A Well-Grounded Vocal Tradition

"The genius of Westminster Choir College stems from the emphasis placed upon vocal and choral training for all students. Since its founding the college has made a unique contribution to the world of music because of this emphasis. It is indicative that all undergraduates are required to study voice and to sing in choirs at Westminster in order to become well grounded in those fundamentals of singing for which alumni of the institution are known.

The goal of class and private instruction is to establish a sound vocal technique and a thorough understanding of the singing voice. These are essential to the study and performance of vocal and choral literature and to training a singer as a choral conductor or professional teacher. Before graduation every student must satisfy the requirements of the Voice Department. Juried and other tests are conducted periodically for the purpose of evaluation progress." (Westminster Choir College Catalog 1980-82.)

The uniqueness of Westminster stems from its vocal tradition. A choir was established in 1920 by John Finley Williamson and it was because of the excellence of this ensemble for its time, and Williamson's theories of vocalism that a

(continued on page 4)

NEW TRUSTEE ELECTED

Howard McMorris II was elected to the Board of Trustees at the Board’s last meeting in October.

Mr. McMorris is a banker, an Assistant Treasurer of Morgan Guaranty Trust in New York City, and responsible for the bank’s interests with English and Danish investments in the U.S. He was formerly with the Philadelphia National Bank in its International Division. From 1971 through 1976 he traveled extensively in Europe and worked in Paris for a year. In 1969 he studied language at the Goethe Institute in Germany.

“I grew up in Princeton,” he says, “and all my life have known about Westminster Choir College. I anticipate that my involvement with the College will be in the area of development.”

As an undergraduate Mr. McMorris was a member of the “Nassoons,” Princeton University’s close-harmony singing group. At present he is singing with the (continued on page 7)
President's Message

One of my favorite places is the Umbrian hill country of Italy. It is here that The Westminster Choir has served as chorus-in-residence at the Spoleto Festival for the past nine summers. During a recent trip to Europe in September, I returned to this part of Italy for the world premiere of the Penderecki Te Deum.

Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933) is one of the most important musical figures in the world today. With the performance of the St. Luke Passion (1965-66) in Munster (West Germany) on March 30, 1966, his reputation as one of the twentieth century's leading composers of choral music was assured. He has gone on to score impressive triumphs in the fields of orchestral music (Threnody), chamber music (String Quartet #1), and opera (The Devils of London, Paradise Lost) as well. Te Deum which was composed for Pope John Paul II and premiered at the 35th Umbrian Music Festival on September 17, 1980, continues in the tradition of the St. Luke as an important musical and social statement.

The site of the first performance was the Church of St. Francis in Assisi, one of the many beautiful Umbrian hill towns in this northeastern section of Italy. Assisi is especially beautiful at night as the city—especially the Church—emerge out of the evening darkness in their fully-lit splendor. On this particular Saturday evening, the city was decorated in a festive manner, fully consistent with the mood of a world première. The performance was also televised live to 24 countries.

The Church of St. Francis is famous for the frescoes of Giotto which adorn its walls and give it the reputation as an art treasure. Less known are its fine acoustics which are ideal for the resources of a large orchestra and chorus, in this case the Polish Radio Orchestra and Chorus of Krakow. The composer conducted this première performance. The soloists were Stefania Woytowicz (soprano), Ewa Podolska (mezzo-soprano), Pauls Raptis (tenor), and Bernard Ladyzh (bass). Miss Woytowicz and Mr. Ladyzh are experienced Penderecki interpreters, having sung in the first performances of a number of the composer's works including the St. Luke Passion (1966), Dies Irae (1967), Utrenia (1970), and The Magnificat (1978).

The work itself is a welcome addition to the repertory for orchestra and chorus. It falls surprisingly into a neo-Romantic style with its long lines and precise rhythmic notation and is quite a contrast to some of the composer's earlier works which are experimental in nature. Of special interest from the standpoint of the text is the insertion of the famous nineteenth century Polish hymn "Boze cos" ("Lord who has watched over Poland in the past, keep our nation together in the future") as an addition to the complete ordinary version of the Te Deum, which brings an important social dimension to this work.

Hearing this new musical setting of the most famous non-biblical hymn of the Western Church in a building of such exquisite beauty is a religious as well as a musical experience.

DAVID C. WOOD MADE HONORARY ALUMNUS

David C. Wood of New York City, a member of Westminster's Board of Trustees, was made an Honorary Alumnus of Ohio University at a formal banquet in Athens, Ohio, on October 8.

"I was very pleased with the honor," said Mr. Wood. "It has only been awarded about ten times before and is the highest form of recognition given by the university. In recent history two of Ohio's presidents and one faculty member of 50 years tenure have been so honored.

"My wife, Joan Herrold Wood is an Ohio graduate whose ancestors provided the lumber for the first building of the university when it was founded in 1804. Other buildings have been named for her father and uncle. My involvement with the university was as chairman, with my wife, for the east coast of a major fund-raising campaign."

A lawyer, Mr. Wood is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and earned his law degree at Temple University. He was formerly with the firm of Hill, Betts and Nash and recently established his own firm of Harlow and Wood.

WALTER EICHENBERGER STATES HIS PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

Walter Eichenberger, Westminster's new Vice-President replacing Lloyd Lawrence who retired earlier this year, will be responsible for raising the monies needed by the college and will also be working with the public relations staff and Board Committee to make sure that Westminster's message is communicated to its many constituencies. His experience has included a long background in sales, development, and management. While working as a consultant for the C.W. Shaver and Company, Inc. in New York City for the last ten years, his assignments have included symphony orchestras, a college, a preparatory school, an art museum, hospitals, and an historic preservation group.

He states his purpose and function as follows:

There is a great need for sound development work in all private colleges and I am happy for the opportunity to work with Westminster Choir College in its efforts to gain the support of people who want to see this unique institution continue its service to people through music leadership in churches, schools and community groups. I am impressed with the high quality of the students attending Westminster; they are young people with a keen sense of direction and purpose in their lives. The faculty, staff and environment of this college help shape their lives for service to people through their music.

People support organizations for three reasons: Because they believe in the purposes and programs of the institution; because they have faith in the management of the institution; and because they see that the institution needs their help.

I am comfortable in asking people to help Westminster Choir College balance its budget each year through their gifts, because I have seen the quality of those who have been educated here, which proves to me that this college is carrying on the purposes and traditions upon which this school was founded. The public and friends of Westminster can have confidence in the management of this college because Dr. Ray Robinson has been successful in balancing the budget for most of the twelve years he has been President.

(continued on page 7)
From Forty-nine to Fifty
with Helen (Hubbert) '41 & John Kemp '46

Helen Kemp’s sabbatical began in September, 1979, a month after it ended, she added number “50” to her list... John Kemp joined his wife on sabbatical after the fall, 1979, semester at Westminster... Both spent time in Europe and went to “the 50th state” for the first time...

Helen, a most sought-after expert in children’s voices, has been touring the country for years, giving her expertise to clinics, workshops and festivals in all states but two. Some states have had her many times, but this was a first for North Dakota in October, 1980, and Alaska in March/April, 1980. The year’s sabbatical was hardly one of rest — in the old Judean sense — but one of accomplishment and renewed dedication and activity.

September, 1979, found Helen hard at work on a new hymn collection for junior choristers. Entitled Hymns Plus the book was off the press a month ago published by Hinshaw Music Co. In it are materials that were composed with the book in mind; other materials were newly arranged. Before publication the hymns were presented to the National Convention of the Hymn Society of America in June, 1980.

In October she worked on a project with son Mike Kemp ’68 who is minister of music at the First Presbyterian Church of Arlington, Texas. Here she worked on audio-visual materials, mainly for teachers, using video-tape and TV. Individual choir children were used for a clinic on vocal problems, pitch-matching and enjoyment of singing.

During November and December Helen took on an eight-week project with a group called “The Christmas Star Singers.” She tried out Hymns Plus and other worship materials, and provided Advent and Christmas workshop experiences for children and congregation.

On December 29th Helen left for London to attend the NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing) International Symposium. For eight days she absorbed master classes by Geoffrey Parsons, Elizabeth Hawes, Erich Viethner, Inge Henderson and Noelle Barker at Trinity College, London. Performances were scheduled for evenings including Janet Baker in Julius Caesar at the Coliseum, Alan Richardson in concert at Wigmore Hall, and a New Year’s Eve production of La Traviata at Covent Garden. A Watchnight Service at St. Paul’s Cathedral with the Queen’s spiritual advisor as speaker was informal, witty, caring, and joyful with a special New Year’s resolution:

“Leave the past to the mercy of God;
Leave the future to the province of God;
Concentrate fully on the Sacrament of the present.”

The organ at St. Paul’s was silent for the service. An excellent Salvation Army Band played hymns for congregational singing.

After the symposium both Kemps participated in the Westminster Interim program at the Royal School of Church Music at Addington Palace.

From Croyden the Kemps went to the continent, spending the next two months crisscrossing Germany and France on a Eurail Pass. They spent two and one half weeks with daughter Julie (Kemp) Rothfuss ’66 and her husband, Guy Rothfuss ’66 who are both singing in the Osnabrück Opera in Germany. They were welcomed and delighted with three Rothfuss, bi-lingual grandchildren. From a village outside Osnabrück they made several trips to the Landeskirche-musichschule nearby in Herford to make plans for Westminster’s church music study tour in January, 1981.

In France they concentrated on Paris: the Louvre, the opera, the cathedral of Notre Dame and late, late French dinners. “Prices being what they are in Europe,” said Helen,”we soon found out (continued on page 6)
VOCAL TRADITION from page 1

HELEN KEMP
is a Westminster graduate; a Professor of Voice and Church Music, and a nationally-known authority of children's voices.

JAMES McKEEVER
is a Full Professor of Voice, and a Westminster graduate who has served the college as Director of Church Relations, Alumni Affairs, and Development as well as being on the faculty.

MARTIN KATZ
an internationally-known accompanist for such superstars as Marilyn Horne and Montserrat Caballe, teaches accompanying and vocal coaching at Westminster.

JUDITH NICOSIA
from Ithaca College and Indiana University, first taught theory at Westminster and then was on the voice faculty full-time. Currently she teaches part-time to allow for her heavy performance schedule.

MARGARET POYNER
a finalist in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, has sung with a number of opera companies and orchestras. She is part-time on our faculty.

school was established. Times have changed and Westminster has grown. Basically, however, it is the vocal/choral focus which sets the college apart from its sisters.

Westminster boasts one of the finest and largest voice departments in the country. At present there are sixteen teachers on the voice faculty — (eight full-time), reflecting an impressive diversity of educational background and professional experience. All students are required to study voice — pianists, organists, and conductors as well as voice majors.

The excellence and versatility of the department members insures quality vocal instruction to serious voice students, and the study of voice gives an added dimension to the training of keyboard majors.

Each semester the Voice Department provides nearly 200 hours of private instruction to 350 singers. Departmental standards and requirements have been substantially upgraded in recent years. Students take their juried tests very seriously, and the general level of vocalism has improved considerably. Besides vocal study, every student must study Singer's Diction and Vocal Pedagogy regardless of his/her major.

JAMES McKEEVER '48, who began teaching on the voice faculty in '58, then was in Westminster administration for several years, and now is back teaching voice, said: "Today we have a much more structured department which guarantees more thorough study by students. Generally first year students begin with 17th and 18th century Italian songs. This literature makes them 'stand up' pretty quickly!"

The first step in the “structure” is the general progress jury which is taken after two semesters of private voice study except for voice performance majors for whom the structure is more demanding. The student presents the faculty committee with a list of repertoire studies, indicating which of the songs he will sing from memory. The student must be prepared to sing at least one song from memory; the faculty may request another.

Although vocal ability varies considerably, the faculty expects students to sing required repertoire from memory; to sing on pitch and with rhythmic accuracy; to sing musically, with stylistic and textual understanding; to use good diction and to pronounce foreign language texts correctly; to be able to communicate both the general spirit of the song and specific nuances; to deport themselves in performance with grace and assurance.

When a student has mastered the above and is able to sing (a) four songs or arias in Italian; (b) four songs or arias in English; (c) and four more in any
LOIS LAVERTY
is a Westminster graduate on the faculty since 1964. She also holds an Artist's Diploma from the Vienna Academy of Music and specializes in singer's diction.

language, he/she is ready to be heard by the entire faculty for Level I test. Generally, voice performance majors attempt the test after two semesters of voice study; voice principals after three semesters; and voice minors after a year of class voice and four semesters of private voice. The faculty hears each student and either passes or fails him. Successful completion of these requirements are a prerequisite to Level II.

At Level II, a student must sing (a) four songs or arias in English or Italian; (b) four songs or arias in French and German; (c) one opera aria in the original language; (d) one oratorio aria in the original language; (e) one recitative from either opera or oratorio in the original language. Two in the first category, four in the second plus opera and oratorio must be memorized.

Level II is attempted by voice performance majors at the end of four semesters (sophomore year); voice principals — at the end of the 5th semester; voice minors may complete Level I and go on to present a recital at the discretion of the faculty.

Voice performance majors must present a 20 to 30 minute recital during their junior year and a senior recital of 50 to 60 minutes. Voice principals are required to give a full recital with permission from the faculty.

Robert McIver, Acting Head of the Voice Department said: “One of the best things that has happened in my nine years on the faculty is the development of a core of both full and part-time faculty. Heretofore, new faculty were constantly coming and going, limiting consistency with many more part-timers. In these years we have increased full-time faculty which also has increased instructional visibility. A major overhaul of the curriculum several years ago was primarily overseen by Daniel Pratt when he was Head of the Department, but changes involved a great deal of input from the entire faculty. We now have a total vocal program within which the voice faculty can live and work effectively.”

“In 1964 when I joined the faculty,” said Lois Laverty, “there were no well-defined sets of standards or tests. Our standards have been upgraded tremendously; voice is no longer an ‘easy”

(continued on page 7)
Kemps continued from page 3

that there were many things we could not do or have. Europe, especially France, is no longer an inexpensive place to stay.”

From Europe the Kemps went to the 50th state — Alaska — for clinics and workshops. In a letter to their children John wrote: “Alaska made a real impression on us that is hard to describe. Every session was a surprise! It was a new venture for all of the sponsoring groups and hard to anticipate if plans were complete. In spite of working hard the situations were so unusual and the people so interesting that it was stimulating. The state is so big and different in each of its areas!

“In flying from Newark to Fairbanks we crossed five time zones. The first night there was cold (−20°) and we tried a short walk without realizing the temperature. It fluctuates between −80° and +95°, according to the time of year — when they have 22 hours of night or 22 hours of sun.

“Fairbanks has a frontier feeling. Half the vehicles are four-wheel drive, Scout-type cars or pick-up trucks. During the week the spring ice break-up started but the usual dress for everyone was parkas with fur. Motel signs are in English and Japanese; the Presbyterian Church had services in English, an Eskimo language, and Korean. A black musician was one of our clinic sponsors; a Danish man another. There were many natives in all the cities we visited, and some were in our sessions. The native population consists of 52% Eskimos, 34% Indians, and 14% Aleuts.

“The University of Alaska in Fairbanks is the main school for advance study in the state. Classes went well after a shaky start — with a mixture of church musicians and school teachers, many of them good. A number had attended Westminster Summer Sessions or had done other special study in the ‘lower 48.’

“Anchorage is a big city with half the state’s population; mountains are close by — spectacular in all directions. Many churches have a window behind the altar with a beautiful view of this natural beauty. Here we worked with the junior high age, judging their choirs one evening, and meeting with several supervisors who wanted detailed evaluations of the directors and comparisons with work in the ‘lower 48’ school systems.

“For three days we held a graduate-level course at the Alaska-Pacific University. Some sessions were in churches with demonstration groups from schools and churches. We met a number of outstanding musicians who were doing good work. In Palmer (north of Anchorage, where they grow 70 lb cabbages and over-sized carrots, and beets the size of your head — as the result of 22 hours of sun!) we gave a lecture-demonstration to 110 assembled choir singers and directors from rural areas.

Here we demonstrated basic conducting patterns to fishermen, hunters, and homemakers — so they could appreciate the work of their choral directors!

“Spring was breaking in Juneau — which is in Alaska’s lower panhandle. The land here is heavily wooded in contrast to Fairbanks where trees are small due to the severe weather. Juneau sessions were at the University of Alaska at Juneau, part in classrooms, and part in a good-sized log church. Again — very interesting people took the course: the wife of the majority leader in the state legislature; two young women with fine voices who teach in the Alaskan bush; a college choral director; a very fine high school director who had been to Summer Session, etc. The two young women teachers fly by little pontoon planes to four remote schools where they teach all 12 grades to no more than 18 pupils per school!

“The one pipe organ in Juneau is a theatre organ rebuilt in the court of the state office building opposite an enormous totem pole. During our whole stay we enjoyed the individuality of the Alaskan people.”

In between the European and Alaskan trips Helen participated in festivals in Laurel, Mississippi; Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania; Eden, North Carolina. And after Alaska: Long Island and Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. The two Kemps were involved in seminars and workshops at the University of Indiana in Bloomington; University of Evansville; Blacksburg, Virginia; The Hymn Society on campus; the Westminster Summer Session; in residence at Skidmore College for a Saratoga/Potsdam conference; and Colby College Church Music Institute in Maine.

During the summer months the Kemps squeezed in a little camping, canoeing and gardening. John grew mountains of vegetables and Helen, armfuls of flowers. In their “spare time” they kept up with five children, nine grandchildren and only the Lord knows how many former pupils and work-shoppers. If there is a 51st state, the Kemps will be there — full of vitality and ideas!
Vocal Tradition from page 5

major. Our voice performance program is particularly exclusive. Some students have become voice performance majors in highly thought-of schools whom we would not accept in our program. Our curriculum is both demanding and a service to the choral department."

Dr. Melver personally hears every incoming student for student/teacher assignment. "I try as much as possible," he says, "to honor requests for a certain teacher. Next I try to pick a teacher who can help that student particularly. Because of the consistency of the faculty, there has been a dramatic lessening of studio 'travels.' Only one freshman this year requested another teacher."

In addition to teaching class and private lessons the voice faculty is responsible for teaching voice-related subjects such as English, Italian, German, and French diction, using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). There are vocal literature classes on several levels; vocal pedagogy, and an opera workshop. Voice performance classes are held on Wednesday afternoons.

The general consensus among the faculty is that each member has a high regard for other members of the department — even though they may differ in their training or in the way they teach. Strengths in each other's ability are recognized and they have a very special camaraderie. All are in agreement that the level of teaching is consistently good. "There are more good people here than any place I can think of," said Judith Nicosia. "In a huge place, such as Indiana University, for instance, there are a number of 'big names' who draw good students but the rest of the faculty gets no notice and no quality students."

Teachers agree that sometimes the heavy choral involvement makes teaching more complicated but the choral experience is the reason for the school's existence. "The students have to learn to pace themselves," says Ms. Nicosia. "A young voice should not be used more than three hours a day. We all try to insist that students have good vocalism — whether for solo or choral purposes. Most students are so good to work with and so willing to practice. They literally sing their hearts out."

Long-time members of the faculty are very willing and cooperative about giving assistance to newer members. Brenda Smith, Alan Seale, and Frances Merritt, three masters degree graduates from the class of 1980 who are teaching this year, are particularly aware of how faculty members solve problems as a group and are helpful to one another.

Lindsey Christiansen summed up with: "In spite of an enormous variety of personalities we all have personal respect for each other. The level of talent at Westminster is wonderful and I feel very proud to be a member of its faculty."
Laurel Becker Thompson is teaching elementary music (K-6) in District 13, Valley Stream (NY), and she is organist at Freeport United Methodist Church. Laurel recently finished a full year directing a Disney Youth Musical, *Alice in Wonderland* and accompanying the Westbury Community Chorale.

Jack Ferguson has returned to Westminster as a graduate student in church music. He also has been appointed minister of music at First Presbyterian Church in Mendham (NJ).

Karen Eaton teaches music at Lincoln Heights Middle School and is choir director at First Christian Church in Morristown (TN). She is currently studying voice with George Bitzas at University of Tennessee. Karen's new address is 1610 Chestnut Avenue #14, Morristown TN 37814.

Sue Ellen Page Johnson and her husband, Eric, announce the birth of their son, Lukas Page, born on August 29.

On behalf of members of the Class of 1972 Alan Knotts presented a $200 scholarship to the College. Known as the "Class of 1972 Merit Scholarship," the gift will be awarded to the incoming freshman organist who presents the most outstanding audition, high school rank, and SAT scores among our freshman organ applicants for 1981.

Paul Danilewski led the Adult Choral Music Classes for the Ohio Conference Worship Workshop of the United Methodist Church in Akron (OH). Paul is beginning his third year as staff organist at Longwood Gardens in addition to his organist/director of music position at Covenant United Methodist Church in Springfield (PA).


Greg Funfgeld, director of music at First Presbyterian Church in Bethlehem (PA), presented a dedicatory recital on the congregational parts in Billy's Quire's album. *The Pealing Bells* copies @ $6.98 each

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