazz repertoire.

John MacKay, associate professor, has composed a new SATB anthem on a text from Ecclesiastics. It received its premiere this fall at Pittsburg's First United Methodist Church.

Susan Marchant, associate professor, has undertaken the direction of Pittsburg's Centennial Choir, following the resignation of its previous director, Marshall Turley. The choir will present a Christmas program on December 13 and a spring concert on May 8.

*Tickets required. For further information, contact the PSU Department of Music (316/231-7000, Ext. 4464).
+ Cover charge.

All events take place in McCray Hall unless noted otherwise. Please consult local news media for any changes in the above information.
ALUMNI NEWS

Diana Allan (BM, BME '81) has moved to Nacogdoches, TX to finish work on a master's degree at Stephen F. Austin University. She holds a graduate assistantship that involves vocal teaching as well as administrative work. She is also teaching high school students in the preparatory division.

Wayne Chow (BM '83, MM '84) was awarded the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Louisiana State University this past summer.

Chris Cruz (BME '74) and Cindy (McClanahan) Cruz (BME '74) are in their fourth year in Topeka, KS. Chris accepted a position as educational sales representative for Hume Music, following nine years as a band director in the public schools. Cindy serves as a music educator at Pauline South Elementary School in the Auburn-Washburn School District. Their daughter, Courtney Nicole, recently celebrated her first birthday. Chris remains musically active as a member of the Capital Brass Quintet.

Linda Evans and her husband, Rick, announce the birth of a son, Stephen Zachary, on July 12. They are residing in Lebanon, IL.

Michael Fischer (BME '80) writes that he has been awarded a teaching fellowship at North Texas State University, where he will be working toward the DMA degree. During 1986-87, he played tuba in the Lincoln and Omaha Symphony Orchestras and earned an MM degree at the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

Jayne George (BME '87) reports that she is enjoying her work at Portland State University, Oregon, where she holds a graduate assistantship in instrumental conducting.

Janet Hubbard (BME '87) has begun a graduate assistantship at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Her primary responsibilities lie in the area of piano accompanying.

Nancy (Thompson) Jones (MS '62) has recently been appointed assistant professor of music at Central Methodist College in Fayette, MO. She will sing the role of Marcellina in Mozart’s Le Nozze di Figaro with the Kansas City Lyric Opera this fall.

Rich Lamer (BME '73, MM '75) writes that he is enjoying life in the Rocky Mountains with his wife, Sandy, and children, Greg and Elizabeth. He is currently senior claims representative for Crum and Forster Commercial Insurance Co. in the Denver regional office. He remains musically active as singer and coach in the barbershop quartet tradition.

Carl Mathis (BM '61) was recently promoted to associate professor of music at the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada. Last spring, he received the U.P.E.I. Faculty Association Award for excellence in teaching. Carl serves the Charlottetown community through his position as precentor of St. Peter's Anglican Cathedral. He also sings and plays recorders in the Charlottetown Renaissance Consort.

Dale and Pam (Rexwinkle) McDaniel (BME '82) announce the birth of a daughter, Kally Anne, on September 14. Dale is currently the director of junior high and senior choirs in Neodesha, KS.

Mary Alice (North) Novak (BM '65) is an elementary vocal teacher for the Salina Schools, USD #305. An Orff specialist, she works with a group of elementary singers and dancers known as the Stewart Sound Machine.

Deborah Pierce (BME '79, MM '81) continues as a music librarian at the University of Washington, Seattle. Owner of a harpsichord by Willard Martin, she has been an active player of Baroque chamber music. She has also renewed her interest in early vocal music and is currently singing with the University of Washington Madrigal Singers.

Virginia (Barrett) Rhynard (BM '43) has retired from her position as executive secretary to the director of the Detroit Public Library. She and her husband are enjoying retirement, traveling extensively, and getting involved in their new community, Niles, MI.

Nancy (Hayes) Sapp (BME '73) has done graduate work at Wichita State University that focused on learning disabilities and behavioral disorders. She is teaching in the Hutchinson public schools and directing the choirs at Forrest Park Presbyterian Church.

Cynthia (Manlove) Selby (BM '81) and her husband, Bob, announce the birth of their son, Robert Earl Selby III, on August 12 in Tulsa, OK. Cindy is organist at First Evangelical Free Church in Tulsa; she also teaches privately.

Ronda Vickers (BME '86, MM '87) has accepted a teaching position at the Jasper, MO High School.

Donna (Boever) Welty (BME '86) and Keith Welty (BME '85) have moved to Wichita. Donna has begun a teaching position at Kellogg Elementary School, and Keith has been appointed director of youth and children's choirs at Plymouth Congregational Church. He will also work for KMUW, the Wichita State radio station, while pursuing a master's degree in choral conducting at WSU.

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