

Kinney cont.

Horace Vandergelder in *Hello Dolly*? Or maybe I would be regaled with a song by a member of the barbershop quartet from *The Music Man*. I have to say it was nice for me to have an excuse for playing poor golf. . .it was like trying to play along with an eccentric sound track.”

Of Tom’s three handsome grandsons (David, John and Matthew), five-year-old Matthew giggles uncontrollably to the tune of grandpa’s vocal shenanigans while listening to him play the piano and sing in various amusing character voices.

In his spare time, Tom took voice and acting lessons. He became quite the celebrity, never breaking a leg, but engaging and entertaining the Bowling Green community with unforgettable performances.

He has a voluminous resume, full of teaching experience (no one ever escaped most classes without memorizing the prelude to *The Canterbury Tales*); academic positions (full professorship and professor emeritus status); visiting teacher (foreign expert, Xi’an Foreign Languages, China); administrative positions (acting chair, Department of English, 1969-70; Faculty Senate chair, 1979-80), and working with the Humanities Cluster College in the mid-1970s—to mention only a few. Besides teaching his celebrated graduate and undergraduate courses in the *Legend of King Arthur*, he published journal articles, book reviews and abstracts. I might add that he was vice president on the original Pro Musica board 25 years ago.

Although officially retired, Tom stays active and interested in life and in academia. He has written almost 100 poems in the past five years and recently completed a short story about an event which happened at Deep Springs College while climbing White Mountain with his friend Dick (and running into a Basque shepherd who immigrated from northern Spain). Here is an excerpt from that story:

We finally reached the top [of White Mountain], a little winded, and found a metal box which we opened and found a place to sign our names and date. We felt good about having made it and just looked around contentedly, well, maybe a little self-satisfied too. We had our biscuits and rested. My guess now is that the thin air made us giddy, but we were, after all, almost on top of the world.

I suppose Bowling Green doesn’t quite make the list for “living on top of the world,” for most; but with people like Thomas L. Kinney in town—some days—I feel like we are. Were all communities so lucky.

Mariam Vardzelashvili Trip to Paris

This fall brought a unique opportunity to travel to France and to participate in master classes in Paris. Taking lessons from wonderful French musicians gave me an inside view of musical life there. It was an unforgettable experience to explore music in a ‘French way’—the highlight of my trip was working on music by French composers with French musical performers.

The French piano school is very proud of its composers and approaches the performance

Beluska cont.

“Now I’ll tell you ‘the story goes’ episode. I heard accordion music at age five. I wanted it, I had to have it. I received one as a present and I managed to figure out the right hand by myself. The next year I was enrolled in the City Music School in Cluj and continued with my music studies. I became the concertmaster of the school orchestra of the Lizeul de Muzica. I began to dream of going to the West and to the United States.”

I looked at the intense and complex face of Professor Beluska: he continued to relate his flight from communist Romania in 1977 to a refugee camp in Athens; he and his brother and his brother’s wife and daughter stayed in Lavrio, Greece, for six months and then were sponsored by Catholic Family Services in Amarillo, Texas, to immigrate to the United States. Vasile felt he had landed on Mars.

“We didn’t know anything about the U.S.except what we saw in a few movies and what we listened to in secret from Radio Free Europe. One thing that surprised us was that Americans drove so many places instead of walking. I formed a band and we played soft rock, country, jazz and Romanian folk tunes. I had to learn to play lead guitar. Part of our job was to mingle with people in our audience between sessions. I met my wife, Donna, at the Embers Nightclub in 1978 doing just that. She was a student at West Texas State University, attractive, intelligent and focused on the future. She was the perfect girl for me—and still is. Donna has a business in graphics. We have three lovely children: Katrina (Kati), aged 22, who has a bachelor’s in biology; John (Johnny), aged 19, who has already completed a bachelor’s in psychology, and 11 year old Christopher.” Professor Beluska flashed a handsome smile; I couldn’t help noticing if his eyeteeth (cuspids) were any longer than average, considering his origins in the old country of Transylvania; although they seemed equivocal, perhaps in the twilight. . .

The many accomplishments of Vasile appear on his Web site at www.beluska.com and on the BGSU College of Musical Arts’ Web site. A fine mentor for many students, Professor Beluska coaches the Graduate String Quartet at BGSU. Diversity marks the members of the group: Tiffany Ying-wei Sung, from Taiwan, currently

practice of their works very strictly; over time, a set of “rules” was developed by French musicians on how to interpret and perform these pieces. My trip was priceless in the exposure to this discipline. Time wise, it was beneficial because our studio project this semester (Dr. Laura Melton) was a concert of works by Olivier Messiaen. This trip helped me understand his music better, because of my experience in musical and cultural context of French traditions.

French music is intertwined with other art forms, especially visual ones. For example:

pursuing master’s degrees in violin performance and music history; Kyle VanArsdalen, from Bryan, who is currently working on a master’s degree in violin performance, has studied since he was 16 with Professor Beluska; Raphael Lizama, a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory and pursuing a master’s degree in viola performance, and Sha Lu, from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in China, and currently working on a master’s in cello performance. These individuals collectively performed a wonderful and busy schedule this holiday season in places like the Manor House in the Wildwood Preserve Metropark in Toledo and at the Way Public Library in Perrysburg.

Mentors make mentors and Professor Beluska mentioned three of his role models. “I remember Ladislau Kiss(h) from the ninth grade—the year I first woke up to serious music. He came to our school from the conservatory to select students; he won major competitions and ended up teaching in Australia. Next was Ronald Neal, a teacher at Southern Methodist (who was a student of Ivan Galamian) and who taught me how to play violin the American style. The class with the distinguished violinist, Jascha Heifetz, at his home in Beverly Hills, was the clever third mentor; he taught the right-brained approach. He would simply *demonstrate* how he wanted you to play; if you began to ask questions as to *how to do it* you were immediately done with his class; *it was your job to be able to intuit*—to have direct insight—how to play the passage without the intervention of a representative idea. You can either do it or you cannot (of course, *Vasile can!*).

I suddenly realized I had kept Professor Beluska in his office for over three hours. Time was rounding toward the dinner hour and, in winter, evenings are quickly veiled in pervasive darkness.

“Sorry to keep you so long,” I said. “Samuel Johnson, the great English lexicographer, wrote that every man’s life is worth a book. With you—I think it would work out to at least a three-volume historical novel.”

“Thank you for the interview,” he returned as he put on his broad cape. “It’s been a pleasure—as always.”

I stepped into my car just as the sun dropped below the horizon, before darkness, in the *twilight*. How fortunate to have such a talent in northwest Ohio—and all the way from Transylvania.

Leonin and Perotin were inspired by and specifically wrote for Notre-Dame Cathedral; impressionist composers were inspired by impressionist painters; Messiaen was inspired by stained glass traditions of French churches and cathedrals. Visiting museums and important architectural monuments helped me explore music through the delicate prisms of original cultural forms.

The financial help I received from Pro Musica gave me a wonderful option to grow in music and to connect with a culture replete in the arts.

BGSU.



Celebrating
25 years of
promoting
excellence!

The ProMusican Winter 2009

A letter from the President



Dear Readers,

Prepare for moments of satisfaction and pride. This fall marks an historic time in the life of Pro Musica. Twenty-five years ago a small group of visionaries ate brown bag lunches together to talk about a way to support the College of Musical Arts as funding was less than adequate for the perceived needs of students. That conversation is timeless, it could happen in any college anywhere today. The group didn’t just talk, they codified their vision and Pro Musica was created. Pro Musica has evolved and continues to touch lives.

Activities and participation have evolved over the years. Slightly more than 100 members have become 216. The constant for the past 25 years remains that students are our focus.

Pro Musica’s mission has been reduced from a long, but well written, paragraph to a phrase that is remembered: *Promoting Musical Excellence*.

Dr. Robert Thayer, dean at the time of Pro Musica’s conception, has returned to campus to join in the celebration. He is surprised and pleased at the organization’s changes as individuals have left their mark on this ever-changing group of musical advocates. Membership has increased. Activities have increased and each spring, two graduate and two undergraduate scholarships are awarded. Domestic and international travel allow students to learn about our ever smaller world in which we live. Pro Musica has an electronic site that you might like to visit at www.bgsu.edu/ music (click on Pro Musica on the left hand margin). It is difficult to state a specific number of lives touched. The word that comes to mind first is significant.

We plan to vary the method by which we touch member’s lives this year by including electronic messages of importance to you. Please, when a message from Pro Musica arrives in your electronic mailbox, take a moment to peruse it.

Thank you for your support and involvement, together we are making a measureable difference in our communities.

Sincerely,
Karol H. Spencer

College of Musical Arts
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0290



Promoting Musical Excellence

Pro Musica supports the College of Musical Arts by inviting the participation of alumni, friends, parents and the Bowling Green community in a wide variety of musical events and by providing financial support for projects that are often beyond the reach of state funding.



Vasile Beluska

Heavenly shades of night are falling—it's twilight time... or so the song goes. With the advent of *vampires* as current heroes in our contemporary reading culture, Bowling Green has not only a clever and gifted violin professor, Vasile Beluska—but also a romantic and suspenseful individual from just the right place—Transylvania; the home of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

I find that the district he named is in the extreme east of Romania, just on the borders of three states, Transylvania, Moldavia and Bukovina, in the midst of the Carpathian mountains; one of the wildest and least known portions of Europe. In the population of Transylvania there are four distinct nationalities: Saxons in the South, and mixed with them the Wallachs, who are the descendants of the Dacians; Magyars in the West and Szekelys in the East and North. I read that every known superstition in the world is gathered into the horseshoe of the Carpathians, as if it were the center of some sort of imaginative whirlpool; if so my stay may be very interesting.

“Our house in Cluj (Kolozsvár in Hungarian),” said Professor Beluska, “imposing as it was, bordered a gypsy ghetto; this was not atypical in those days (during the Communist era); at that time our house was divided into four living quarters. Gypsies either wander, looking for trade or they settle in one spot. They are quite colorful, intelligent, and musical and speak Romani and Romanian—some speak Hungarian or Serbian. I speak Romanian, Hungarian, French, Russian, English and a little Turkish and Italian; with borders changing back and forth, for example, my father's name, Ioan (in Romanian) is the same as my brother's name, Janos (in Hungarian).”

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Pro Musica Officers

Karol Spencer, *president*
Andrew Housholder, *vice president*
Douglas Wayland, *secretary*
Myra Merritt, *treasurer*
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Susan Knapp, *ex-officio member*
Vanessa Chapman, Richard Kennell and Nancy Lenhart, *ex-officio members*

Profile

Thomas L. Kinney

“*My fait accompli* was set when my parents accidentally met in the Congregational Church choir at Oberlin in 1914,” mused Dr. Tom Kinney, looking something like a Dutch master ready to offer you a cigar. “This musical connection accounts for the fact that not only do I enjoy singing in choirs, I also, through play acting, benefit from being something of an impresario, or as some might even say, an *imposter*.”

Tom was born March 28, 1928, at Deaconess Hospital on East Jefferson Avenue in Detroit, the second and last son of Gretchen Schermerhorn and Harry Engert Kinney. Gretchen's father, James Ten Broeck Schermerhorn (fondly known as ‘GD’), published and edited *The Detroit Times* and tried to make the newspaper a “moral publication” sans any liquor or tobacco advertisements. He was known as a regional ‘wit’ and an ‘after-dinner speaker.’ Tom grew up in the Detroit area. His family moved to Royal Oak when he started the sixth grade. His older brother, Harry, was tragically killed in a plane accident when he was 15; at

17 Tom went to Deep Springs College in California—an elite and somewhat idiosyncratic boys-only academy situated a mile up in the Inyo Mountains (about four hours drive from Las Vegas) and accessed by a single precipitous road. The school was founded in 1917 by Lucien Lucius Nunn, a man interested in ‘electricity’ and who was president of the first bank robbed by Butch Cassidy. Besides academic excellence, Tom learned to milk cows, slaughter pigs and bale alfalfa. After two years, he was accepted into Swarthmore College where he received his bachelor's in English in 1950.

All through undergraduate school Tom worked summers at the Chrysler plant. Then, in autumn 1950, he got a job at the J.L. Hudson Company in men's clothing and worked through the Christmas season. In January 1951 he was drafted into the army.

At the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, he became regimental instructor for companies of 200 men, teaching chemical, biological and radiological warfare. He was at the Desert Rock Explosion—north of Las Vegas—in 1952. “About 10 miles from ground zero, I faced away from ground zero for five seconds. Then I turned around and saw the

Tom Kinney as Mr. Peachum in the 1970 BGSU production of *Three Penny Opera*.



mushroom cloud slowly rising. I remember the mountains lit up for a moment like the transfiguration of Christ.”

Later that year, Tom was accepted into the University of Michigan where he completed his master's and Ph.D. in English. He married a nursing student, Nancy Gallery, in December 1954. They lived and worked as students in Ann Arbor.

In December 1958, Tom was interviewed by Howard Brogan, the chair in English from Bowling Green State University, at the Modern Language Association Convention in New York

City; that spring he was offered an instructorship with tenure track; he and Nancy moved to Bowling Green.

In the late 50s, Bowling Green was a small, relatively quiet town with a growing academic environment—a perfect place to raise a family. His two boys were born just a year apart: David Alan in 1960 and Matthew Schermerhorn in 1961.

Tom describes himself as: a formal teacher, an informal teacher; a friendly colleague,

a cooperative colleague in committee, a *primus inter pares* (in committee, faculty group); a non-competitive golfing partner, a leisurely walker; a grape grower, juice and jelly maker; a non-directive father, a semi-dutiful son; a resentful cat owner, a furniture refinisher and plucky do-it-yourselfer, an avid mystery reader, a (sometimes) confident soloist and a skilled and responsive actor; an occasional calligrapher, and something of a proud grandfather. Still, in all this, you know he has only skimmed the surface of his multi-faceted personality—or should I say personalities?

His son Matthew told me he vividly remembers spending mornings with his dad, learning the art of golf. “I would go—only I never knew for sure whether he would show up as himself or as a theater character. Would I be teeing off with Tevye from *Fiddler on the Roof*, or

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Student Essays



Andrew Braet and Jean-Marie Londeix

Andrew Braet

The Saxophone in Paris, March 8-16

This experience was extremely rewarding—having never been overseas before, it was a wonderful opportunity to learn French culture and practice the language in the place where I hope to live and study one day.

The people in the program were intelligent, humorous and interested in their environment. Here is the basic program, both busy and thrilling: Tours of Montmartre cemetery, Selmer Factory and Showroom, Vandoren Factory; panel discussion of saxophone teaching techniques, saxophone ensemble performances and the Conservatoire du Boulange, Billancourt and Le Fondation des Etats-Unis., participation in master class with Jean-Michel Goury, discussion, lesson observations, and concert with Claude Delangle, and lecture with Jean-Marie Londeix.

The week began with a tour of the Selmer showroom, explaining how saxophones are made, what tools are used and how rigorous the process is to create the instrument. After leaving the Selmer Factory, we ventured over to the Conservatoire and observed saxophone lessons taught by Claude Delangle, a celebrated teacher in France. The next two days were whirlwinds of activities involving two saxophone ensemble concerts in Paris, performing in master classes, finding the Montmartre cemetery, hearing concerts in the city and, all the while, struggling to make myself understood in French. Still, the whole experience was quite rewarding; specifically playing in a master class for Jean-Michel Goury. One day I hope to study with him, so it was a great experience to play for him and hear his ideas. Performing two concerts was challenging: the ensemble was well prepared and we learned the music quickly. It was significant to have saxophonists from all over the country come together and perform where the saxophone was born.

The lecture, “L'histoire du Saxophone,” given by Jean-Marie Londeix, known as the master of modern saxophone, was the final

event. Londeix is essentially the reason we play saxophone the way we do; to be able to hear him speak so passionately about the instrument was really a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

I thank Pro Musica for the grant that made this possible.

Casie Dietrich

International Music Festival in Poland July 14-25, 2008

I arrived in Warsaw, Poland, on July 14 (Bastille Day) and went to Kazimierz and Naleczow to the music festival. I spent Monday through Friday both weeks taking lessons and practicing three to four hours a day. Practice sessions took place in the palace and the cultural center in Naleczow. I also practiced at the director's home in Kazimierz Dolny a few days. I had two lessons the first week: one with Tomoko Mack and the second with Steven Spooner. The second week, I worked with Kazimierz Brzozowski and had an additional lesson with Professor Spooner. My lessons took place on a concert grand in a large, European concert-style hall.

Every night I had a chance to attend recitals. All of the teachers (Leonid Tamulevich, Shoko Kusuhara, Tomoko Mack, Steven Spooner and Kazimierz Brzozowski) gave recitals the first week. There was an entertaining duet recital the second week and two solo recitals given by previous winners of the festival competition.

There were other student performances, one of which was the concerto performance on the last day of the festival (Friday, June 25). I performed the first movement (*Allegro*) of Bach's *Concerto in F Minor* with nearly a 20-member orchestra in the hall of Naleczow Palace.

Among the opportunities for performance, practice, lessons and recital attendance, we also had a bit of down time. We spent Saturday exploring the Lublin region in southwestern Poland, and on Sunday we traveled to Warsaw's Old Town for morning and early afternoon excursions; then headed to Chopin's birthplace to attend a recital and visit the grounds and house. I also had the pleasure to try the exquisite Polish cuisine—lots of soups, breads, stews and sausage.

This endeavor was extremely worthwhile and one of the most enjoyable trips of my life. Thank you for the grant from Pro Musica.



Dr. Robert Satterlee and Ioana Galu pulling a switcheroo!

Special thanks to Nancy Lenhart, editor of the Pro Musica News.

Ioana Galu

Trip to Romania, October 6-10, 2008

We arrived on an autumn night in the old city of Cluj, Romania, and met with Cluj organizers in the hotel to plan the following days' music agenda: piano master classes at the Sigismund Toduta High School in Cluj, a radio interview and a solo piano recital performed by Dr. Robert Satterlee at the music high school's concert hall.

The piano master classes were held for eight hours the next day. Students ranging from 14 to 23 years of age, from the high school and the music academy, performed in Dr. Satterlee's master classes. Since the majority of the public and students spoke English, contacts were quickly made. The Romanian students were impressed with Dr. Satterlee's pedagogy and performance. Many expressed a desire to continue studies with him.

The radio interview between the two piano classes previewed the evening's recital which turned out to be a great success.

On the morning of October 10, we left for Bistrita, my hometown, and arrived at the City Concert Hall. We rehearsed, met with professors from the music high school and the foundation Societatea de Concerte Bistrita. The recital included works by Beethoven, Franck and Amy Beach, and was broadcast live by the local radio and TV stations.

After the recital we had dinner. I discussed the possibility of starting a Romanian-American music festival and summer classes in Bistrita. The members of the foundation seemed interested in the project and promised me full support. The festival and master classes are scheduled to begin in the summer of 2010, with professors and students from the U.S. and Romania.

I believe this trip was extremely beneficial. I established new connections with Romanian musicians and friends.

I am touched and thankful for the substantial support offered by Pro Musica, and for the honor and privilege to perform with Dr. Satterlee.



Mariam Vardzelashvili at the Eiffel Tower.