



# *The Stearns Newsletter*

THE STEARNS COLLECTION OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

FALL 2004

VOLUME 17, NOS. 1-2

## **The New Stearns Gallery at Hill Auditorium and a Celebratory Exhibition**

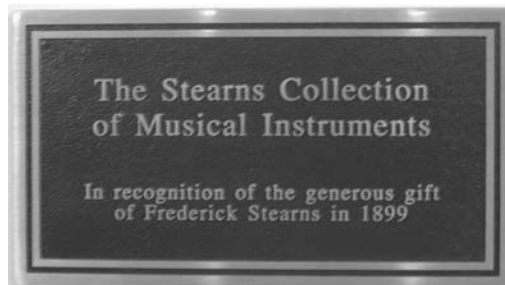
The new Stearns Gallery at Hill Auditorium is in the new lower lobby of the building: a beautiful and spacious venue created with support from the Elizabeth E Kennedy Foundation. The gallery features three state-of-the-art display cases. Lining along the north side of the gallery, the center case measures fifteen feet wide; the right and left cases each measure ten feet wide. With these display cases, the Stearns Collection acquires an exhibition venue that is conveniently located in the U-M campus and Ann Arbor downtown.

Thanks to the generous support by member of the Founders Society, beautiful art work has been installed in the cases to create a pleasing context for the presentation of musical instruments.

The Celebratory Exhibition features instruments with the following three themes: musical instruments made in Michigan, musical instruments that Frederick Stearns collected from around the world, and musical instruments members of the Founders Society have adopted.



Three display cases in the lower lobby of Hill Auditorium: Left, Center, and Right.



Dedicator Plaque (center) and the Hill Auditorium Lower Lobby.

---

## Greetings from the Director

---

**G**reetings! I am very pleased to tell you that the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments had a busy and successful winter and spring. As soon as the renovated Hill Auditorium opened in January 2004, the collection began to finalize the designs of its first exhibition in the Stearns Gallery in the new lobby of the auditorium. A grand exhibition that celebrates the collection's return to the auditorium has now opened. When you attend concerts in Hill Auditorium in the Fall, be sure to visit the elegant gallery, and view the displayed instruments and the art work that contextualizes their presence. The Adopt-an-Instrument program has concluded its first year with eight adoptions. This is a great achievement. It not only provides funds for a variety of Stearns activities, but also demonstrates Ann Arbor citizens' support for the collection. (See Adopt-an-Instrument, p. 5). Other regular activities continued as usual—the Virginia M. Howard Lectures, development of the digital archives and virtual museum, and so forth. To reveal an unknown aspect of Frederick Stearns' fascinating life and philanthropy, this issue publishes Mr. Douglas Nelson's report on a collection of Japanese natural history paintings that Stearns donated to the University.

---

## Virginia Martin Howard Lectures, Winter 2004

---

**I**n Winter 2004, the Virginia Martin Howard Lecture/Concert Series of the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments presented two events. On January 25, Professors Tian Qing and Zhang Shan of the Music Research Institute of Beijing, China, presented a lecture-recital of Chinese zither (*zheng*)



A *zheng*, Stearns 998, from the Stearns Collection.

history and music. Professor Tian, a Chinese musicologist noted for his eloquence, presented an informative and stimulating summary of Chinese *zheng* music, outlining its major lines of development, and explaining stylistic differences among schools of *zheng* music composers and performers. Translation from Chinese into English was provided by Ms. Joys Cheng, a Ph.D. candidate

... see *Lectures*, p. 4

---

## "Painted from Life ...": A Frederick Stearns Collection of Japanese natural history paintings

---

By Douglas W. Nelson  
Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan

**F**rederick Stearns, pharmacist, pharmaceutical manufacturer, publisher, collector, philanthropist, and natural historian, donated many valuable collections of art, artifacts, and natural history specimens to several museums and institutions. Most notable among these is the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments, the major portion of which Stearns presented to the University of Michigan in 1899.

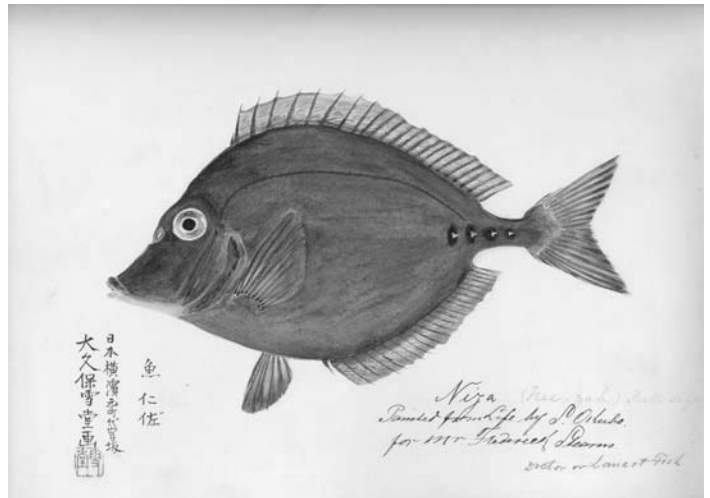
Apparently unknown, however, to both historians studying the Stearns legacy and to the various curators of collections bearing his name is a wonderful series of Japanese natural history watercolor illustrations painted for Stearns in 1892 by Mr. Okubo Setsudo of Yokohama. This collection was discovered by the author in the archives of the Fish Division of the Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan (UMMZ) in the late 1980s.

... see *Paintings*, p. 3

We are pleased to report that substantial progress has now been made in the areas of proper archival storage, identification and cataloguing of the paintings. A presentation and exhibit, based on a portion of the collection, are planned for fall, 2004 (University of Michigan Exhibit Museum of Natural History). Publication of the catalogue (print and online versions) is planned for 2005.

In total, there are 353 paintings in the collection. Each illustration bears Stearns' hand-written comment "Painted from Life by S. Okubo for Mr. Frederick Stearns" and a translation of the Japanese common name for the animal. As archived in the

Regarding the artist, Mr. Okubo Setsudo, all we presently know is his address in Yokohama, Japan; his seal (which is imprinted on each of the



Prionurus scalprus: the scalpel-tail surgeonfish

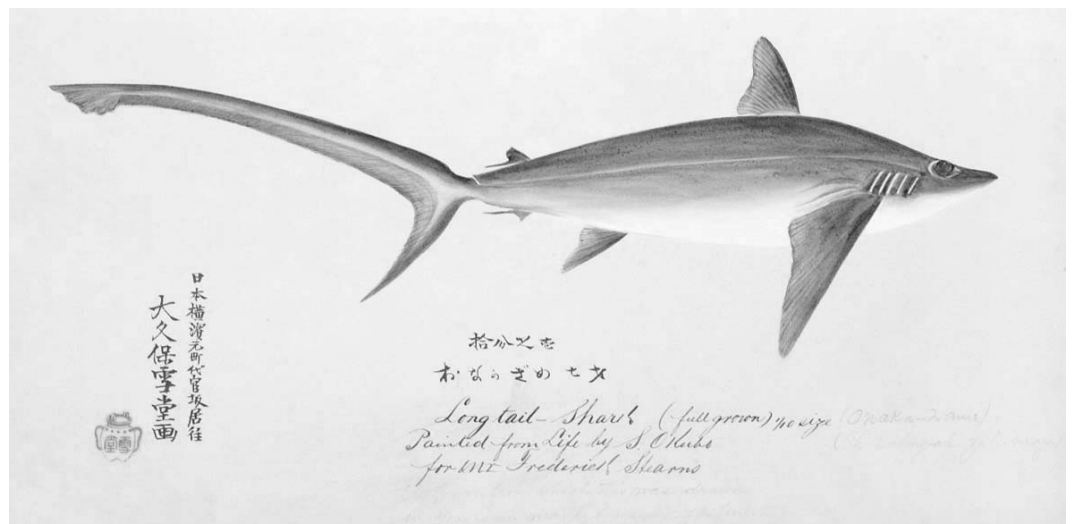
illustrations); and the beautiful paintings he rendered for Stearns. We have enlisted the aid of several colleagues in research efforts to discover more about Mr. Okubo.

Persons interested in further information about the collection are encouraged to contact the author at the Fish Division, Museum of Zoology, 1109 Geddes Ave., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1079 or via e-mail at dwnelson@umich.edu.



Uranoscopus japonicus: the Japanese stargazer

UMMZ, the collection comprises illustrations of 327 fishes, 12 mollusks, 6 crustaceans, 6 sea cucumbers, one feather star, and one whale. More than 125 Japanese fish species, belonging to 75 families, have thus far been identified in the series. Examinations of Stearns' hand-written lists accompanying the illustrations indicate that the paintings archived in the UMMZ may not represent the total collection.



Alopias vulpinus: the thresher shark

## Lectures, continued from p. 2

in the Department of Musicology, School of Music, U-M. Professor Zhang Shan performed five representative pieces of *zheng* music, fascinating the audience with a virtuosic performance of sweet melodies and dramatic sonorities.



Professor Naomi André

and their audience negotiated cultural and gendered meanings through the music performed and heard.

On March 27, Professor Naomi André, Women Studies, U-M, presented a lecture entitled “Operatic Voices and Period Ears.” With historical recordings and visual materials as well as clippings from the 1994 movie *Farinelli*, she discussed how Italian operatic singers made vocal music, and how they



Professor Donald Sinta

On September 26, Professor Donald Sinta, Earl V. Moore Professor of Music, U-M, and Mr. Brian Sacawa, a doctoral candidate in the School of Music, U-M, jointly presented a lecture-demonstration on the history of saxophone making and performance in the last 160 years. With a lively style of lecturing and exquisite playing accompanied on the piano by Ms. Kathryn Goodson, an Ann Arbor artist, Professor Sinta explained early saxophone making and performance. Professor Sinta also prepared a fascinating



Mr. Brian Sacawa

display of saxophones in different sizes and make, old records, specialized books and related

## Melodeon

In Winter of 2004, Ms. Cathy Lerner and Ms. Patty Wallace, daughters of the late Mr. Glenn McGeoch, Professor Emeritus of Music History, U-M, donated to the collection a melodeon and an endowment for its restoration and preservation. A small reed organ with a single keyboard, the melodeon was a wedding gift that Professor McGeoch presented to his bride Ms. Charlotte Whitman in August, 1939. Professor McGeoch was one of the founding members of musicological studies in the School of Music, U-M. With this donation, the collection acquires a beautiful sample of early 20th century American reed organs, a physical artifact of U-M music history, and funds to realize the collection’s mission. The melodeon will be restored for active performance in the near future.



Wedding Picture of Professor Glenn McGeoch and Ms. Charlotte Whitman



Melodeon

---

## **The Adopt-an-Instrument Program and the Founders Society**

---

As the collection's Adopt-an-Instrument Program has had a successful year and developed a mature program, it should now be formally introduced to readers of the *Stearns Newsletter*. Launched in spring 2003, the program is designed to raise funds to support the collection's preservation and display of musical instruments.

As physical objects, musical instruments deteriorate because of extended use and exposure to polluted air and other undesirable elements. In other words, all musical instruments, in due time, need restorative care, which involves many time-consuming and expensive activities. Purchase of authentic materials and hiring of specialists to conduct the repair, for example, are alarmingly costly. Similarly, mounting informative and attractive displays of musical instruments entail professional designs and exhibition materials.

the instrument is displayed, the name(s) of its adoptive parent(s) will be publicly acknowledged. With support thus acquired, the adopted instrument will receive the maintenance it needs, and will be displayed whenever appropriate.



Burmese Harp, Stearns 991.



Moog Synthesizer, Stearns 2035

The adoption process is simple, and its outcome is long-lasting. As soon as a patron expresses his/her interest in the program to the Director of the Collection, they meet to identify the instrument(s) to be adopted, and to work out the adoption fees. Once an agreement is reached, a permanent bond between an adoptive parent and an adopted instrument is established. From then on, whenever

To honor the first seven patrons of the program, who have generously support their adopted instruments with major donations, the collection honors them as members of the exclusive Founders' Society. Their adopted instruments will be featured in the celebratory exhibition in the new Stearns Gallery at Hill Auditorium throughout the 2004-05 seasons.

Many more instruments are available for adoption. For further information, please contact, Joseph Lam, Director, the Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments, 734-647-9471; [jsclam@umich.edu](mailto:jsclam@umich.edu).

## 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.

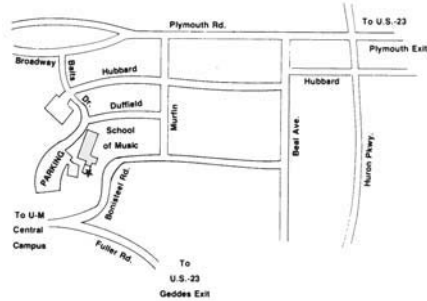
**Admission:** Free at all times.

**Exhibit Hours:** Monday through Friday  
10:00 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.



## Lectures, continued from p. 2

memorabilia. Mr. Sacawa discussed contemporary saxophone performance techniques, and illustrated them with historical records and performance. The lecture-demonstration ended with a saxophone quartet performance by Professor Sinta's students. The audience stayed long after the lecture to ask further questions and examine the displayed instruments, which included the collection's precious saxophones by Adolphe Sax and Allen Loomis.



Saxophone, Stearns 661 by Sax.



Saxophone Display