
A Dedication to William Kearns and American Music

As the American Music Research Center prepares to celebrate its tenth-year anniversary in Colorado in the year 2000, it is appropriate that we look back at one of the key individuals instrumental in its establishment here, William K. Kearns. His friend, John Graziano, recently observed, "William Kearns is a man of many musical interests, but his greatest passion has been his exploration of, and involvement with, the multi-faceted nature of American music." Even in retirement Kearns's musical work continues. The editors of this special double volume of the journal that he founded are extremely pleased to dedicate it to him.

William Kearns was born on 17 January 1928 in Wilmington, Ohio. He graduated from Wilmington High School in 1945 and served in the United States Army from 1946 to 1948 as a Staff Sergeant in the 36th Regimental Band in Germany. He returned home and attended Wilmington College (1948-50) before enrolling at Ohio State University, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree, *summa cum laude*, with a major in music education in 1952, and a Master of Arts in music theory and composition in 1954. Bill completed a Ph.D in musicology with a major in music history and minors in philosophy and music theory at the University of Illinois in 1965.

Between 1952 and 1965, he held professional positions in the Columbus, Ohio public schools, at Friends' University in Wichita, Kansas, and at Ohio State University, where he was first an instructor and then an assistant professor of music, teaching French horn and other brass instruments, music appreciation and music literature, and serving as conductor of various ensembles. During this time he also performed as hornist with the Wichita Symphony Orchestra.

Bill Kearns was appointed to the faculty of the College of Music at the University of Colorado in 1965 to initiate a graduate program in music history and to teach French horn. He was very successful in both of these endeavors. A good number of young horn students developed their talents under his tutelage and have entered the profession as teachers and performers, and the graduate music history program at the university has prospered, furnishing excep-

tionally well-trained and highly qualified professors for important positions at universities across the nation.

William Kearns was promoted to associate professor in 1967 and professor in 1970. He chaired the College's Music History Division from 1966-1976 and the Academic Area from 1979-1981. In 1981 I appointed him Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in Music; he was enormously effective in this position. Under his guidance the graduate program flourished, reaching a total enrollment of more than 200. During his tenure as dean, countless graduate students related to me his selfless devotion to their education as administrator, teacher, advisor, colleague and friend. His normal workday was frequently stretched to meet the needs of students, and Bill's genuine interest in students and support of their work has become a legend within the College. The respect and admiration that students and colleagues had for his work as an administrator was nothing short of spectacular and quite unusual in these days when it is more fashionable to revile administrators than to praise them.

In 1985, Bill decided it was time to devote all his energies to his first loves, teaching and research. His many contributions as a distinguished scholar in the field of American music embrace subjects as diverse as the life and works of Horatio Parker, folk and cowboy songs of the West, and contemporary theories of esthetics. He was also a masterful teacher and a caring mentor for hundreds of music students during his career. Recently, when he was nominated for a Presidential Teaching Scholar Award at the University of Colorado, a number of students wrote letters of support that include the following statements:

As a teacher he has an excellent reputation among students, not because his classes are undemanding (au contraire!), but because he is so personable, positive, and enthusiastic that students find themselves interested in the subject in spite of themselves. He even makes subjects like music esthetics come alive. His inspirational teaching was largely responsible for my decision to choose American music as my professional area of specialization .

[Linda G. Davenport]

Besides being an excellent teacher, Dr. Kearns is also personally interested in his students. He asked me about my plan of study and became actively involved in guiding me in a more interesting and productive direction. Not only does he willingly give of his time upon students' requests, but he personally suggests that students arrange conferences to discuss their program, thoughts, ideas, and/or feelings about the progress of their particular course of study.

[Sheryl Mueller]

Inspiring ideas, constructive criticism, and professional support characterize my dissertation meetings with Professor Kearns. His impeccable credentials and voluminous knowledge make sessions valuable mid-thesis motivations. Most often I leave the interviews feeling that thirty years of concentrated work will still leave me far behind him. And yet, he convinces me that my ideas are interesting and my progress is worthy of praise. In an environment

where publication demands often cause scholars to become self-involved, he distinguishes himself by treating my writing, whether well-developed or in its embryonic state, as important. His approach to students is a unique blend of professional integrity and sincere interest in the individual.

[Kay Norton]

When post-tenure reviews were instituted at the University of Colorado in 1984, Bill's faculty colleagues summarized his accomplishments in the following statement:

For the entire time of his tenure, Professor Kearns has been remarkably productive in scholarship, teaching and in service. He presently holds the position of Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Music. Under his leadership during the past three years, a higher degree of communication among graduate students through the Graduate Student Council, newsletters, symposia and colloquia has become evident. He has moved toward establishing a great uniformity of standards and achievements among the various graduate degrees. New courses, clearer definitions of requirements and two new degree programs have been initiated. Faculty and students in the College have looked to Professor Kearns over the years for enlightened leadership, first in establishing the Ph.D in musicology as chair of the Music History Division, and then as chair of the Academic Area. Professor Kearns is highly esteemed as an outstanding teacher, both in general history and literature courses for undergraduates and courses in his specialties: American music-art, popular and folk-and music esthetics. He has been and remains very active as a graduate committee member and has directed many Ph.D. dissertations. Professor Kearns' scholarship has been focused in American music. His curriculum vitae lists numerous articles, monographs and papers over many years and he has served as editor of the Sonneck Society Bulletin. He has written both a biography and bio-bibliography of American art music composer Horatio Parker. The Post-Tenure Review Committee believes that Professor Kearns has given many years of outstanding service to the College, to the University and to the profession as a scholar, teacher and administrator, and that he will continue to make equally important contributions in the future in the roles he chooses to fill.

In the spring of 1988, Bill came to me with a proposal to bring the American Music Research Center to the University of Colorado. He had been collecting research materials in the field of American music for years and served as curator of the Ben Gray Lumpkin Colorado Folk Music Collection and the Early Country Music Collection, housed in the Music Library at the University of Colorado. Bill and his colleague, Professor Karl Kroeger, Head of the Music Library and himself a well-known and frequently published Americanist, had been contacted by Sister Mary Dominic Ray, the Director-Founder of the American Music Research Center at Dominican College in San Rafael, California, to see if we might be interested in acquiring the Center. The AMRC had outgrown its environment at Dominican College and Sister Mary's failing

health made it impossible for her to continue to bear its responsibilities. The Center had been awarded a special citation at a recent national meeting of the Sonneck Society for American Music and had a sterling reputation. Bill informed me that AMRC encompassed books and music from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries with extraordinary strength in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tunebooks and ballad operas. Needless to say, he convinced me that we should obtain the AMRC, and we proceeded to negotiate with Dominican College for ownership of the Center. The Music Library had been building collections in American music over the years and they fit very well with the holdings of the AMRC. In the fall of 1988, an agreement was reached whereby the University of Colorado would purchase the American Music Research Center, its materials and equipment and its endowment. Bill received a large grant from the University of Colorado Humanities Special Purchase Fund to help with the funding, and additional support was provided by the President, Chancellor, and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs of the university. Once the AMRC was moved to Boulder, Professor Kearns was appointed director and Professor Kroeger curator of the collection.

Since the acquisition of the Center, Bill has succeeded in attracting over \$200,000 in donated materials to expand its holdings. Undergraduate and graduate students have gained exceptional benefit from working with its materials, and faculty members from Colorado universities, institutions in the region, and across the nation, have investigated its richness. In addition, the Center has sponsored concerts of American music, funded research fellowships, published a bulletin and, in general, established itself as a vital part of the life of the College.

William Kearns has now retired as director of the American Music Research Center but he has continued as a Senior Research Fellow. His impact on the College of Music, the University of Colorado, and American music is immeasurable and deeply appreciated. He is a remarkable man who has made significant contributions as a scholar, teacher, and administrator. This volume of the *AMRC Journal* will join the recently published *festschrift, Vistas of American Music* (advertised on the following pages) and stand with it as a lasting tribute to the immensely positive effect that this dedicated, able and humane person has had on the lives of students and colleagues and to the quest for knowledge that his life has signified, and that is the heart of the university experience.

Robert R. Fink
Boulder, Colorado

Vistas of American Music:

Essays and Compositions in Honor
of William K. Kearns



Edited by Susan L. Porter and John Graziano

This varied collection contains essays ranging from eighteenth-century tunebooks and social dances, through nineteenth-century composers and merchants, to twentieth-century issues in American music. This unique *festschrift* also honors Kearns's first love as a French horn player through compositions dedicated to him by an array of prominent Colorado composers.

Selected Essay Titles

- "New World Inspiration and Peggy Glanville-Hick's
Opera *Nausicaa*" by Deborah Hayes
"Old World Origins of the Matachines Dance" by Brenda Romero
"*The Musical Quarterly* in America" by Karl Kroeger
"The Yale Song Books, 1853–1978" by Walter S. Collins
"Musical Emissary in America: Nadia Boulanger, Norman Lockwood,
and American Musical Pedagogy" by Kay Norton

Selected Compositions

- Nocturne* by Richard Toensing
Fanfares for Six French Horns by Karl Kroeger
A Childhood Recollection: Lunch at Putnam's Camp by Norman Lockwood
Soliloquy for Horn Alone by Charles Eakin

Detroit Monographs in Musicology/Studies in Music, No. 25

Price \$45.00 xvi, 380 pp

ISBN 0-089990088-7

Send Orders to: Harmonie Park Press
23630 Pinewood
Warren, MI 48091 U.S.A.

Or Contact by: Phone: (Toll Free in U.S.) 800-422-4880
(Outside U.S.) 810-755-2560
E-mail: hpp@wwnet.com