

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.

A letter from the President

Pro Musica: Promoting Musical Excellence

This has been an extraordinary year for Pro Musica. As you can see from their essays, students greatly appreciate the 51 travel grants we've been able to award thanks to new and renewed memberships. We are making a substantial difference in the Bowling Green State University's College of Musical Arts.

Student memberships alone increased by 254 percent! Two students, Jami Lynn Haswell and Michael Hsin-en Liu, were elected by their peers to serve on the Pro Musica Board. We are proud to have them with us and look forward to serving with them.

Pro Musica also sponsors and provides musical events in our community. For example, a fantastic piano concert was given at the Wood County District Public Library on a cold winter's Sunday afternoon. It was well attended and greatly appreciated by all. The Bowling Green Kiwanis Club was treated by our student, Jami Lynn Haswell, with her memories and pictures of her musical experiences in Pitten, Austria. We hope to expand providing musical events to our community.

Members of the Board of Pro Musica join me in thanking each of you for making a difference in the lives of the talented students in the College of Musical Arts.

Sincerely,
Karol H. Spencer
President



A special year of
promoting excellence!

Pro Musica funded
98 individual student
grants, awarding nearly
\$39,000 for 2006-07!

Spring 2007

Profiles in Pedagogy

Virginia Pancoast Marks

“The importance of models in molding the character can never be underestimated,” said Virginia Marks, as she offered me a glass of wine. “You know, I was Eleanor Sokoloff’s first piano student, and she’s still teaching at age 92 at Curtis, can you imagine.”

Seeing Virginia and remembering her faculty concerts (dramatic, perfectly executed, tickling your ear at just the right moment), I can only imagine what a colossal impact Sokoloff must have had on the little, precocious, blue-eyed blonde standing defiantly on the piano bench and every bit her own woman at age five.

Raised in Philadelphia, Virginia Alice Pancoast was the eldest daughter of an attractive and demanding mother named Kitty, and the third child of her father, Asa.

Ace, as he was known, was literally Mr. Music of Philadelphia, playing organ at the Fox Theater (he also played piano and accordion), doing upscale gigs, making records (*Sioux City Sue*, written by Virginia’s

uncle) and eventually taking his talented daughter with him. His easygoing manner and upbeat personality encouraged Virginia and made her life sparkle. Together they did the fun things of the 50s, appearing on “American Bandstand,” and playing on the “Paul Whiteman Show,” for which she won a \$50 savings bond and a great big deep freezer.

Other siblings came along; two sisters over the next seven years, twin girls when Virginia was 15, and then, three-week-old Russell, a relative who was babied and raised by all.

Kitty, her indefatigable mother, took care of Virginia’s musical training from the beginning. When school began to interfere with practice time, Kitty went straight to the teacher and announced that her daughter would be taking any necessary schoolwork only in the mornings, because she would be practicing piano from 12:30 until 4 p.m. in the afternoons.

When the home economics teacher noted that Mrs. Pancoast (an accomplished seamstress) must have personally sewn the apron assigned to Virginia, the answer came as a direct question. “Do you play the piano?” Virginia’s mother asked. “Well, no. I must admit I don’t,” said the teacher. “Well then, Virginia doesn’t sew!”

Virginia Pancoast Marks with her teacher, Eleanor Sokoloff (originally taken as a publicity photo in 1945 for the Philadelphia New School of Music).



Her mother supervised her lessons Exceptionally good ones were rewarded with lunch and a movie. Lessons were never missed (except once for the measles). Virginia was attentive and compliant, listening to her mother’s coaching during every practice session; it was not until years later that she discovered her mother couldn’t read a note of music!

Virginia played her first concert at age five for the Ethical Society in Philadelphia. At 10, she won the Philadelphia Children’s Concert auditions, and performed the Beethoven

Second Piano Concerto with the Philadelphia Orchestra for her debut at age 11. Afterward, she was asked by conductor Alexander Hilsburg to play with the Robin Hood Dell Orchestra.

After high school graduation, she attended Temple University where she studied chamber music, accompaniment and worked on repertoire. At age

17, she was appointed to the faculty of the Settlement School of Music where she decided to become demanding and strict like her first teacher, Sokoloff. A young clarinetist named Edward Marks asked Virginia to accompany him, and she did. They were married in 1961 after her graduation from Temple. Virginia continued her teaching at the Settlement School and earned a master’s degree at American University under the tutelage of the Department Chair, Evelyn Swarthout.

Virginia’s husband received a faculty appointment in the Department of Musical Arts at Bowling Green State University. Moving from glamorous Philadelphia to rural Bowling Green required something of an adjustment, especially for Virginia. However, with her usual aplomb, she made it look easy. She taught in the Creative Arts Program, joined University women’s groups and took up sewing as a hobby (specializing in much more than aprons!). Virginia and Edward had two children: son, Brian, and daughter, Jennifer.

“The importance of models in molding the character can never be underestimated.”



Jami Lynn Haswell

Student Representative of Pro Musica

I received a Pro Musica grant in summer 2006 to travel to Pitten, Austria, for an intensive music study/performance opportunity. This trip, coupled with similar shared experiences with other students helped by Pro Musica, influenced me to be involved with the organization.

As current president of the Bowling Green State University Collegiate Chorale, I headed a student membership drive last fall to increase student membership in Pro Musica. Overall, student membership increased by 254 percent!

I feel students should be involved with Pro Musica due to its outreach to the entire College of Musical Arts. As a future music educator, I understand the importance of funding music as a core curriculum.

As a newly elected board member, I hope to encourage other students to become active and contributing members of Pro Musica.

Pro Musica Officers

Karol Spencer,
president

Andrew Housholder,
vice president

Virginia Marks,
secretary

Douglas Wayland,
treasurer

Joan Callecod,
member-at-large

Deborah Fleitz, Richard Kennell
& Nancy Lenhart,
ex-officio members

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Student Essays

Samantha Cloz

Thesis Fieldwork in
Merida, Yucatan, Mexico

For my master's thesis I wanted to investigate a new and exciting subject (non-researched) in the field of ethnomusicology. I also wanted to conduct fieldwork, hoping to make new tracks in this area.

As an undergraduate student, I had the opportunity to study in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico in summer 2003. Attracted to Yucatecan (Mayan dialect/descent) performances of folk music and dance, I wondered about the dynamics and their importance in Yucatecan culture. Searching for information on the jarana (the state's regional style of dance), I discovered there was not much information.

Through the help of Pro Musica, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to conduct overseas fieldwork! After four years, I returned as an ethnomusicologist. I was able to see cultural performances: Monday night Vaqueria, Thursday evening Serenatas Yucatecas and the Sunday Merida en Domingo.

In addition to nightly performances for the natives and foreigners, I spent the late afternoons and evenings observing and attending classes at the Escuela Municipal de Folklore in downtown Merida. Here, I did my ethnography. I learned about the municipal school, supported entirely through government support and tax dollars. At the school, over 1,020 students take free dance classes of the jarana. I learned how the school serves as a feeding tool for the Ballet Folkloricos Juvenil, Infantil and Titular of Merida.

Thank you for your support.



Joel Crawford

Exploring Brass Ensembles in Greece

In January 2007, I attended the "Exploring Brass in Greece" workshop, held in the 2,000-year-old mountain town of Kalavrita, Greece. The workshop was hosted by artistic director George Babarakos and Gerasimos Ioannidis (former trumpet with the Greek National Opera).

The workshop consisted of master classes by leading trumpet teachers from the United States, as well as numerous performing opportunities with critiques done by members of the resident brass quintet, the Millennium Brass. We also had the opportunity to experience and explore the rich culture and history of Greece.

Master classes covered a wide variety of topics reflecting the specialties and interests of diverse artists/teachers. One class I found particularly fascinating was about yoga and its therapeutic effects on brass performers. Other classes covered: smart music, time management, strategies

for success, recitals and literature. In addition, members of the Millennium Brass also offered master classes on their respective instruments.

Each evening there was a concert that included performances from student groups, massed festival ensembles and the Millennium Brass. Our ensemble performed two concerts and was involved with the large, massed ensembles.

I met two teachers who focused on areas that will benefit my goals in the future, and I will be auditioning for their studios this spring.

As part of the workshop, we also performed in a theater on the outskirts of Athens.

The history and culture of Greece suffused many aspects of the workshop. We decided to follow the circadian rhythms of Greece; breakfasts at 8 a.m., lunch at 1:30 p.m. followed by the traditional afternoon nap from 3-5 p.m. and dinner at 9:30 p.m. after the concert.

We visited the town's center surrounded by ancient Greece. The church has a plaque listing two dates when it was burned; first, by the Ottoman Turks, then, centuries later by the Nazis, during a bloody massacre in World War II.

The final day in Athens was free time. We climbed the steps to the Parthenon atop the Acropolis. From that height you look over the whole city, which stretches as far as the eye can see. The historic city, the Plaka district (shopping), and dinner at a traditional Greek restaurant completed our trip.

What a tremendous experience, a magnificent trip to be remembered and cherished. I thank Pro Musica for their invaluable support in this endeavour.



Michael Hsin-en Liu with his teacher Prof. Nina Assimakopoulos

Michael Hsin-en Liu

Student Representative of Pro Musica

Currently pursuing a master's degree at the college, I also serve as the graduate teaching assistant for the flute studio. In addition, I hold a music certificate in flute from the University.

Originally from Taiwan, I was born and raised in Taichung, one of the country's three largest cities. As an undergraduate, I studied psychology at National Taiwan University. My flute teacher was Anders Norell, principal flutist of the National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, and upon graduation, I decided to dedicate more time to musical pursuits.

I originally became interested in studying at BGSU, because several colleagues of mine had come to study here and highly recommended this program.

As a graduate student, I benefited immensely from financial support available through Pro Musica that have allowed me to travel internationally to attend master classes with renowned artists and domestically to participate in competitions and workshops.

I am honored to serve as a student representative of Pro Musica, so I can help make these opportunities available to other BGSU students.



Kristina Green
American Choral Directors Association National Convention

When Conductor Leonard Slatkin came to BGSU as part of the 2007 Conductor's Guild Workshop, he made a meaningful comment: "Today many people become musicians for the wrong reasons...to be a musician you will make many sacrifices, but what you get from those sacrifices is so great."

How apropos of the convention I attended in Miami. Attaining not only valuable information with regard to rehearsal techniques, the mix of different choirs and insight into compositions, my views of music and professionalism grew. The musicality and love of music was everywhere. The ambience of the convention opened my eyes to the vision of greatness and left an indelible mark in my memory. Filled with eager, engaged students who were there because they loved music was not only breathtaking, but an awakening.

I thank Pro Musica for this unforgettable experience and for the remembrance of a truly sparkling time.



Kristen Hoverman
Rochester Flute Association Competition

As a freshman, I can say that I have grown immensely as a musician over the last few months. I have had many wonderful opportunities for growth, but none aided me more than my trip to Rochester, N.Y., to compete in the Rochester Flute Association Competition.

The competition was a great experience. I had the opportunity to perform in front of three judges (one was the assistant professor of flute at Eastman). I memorized the entire performance, a first for me, and received comments from the judges that were extremely helpful in examining my strengths and potential areas of growth.

At the Rochester Flute Association Flute Fair, I was able to hear Gary Schocker perform, and to hear the winners of the competitions.

I learned a lot through associating with amazing musicians by observing their techniques of preparation and exchanging ideas with them. My experience in Rochester was beneficial in the performance arena and aided me greatly in culture, style and professionalism.

I sincerely thank Pro Musica for taking an interest in the creation of young professional musicians.



Octavio Más-Arocas
Concert and European Premiere of *Si Ji Tu* by Doctoral Candidate Timothy Stulman

On November 19, 2006, I conducted a concert with the Orquesta Ciudad de Alcala in Alcala de Henares in Madrid, Spain. The event closed the well known Alcala de Henares Film Festival at the historic Teatro Salon Cervantes.

My rapport with the orchestra and soloists developed quickly and we prepared a concert of the highest caliber. The audience reaction was so warm and eager that we offered an encore!

The orchestra is an amateur ensemble with committed and gifted musicians who have toured the United States, France, Germany, Portugal and Italy. Based in Alcala de Henares (a city famous for having one of the oldest universities in Europe, and the home of writer Don Miguel de Cervantes), conducting this orchestra was a rewarding and important experience for me. Also, the adjustments in rehearsing taught me coping skills to deal with the exigencies required in performance and conducting.

The generous money grant from Pro Musica helped make my project possible. Thank you.

Special thanks to
Nancy Lenhart,
editor of *Pro Musica News*

Public Events Office,
College of Musical Arts

June 07

(Marks continued)

After two years, she was offered a part-time faculty position in the music department. When a full-time vacancy occurred, Virginia, decided to apply for the job (good thing, no full-time vacancies opened again for 25 years!).

Her typical workday would begin mornings at 8 a.m. with piano practice at home until noon. Afternoons, teaching four or five one-hour lessons, arriving back home at about six, with dinner to fix, homework to oversee and a plethora of house holding duties to attend to. She prepared faculty performances, accompanied piano students, singers and other instrumentalists. Virginia had two studios: one for Creative Arts (she was director for five years), and one for private teaching. She was keyboard coordinator for more than 20 years and department chair for eight.

"I managed," she told me, "by copying my father's basic philosophy: Be curious, want to know everything, and never lose your temper." She said he never lost his temper, and she has never done so with a student.

Jennifer Anne Feehan, Virginia's beautiful and gregarious daughter, remembers a childhood filled with excitement. "Mother was a leader and a motivator. For example, I had a clothing budget. Brian and I had freedom, but freedom with responsibility. I could (and can) always trust her judgment. As kids, we had Christmas in Jamaica four years in a row, spent summers at Interlochen, and more recently, traveled to England, drove through Maine with Aunt Lynne, and traveled the breathtaking California coast. Mom has three grandsons, two granddaughters and another grandson coming in July. In our family, it really is Mother (and Grandmother) knows best!"

At her retirement party this spring, I met a former student of Virginia's, Roberta (Bobbie) Mong Lange '85, who had driven all the way from Cadillac, Mich.

"Virginia Marks had a huge influence on my style in teaching," she said. "She used tactile and visual methods, like playing on your arm or lining up pencils on the floor to show spacing. I can never thank her enough for giving me such a strong role model in teaching."

"Do you remember what you played when you auditioned for Virginia?" I asked her. Bobbie answered "You know, I can't think of it right now, let me see. Oh, there's Mrs. Marks."

We asked Virginia if she remembered the audition. "Yes. The Reinhold *Impromptu in C-sharp Minor, No. 3*, in ABA form. It begins in C-sharp, the middle section is in D-flat major, then it returns to C-sharp major."

"Do you see what I mean about models?" Bobbie asked me.

"Yes, I certainly do."