MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS HARRY B. PETERS

The School of Music was saddened to learn of the death of Harry B. Peters, professor emeritus, on April 21, 2000, in Lexington, Kentucky. His daughter, Jane S. Peters, survives him.

Dr. Peters, who held degrees from Eastman (BME and MM) and the University of Toronto (DMA-Musicology and Composition), came to the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1960, from faculty positions at Oberlin and SUNY-Fredonia. Although primarily an oboist, Professor Peters originally taught all of the woodwinds (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, saxophone) as well as theory classes.

Professor Peters was instrumental in the conception and development of the Wingra Woodwind Quintet. During his first year on the Madison campus, he heard a performance by the New York Woodwind Quintet, which sparked a desire to create a similar group composed of School of Music faculty. In 1961 John Barrows, horn, and Glenn Bowen, clarinet, joined the faculty, followed by Robert Cole, flute, in 1962, and Richard Lottridge, bassoon, in 1965. The University Woodwind Quintet performed its first concert on October 17, 1965, at the Memorial Union's "Sunday Music Hour." Peters remained as oboist of the group, whose name changed to 'The Wingra Woodwind Quintet" in 1968, until summer 1971, when he retired from the group to return to teaching and other pursuits. The Wingra Woodwind Quintet, currently in its 35th year, is one of the longest standing resident faculty ensembles in the United States.

In addition to his performing and teaching activities, Dr. Peters found the time to publish works that have become staples in music library reference collections. In 1966, he was granted a leave of absence to do research in France on woodwind literature. In addition, he kept a written log of all music read and performed by the Quintet, and included commentary from the performers on each composition. The result of his work, The Literature of the Woodwind Quintet, was published by Scarecrow in 1971. The bibliography, the first of its kind, was of such importance that Dr. Peters was approached to serve as editor for a comprehensive bibliography of woodwind music, planned by the Music-In-Print series. Woodwind Music in Print, a 743-page bibliography, edited by Harry B. Peters, was published in 1997 by Musicdata, as number 8 in the series.

Professor Peters was also responsible for perhaps the single most important book on music in Wisconsin. In January 1973, A. J. Blotz, widower of Helene Stratman-Thomas, approached him to continue her work on a book of Wisconsin folk songs that she had collected and recorded throughout the state in the 1940's, as part of a project sponsored by the Library of Congress. Although Professor Peters had little previous exposure to the genre, he worked with Stratman-Thomas's manuscript materials and added songs collected by Franz Rickaby in the 1920's and Asher Treat and Sidney Robertson in the 1930's, along with commentary, texts, and photographs of some of the informants. Folk Songs Out of Wisconsin (State Historical Society, 1977) presents a remarkable overview of songs and ballads from the oral tradition popular among inhabitants of the state during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Dr. Peters also edited oboe music, still in the catalogs of Southern Music. His edition of Bellini's Oboe Concerto in E-flat Major remains in pedagogical literature as one of the important pieces for study.

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