New Life For Old Instruments

One of the joys of the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments is its size and variety of holdings. One of its problems is keeping its treasures in playing condition. Since 1899, the Stearns has grown from 900 to over 2,000 instruments. Long time Stearns fans may remember how the collection was once packed in cases in the second floor lobby in Hill Auditorium, hanging on hooks with labels attached, like items in a pawn shop. Under those conditions, many fine instruments suffered badly. The goal of the Stearns today is to see that instruments, old and new, are maintained properly to maximize their performance and educational potential. Meeting this goal requires two things - money and proper expertise. Thanks to the Friends of the Stearns, the collection has been able to secure the expertise of Robert Vernon in Ann Arbor, and work has begun on the task of restoring the Stearns' wind instruments.

Robert Vernon conserves as much of the original instrument as possible

particular any reconstructed parts, are deliberately made detectable. For example, ivory parts are matched with plastic and any replacement key Mr. Vernon makes will be signed and dated by him. He thinks not only of the instrument's history but of its future. One hundred years from now another restorer may be examining the same instrument. It must be clear which parts of the instrument are the restorer's work and which are original.

During the process of disassembly, a plan is carefully drawn as the instrument is taken apart. This provides the blueprint for later reassembly. Any part that has to be removed and replaced is saved and stored, carefully labelled and documented.

A restorer can't expect to walk into a music store and pick up spare parts for every historic instrument. Neither can he march into a hardware store and always pick up exactly the right tool he needs. Therefore it is necessary for him to have the ability not only to make the parts he needs but also to make the tools with which to craft them.

The cleaning process requires similar consideration. It must be very thorough and non-invasive so that none of the original finish of the instrument is harmed or lost. On metal parts Mr. Vernon uses museum quality metal cleaner and on wood he uses a compound recommended by wood conservers.

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3. Stearns Collection on the Map
THE HARPSICHORD: A TREAT FOR EYE AND EAR

Do you consider musical instruments to be pieces of art? 16thC-18thC Europeans certainly did. The Italians, Flemish, French, English and Germans all thought of their harpsichords as works of art as well as musical instruments.

The fascinating illumination of their different aesthetic preferences and how that influenced the recognizable design of their respective harpsichords is the subject of our next $2 + 2 + 2$ presentation.

Why do many French harpsichords have a hunting scene painted on the front? Why is the Latin motto, 'In life I was silent, in death I sing' such a common form of decoration? What can we look for in the overall shape and form as well as in its decoration that tells us about the original owner of the harpsichord and of its subsequent history? What spiritual satisfaction did makers find in making their harpsichords? Is it the same for the harpsichord maker today?

Edward L. Kottick
Professor of Musicology, University of Iowa

All these questions and more will be answered on January 8, 1989, at 2 p.m. in the School of Music's Recital Hall when Edward L. Kottick, professor of musicology at the University of Iowa, presents, "The Harpsichord: A Treat for Eye and Ear". Professor Kottick studied the history of harpsichord decorating with art historian Sheridan Germann and has been building harpsichords for the past 20 years.

ANCIENT ART ALIVE AND WELL IN JAVA

The royal court city of Sura Karta, Central Java. How magnificent it sounds, and how unique is the gamelan which is still hand crafted there.

This art is the topic of our $2 + 2 + 2$ presentation in the Recital Hall of the School of Music on Sunday, February 12, 1989 at 2 p.m. At that time, Samuel D. Quigley of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston will present and discuss his videotape entitled "Making Bronze Gongs in Java". The lecture is based on his research conducted in Sura Karta.

The Javanese gamelan is a large ensemble of predominantly percussion instruments, bronze xylophones and gongs on carved and painted teak supports. The instruments cover a range of about 8 octaves and the ensemble may range from 4 to as many as 25 players.

The presentation will focus specifically on the Javanese craft and technique of hot metal forging of the bronze gongs, an art which Mr. Quigley found to be still very much alive and respected there. Javanese gongsmiths command as much respect in Java as the Samurai swordmaker might expect in Japan.

Founder and director of the Boston Village Gamelan, Mr. Quigley has been studying Javanese music since 1972 when his interest was sparked at Wesleyan University during student days there. He has a Master of Arts in musicology with a particular interest in Indonesian music which he teaches part time at the New England Conservatory of Music. Keeper of Musical Instruments for MFA, Mr. Quigley is responsible for its collection of around 1100 historical musical instruments and is a regular contributor to MFA publications.

$2 + 2 + 2 = 2$ p.m. on the 2nd Sunday of the first 2 months of each semester.
New Life for Old Instruments
Continued from page 1

A true craftsman, Mr. Vernon prides himself on the quality of every detail of his work. Right down to the repositioning of each minute screw into its original position and location, he is faithful to the historical accuracy of the instrument so that his work truly reflects the caliber of the Stearns Collection.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?
Our work on wind instruments is only a start. With further help and expertise, we can expand our attention to cover stringed instruments and percussion. And then there are all the instruments of Asia and Africa!

 STEARNS COLLECTION ON THE MAP

When you travel to Ann Arbor, what is there to see? The University of Michigan Art Museum and The Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments. That's the opinion of the new National Geographic Close-Up USA series of maps published this year. This set of maps is designed to help a tourist see all the great sights of America with the aid of oil cloth National Geographic maps and a reference book. These two museums are the only items listed for Ann Arbor. The Art Museum now fills the former Alumni Hall with exceptional items of art from Asia and Africa as well as Europe and America. The Stearns, in its new galleries at the School of Music, tastefully displays the broad prospective of world music from its collection of over 2,000 instruments. Both museums are open to the public without charge. Guided tours and special lecture/demonstrations can be arranged. The National Geographic has chosen some winners. Be a tourist in your own town and visit them soon! Better yet...Become a Friend of The Stearns.

Become A Friend of The Stearns

With your help, additional instruments may be restored, played, displayed and appreciated by the musical public. Friends receive The Stearns Newsletter, invitations to the 2 + 2 + 2 lecture series and announcements of upcoming exhibits and performances. Your contributions help support all activities of the Stearns Collection.

Membership in the Friends of the Stearns Collection is available in the following categories:

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I (We) want to support the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments.
I enclose my check for $________________ made payable to The University of Michigan Stearns Collection.

Mr., Mrs., Dr., Miss, Ms., ________________

Please circle title(s) and print your name above as you would like it to appear on donor lists.

Spouse's name if not given above

Phone number

Street          City          State          Zip Code

Please mail this form with your check to Friends of the Stearns Collection, The University of Michigan School of Music, Moore Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109.
How Do I Get to The Stearns?

The Stearns Collection of Musical instruments is located in the new Margaret Dow Towsley wing at the south end of the Earl V. Moore School of Music on Bolts Drive in the University of Michigan North campus area. Enter through the doors nearest to the parking lot. The Macintosh Vocal Arts Center is just across the hall and to the right of the entrance, and The Stearns galleries are down the stairs at the end of the hall to the right.

Admission: Free at all times.

Exhibit Hours: Thurs., Fri. 10-5
Sat., Sun. 1-6

Group Visits and Tours: To arrange for group visits or guided tours by members of The Stearns collection staff, please call (313) 763-4389.

Parking: Metered parking is available south of the entrance doors.

UPCOMING EXHIBITS

The Stearns collection is proud to announce the opening of several new exhibits. On November 11th a new exhibit was opened to the public featuring the Stearns' Adolphe Sax (1814-1894) collection, as well as wind and brass instruments from the 18th and 19th centuries. This exhibit celebrates the publication of the Stearns Collection's newest catalogue European and American Wind and Percussion Instruments by James M. Borders, Assistant Professor of Music and curator of the collection. Come and trace the development of our Western orchestral winds and brass in Gallery One of the Stearns Collection in the Margaret Dow Towsley wing of the School of Music. Our exhibit spaces on the third floor and in the School of Music Library will feature several new acquisitions to the collection. Look for them in the coming weeks.

James M. Borders

European and American Wind and Percussion Instruments

Catalogue of the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments,
University of Michigan

This volume is devoted to a discussion of the Western European and American wind and percussion instruments of the University of Michigan Stearns Collection. In 1899, Frederick Stearns donated 904 instruments to the University of Michigan School of Music. Since then the collection has mushroomed into one of the largest in the United States, representing every continent and historical period and including more than two thousand pieces. Subsequent donors, enthusiastic patrons, and other members of the Friends of the Stearns are largely responsible for this growth. A unique and significant educational resource and an international treasure, the Stearns Collection serves the academic community, the music world, and the general public.

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