

The Robert Dumm Collection  
Special Collections, duPont-Ball Library  
Stetson University  
DeLand, FL

The Dumm Collection includes interviews with approximately 383 musicians, chiefly pianists, recorded by Robert Dumm over the course of almost fifty years. Mr. Dumm, himself a pianist, piano teacher, writer, and reviewer, was passionate in his pursuit of learning about pianists and, where it was possible, talking with them in person and recording their voices for future students and scholars.

#### THE GIFTS TO STETSON

In the gift letters, Mr. Dumm explained that he had chosen Stetson to house his interviews because he had been impressed with the quality of the student performances which were often featured on the public radio station, WMFE, in Orlando, FL. He mentioned that many were master's level quality, and some nearly doctoral level. His first gift to the School of Music in 2006 was his beloved Steinway grand, now housed in the violin studio. The Robert Dumm Collection (as he requested the interviews and accompanying materials be named) came in several installments: in 2007, the interviews (original tapes, a working copy, and many 'supplemental' tapes of music related to the interviewees). Then in 2008, his life partner John Milton Snapp donated 36 boxes of books given to him by Robert, which supported the collection of interviews. Also in 2008, Mr. Dumm donated 13 boxes of files, correspondence, and other printed materials relating to his career. The final portion of the gift in 2009 included manuscripts and photographs.

#### PRESERVATION OF AUDIO

The recordings began on a reel-to-reel Wollensak, then on cassettes, with a brief foray into microcassettes. Mr. Dumm took care to keep his original recordings, although the reel-to-reel ones were recorded onto cassettes and the original then discarded, and a few of his recordings were lost in the shuffles of moving. In the interests of preservation, he copied his cassettes onto other cassettes several times over the years. While well-intended, he realized too late that the cassettes varied in quality but, fortunately, he kept all his copies. So far, digitizing has been done from what he called the 'working copies' that he donated to the Library along with the originals. Shortly before his death, he gave his personal copies to the Music Specialist along with more books, his entire CD collection (mostly pianists), and his favorite piano scores. The ongoing digitization has been a mixture of using the free Audacity software and later burning the files to CDs as well as copying other tapes directly onto a CD, using a Tascam tape-to-CD copier, donated from the School of Music's Sound Lab. So far, 265 interviews have been digitized by the Music Specialist (early on aided by a staff member before the Music Library was absorbed into the duPont-Ball Library in 2011).

#### TRANSCRIPTIONS

Transcriptions exist for about 100 interviews. These include full transcriptions done by Mr. Dumm, many of which were published in *Clavier*. They also include summaries, notes of highlights, and draft transcriptions. In a few cases, where Mr. Dumm had equipment failure during the interview, he tried to reconstruct the conversation from memory as soon as possible after the meeting.

#### THE FUTURE OF THE COLLECTION

Mr. Dumm had long planned to publish 'a book' of these interviews, but ran out of time to do so. It was his wish that the interviews would be preserved and made accessible to interested musicians and scholars, but with care to preserve each individual voice in context. With the help of the students in oral history and possibly the School of Music, we plan to transcribe the interviews, beginning with those that have not been published in any form.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COLLECTION

Mr. Dumm was an avid follower of pianists as they began their careers, especially those who won awards (not necessarily first place) at competitions, including the Tchaikovsky, Leventritt, Queen Elizabeth, Van Cliburn, Chopin, and Leeds. Some of those winners include Ashkenazy, Browning, Egorov, Entrement, Frager, Kuerti, Lympany, Ousset, and Vasary in the Queen Elizabeth. Van Cliburn, Ashkenazy, Ogdon, Donohoe, Douglas, and Dichter won awards in the Tchaikovsky. In the Leventritt were Kalichstein, Frager, Kuerti, Cliburn, Graffman, Browning, and Reyes. In the Leeds, Perahia, Hobson, Artymiw, Lortie, O'Riley, Wass, and Donohoe. Davidovich, Ohlsson, Ashkenazy, Sultanov, and Kobrin won awards in the Chopin competition.

He invariably asked his subjects about their teachers and what they had learned from them, ever interested in pedagogy as well as performing.

### Examples of specialties (most are also pianists)

**Pedagogy:** Badura-Skoda, Balsam, Bernstein (Seymour), Blickenstaff, Bloch, Bryanskaya, Burge, Calapai, Casadesus (Gaby), Cavallo, Curcio, Dorfmann, Dubal, Fink, Frank, Graf, Holmquest, Keene, Lefebure, Mach, Marcus, Pierce, Robert (Walter), Simon, Sokoloff, , Uszler, Webster, and Zander.

**Performers on historical instruments** include harpsichordists Gibbons, Hogwood, Jacobs, Kipnis, Kirkpatrick, and Tureck; fortepianists Badura-Skoda, Benson, Frager, and Sellheim; organists Vogel and Puig-Roget.

**Composers:** Bolcom, Copland, Dello Joio, Dutilleux, Eaton, Finney, Kabalevsky, Lees, Rorem, Schuller, Starer, Tansman, and Thomson.

**Conductors:** Ashkenazy, Barto, Boulanger, Copland, Eschenbach, Nygaard, Schuller, Slonimsky, Stokowski, Tansman.

**Writers:** Bookspan, Bowers, Brendel, Dubal, Evans, Ferguson, Hinson, Hogwood, Hume, Kipnis, Kochevitsky, Mach, Machlis, Porter, Rezits, Searle, Slonimsky, Walker, Thomson, Wolff.

**Duo-pianists:** Vronsky-Babin, Bradshaw & Buono, Markham & Broadway, Weekley & Arganbright.

**Movement, body work, therapy:** Pierce, Samama, Shaw, Shuster, Taubman

**Technical support:** William Hupfer, Franz Mohr, Robert Glazebrook.

**Family:** Natasha Saitzhoff, cousin of Horowitz (not aunt as stated in the abstract), Dolly Bardac (Mme Gaston de Tinan), daughter of Emma Bardac, for whom Faure's Dolly Suite was named, and Blandine de Prevaux, great-granddaughter of Liszt.

### Women

Approximately 97 of those interviewed are women: including Rosalyn Tureck, Nadia Reisenberg, Gaby Casadesus, Maria Curcio, Ania Dorfmann, Moura Lympany, Olga Kern, Constance Keene, Ruth Laredo, and Nadia Boulanger.

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