

UNM JOHN D. ROBB MUSICAL TRUST



The University of New Mexico

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Impromptu: Opus 7

UNM ROBB TRUST CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY!

2009 marks the 20th year of the establishment of the Robb Trust at the University of New Mexico. Over those 20 years, the Trust Committee (presently the Board) has carried out the musical legacy of UNM's "legendary" Dean of the College of Fine Arts, noted composer and folk song ethno-musicologist, John Donald Robb. 2009 is a year of celebration for the Dean, his music and musical legacy, for the Robb Trust's 20 years, and for UNM which has supported and now provides a permanent home for the Trust. In the first six months of this historic year, a dazzling array of accomplishments as well as the beginning of additional plans for the future

include:

- celebrating the performance by the winner of the Trust's first time expansion into the national UNM John Donald Robb Composers' Competition with an international board of judges,
- an outstanding UNM John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium by an acclaimed composer-performer including an opening concert featuring two world premieres including an Albuquerque performance of Robb's internationally performed viola concerto,
- a historic, first time ever one hour St. Louis,

- Missouri, TV program centered on John Donald Robb, his family, the UNM Robb Musical Trust, the University of New Mexico, the state of New Mexico, and New Mexico folk music,
- a first ever Concert in New Mexico featuring performances of compositions all by John Donald Robb, and
- bidding a reluctant farewell to Christopher Mead as he stepped down as Dean of UNM's College of Fine Arts and welcoming the addition of Acting Dean James Linnell and four outstanding new Trust Board members!

SONG OF THE HOLY GROUND AWARDED JOHN DONALD ROBB NATIONAL 3RD BIENNIAL COMPOSERS' COMPETITION ENTRY



Gary Smart and the Chamisa Players

A stirring Composers' Symposium event was the world premiere performance in Keller Hall on Monday evening's March 30th "John Donald Robb Concert" of the winner of the 3rd Biennial UNM John Donald Robb Composers' Competition, a piano quintet entitled *Song of the Holy Ground* composed by Dr. Gary Smart, Terry professor of music at the University of North Florida. The Trust's Composers' Competition focuses on Dean Robb's legacy by requiring entries to be based on themes of folk songs from the Robb Archives at the Center for Southwest Research in the UNM Zimmerman Library and awards the composer of the winning composition \$3,500.

Song of the Holy Ground was one of a huge number of songs Dean and Harriet Robb personally collected over many years. Composer Smart furnished this note: "*Song of the Holy Ground* was written in reaction to an Apache chant recorded by John Donald Robb. The original recording, sung by a young girl, is clear, delicate, and charming at first hearing. The text itself is unknown to me, beyond the fact that this is a song of consecration, a blessing. But the music of the chant is enchanting, with its uniquely expressive melodic shapes and its asymmetrical rhythms . . . My composition is a fantasy; an abstracted music that at times 1) spins out a music which freely develops small pitch or rhythmic motives taken from the original chant and at times 2) directly "sets" a statement of the chant - as with the solo violin statement at the very closing of the work. My quintet is not to be taken in any way as a decorated version of the original chant, nor is it in any sense an attempt to improve upon it. If anything *Song of the Holy Ground* is an act of artistic homage."

Song of the Holy Ground was performed with Dr. Smart in attendance by The Chamisa Players – Ikuko Kanda and Nicole Maniaci, violins; Cherokee Randolph, viola; David Schepps, cello; Darby Fegan, piano.

This was the first time the competition had been opened to composers throughout the U.S. with an international panel of judges: Julio Estrada, *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*; Robert Morris, *Eastman School of Music*; and Barbara Rettagliati, *Conservatorio Statale di Musica "Luigi Cherubini"*, Florence, Italy.

APRIL CONCERT FEATURES ALL JOHN DONALD ROBB COMPOSITIONS

A concert of all Robb music was performed on April 19, 2009, in the intimate Concert Hall of Albuquerque's Robertson and Sons Violin Shop, and the site for another historic event for the UNM Robb Musical Trust. It was the first New Mexico concert comprised entirely of Robb music although there had been many performances in New Mexico of major and other Robb works during the Trust's 20 year history. Conceived by Jim Bratcher assisted by Bob Tillotson, long time talented members of the Trust Board, the performance was notable among other reasons because it contained the world premiere of Robb's *Quintet for Piano and Strings*, and because it involved two members of the Trust, Bratcher and Tillotson, performing in the concert.

continued on page 3



2009 UNM JOHN DONALD ROBB COMPOSERS' SYMPOSIUM



The 38th Annual UNM John Donald Robb Composers' Symposium presented by the UNM College of Fine Arts, Department of Music, on the UNM Campus from March 29-April 1 was fielded by Christopher Shultis, Artistic Director, and sponsored and actively supported as a major effort by the UNM Robb Trust. The 2009 Symposium had an amazing line-up which featured George Lewis, Edwin H. Case Professor of American Music at Columbia University, and Director of the Center for Jazz Studies at Columbia. Lewis is nationally acclaimed as a composer, improviser, performer and interpreter who has explored many forms of improvisational music. A number

of his compositions were performed at the Symposium, and the opening night Concert which featured Lewis on trombone, Nicole Mitchell on flute, and Hamid Drake on drums was presented through collaboration with the Outpost Performance Space facilitated by Dr. Shultis, Tom Guralnick, and Alicia Ultan.

Another feature was the world premiere of a composition of Christopher Shultis, professor of the UNM Department of Music. Entitled "Openings (2004-2007)", it included movements entitled *mouth*, *mind*, *eye*, and *ear* and was impressively performed by the UNM Wind Symphony under the baton of Eric Rombach-Kendall.

The music of John Donald Robb was featured at the Symposium in a well received performance of his *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra*, Opus 24, by Chatter Chamber Orchestra directed by UNM faculty member, David Felberg. The concerto featured viola soloist Kim Fredenburgh of the UNM Music Department Faculty. The concerto has received national and international attention through its world-wide availability on a CD through Amazon.com in a performance by the world-class Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra. Directed by David Oberg, former long-time director of the Chamber Orchestra of Albuquerque, the CD has received write ups in national music publications.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, TV BROADCAST FEATURES JOHN DONALD ROBB



A singular event in St. Louis was the May 8, 2009, first ever TV broadcast on HEC-TV of an original documentary, *Noteworthy: The John Donald Robb Story* which focused upon Dean Robb and New Mexico folk music. HEC-TV is St. Louis' leading producer of education, arts, and cultural television programming. The program contained interviews with Sanford and Priscilla Robb McDonnell, other Robb and McDonnell family members, John Robb as a member of the board of the UNM Robb Musical Trust, and excerpts from the 2008 KNME-TV 5 *Colores* program entitled, *John Donald Robb and His Musical Adventures in New Mexico*.

Following in the footsteps of a September St. Louis concert, which was packed to overflowing, the TV program brought "New Mexico to St. Louis". Robb, the Robb Trust, UNM, New Mexico and his outstanding collections of New Mexico folk music and performances of New Mexico folk music were the centerpiece. Widely publicized rebroadcasts of these one hour performances on Station HEC-TV in St. Louis were featured in *HEC-TV Magazine* for the month of May. It included the cover and two full page articles. In a press release issued by the station entitled "One Man, One Passion: Sharing the Music" the release stated: "A whole culture of music surely would have been lost if not for one man, John Donald Robb. HEC-TV takes a look at the life of this music man and his passion for Spanish Folk Music--the art of storytelling through music." For more information, contact the Robb Musical Trust by calling 277-8967 or mailing the UNM Robb Trust, College of Fine Arts, Center for the Arts, 1 University of New Mexico, MSC 04-2570 Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001.

PROGRAM HONORS CONTRIBUTIONS OF UNM PROFESSOR EMERITI

On Tuesday, April 28, William Seymour, Professor Emeritus, presented a lecture in Keller Hall "Experiencing Musical Awareness". Dr. Seymour discussed the processes involved in the development of our musical awareness, including an important role the body plays. With degrees from Washington University and Music and Arts College in St. Louis, Dr. Seymour joined the University of New Mexico Department of Music faculty in 1962. During his tenure, he taught piano, music education, music aesthetics and psychology, and low brass and many other subjects. Dr. Seymour also served as Chair of the Department of Music and Assistant Dean of Fine Arts. Since his retirement as an Associate Professor of Music in 1993, he continues his research into music and neuroscience and teaches piano and the art of teaching piano. Bill Seymour is a past Trust Board Member and current Honorary Trust Board Member.

This was the initial lecture, supported by a grant from the UNM Robb Trust Grants/Archives Committee, in a planned series that features outstanding retired UNM faculty.

APRIL CONCERT

(continued from p. 1)

The Chamisa Players performed Robb's *Quintet for Piano and Strings*, Opus 82, with Megan Holland and Nicolle Maniaci, Cherokee Randolph, James Holland, and Michael Bowen. Javier Ortiz, bass-baritone accompanied by James Bratcher sang *Eight Songs*, Opus 6C. *Post-Impressionistic Paintings*, Opus 14, and *Carnival* from *Sonatina: Three Incidents from Liliom*, Opus 22, were performed by pianist Tatiana Vetrinskaya (the Robb artist-in-residence), and the concert concluded with *Piers the Plowman* narrated by Catherine Haun and Rick Huff, with Bob Tillotson, Leslie Shultis, Niels Galloway, and James Bratcher. The concert was followed by a reception hosted by the Trust. Trust Members Karen Turner and John Robb assisted Jim Bratcher and Bob Tillotson supported by numerous board members in fielding the event.

THE TRUST NEEDS YOUR HELP!

In view of increasing mailing costs and trying to reduce paper use, we are developing our "online" communication. If you would like to receive future Robb Trust newsletters, notices, and invitations electronically, please email us at robbrst@unm.edu and we'll add you to our email list! Thank you for assisting us in this effort and saving a few more trees!!

FAREWELL TO DEAN CHRISTOPHER MEAD AND A WELCOME TO FIVE OUTSTANDING NEW BOARD MEMBERS



New Board Members (above, from left to right) Mike Kelly, Martha Bedard, John Stropp, and Jim Linnell; (top right) Priscilla Robb McDonnell.

Dean Mead receives farewell gift from Robb Trust (right); Dean Mead and John Robb (below)



The Trust bid a fond farewell and presented a small gift to Dean Christopher Mead when he resigned as the UNM Dean of the College of Fine Arts and as an outstanding member of the UNM Robb Musical Trust at the beginning of 2009. Without his active intervention and assistance in dealing with virtually all matters which involved the Trust relationship with the University of New Mexico both before and after securing its new home there, it would be hard to imagine ways in which a more successful consummation could have occurred after many months of negotiation which resulted in September of 2008 in a historic *Memorandum of Agreement* which provided the Robb Trust with a permanent home as part of the University of New Mexico to assure its survival and that of its mission for many decades to come.

Joining the Robb Trust in Dean Mead's place is acting College of Fine Arts **Dean Jim Linnell**. He was joined by four other remarkable members:

Dean Martha Bedard, of the UNM Libraries which include the Center for Southwest Research in which is housed Dean Robb's unmatched collection of New Mexico and Southwest Hispanic Folk music recordings, his own musical compositions and history, and other Southwest Folk music and collections. Dean Bedard brings vast library experience on advising and assisting

in the vital Trust mission of maintaining and improving the J. D. Robb archives of the UNM Zimmerman Library.

Priscilla Robb McDonnell is a new family representative on the Board. She is a talented Julliard School trained singer, the foremost interpreter and performer of Dean Robb's songs in venues ranging from the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra to the Carnegie Recital Hall in New York, and she along with her husband, Sanford McDonnell, have provided generous annual support for the Robb Trust for many of its 20 years.

John Stropp, another new Board member, is President of the UNM Foundation. The Foundation is the manager of all of the UNM endowments including the John Donald Robb and Harriet B. Robb Endowment for the Robb Trust as well as the distributor of funds for the Robb Trust. Bringing impressive credentials of his fundraising talents to UNM generally, he will be a valuable member of the Robb Trust in its efforts to advise and assist in obtaining additional endowments and funds for the Robb Trust.

Associate Dean of UNM Libraries, **Michael Kelly**, another crucial new Board member, is Director of the Center for Southwest Research which includes direct supervision of the J. D. Robb Archives. He will be an invaluable addition to the Trust Board relative to decisions about the Robb Archives.

GRANT ENABLES NEW PROJECT



Tobias Kokkelink (left) and Mike Kelly, Director of UNM Libraries, Center for Southwest Research

Tobias Kokkelink, the Trust's Graduate Assistant for the past two years, is the recipient of a \$1,500 grant from the UNM P.L.A.C.E. Program directed by Ramsey Lofton. The focus of the grant will be an internship in arts management, and the project will be managed and facilitated by Bob Tillotson (former Chair of the Music Department of Harper College in the Chicago area) and Jim Bonnell, Chair of the Robb Trust.

ROBB TRUST EXTENDS EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Educational Outreach for the UNM John Donald Robb Musical Trust is focused on offering scholars, students, and the general public the opportunity to explore and study folk music of the Southwest and the music and legacy of John Donald Robb, as well as the dissemination of the results to new audiences.

In addition to an earlier Trust grant for development of Suzuki violin study books involving music from the Robb Archives which was developed for students by Susan Kempter, Director of String Pedagogy for the UNM Music Department (and recent Arts Alliance *Bravos* Award recipient), an Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) grant was made to Michael Mauldin who presented five programs in February and early March for students in four middle schools. It was a project involving bringing a living, practicing composer, Michael Mauldin, into APS classrooms to talk to students about his own career as a composer and how his life and musical career were influenced by John Donald Robb. Michael visited with students of selected schools and started conversations with them about Robb's contributions to the Hispanic community and culture by collecting and preserving folk songs which would have disappeared without his efforts. When asked by the students to name three things they had learned about composers and Dean Robb's music, they had widely varying comments such as "Robb was a good musician", "folk music makes a legacy for events and cultures", "folk music speaks for everyone and anything". "Dean Robb recorded a lot of folk songs that would have not been recorded otherwise", "Dean Robb liked folk songs", "I learned that Dean Robb's music is phenomenal", "Dean had a scruffy beard", "Dean Robb used synthesizers", "He made classical music out of folk songs", and "Robb was a BIG man." The project was under the direction of Nina Hobbs and the Performance/Education Committee chaired by Jim Bratcher.

UNM John D. Robb Musical Trust Newsletter

Edited by John Robb & Jim Bonnell

UNM John Donald Robb Musical Trust

College of Fine Arts • University of New Mexico • Center for the Arts
MSC04 2570 • 1 University of New Mexico • Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001
Website: www.robbtrust.com • Phone: 505-277-8967 • Email: robbtrst@unm.edu

TRUST PROTECTS MOST OF ITS PROGRAM IN RESTRUCTURING REQUIRED BY DIFFICULT FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The UNM Robb Trust necessarily made a number of important decisions in 2007, 2008, and 2009 regarding the financial foundation for the future which was jeopardized by a number of unplanned personnel and other expenses. None of these were included within the operating budgets of the Trust, and all contributed to the serious decline of its needed and long maintained \$50,000 to \$60,000 reserve fund. This fund had continually been maintained to guard against "rainy day" adverse developments in order to ensure program support for at least a year as an offset to possible future declining revenues. After waiting some time hoping for a favorable change in the decline of the reserve, the Trust in January 2009 was forced by additional unplanned expenses, the recession, and future uncertainties to make substantial financial restructuring of the Trust. This involved heavy reductions in expenses focused on rebuilding the reserve funds as soon as possible to the minimum amounts required for sustainability in view of devastating national and local financial problems and by the uncertainties of some of the future funding for the Trust. The thrust of the reductions fell upon the administrative expenses which necessitated a reduction in force eliminating the position of Trust Operations Specialist, other administrative expenses, and also some program cuts including a reduction in the graduate assistant position to one-half time. These cuts are all painful but necessary to preserve the core of the Trust program by prioritizing spending to support programmatic initiatives rather than personnel as is consistent with the original *Will and Codicil* that established the endowment as well as the recently approved *Memorandum of Agreement* with the University, the University Foundation, and the Trust. This includes some additional reserves in these perilous financial times for expenses of conducting future large fund raising possible needs. Achieving these goals required and continues to require a huge amount of study, agony, time, and work by the Board, the Trust Development/Finance Committee and by the approvals of this restructuring up to and including the Office of the Provost.

THANK YOU!

UNM Robb Trust revenues support basic infrastructure for the Trust. All of our many additional activities and successes cannot occur without the assistance offered by gifts and grants from individuals such as you, our *Friends of the Robb Trust*. We appreciate very much the ongoing support from the McDonnell Foundation and hope that each of you will want to be a part of this work by considering a generous tax deductible gift to the Robb Trust! For your convenience use the donor envelope, or for more information contact:

Belinda Jentzen, Senior Development Officer
College of Fine Arts Administration • MSC04 2570
1 University of New Mexico • Albuquerque, NM 87131
Phone: 505/277-7320 • Email: Belinda@unm.edu

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