

## UHM Music Department Celebrates Fiftieth Anniversary

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The University of Hawai'i at Manoa Music Department (UHM) dates its founding from the establishment of a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in music in the College of Arts and Sciences in 1947. However, music courses had been taught at the University of Hawai'i (UH) before this time. Men's and women's choruses were organized as extracurricular activities before 1920. A drum and bugle corps, the ancestor of the present-day bands at UHM, was organized during the 1923-24 academic year. Dorothy Kahananui and the composer Fritz Hart were two distinguished faculty members who taught at UH before the Music Department was established. Mrs. Kahananui began teaching at the Normal School, a forerunner of the School of Education, in 1923; she continued to teach at UH up to her retirement in 1960. Hart taught at UH from 1937 to 1942.

Norman Rian, who arrived to teach at UH in 1946, served on the music faculty at the Manoa campus to 1968. He recalled his discouragement at the makeshift music rooms in use when he came, rooms far inferior to similar facilities in Honolulu's high schools at that time. He located a surplus army building in 1947 and had it moved on campus to serve as a home for a Music Department. A new music complex constructed during 1958-59 at a cost of \$285,000 attested to the growing importance of music at the University. It included faculty offices and studios, practice rooms, and a large choir rehearsal room. Faculty and students moved in late in 1959. Three years later Mae Zenke Orvis Auditorium was opened, a \$180,000 building seating 409 and named for the wife of the donor, Dr. Arthur E. Orvis, a retired New York stockbroker and philanthropist.

UHM was one of the first institutions in the U. S. to include courses in non-Western music in its curriculum. Barbara Smith, who joined the music faculty in 1949 as a teacher of piano and music theory, became interested in ethnic musics because of her students' diverse cultural backgrounds. She collaborated with the late Dorothy Kahananui Gillett in devising Pacific and Asian Music in Education, a course first given during the 1959 summer session. Through her pioneering work, UHM became a leader among U. S. institutions in offering courses in the musics of other cultures, especially those of Asia and the Pacific area.

Smith and Gillett brought bearers of the traditions of the appropriate cultures to their classes. In the years that followed, many of these visitors were appointed as lecturers to teach their specializations. The Music Department soon won national and international recognition for its integration of multiculturalism into the training of teachers. Smith encouraged her students to become performers in the music of Asia and the Pacific, becoming herself a role model by taking up the Japanese koto in 1955. "Getting inside the music" of another culture was also illustrated in the \$10,000 purchase in 1970 of a Javanese gamelan (percussion ensemble) of twenty-five pieces. Javanese musician and ethnomusicologist Hardja Susilo was appointed ensemble director.

Meanwhile, new kinds of Western music were also being heard on the UHM campus. The late Marian Kerr started a Festival of the Arts of This Century at Punahou School in 1957. She moved to UHM as full-time faculty in 1959 and brought the Festival with her. From then until her 1972 retirement, the Festival was a major showcase for 20th-century music of U. S. and Asian composers. Altogether, the Festival presented 473 compositions, 100 of them world premieres, by 234 contemporary composers of twenty different nationalities. In the 1960s the Department created a small studio for the production of electronic music. Pianist Peter Coraggio and his students produced compositions in the new medium.

Armand Russell, Allen Trubitt, and Neil McKay, who joined the faculty in 1961, 1964, and 1965 respectively, contributed greatly to the growing reputation of the Department through their compositions, many of which were premiered locally. All three men have retired in recent years. Russell chaired the Department from 1965 to 1972 and was a key figure in securing accreditation through the National Association of Schools of Music and in the construction of the Dorothy Kahananui wing of the Music complex, completed in 1975.

By 1962-63, Master of Arts degrees had been established with concentrations in ethnomusicology and musicology and a Master of Fine Arts in composition and performance (the MFA degree was later changed to a Master of Music). Dance ethnology (1968) and music theory (1970) were added to MA fields.

When the Music Department started to expand in the late 1940s about ten students were majoring in music; by 1958 the number had risen to sixty; in 1978-79 the number had risen to 272, probably an all-time high. Enrollment fell during the 1980s, just as it did at most U. S. universities. It stood at about 200 during Spring Semester, 1997, including about fifty graduate students.

In 1992, the Board of Regents approved the Ph.D. program in music. Allen Trubitt and former Dean of Arts and Humanities Robert Hines played an important role in getting it adopted. Its heavy emphasis on ethnomusicology and research in cross-disciplinary areas of music, dance, drama, and Asian and Pacific studies reinforced the UH commitment to its historic role as a bridge between East and West. As of Spring, 1997 the Department had a total of seventeen doctoral students in the areas of ethnomusicology, musicology, music education, and composition.

The budget for the Music Department has unfortunately been curtailed during the last few years, as have budgets of all University departments. In this climate of austerity, we can only look forward to the coming of better economic conditions and continue to make what contributions we can to the musical community.