



# The Stearns Newsletter

The Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments at the University of Michigan

SPRING 2001

SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

VOLUME 14, No.1

## Greetings

Dear friends of the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments! Much has happened since the last issue of the *Stearns Newsletter* was sent to you in the Spring of 2000. The production of Volume 13, No. 2 was interrupted last fall by computer difficulties and construction work at the Burton Memorial Tower. Now, we have produced this issue to report to you the many exciting things that have happened; please accept this issue as a combined *Stearns Newsletter* of Volume 13, No. 2 and Volume 14, No. 1.

## Learning with the Stearns' 18th Century Cello, by Mary Morris



Ms. Mary Morris plays the Stearns cello.

It has been exactly one year since I commenced Baroque cello lessons, using the lovely eighteenth century English cello of the Stearns Collection, which was loaned to me by Professor Lam. Since then, I have been studying solo repertoire for the instrument with the highly regarded Baroque cellist and gambist Enid Sutherland, who to my immense good fortune is a resident of Ann Arbor. I have used the cello as well

in my early music ensemble studies at the University of Michigan with Professor Edward Parmentier, a harpsichordist. Both of these excellent teachers have helped me to understand how to use the instrument to create the color and intimacy of sound which is critical to an understanding of seventeenth and eighteenth century repertoire.

... see *Stearns Cello*, p. 6

## New Exhibitions

Thanks to the generous support of Virginia and Cruse Moss, not just one, but five (!) cases in the Stearns Collection exhibits will be changed this semester. They are designed and installed by Dana Buck, an exhibits designer from the Kelsey Museum, in consultation with Prof. Emeritus William P. Malm, former director of the Stearns.

The first case contains an original Adolph Sax saxophone plus one of the only three existing examples of a Loomis saxophone. The latter, patented by Allen Loomis of Toledo in 1920, shows all the features of the modern saxophone before they were manufactured. Go to the School of Music Library to study them up close.



Loomis saxophone, ca. 1920

... see *Exhibitions*, p. 2

## The Outreach Committee & My Participation, by Dr. Robert Whitman



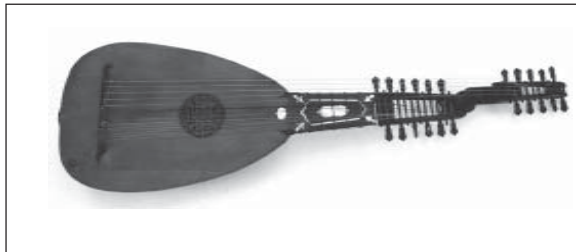
Dr. Robert Whitman

Nothing in my formal education relates to either music or instruments; but I was blessed with music-loving parents, and from the age of ten or so was a regular attendee at performances of the Boston Symphony. I grew up in Cambridge...

... see *Outreach*, p. 4

**New Exhibitions,** continued from p. 1

The second new exhibit is entitled “Exotic Strings from the Stearns” and will be in the large case at the main entrance to the School of Music. In it you will see a giant Rudra Vina from India and a most curious one-stringed Tromba Marina from Italy. Two other large stringed instruments shown are the Italian archlute with long open strings to provide bass sounds and a *kora*, a West African harp lute that was used to accompany praise and narrative songs for the pleasure of African rulers. For contrast the exhibit includes a small German bowed monochord from Ohio that may have been used to accompany church or school singing when a keyboard instrument was not available. There also is a small German violin, played by dance teachers during their choreographic lessons.



Italian archlute



West African kora

Moving to the lower level of Stearns exhibits in the South end of the building, you will see a new exhibit on drums from all over the world. In it you will learn the basic ways in which drumheads are attached and tightened.

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**Virginia Martin Howard/  
Stearns Lectures Series**

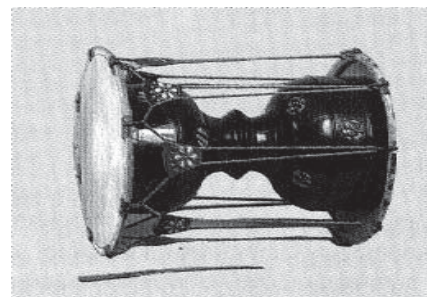
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In the fall of 2000, the Virginia Martin Howard/ Stearns Lecture Series presented two fascinating lectures. The first one, given on October 1, 2001, was by Ms. Heesun Kim, a professional *kayagum* (12 string zither of Korea) performer and a Ph.D.candidate, of the University of Pittsburgh.



Ms. Kim performs *kayagum* music

Ms. Kim first explained the organological features of the *kayagum* and its history, and demonstrated various performance techniques of plucking and pressing the strings. Then accompanied by Mr. Jayyoung Kim, who played rhythmic patterns on the *changgo*, the Korean hourglass drum, she performed three pieces of traditional *kayagum* music. Her superb expressions and techniques won enthusiastic applause from the audience.



Korean *changgo* and stick

... See New Exhibitions, p. 3

See Stearns Lectures, p. 3

**New Exhibitions**, continued from p. 2.

In the lobby before the MacIntosh theater on the first floor of the south end of the building, there are two cases demonstrating the classification of world musical instruments. Besides all this, there also are the present exhibits of guitars, brass instruments, winds, and animal figures on instruments to entertain and enrich your visit to the Stearns. Come take a look!

Want to know more about the instruments you see in the Stearns galleries? Want to share it with your friends or organization? Call Carol Brodbeck, (734) 434 3795, the director of the Stearns Tours Program. A group of docents has been trained to lead you through the instruments now on display, and to answer questions you may have about organology, the science of musical instruments.

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**Carol Brodbeck, the New Director of the Stearns Tours**

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Upon receiving her Bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences from Bowling Green State University in 1966, Carol joined Parke-Davis Pharmaceutical Company. Two years later, she became a member of the company's newly established Research Information Systems computer department in Ann Arbor, which provided computer systems for analyzing and summarizing research data. There Carol oversaw the design and development of numerous computer systems. During her 33 year career at Parke-Davis/ Warner-Lambert, Carol served as chair of many committees, and was responsible for introducing many "firsts" within her company. An author and lecturer on computer systems, Carol was a member of the IEEE Society. She retired in early 2000 to pursue her many other interests.



Carol Brodbeck

As Director of the Stearns Tours, a program of guided tours to the exhibition of musical instruments in the Moore Building of the School of Music, U-M, Carol will actively introduce the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments to the general public in Greater Ann Arbor.

*See Brodbeck, p. 4*

**Stearns Lectures**, continued from p. 2

On October 29, 2000, Professor Greta Olson of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, a leading scholar on seventeenth century Spanish music, gave a lecture on the significance of the paintings of musical instruments. Entitled "Angels, Musical Instruments and Seventeenth Century Spain," her lecture showed fascinating iconographic evidence of Spanish music and musical instruments. See Professor Olson's essay on pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter.

On February 4, 2001, Professor Albin Zak, University of Michigan, lectured on the Beatles' creative and expressive use of musical colors in their compositions and performances. Entitled "The Beatles' Infinite Palette of Musical Colors," Professor Zak played a series of well-chosen excerpts from the Beatles' repertory, tracing the musicians's creative change of styles and sounds. Professor Zak's explanations, such those on the innovative use of a string quartet in "Yesterday," presented the audience a new perspective to appreciate those modern-day classics.



Professor Zak explains Beatles' music

On March 11, 2001, Master Yoshinobu Taniguchi, one of Japan's leading performers and teachers of shakuhachi, the Zen end-blown flute of Japan, joined his American discipline, Mr. Michael Gould, to present a lecture/demonstration on the musical instrument in the Britton Recital Hall of the School of Music. They played two traditional pieces, and invited the audience to examine the old and new specimens that they brought.



Shakuhachi

**Outreach Committee**, continued from p. 1. **Brodbeck**, continued from p. 3

so much in the shadow of Harvard that I broke family and school tradition and went “out west” to college, i.e. to Cornell, where I majored in English literature. I returned to Harvard for my PhD, also in English, and taught at Princeton, and later at the University of Pittsburgh, where I was chairman of the English Department. I came to Ann Arbor because my wife was a group vice president at General Motors; but now that we have both retired, the decision to stay was certainly influenced by the easy accessibility of good music, as well as good friends, in this remarkable community. We are naturally much involved with the Musical Society and the School of Music; and my involvement with the Stearns Collection arises from a keen sense that here is a fascinating, valuable, and virtually unique resource available to the university, the community, indeed everyone—but only if they know about it.

To this end, I have volunteered to be the Chair of the Out-reach Committee of the Collection; the other members are: Carol Sue Brodbeck, Jill Corr, Penny Fischer, Linda Grekin, Carole Holmes, Chris Larsen, Bill Malm, Ginny Moss, and Anne Rubin. The Collection has been blessed by the acquisition of a human dynamo in the person of Carol Sue Brodbeck as volunteer director of the newly revived guided tour program. Not only have she and Bill Malm, Director Emeritus of the Collection, trained the first docent “class”—now prepared to give visiting groups a lively tour of the exhibit—but they have put together a small illustrated brochure introducing the collection.

Bill Malm has come back from his retirement to do volunteer work for the Collection, and is now busy upgrading several of our display cases so that our docents will have more attractive exhibits to show our visitors. Our next projects are to acquire (and support) additional display locations, hopefully in a renovated Hill Auditorium, and to establish liaisons with local and area schools. Most important, perhaps, is the goal of enlarging our pool of docents; for it is they who are our spokespersons in our efforts to make this extraordinary collection of instruments known to, and available to, as many people as possible.

Towards that purpose, she has already designed colored pamphlets of the Collection, and distributed them to attendees of the Midwest Conference on Vocal and Instrumental Music earlier this year and music coordinators or superintendents of the local school systems. She is working with the Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and a local tour company to schedule tours to the collection.

Carol also does volunteer work for her 2,000-member church, the Ann Arbor Area Conference and Visitors Bureau, and the Matthei Botanical Garden. Carol spends her free time with her grand children, traveling, gardening, freelance writing and publishing, and photography.

Carol’s interest in music goes back to her college days. She played tenor saxophone in the college band for four years. After coming to Ann Arbor, she played in a volunteer dance band, and singing in a number of choirs, which include the UMS Choral Union, church choir, and numerous U-M master and doctoral conductor-candidate choirs. In 1993, she toured England with her church choir.

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### **Angels, Musical Instruments and Early 17th Century Spanish Painting**, by Greta Olson

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In Western Christianity, the association of music and religion is a long and venerable tradition, one with many references in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Musical angels adorn the altars, cornices of the churches, religious statues and paintings, or decorate books and manuscripts where they often figure as singers or instrumental musicians. While they sometimes appear individually, often they are presented in groups, poised around a central figure as if to serenade the individual. Consequently, many of these images provide a general idea of the variety of contexts and instruments which could be used in the performance of music.

During the mid-sixteenth century, the Counter Reformation provided new impetus to art, and a more realistic or naturalistic style became prominent, especially in Spain. As we move into the seventeenth century, the musical angels are no longer present in stilted positions but rather seem to be in more realistically moving, chatting, or performing.

Further the range of musical instruments broadens as shawms are replaced by cornetti or recorders, and violins rather than treble viols are more frequently presented. Harps, lutes, and organs are increasingly larger in size, with more strings or keys, and on occasion, a more unusual instrument, such as a gittern may creep into the paintings of the early seventeenth century. Nonetheless, the quantity of angelic instrumentalists of early seventeenth century Spanish painting is quite noticeable.

Several frescoes on the ceilings of Spanish churches deserve mention as they provide interesting approaches to the use of angelic instruments and musicians. The ceiling of the church of the Spanish Royal monastery, San Lorenzo El Real de El Escorial provides an interesting array of both musical angels with their instruments and figures important to the Catholic Church, the Spanish Church and the monastery itself. Completed in 1584-5, Luca Cambias's "La Gloria" presents a veritable musical orchestra of 35 harps, organs, lutes, large and small bowed string instruments, straight trumpets, transverse flutes, cornetti, and small percussion



Angelic musicians, Valencia, Spain  
Photo by Juan Carlos Tormo Albert

instruments. None of the instruments is presented with great accuracy (in fact, some are quite distorted in their representation on this curved ceiling) and the performers are scattered amid the other important personages as if they are serenading the individuals, rather than working as a united group in a single musical orchestra.

On the Eastern seaboard in Valencia, education and reformation of the church became some of the main goals of the Archbishop San Juan de Ribera (elected 1568- d. 1611), as he founded and built over eighty churches and religious houses in the province. The ideals of reform were integrated into his seminary, the Real Colegio-Seminario de Corpus Christi (Valencia), both in terms of the organization and operation of the Seminary via their Constitutions, and in the design and construction of the Seminary church. The architect for the Seminary,

Guillem del Rey, followed the principles laid out in San Carlo Borromeo's *Instructionum fabricae et supellectilis ecclesiasticae* (begun after 1572; Milan, 1577) to build and decorate the church. The frescoes for the church (dedicated in 1604) were painted by the genovese painter, Bartolomé Matarana (ca.1545-1605).

Matarana was not gifted with the highly developed artistic skills of many of his well-known contemporaries but he labored between 1597-1604 to complete the decorations. Angelic musicians fill the upper walls of many of the side chapels (as seen in the accompanying details), playing shawms or cornetti, although aspects of the instruments or their playing suggest a generous dose of artistic license, and the positioning of the angelic musicians around a central figure reflect a traditional approach to the composition of the frescos.

The use of angelic musicians to fill the dome over the altar table in Matarana's "Gloria de los ángeles músicos" represents a reformed approach to the use of angelic musicians. Since ancient times, angels had been considered to be present during the Mass and to help with the transubstantiation, so the location of this fresco, immediately above the altar table, is quite logical, if little used previously. The dome, divided into 4 quadrants, show angelic musicians playing some 30 instruments in a variety of instrumental combinations. The groupings represent groups of musicians consistent with church music while other groups seem consistent with devotional music and more secular contexts are suggested by the inclusion of several infrequently represented folk instruments, percussion and dancing angels. This was a time when Church fathers frequently reinterpreted or explained everyday events in a manner that allowed them to be understood in a religious context, reinforcing their concept of a universal and omnipresent Christian experience.



Angelic musicians, Valencia, Spain  
Photo by Juan Carlos Tormo Albert

## How Do I Get to the Stearns?

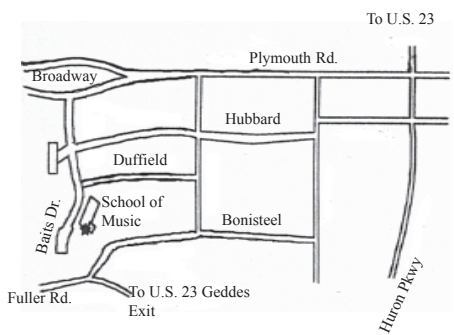
The Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments is located in the Margaret Dow Towsley wing at the south end of the Earl V. Moore Building of the School of Music on Baits Drive in the University of Michigan North Campus area. Enter through the doors nearest to the parking lot. The McIntosh Hall is just 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 through Friday, 10:00a.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 Cello, continued from p. 1

Much of that warmth has been sacrificed in modern instruments which are built primarily for power and volume of sound. This is of course a logical evolution when we realize that instruments now have to have enough sound to fill large concert halls. Music in previous centuries was a much more private and intimate affair. The royal chambers and private salons and chapels where instruments like the Stearn's cello were heard were much smaller and nuance and delicacy of tone were prized more than quantity of sound.

As a cellist with years and years of training on modern instruments this has been the most difficult idea for me to grasp. For many months last year, I would bear down on the instrument and wonder why it squeaked and complained back to me. I can remember playing continuo for some singers last year who were singing Heinrich Schutz and Luzzasco Luzzaschi and all of us were amazed at some of the truly, impressively awful sounds I was making. I did manage to make some progress however and with a harpsichordist friend, Amy Blithe, I gave my first baroque recital in early May, 2000. I am continuing to play in early music ensembles and am making plans to explore early Classical music with the Stearns cello.

By loaning me this cello, the Stearns's Collection has allowed me to explore a new, richly rewarding world of music making and I am immensely grateful. I now see the Stearns Collection as not only an assemblage of old musical instruments but a resource for music studies and performance.

## Become a Friend and Support the Stearns

With your help, precious instruments in the Stearns Collection may be restored, played, displayed and appreciated by the musical public. Friends receive the *Stearns Newsletter*, invitation to the Virginia Martin Howard/Stearns Lectures. 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;  Friend \$30;  Senior Citizen \$ 15

I (We) enclose my/our check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the following funds to support the Stearns Collection:

General Funds;  Activities Funds;  Restoration/Maintenance Funds;  Scholarship Funds

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