

# Barbara Smith Amphitheater



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BARBARA B. SMITH (1920- ) after whom the Barbara Smith Amphitheater located behind Orvis Auditorium in the Music Department complex was named in honor of Emeritus Professor Barbara B. Smith.

Smith's tenure as a faculty member and researcher has spanned virtually the entire life of the department - from her arrival in Hawai'i in 1949, through her official "retirement" in 1982, and to 2006 in which she remains an active contributor to the university and department as a mentor and through field work and advocacy research.

In her first years here, Smith taught piano performance and music theory. Among her early students were Herbert Ohta (Ohta-san) and Eddie Kamae, both recognized artists in Hawaiian music today. She was an active piano recitalist and often performed in the community, and was featured as a concerto soloist with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra.

She assisted in the organization of the University Micronesian Club and helped them produce a recording of their music. She organized a number of leadership seminars for artists and arts administrators at the East-West Center, participants of which are now in national arts positions in their own countries. Most recently she undertook the final editing of the Queen Lili'uokalani Song Book after the death of previous editor Dorothy K. Gillet, a colleague and close friend. In 1969, she received the State of Hawai'i Governor's Award for the preservation of Hawaiian Language, Art and Culture and in 1983 she was publicly recognized as a "pioneer" by a resolution of the City Council of Honolulu.

Through her involvement with the community and her students, she became aware of the rich heritage of Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific musics and set about to understand them. She learned Iwakuni-style Bon Dance drumming, Japanese koto, Gagaku, and Hawaiian chant, attracting attention as the first female and first Caucasian performer. Beginning with Hawaiian chant and koto, she introduced ethnic music performance classes into the Music Department curriculum. Recognizing the value and potential of ethnomusicology at the University of Hawai'i, she also designed lecture courses and education workshops. She established the master's degree program in ethnomusicology in 1960. UH recognized her as a "living treasure" of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences in 2000.

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\* News@UH, May 15, 2006 [<http://www.hawaii.edu/ur/newsatuh/2006/0515/people.htm>]