

PAS Museum: History and Metamorphosis

By Gary Cook



It is probably safe to say that when most PAS members think about the PAS museum, they think of the Rhythm! Discovery Center that opened in Indianapolis in November 2009 at PASIC 2009.

Indeed, thousands of members and visitors have experienced Rhythm! while attending PASIC 2009 and PASIC 2010 and throughout the year. Many members will also think about the first brick-and-mortar PAS Museum that opened in Lawton, Oklahoma on August 8, 1992 and prevailed as an integral part of PAS until the Society moved from Lawton to Indianapolis in April of 2007. From then until November 2009 when Rhythm! opened, the museum instruments, artifacts, and extensive library collections were in storage in Indianapolis awaiting the build-out of the new offices, museum, and library spaces in the Claypool Court at 110 W. Washington Street in the heart of downtown Indianapolis.

The roots of the PAS museum, however, extend much further back than 1992 in Lawton. In researching the history of the museum, we perused extant PAS resources compiled by Historians James Strain, Lisa Rogers, and Frederic Fairchild over the years, contacted every living PAS Past President, PAS administrators, and others who played an important role in the evolution of the *idea* for a museum and library to the *reality* of the first PAS Museum in Lawton. It is this story that we wish to tell during this 50-year anniversary celebration of PAS.

In the formative years of PAS, the focus was on establishing the organization and addressing the goals of the Society—all of which dealt primarily with raising the standards of percussion performance, education, adjudication, and composition. While none of the goals of the Society in this first decade specifically mention establishing a museum, the idea was clearly in the minds of these early leaders. Gordon Peters, who served as the first elected PAS President from December 8, 1964 to 1967 stated that, "Everyone dreamed, hoped for, a PAS Museum one day...to try to preserve meaningful instruments, texts, graphics, recordings (audio/visual), and other."

The first mention of business pertaining to a PAS museum is found in the minutes of a December 1971 PAS Board of Directors meeting. These minutes were published in the Spring 1972 *Percussionist* (Vol. IX, No. 3) and state, "Gary Olmstead moved and Lloyd McCausland

seconded the motion that a newly formed Museum Committee investigate the possibility of the establishment of a Percussion Museum. Motion passed." But a year later, a published list of PAS committees in the Spring 1973 *Percussionist* makes no mention of a museum committee.

In June of 1977 President Gary Olmstead asked Secretary Neal Fluegel to investigate the possibility of Indiana State University in Terre Haute, where Fluegel taught, housing a proposed PAS percussion museum. In his letter to Fluegel, Olmstead stated:

There is a longstanding desire on the part of PAS to establish a depository for the collection of historical percussion items. These items would include virtually everything from actual equipment to personal documents, letters, memorabilia, etc.

The PAS museum would make it possible to collect these items in one central depository in order to (1) preserve historical items, and (2) to make this collection available to the percussion public for its interest and study.

Nothing materialized with the possibility of a museum in Terre Haute, but there was a clear, growing desire for one. The PAS offices and headquarters were moved to Urbana, Illinois in 1981, which began a definite history of instrument donations intended for the PAS museum.

Tom Siwe (PAS President 1984–86) recalls that Roy Knapp had died on June 16, 1979, and his son Jim donated his drumset to PAS in 1981, when PAS moved to Urbana. Siwe goes on to say, "about the same time, I was contacted by a friend of Haskell Harr (1894–1986) who indicated that Haskell was about to die, and that he was in possession of Haskell's xylophone which, after Haskell's death, he wanted to donate to PAS."

PAS records show that in 1981 the first museum instrument donation was made to PAS of the Roy Knapp drumset, photos, and memorabilia. How fitting that PAS would acquire as its very first museum piece the drumset of the "Dean of Percussionists," as Knapp was often called. (See photos and more on the Roy Knapp



Roy Knapp drumset

drumset at: www.pas.org/experience/onlinecollection/royknappstrapset.aspx).

According to the deed of gift and correspondence from PAS Historian Frederic Fairchild, Haskell Harr's xylophone was donated in 1986 by Harr's friend James Cantley of Mt. Prospect, IL. (See photos and more on Haskell Harr's xylophone at: www.pas.org/experience/onlinecollection/haskellharrsxylophone.aspx).

In the summer of 1984, when Tom Siwe was First-Vice President and Larry Vanlandingham (deceased) was President (1982–84), PAS Historian Frederic Fairchild arranged for a loan of the Roy Knapp drumset to the Chicago Historical Society for an exhibition. PAS records show correspondence on this “museum loan” started in October 1983. Even before PAS had a “museum” the Society was already fulfilling its current mission of “promoting percussion education, research, performance and appreciation throughout the world.”

Tom Siwe clearly played a paramount role in establishing the PAS museum and library. With the Knapp drumset and Harr's xylophone as the first museum artifacts, Siwe recollects the following:

I started an endowment drive with the intentions that money raised over the years would support a home office and museum. I contacted Bill Ludwig, Jr. and others looking for their support in this endeavor. In fact, I looked at a number of campus area buildings that could possibly serve our needs. Ludwig thought that perhaps it was too much too soon. Garry Kvistad designed and made wooden key rings in the shape of woodblocks and marimba bars. Members who donated more than five dollars to the fund were able to select one or the other as a free gift for their donation.

According to Siwe, PASIC '86 in Washington, D.C. was a difficult financial burden on PAS, and this fund evaporated after that.

In June 1985, David Via, who has gone on to his current position with D'Addario and Company, became the first full-time employee of PAS serving as Administrative Manager until April 1988 in Urbana. Via recalls that, “In our upstairs office located at 120 Main Street in Urbana, Illinois, we had Roy Knapp's drumset set up and Haskell Harr's xylophone stored in a closet.”

A memorandum from the PAS “Office of the President” dated January 1985 outlines the “Policy and Procedure No. 2” for the “Museum Collection.” This is the first document of record pertaining to the PAS Museum and library. It states:

This special collection consists of musical percussion instruments, manuscripts and printed scores of percussion solo and ensemble music, rare photographs and accessories donated to the Percussive Arts Society. The various items are

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temporarily housed at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and at the International PAS Office, 214 West Main Street, Urbana, Illinois.

In the future, PAS will house all the items collected in the PERCUSSIVE ARTS SOCIETY MUSEUM. We solicit contributions of both instruments and money toward this goal.

Upon request, scholars, instrument collectors and other interested people may arrange to examine and study both instruments and music housed in the Percussive Arts Society Collection. Museums and special exhibit committees may arrange to borrow specific items for up to six (6) months.

The memorandum goes on to outline the borrowing/lending policies and proper citation and credits.

Clearly by 1985 PAS had acquired more than just instruments. Donations included “manuscripts and printed scores of percussion solo and ensemble music, rare photographs and accessories.” But when did the University of Michigan come into the story? This is another adventurous chapter in the PAS Museum! Recently retired University of Michigan Professor of Percussion Dr. Michael Udow shared this fascinating story:

Tom Siwe, phoned me early in the fall of 1983 saying that Arnie Lang and Harry Breuer, concerned about Carroll Bratman's ailing health, had assisted in helping arrange for Mr. Bratman to donate his collection to PAS. This was quite important, as those instruments were still stored at Carroll Sound in New York City. Mr. Bratman, having already sold his business to the person who had the Teamsters' trucking contract for delivering the rental instruments (which “paved the way” for the delivery of the instruments to the loading docks at the concert halls in the city), as well as Arnie and Harry were concerned that many of the rare and wonderful instruments that Bratman had acquired throughout his career were going to fall into disrepair or be lost. Having rented in the city before and recalling on one occasion, the back of the trucking company van being opened and seeing a set of Deagan Parsifal Bells, that had not been secured properly inside, fallen over with the top of the case and bars strewn all over the floor of the van with the case within inches of an unprotected concert bass drum head, I could understand their concern. Arnie was still in the New York Philharmonic and Harry amazingly was still working at Carroll Sound in New York City recording jingles. Harry

was also working on his new book of xylophone rags and was very excited about that.

Tom Siwe, John Beck, and Jim Peterscak had made a trip to Ann Arbor in the fall of 1982 (after they had asked me to host PASIC '84) for an onsite inspection. Tom was aware of the Stearns Musical Instrument Collection at the University of Michigan and asked Arnie and Harry to organize these valuable instruments at Carroll Sound. Tom asked me if I would be able to temporarily have the collection housed at the Stearns climate-controlled storage space. Tom also asked me to have the collection inventoried. I discussed this with William Malm, the inspiring ethnomusicology professor who has written many books on the music of Japan and was the curator of the Stearns Collection. Bill was “all in” on helping PAS preserve these instruments, so in the fall of 1983, Larry Kaptain (who had just arrived to begin his Doctoral work) and I drove a 15-foot U-Haul rental truck from Ann Arbor to New York City, met Arnie and Harry at Carroll Sound, and the four of us hauled the Toscanini NBC Symphony Chimes, the Billy Dorn balsa wood xylophone/marimba orchestra, the Deagan Octamarimba, the King George Marimba, the Billy Gladstone drum, and all the other hundreds of instruments—Carroll's amazing collection of bells, etc.—into the freight elevator and down to the loading dock and into the truck. We were all perspiring profusely, but knew the value of preserving this collection. So with everything tied in securely, Larry and I winged our way back to Ann Arbor where we met Bill Malm, and the three of us unloaded everything, weaving our way through the hallways of the old Michigan Media building, up the elevator, and into the climate-controlled storage facility of the Stearns Collection. This was a two-day trip, there and back!

I was able to secure a work-study job for one of the terrifically well organized MM percussion students with superb ethics, Beth Graves (Lenz), to begin opening up each of the cases, trunks, and boxes to photograph and identify each instrument. Duplicate photos were printed for insurance purposes with one set of photos and one copy of the instrument list sent to Tom Siwe in Champaign. The other set was kept in my studio.

Due to insurance and security issues, the instruments were never exhibited in Ann Arbor. It would have been so nice to exhibit them at PASIC '84 in Ann Arbor, especially since, sadly, Carroll had passed on (I think that was in July of 1984), but again the insurance and security issues did not allow for that possibility.

Once the facilities in Lawton were opened,

the Carroll Bratman Instrument Collection was moved from the Sterns Musical Instrument storage facility to Lawton. I recall recognizing at the time how important it was to preserve this collection, which would be a major addition to the beginnings of the PAS Museum Collection. Having seen the PAS museum and the inspired work of [PAS Museum Curator] Otice Sircy and the staff certainly made that journey to New York well worth the effort.

What an effort, indeed! The dedication of Udow and Kaptain and assistance of Lang and Breuer are indicative of the volunteer commitment to PAS that has, throughout its history, contributed so genuinely to its continued growth and success.

The Carroll Bratman collection was officially inventoried into the PAS museum collection in November 1985, thanks especially to the excellent work of Beth Lenz, but stored in Ann Arbor until PAS moved to Lawton in 1992. In addition to the instruments cited above, there were 71 objects total including numerous other xylophones and glockenspiels, a Leedy vibraphone, timpani, and other drums. Bratman was born June 27, 1906 and died in NYC July 15, 1984. He was a freelance percussionist for over 20 years before he formed Carroll Music in 1945 as a full-time instrument rental business. (For more on Carroll Bratman see: www.spaceage-pop.com/bratman.htm) The Bratman donation expanded the PAS museum instrument collection to a significant size and became the main body of the museum exhibits in Lawton in 1992.

Another significant collection of books, music, scores, business records, and memorabilia that came to PAS in 1984 and 1985 was over 40 titles donated by Maurie and Jan Lishon of Franks Drum Shop in Chicago. Started by Frank Gault as the Dixie Music House in 1928 on Wabash Ave., it became Frank's Drum Shop in 1938 when it specialized in drums and

percussion. Lishon took over in 1959 as Franks Drum Shop (without the apostrophe) until Bill Crowden bought it in 1984. Like Carroll Sound in New York, Franks was the meeting place for teaching and percussion business in the Midwest. See *Historically Speaking: Remembering Frank's Drum Shop, Percussive Notes, Vol. 41, No. 6* December 2003 (<http://publications.pas.org/Archive/dec03/articles/0312.72-73.pdf>) and *In Memoriam Maurie Lishon 1914-2000* in the January 2001 *Percussion News*, by Mike Balter (<http://publications.pas.org/Archive/misc/jan01/articles/0101.pdf>).

By the time John H. Beck became President in 1987, PAS had assembled an impressive collection of instruments and library materials for its museum, but, unfortunately, had no space to exhibit them. Donations continued to be made to PAS including artifacts from the Shelly Manne estate. With instruments stored around the country, establishing a museum space was a top priority, and concern, for the Society.

In 1988 PAS was informed that the lease on the Urbana offices would not be renewed after September 1991. PAS needed to find a new location, and as Beck explained to the Board of Directors at PASIC '90 in Philadelphia:

One, we have to move out of our current office space and will need a new home; two, PAS owns instruments and items of historical value that need a museum home because they are currently stored in various locations that are not centralized and are not viable; three, PAS wants to establish research as a part of our long-term goals.

This declaration of *research* as being part of the mission and goals of PAS was a turning point in the Society and for the McMahon Foundation's consideration of a partnership with PAS in building a headquarters and museum in Lawton, Oklahoma. According to Bob Schietroma, President from 1991-92, "It is my

understanding that the museum was essential to the composite deal PAS was given in Lawton.

The Louise McMahon Foundation was developing McMahon Park. The Museum of the Great Plains and McMahon Memorial Auditorium were on the property, and the foundation was primarily interested in another museum."

John H. Beck recalls, "When a connection was made with the McMahon Foundation to build a headquarters in Lawton, we could see a light at the end of the tunnel for the development of a PAS Museum. It was Tom's [Siwe] idea for the headquarters and museum. I followed Tom into the president's position (1987-90) and managed to get the headquarters and museum location moving, and it was Bob Schietroma who put the final thing together when he followed me as president."

Ground was broken for the headquarters and museum in October 1991, and the grand opening was held August 8, 1992. "Steve Beck [then PAS Executive Director] was enormously influential in securing instrument donations—primarily from Emil Richards," recalls James Lambert, then editor of *Percussive Notes* and percussion instructor at Cameron University in Lawton, who was very instrumental in hooking PAS up with the McMahon Foundation. "One of my percussion students, John Simon, flew to Los Angeles and drove a rental truck with many of Emil's donations to Lawton. A museum expert from Oklahoma City was hired to arrange the first exhibit at Lawton, and many other exhibits followed."

The aforementioned donation from Emil Richards was another major and significant addition to the PAS Museum that came in 1991 while the museum was being built in Lawton. A sampling of the variety of world percussion instruments that the Celeste and Emil Richards Estate donated to the PAS museum include: Emil's entire collection of Javanese gamelan instruments, an 1880s slit drum from New Guinea, a 1930s gourd drum from Tunisia, West African double bells, a drum made by the Huichol Indians of Mexico, a Kundu drum from New Guinea with a lizard-skin head, a pair of slit drums from Bali, a Ntumpane drum used by the Ashanti tribe of Ghana to send messages, and a Japanese Shime-daiko.

Other items donated by Richards in 1991 include a Marimba Grande di Guatemala and an octarimba made by Leedy, which is similar in concept to a twelve-string guitar in that it has bars mounted in pairs and pitched an octave apart that are played with a double-headed mallet (www.pas.org/experience/onlinecollection/octarimba.aspx). In 1993 donations included a xylorimba by Leedy, tons of auxiliary instruments like air raid sirens, bull roars, ancient bells, and several slit drums in various sizes.

Richards was instrumental in procuring the donation of Shelly Manne's drumset (www.pas.org/experience/onlinecollection/shellymanne.aspx). Manne's wife, Florance ("Flip") donated



Octarimba



Shelly Manne exhibit in Lawton

the drumset to PAS in 1996. Manne died in 1984.

One of Richards' most important and prominent donations is the gigantic slit drum currently on exhibit in the entrance gallery of the Rhythm! Discovery Center.

Clearly the "long standing desire on the part of PAS to establish a depository for the collection of historical percussion items," as first articulated in 1977 by President Gary Olmstead, had become a reality. When the structure was first completed, the museum took up 1,600 square feet of the building's total 5,000 square

feet. But within two years, instrument donations to the museum had used up all available display space.

The McMahon Foundation was delighted with the attention the PAS Museum had brought to Lawton and agreed to fund an addition to the museum that would include 2,000 square feet of display space and 2,000 square feet of storage space for instruments and archive materials. With the new addition, the museum space increased from the original 1,600 square feet to 3,600 square feet of space for displays and exhibits.

The expanded museum reopened in August, 1995. PAS was secure in Lawton; the Society grew in membership and the museum expanded and further established

itself under the leadership of Presidents Garwood Whaley (1993–1996), Genaro Gonzales (1997–98), Bob Breithaupt (1999–2000) and Jim Campbell (2001–02). Another addition to the building was completed in 2001, bringing the Percussive Arts Society headquarters and museum total space to 13,000 square feet. Michael Kenyon became Executive Director of PAS in August of 2001 and continues in that capacity today.

With a growing collection of instruments and library materials, and an expanding PAS staff, the 13,000 total square feet of office and

museum space was quickly utilized. Within the first two years the PAS museum had welcomed visitors from 34 states and other countries. However, few members of PAS actually visited Lawton to experience the museum. With a growing concern for greater exposure of the museum and library, especially to PAS members, and the dream of having the PAS offices and museum in a city that could host the annual PASIC, the leadership of PAS began considering the possibility of relocating PAS.

By PASIC 2006 in Austin, plans were underway to relocate PAS to Indianapolis. In April 2007 President Gary Cook (2007–08), Executive Director Michael Kenyon, and the PAS staff moved PAS to temporary offices in Indianapolis. The museum instruments, artifacts, and library were moved to storage in Indy.

In April 2009, under the leadership of President Steve Houghton (2009–10), PAS moved into permanent offices at Claypool Court: 110 W. Washington Street. The new museum, with its now extensive collection of instruments from around the world and library of archives, scores, and recordings reopened at PASIC 2009 in Indianapolis under the new name of Rhythm! Discovery Center.

The entire Rhythm! space is 15,583 square feet, with the museum space alone of 13,500 square feet—larger than the total space for PAS in Lawton. There is a 10-year renewable lease on the space with option to expand another 10,000 feet as needed. The museum is divided into four major galleries, with a central plaza that also serves as a gallery, making five exhibition rooms. There is a hands-on area with over 150 instruments, an interactive area, and two Wenger soundproof practice rooms with Virtual Acoustics Environments. Technology features include a fully programmable lighting system to adapt to changing exhibits, nine video projectors and screens, three video monitors, two touch-screen video monitors, nine SoundDome speaker stations, four audio sound stations, and four motion activated display audio/video stations. There is a gift shop, library reading area, and secured access archive storage room and secured access instrument storage area. The latter is behind a glass wall and a favorite of all museum visitors!

With over 800 instruments in the collection, thousands of percussion scores, method books, literature and archives that include rare manuscripts and all PAS past and current publications and reviews, memorabilia and recordings, the PAS museum and library is the only one of its kind in the world. The Rhythm! Discovery Center houses several collections recently donated by generous individuals. One such contributor was Edwin L. Gerhardt, whose collection comprises numerous items related to the xylophone and marimba, including several instruments, hundreds of recordings, victrolas, books, pictures, miscellaneous articles, correspondence, and other printed matter. The *Edwin L. Gerhardt Xylophone and Marimba Collection* contains hundreds of



Dame Evelyn Glennie in the hands-on area at Rhythm! Discovery Center



PHOTO BY WILL HAWKINS

Wenger soundproof practice room at Rhythm! Discovery Center



Storage room at Rhythm! Discovery Center

rare cylinder recordings and two machines to play them on (see December 2000 *Percussive Notes* article: www.pas.org/publications/publicationarchives/PercussiveNotesArchives/December2000PercussiveNotes.aspx and museum webpage: www.pas.org/experience/Gerhardt-Cylinder.aspx). The *Fujii Database of Japanese Marimba Works by Mutsuko Fujii and Senzoku Marimba Research Group* (www.pas.org/Learn/FujiiDatabase.aspx) contains a downloadable survey of Japanese marimba pieces composed between 1929 and 2003. The *Fujii Database Volume 2* contains a downloadable document entitled *Evolution of the Japanese Marimba: A History of Design through Japan's 5 Major Manufacturers* (www.pas.org/Learn/FujiiDatabase2.aspx). A rare and unique exhibit of the Clair Omar Musser archives takes up one of the four special galleries in Rhythm! complete with number 97 of only 102 King George marimbas from

the original Carroll Bratman collection donation (www.pas.org/experience/onlinecollection/kinggeorge.aspx), Musser's one-of-a-kind celestaphone made from meteorites (www.pas.org/experience/onlinecollection/mussers-celestaphone.aspx), rare photos, letters, and original music manuscripts. In 2008 Ralph Pace, Jr. established the Ralph Pace Museum Acquisition Fund and helped to procure a rare WFL rope-tension field drum (www.pas.org/experience/onlinecollection/WFL-rope-tensionedfielddrum.aspx) and other instruments.

The most recent acquisition is the American Gamelan invented and built by Lou Harrison and William Colvig in 1969–71. Completely restored and dedicated in Rhythm! at PASIC 2010,

“Old Granddad,” as it was affectionately referred to by Harrison, fulfills the intention that Harrison had in 1991—and Harrison declares on video in *Rhythm!*—for Old Granddad to be donated to the PAS museum for preservation and study. For more information on instruments and artifacts in the museum see the *Online Collection Tour*: www.pas.org/experience/onlinecollection.aspx/.

The success of PAS as an organization and the evolution of the PAS museum could only have been possible through the tireless work and dedication of many individuals committed to the goals and objectives of PAS for promoting the percussive arts. Our current PAS Curator and Librarian, Otice C. Sircy, joined the PAS staff in Lawton and has been invaluable in all his ongoing work. Matthew Groshek, who is on the Exhibit Planning and Design faculty at IUPUI, has supervised the exhibit installations in Indy and provided immeasurable contributions to the success of *Rhythm!* The PAS administration and leadership mentioned throughout this article, and PAS staff and supporters not mentioned, all contributed countless hours and energy to every objective. Their selfless dedication to PAS is the reason the Society is the leader in the music profession. Undoubtedly *Rhythm!* and PAS will continue to enjoy this distinction during its 50th Anniversary and under the leadership of President Lisa Rogers (2010–2011) and President-Elect John R. Beck into 2012 and 2013.

The federal government's *Museum and Library Services Act* defines a museum as: “A public or private nonprofit agency or institution organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes, which, utilizing a professional staff, owns or utilizes tangible objects, cares for them, and exhibits them to the public on a regular basis.” Indeed the next phase of development for the PAS museum and library is engaging a professional Development Director



WFL rope-tension field drum

