



# THE Stearns Newsletter

THE STEARNS COLLECTION OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

FALL 1999

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

VOLUME 12, No. 2

## A Centennial Gala

BY JOSEPH S. C. LAM, DIRECTOR, THE STEARNS COLLECTION OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

On November 13, 1999, the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments celebrated its centennial anniversary with a black-tie gala consisting of a reception, musical performances, and an exquisite dinner for 130 invited guests. The event formally began at 5:45 p.m. as Sinaboro, a group of UM students, played Korean drum and gong music in the courtyard



Sinaboro performs Korean drum and gong music in the courtyard outside the entrance to the Margaret Dow Towsley Wing of the School of Music

outside the entrance of the Margaret Dow Towsley wing of the School of Music. The sky was darkening and the temperature dropping, but the loud, metallic sounds of the gongs and the pulsating rhythm mesmerized the arriving guests. Rather than going into the building directly, many stood on the curbside or walkway and enjoyed the performance. For a moment or two, they could



Dean Paul Boylan and Mrs. Nan Conlin enjoy the reception

have been visiting traditional Korea, from which the music originated.

As they entered the Conlin Lobby, they were greeted by Dr. John Psarouthakis, Mrs. Ginny Moss, Ms. Lois Russell, Prof. Joseph Lam, and other Stearns

...see A Centennial Gala on page 2

## Excerpts from Dean Paul Boylan's Welcome Speech



Dean Paul Boylan explains the history and uniqueness of the Stearns Collection

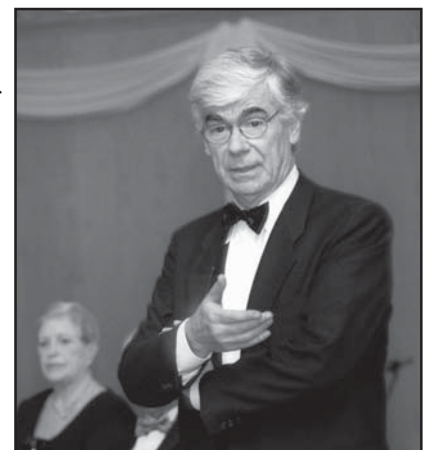
The school of music was founded in 1879. It is one of the oldest schools in a public university in the United States. And, quite happily, about 20 years after its founding, a wonderful benefactor gave to the university a collection of musical instruments, and that is what we are celebrating this evening. In fact, those musical instruments offer to students, I think, a wonderful

glimpse into the various cultures and societies around the world and throughout the centuries. The instruments also offer a great ben-

...see Dean Boylan's Speech, page 3

## Excerpts from Dr. John Psarouthakis's Welcome Speech

Good evening! My name is John Psarouthakis. I am the chair of the Board of Directors of the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments, and I would like to thank you very much for coming tonight and attending the various concerts and seeing the collection. There are about 2000 instruments in this collection and they cannot all be viewed in one visit. . . .



Dr. John Psarouthakis welcomes the guests and calls for support for the Stearns Collection

As chairman, I have been enjoying taking credit for things that were done by others, and done very well,

...see Dr. Psarouthakis Speech, page 3

## A Centennial Gala... continued from page 1



**Dr. Jim Telfer and Mrs. Jill Corr enjoy the social atmosphere of the gala event**

representatives. Nibbling hors d'oeuvres, sipping wine, and chatting with friends new and old, the guests flowed from one floor to another to examine the display cases of Stearns instruments.

Soon, students ushered the guests to the Blanche Anderson Moore Organ Recital Hall in the building's lowest level, where they enjoyed a short harp recital of 18th century European music. Enchanted by the crystal tones of the harp, some guests stayed on for another round of Ms. Alison Perkins' performance, while

others moved up one floor to the gamelan room, where a group of UM students performed classical Indonesian music under the direction of Professor Judith Becker, an international authority on the music. An integral part of the Stearns Collection, the gamelan is an indispensable tool for Professor Becker's teaching, performance and research. Recently cleaned and shined, the gongs of the gamelan glistened, producing sights that matched their courtly sounds.



**The UM gamelan ensemble performs Indonesian music**

As the guests promenaded, socialized, listened to music, and viewed musical instruments from four corners of the world, they not only enjoyed themselves, but also felt the musical and cultural presence of the Stearns Collection. Much more than merely an assemblage of musical instruments from bygone days, the collection

represents world cultures and musics. As soon as viewers realize how the instruments produce musical sounds and what the decorative designs on them signify, the instruments come to life, inviting the viewers to specific sites of distinctive musics.

At 7:00 p.m. sharp, a bugle call was performed, inviting the guests to the Allen Britton Recital Hall. Powerful as the call was, it was not enough. Only when Mrs. Virginia P. Moss, vice chair of the Board of Directors of the Stearns Collection, appeared on the stage to introduce Dean Paul Boylan for a speech, the audience settled. He



**Trumpeter Brian Miller summons the guests with a bugle call**



**Mr. and Mrs. Lubbes pose in front of the Tromba, from which the Stearns logo is developed**

first gave a brief history of the Stearns Collection and explained its uniqueness (See Dean Paul Boylan's Welcome Speech, pages 1 and 3). Then, he thanked Mrs. Nan Conlin, Mrs. Stephanie Lord, Mrs. Virginia P. Moss, Dr. John Psarouthakis and others who had generously donated time and their talents to launch the gala. He extended a special welcome to Mrs.

Marjorie Lubbes of New Jersey, who came specifically for the gala and who is a great-great granddaughter of Frederick Stearns, who donated 904 pieces of instruments to the University of Michigan in 1899 and started the collection.

Professor Joseph Lam, Director of the Stearns Collection, then welcomed the guests and offered a short explanation on Indian *sarod* and *tabla* music, which was performed by two



**U-M Graduate Students Mr. Ajit Acharya and Mr. Mathew Rosen play Indian music on the sarod and tabla**

students of the university, Mr. Ajit Acharya and Mr. Mathew Rosen. At the end of their performance, the guests moved on to the Rehearsal Hall next door.



**Mrs. Virginia P. Moss listens to the Indian music**

Many guests were amazed by the complete transformation the hall had undergone. Instead of a rectangular and rather utilitarian hall filled with students, they saw an exotic garden of palm trees and lights, where gentlemen in their tuxedos and ladies in their evening gowns gathered. While jazz piano music was played by Mr. Mathew Buchman, a graduate student in the School of Music jazz program, a sumptuous dinner was served.

Just before a delicious carrot cake was distributed for dessert, Dr. John Psarouthakis, the chair of the Board of Directors of the Stearns Collection, stood up to present a bouquet to Mrs. Lubbes and explained the purpose of the gathering and how it had been designed and prepared over the last nine months. He concluded with a call for support for the collection (see Dr. John Psarouthakis's Welcome Speech, pages 1 & 3).

...see A Centennial Gala on next page

## A Centennial Gala...

*continued from page 2*

The grand finale of the evening was Professor Penelope Crawford's performance on Ann Arbor's oldest piano, first brought to the city in 1827. A leading performer of historical piano music, Professor Crawford played three short pieces, charming the audience with delicate sounds from the early 19th century and demonstrating the power of music and musical instruments. It was hard for the guests to overlook the extreme versatility of music, and to realize that through musical instruments like those of the Stearns Collection, one can reach different times and cultures.



**Professor Penelope Crawford prepares to play a song using one finger of her right hand**

## Dean Boylan's Speech...

*continued from page 1*

efit for the community. We have an extraordinary number of young people, for instance, who come and see the collection every year. . . .

It is a wonderful collection. And it is something that is unique in the United States. Whereas, for instance, the Yale School of Music has an astonishingly good collection of ancient keyboard instruments, the Stearns Collection is unique in its variety and in our efforts to make it an assemblage of instruments of many cultures—China, India, Indonesia, Africa and areas like that, as well as America. So we are very, very pleased and proud of this collection and what Joseph Lam is doing to lead it both in terms of presenting some research opportunities for our students as well as calling it to the attention of the general public. . . .

It is very nice to have this wonderful group of people here to support the collection this evening [Editor's Note: Dean Boylan thanked Mrs. Nan Conlin, Mrs. Stephanie Lord, Mrs. Marjorie Lubbes, Mrs. Ginny P. Moss, Dr. John Psarouthakis and others.] I thank you all for coming, and I certainly hope you enjoy the rest of the evening as much as I have enjoyed it thus far. Thank you.

## Dr. Psarouthakis's

*continued from page 1*

and I would like to recognize these people, and then to take a look at the history of recent events and entice you to continue a contract with the collection into the future. But first, the events tonight have taken place primarily because of the efforts of a number of people. I'll mention by name only two and then ask the Centennial Committee to stand up. Ginny Moss, Nan and Bill Conlin, and the members of Nan's committee please stand up to be recognized. Thank you. Thank you very much. . . .

About a year ago, Ginny Moss called some of us to lunch at Paesano's. . . . So we got together at Paesano's and the subject was the beginning of this unique and large collection. Unique, as Dean Paul Boylan said, in terms of the variety of its holdings and their history. Some of them are pretty old. . . . The collection began a hundred years ago, so we had to do something to celebrate; a hundred years is a long period of time. Somebody said, "Simple; we will throw a party." And I said: "Well, we have got to do more than a party. This is an occasion to throw a party and to do something more afterwards." And that was when I got involved.

The idea was, after further discussion, to invite some people to celebrate the centennial like we have done, but also get you to see the instruments and develop some interest in them so that you can be more active in continuing activities that relate to the collection. Now to do that we need to get organized. So we said okay, and then we reformed the board and various committees, including a development committee.

Its function is to raise funds—the idea is to raise funds annually and perhaps on an endowment basis, so that the collection can do more active research on the instruments, publish scholarly works, and present more

## Speech...

concerts and exhibitions to the community and students. By that I do not necessarily mean music students only; I am talking about high school level students, and even younger ones. I want to expose them to these unique musical instruments that we have in our community. To some extent these assets have been hidden; the activities have been essentially academic, which is wonderful, but we also want to get the collection more actively engaged with the community. For example, we should be exhibiting the relevant instruments in Hill Auditorium or Power Center where concerts take place.

Now that takes money. It takes money to maintain the instruments; it takes money to case them, to move them, to do research, to invite scholars, to do concerts. And one does not raise money overnight. I am not going to ask for your checkbooks tonight; we intend to do that sometime in the future. But we need to have money to do all these things at a level that can be done well, and we estimate that we need to spend north of \$250,000 annually to do these types of activities well.

I do not think it is important to go into the details right away, nor do I qualify to really say the details. So what I am trying to do is to ask you to really look at the collection. It is a beautiful asset that represents world music in a very unique way. And it is in our community, and very few communities have similar collections. So I would like to ask you to look ahead with interest, to relate to this collection personally as well as through the organized approach that we intend to launch beginning tonight.

Again, I would like to thank you for coming. I hope you are enjoying the evening, and do not be surprised if we contact you in the future. Thank you.

## How Do I Get To The Stearns?

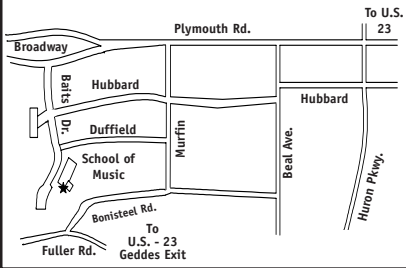
The Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments is located in the Margaret Dow Towsley wing at the south end of the Earl V. Moore Building of the School of Music on Baits Drive in the University of Michigan North Campus area. Enter through the doors nearest to the parking lot. The McIntosh Hall is just across the lobby and to the right of the entrance. The Stearns galleries are down the stairs at the end of the lobby to the right.

**ADMISSION:** Free at all times.

**EXHIBIT HOURS:** Monday to Friday 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**GROUP VISITS AND TOURS:** To arrange for group visits or guided tours, please call (734) 763-4389.

**PARKING:** Metered parking is available south of the entrance doors.



## Stearns/Virginia Martin Howard Lectures for Fall 1999 and Winter 2000

On September 19, 1999, Professor Amy K. Stillman of the School of Music, University of Michigan, an international authority on Oceanic music, lectured on Tahitian drumming. Entitled "Polynesian Thunder: Tahitian Dance Drumming," Professor Stillman's lecture not only showed wonderful video-clips of Tahitian dancing, but also explained basic principles beneath the complex patterns of the drum music. Professor Stillman also demonstrated on the slit drums and encouraged the audience to tap along with her.

On October 17, 1999, Associate Provost and Professor of Musicology Lester Monts of the University of Michigan, a prominent scholar of West African music, lectured on music, musical instruments, dance and ritual of West Africa. Entitled "Bring out the Devils: Musical Instruments and Masquerades of the Guinea Coast," Professor Monts' lecture explained the music and its social and cultural contexts with revealing insights and ethnographic data. What mesmerized the audience, however, was the fieldwork video recordings that Professor Monts showed. Capturing precious moments of dancing and demonstrating sharp contrasts among different dances and dancers, the recordings transported the audience to Western Africa of the late 1970s when the recordings were made.

On January 23, 2000, Associate Dean and Professor of Harp Lynne Aspnes of the School of Music, University of Michigan, spoke on "Harps and Musical Styles: The 19th Century Way." Presented in the Britton Recital Hall of the School of Music, Professor Aspnes not only described the distinctive features of the various styles, but also demonstrated them with her own performances.

On February 13, 2000, Professor Marilyn Mason of the School of Music, University of Michigan, will give a lecture-recital on the Marilyn Mason Organ in the Blanche Anderson Moore Organ Recital Hall of the School of Music. A much-respected teacher and performer of organ music worldwide, Professor Mason's lecture-recital will be a memorable event. She will demonstrate why the much-admired organ is "Michigan's *Klingendes Wunde*."

All Stearns/Virginia Martin Howard lectures are free, and will start at 2:00 p.m. All are welcome.

## B E C O M E A F R I E N D O F T H E S T E A R N S

With your help, precious instruments may be restored, played, displayed, and appreciated by the musical public. Friends receive *The Stearns Newsletter*, invitations to the Virginia Martin Howard Lectures, and announcements of upcoming exhibits and performances. Your contribution will help support all activities of the Stearns Collection.

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

- Benefactor* \$1000       *Patron* \$500       *Sustaining* \$100       *Friends* \$30  
 *Student / Senior Citizen* \$15

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 \_\_\_\_\_

*The Stearns Newsletter*

• Vol. 12 No. 2 ) ISSN 1046-4387