Fisk Op. 106: A New Organ for McCray Hall

After many years of discussion and planning, a contract for a new pipe organ for Pittsburg State University was signed with the C.B. Fisk firm of Gloucester, Massachusetts. The signing, which took place in January, marks the beginning of a five-year waiting period, during which time other Fisk organs currently underway will be completed and PSU's organ will be carefully designed and constructed.

The mechanical action (tracker) organ of three manuals and 45 stops will be housed on the stage of McCray Recital Hall, a space that has been occupied since 1955 by a three-manual Reuter organ. While Fisk Op. 106 will be a versatile instrument capable of covering a broad range of literature, it will display a special fondness for the French Classic and French Romantic veins of the organ repertoire. The details of the organ's specification will be the result of discussion between the Fisk staff and PSU faculty organist, Susan Marchant.

The acquisition of this organ is a major development in the history of music-making at Pittsburg State University. Not since the building of McCray Hall in the year 1928 has such a large project been undertaken on behalf of the department of music, the university, and the musical climate of the surrounding region.

“Organ Update”

The university has begun publication of a newsletter, Organ Update, in order to establish and maintain clear lines of communication between the institution and persons who have an interest in this project and its potential impact on the institution and region. Over the next five years, Organ Update will provide background information on the Fisk company—including descriptions of other distinguished organs across the country—and will provide regular updates on the Opus 106 project. Plans call for the newsletter to be published three or four times a year.

We are interested in identifying persons who have an interest in the Fisk Op. 106 project. Would you, or someone you know, be interested in receiving regular updates about the organ? If so, please clip out the form at the bottom of this page and return it to the department of music.

I have an interest in the acquisition of FISK OPUS 106 for Pittsburg State University and would like to be identified with the effort to make it happen. Please add my name to the mailing list for the Organ Update newsletter.

Clip out and return to: Dr. Gene Vollen, chairman
PSU Department of Music
Pittsburg, KS 66762

Name ____________________________ Telephone ____________________________

Address ____________________________ City ____________________________ State _______ Zip _______
Faculty Focus
Robert Kehle

Robert Kehle, trombonist, hails from that part of our land whose inhabitants claim for it the title "God's country"...the great northwest. Bob grew up in Spokane, WA and attended Washington State University for his undergraduate training, earning BA and BM degrees in the year 1975. He then began graduate study at Indiana University, completing an MM, with distinction, in 1977.

While his earlier training had been geared toward music education, he had by now gained considerable performance experience as a trombonist, and at this point in his career was considering orchestral playing as well as college teaching. Fortunately for us, Bob elected to accept a position at Pittsburg State, joining the music faculty in 1978.

His duties here center on two principal areas: low brass and jazz studies. As low brass instructor, he is charged with the responsibility of teaching of trombone, euphonium, and tuba and their related pedagogical areas. As director of jazz studies, he organizes the annual PSU Jazz Festival, directs the PSU Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Combo, and offers courses in music appreciation (jazz to rock), jazz improvisation, and related support areas. A versatile musician, Bob has also been able to help out by teaching music theory when needed.

Every organization, in order to survive, needs a few people who, in addition to having good ideas, possess the ability to follow through on those ideas. Bob Kehle is definitely one of those people. A key member and past president of the Kansas unit of the International Association of Jazz Educators, he has motivated PSU students to the point where their chapter is one of the most active in the region. He also serves as a member of the scholarship committee for the International Trombone Association and has taken an active role in the Kansas Music Educators Association.

Despite this busy schedule, Bob remains active as a performing musician. He serves as principal trombonist of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra and is a founding member of the Central Plains Brass Quintet, an ensemble that is sponsored by the Touring Artists program of the Kansas Arts Commission.

Much of Bob's scholarly activity has focused on the alto trombone. He made a serious study of it while engaged in doctoral studies at Indiana, and his passion for the instrument continues to the present. In November, 1989, he premiered a concerto for alto trombone—the work of PSU composer, John MacKay—with the Southeast Kansas Symphony.

As a resource person for low brass concerns, it's difficult to imagine someone more prepared than Bob Kehle. He has a collection of low brass recordings that would put most libraries to shame. Moreover, he brings an evangelistic zeal to the act of sharing this music, these experiences, with others. He hosts a weekly radio program, Brass Odyssey, on PSU's public radio station KRPS that offers listeners opportunities that they would not otherwise have. In the jazz vein, he publishes a regional jazz calendar that helps keep everyone abreast of jazz offerings within a reasonable distance.

In what little free time he has, Bob enjoys playing golf or reading science fiction. He and his wife, Lorri, are also serious birdwatchers, and they enjoy nature outings whenever time permits.

Just as the spring semester was beginning this year, Bob made a misstep on a patch of ice and tumbled to the ground, breaking his leg. He spent many of the following weeks in a cast and on crutches, but still somehow managed to meet his commitments...including numerous visits to public schools, the annual PSU Jazz Festival, and a tour with the PSU Jazz Ensemble that included a performance at the KMEA meetings in Wichita. Through it all, he weathered discomfort, inconvenience, and, worst of all, merciless teasing by his friends and colleagues. And what was the reason for all this good-natured ribbing? The answer is simple: only when he's hobbling along on crutches does everyone around Bob Kehle have half a chance of keeping up with him!

PSU SENIOR COMPETES IN SOVIET UNION

Senior music major, Angie Shelton, travelled to Leningrad and Moscow during November in order to compete in a powerlifting competition. A trumpet player majoring in music education, Angie has been involved during her college career with this interesting and unusual sport. She attends an average of three to four domestic meets per year, and her success in these competitions won her the invitation to compete in the Soviet Union. Her natural ability and careful training for the meet enabled her to take first place in her weight division. Congratulations, Angie!

VOICE DAY '90

Approximately 70 area high school students attended a special day-long session on November 15 devoted to the needs of young singers. Prof. Paul Huybrechts, co-ordinator of the event, designed a schedule that included time for diverse activities: vocal master classes, lessons, lectures on choral music and music education, and two concerts, one by the University Choir and another by soprano Kathleen Coffee.

Reactions from students and their directors were most positive, and future plans call for two such days per year, one geared toward high school students and the other geared toward students enrolled in community college vocal programs.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April
14 University Choirs, 3:00 p.m.
16 Collegium Musicum, 8:00 p.m.
18 Senior Recital, Kathy Collins, trombone, 8:00 p.m.
21 *SEK Symphony, Memorial Auditorium, 3:00 p.m., with guest artist Nicholas Smith, horn
23 *Solo & Chamber Music Series: Nicholas Smith, horn, 8:00 p.m.
25 Jazz Ensemble, 8:00 p.m.
27 Elementary Music Festival, all day
28 Senior Recital, Janis Crane, clarinet, 3:00 p.m.
29 Graduate Recital, Yen-Ching Wang, piano, 8:00 p.m.
30 Waddill Chamber Music Contest Winners Concert, 8:00 p.m.

May
2 Graduate Recital, Paul McGinty, bassoon, 8:00 p.m.
3 *Jazz (big band) at McCarthy's 9:00 p.m.-midnight
5 *Oratorio, Elijah, Pittsburg Centennial Choir and PSU Choirs, with the SEK Symphony, First United Methodist Church, 3:00 p.m.
7 Guest Recital, Tallahassee Reed Trio, 8:00 p.m.
9 Four-State Festival Band, all day
18 Commencement

June
2 Faculty Recital, Paul Huybrechts, baritone, 8:00 p.m.

see workshop schedule below

*Tickets required. For further information, contact the PSU Department of Music (316/235-4466).

+Cover charge.

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

ALUMNI NEWS

We are pleased to present this expanded listing of alumni activities, and we encourage other alumni—especially those from whom we have not heard in a while—to use the enclosed form for updates of a professional or personal nature.

Ronda (Wyckoff) Bailey (MM '81) was honored as Outstanding Young Alumna from Fort Scott Community College this past fall. Of special significance is the fact that Ronda was the first educator chosen to receive this award.

Janice (Lancaster) Bartlett (BME '81, MM '83) and her husband, Bill, announce the birth of their daughter, Ashleigh Marie, on April 30, 1990. Janice is in her ninth year as elementary music teacher for the Jayhawk-Linn school district. Her husband is an inside plant technician for Southwestern Bell.

Jane (Brown) Bass (MM '70) has completed work on a master’s degree in school administration. She continues in her position as pianist and children’s choir coordinator for Memorial Baptist Church in Tulsa, OK. Jane is also active in professional organizations such as her local NEA chapter.

William Browning (BM '47) has been busy this spring, presenting concerts and master classes at Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Rutgers, Temple, and Columbia Universities. Frequently invited to participate in Schumann festivals and symposia, he brings special insights to such events as a result of his study with Carl Friedberg, Clara Schumann’s assistant.

Jim Burnett (BME '68) has, after 20 years of teaching music, begun teaching Social Studies to junior high students. He and his wife Rose (BME '65) live in Walled Lake, MI.

James Collins (att. '75) has moved to Nashville, TN and is writing songs with Michelle Gilliland of Lathrop, MO. They are available for hire with all major and independent record labels in the Nashville area.

Robert Ensor (BM '73, MM '74) is a member of the music faculty at William Woods College in Fulton, MO, a position
he has held for the past five years. Prior to that, he was an adjunct professor and staff accompanist at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Marietta Gehr (BM '68) is currently working as a paralegal for Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher in Dallas, TX. She has sung with the Dallas Symphony Chorus since 1983.

Gail Hamilton (MM '78) is residing in Denver, CO, where she is engaged in graduate study in psychology. She is still active as a singer, having recently presented concerts in Denver and at William Woods College in Fulton, MO. Gail also teaches voice and piano to about 15 students.

Denise Heising (BM '76) writes with the following news from Louisiana: she conducted a Christmas concert that included combined choirs from ten local churches (about 200 singers in all), and she was also promoted to manager of programming at Graham Resources in Covington, LA. Her son Niels, age 8, is playing both the cello and the piano.

Cecilia Hwang (MM '73) has been living in Toronto since 1974. She and her husband, Tom, have three children, ages 16, 13, and 9. Cecilia teaches at Ontario Bible College and also serves as choir director in a Korean Church.

Linda Johnston (BME '76) is teaching music in the Olathe, KS schools this year as a regular substitute teacher.

Phyliss Mathis (BME '76), though semi-retired now, has served for the past four years as official pianist for the Olathe, KS Salvation Army. She is also very active in advocacy programs sponsored by mental health organizations at both the state and national levels.

Cindy (Muskrat) Orr (MM '83) and her husband, Taylor, announce the birth of a son, Joshua Sherman, on March 6. They are enjoying life in their new home—which they designed and built themselves—outside Houston, MO.

Mark Powis (BME '84, MM '86) is currently teaching vocal and instrumental music, grades 1-12, in the Gridley, KS public schools. In his spare time, he works on a major construction project that will result in a music room for his home in Garnett, KS.

Robert Dean Smith (BME '80) received very favorable comments in the January issue of Opera News for his portrayal of Aspern in the Kassel Opera Company's European premiere of Dominick Argento's The Aspern Papers.

Debbie Stark (MM '89) is residing in Murphysboro, IL. She is keeping very busy as a caseworker for the Township of Murphysboro, and, musically, as a part-time minister of music for her church and as applied vocal instructor at John A. Logan Community College. Her husband, Tim, is youth minister for the First Christian Church.

Patrick Sweeten (MM '89) is playing bass trombone in the Bartlesville, OK Symphony Orchestra.

James Wintle's (BM '64, MS '65) newest composition written for the Verdehr Trio, Phantasirte Satz, was performed on a recent midwestern tour by the famed ensemble. Included in the tour was a concert on the PSU campus as part of the 1990-91 Solo and Chamber Music Series.

Tony Woodward (BME '64) is in his first year as pastor of the Sedan, Elgin, and Peru churches in the Kansas East Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Obituaries

Edwina Fowler, Oct. 5, in Fort Smith, AR, where she had been living with her daughter and son-in-law. Ms. Fowler had served the university as a member of the music faculty and as a teacher in the Horace Mann School, where she worked closely with student teachers from the department of music.

Lavon Holden, Nov. 9, in Fort Scott, KS. Ms. Holden was well known in Pittsburg as a voice teacher, soloist, and choral director, having directed the choirs at both the United Presbyterian Church and the First Presbyterian Church.

Dr. Juanita "Nita" Laing, December 27, in Pittsburg, KS. A member of the PSU department of English for 30 years, she had a special fondness for folklore and was the recipient of an NEH grant for her work within that area. She helped organize the Little Balkans Folklife Festival, the central component of what would become the Little Balkans Days celebration in Pittsburg. She was married to Dr. Millard Laing, who chaired the department of music during the years 1953-1978.