

A Brief History of Cannon Music Camp

Since 1969, the camp has developed into one of the most prestigious summer music programs in the United States and has made a particularly positive contribution to the growth and development of the Hayes School of Music at Appalachian State University. Historically, Cannon Music Camp was also a cornerstone for the development of the University's summer cultural program, "An Appalachian Summer."

In the Spring of 1968, after several years of discussion, a committee of music faculty members (Dr. Nicholas Erneston, Dean of the School of Fine and Applied Arts; Dr. William Spencer, Chairman of the Department of Music; Dr. Charles Isley, Dr. Joseph Logan, Mr. Walton Cole, and Mr. MacWilliam Disbrow) was appointed to develop a plan for the establishment of a summer music camp on the Appalachian State University campus. It was noted that many successful school and departments of music at universities throughout the United States were operating summer music camps and institutes in an effort to train young musicians and to establish a pool of students who might then attend the sponsoring institution. Until this time, beginning a program of the this type on the Appalachian State University campus would have been most difficult, as housing facilities were limited. With the university demonstrating a sharp increase in enrollment during the 1960's, four new residence halls were under construction and would be ready for occupancy prior to January 1, 1969.

In October 1968, a formal proposal indicating the rationale, operating procedures, instructional organization, and budget was submitted to the university administration. At this time an advisory board consisting of several university administrators (Dr. Paul Sanders, Provost; Dr. O.K. Webb, Dean of Student Affairs; Dr. Nicholas Erneston, Dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts; Dr. William Spencer, Chairman of the Department of Music; Mr. Robert Allen, Director of Public Affairs; Mr. Ned Trivette, Director of Business Affairs) was appointed to work with the Department of Music Camp Council.

January 9, 1969, Dr. William H. Plemmons, President of Appalachian State University, and Mr. Robert Allen, Director of Public Affairs, met in Kannapolis with Mr. Charles A. Cannon, Chairman of the Board of Cannon Mills. Mr. Cannon was most interested in assisting the university with this project. With his generous gift of \$10,000, definite plans were made to begin the first session in July of 1969. **The new summer music program was named Cannon Music Camp, in memory of Mrs. Ruth Cannon and in honor of Mr. Charles A. Cannon.**

July 13, 1969, approximately 135 students, representing six states, arrived on the Appalachian State University campus to participate in the first session of Cannon Music Camp. The camp faculty numbered some seventeen members, assisted by ten graduate music students who served as counselors. From its very beginnings, Cannon Music Camp was designed to offer a comprehensive curriculum. Whereas many other summer music camps were "band camps" or "choral camps", Cannon Music Camp has always offered a total music experience. In the 1969 session, the instructional program included symphony orchestra, concert band, concert choir, string orchestra, and several small ensembles. Daily instruction was given in music theory and private instruction was provided in each instrumental area and in voice.

In 1981, Cannon Music Camp served as the catalyst for an exciting new program. It has proved to be a dramatic extension of the original idea conceived by the original proposal made by the members of the Department of Music, Dr. William Plemmons, and Mr. Charles Cannon. Following a successful engagement as conductor of the Cannon Music Camp Symphony Orchestra, Mr. James Ogle, Associate Director of the North Carolina Symphony, met with Mr. Bill McCloud, Chairman of the Department of Music; Dr. R. Clinton Parker, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; and Mr. Robert Snead, Vice Chancellor for Development, to discuss creating a music festival which would combine the resources of the music camp and the North Carolina Symphony. Obviously, the mountain setting and the completion of the new Broyhill Music Center would offer a magnificent backdrop for this type of endeavor.

During the summer of 1982, a chamber orchestra from the North Carolina Symphony spent a one-week residency in Boone, working with music campers and performing two public concerts. From 1983 to the mid-1990's, the North Carolina Symphony's involvement grew both in duration and with the number of performers involved. At its peak, the Symphony spent as much as two and one-half weeks in residency, giving a variety of concerts on campus, as well as offering sectional rehearsals and a combined concert with the Cannon Music Camp Symphony Orchestra. The value of the North Carolina Symphony residence, as it related to the camp, was immeasurable. Certainly one major effect resulted in dramatically increased stringed instrument enrollments. A waiting list was not unusual.

In 1984, again through the efforts of Mr. Bill McCloud and Mr. Robert Snead, the summer program brought in the "Chopin Colony," a group of talented performers who were forging international reputations. This group, now known as the Broyhill Chamber Ensemble, has become an integral part of the summer program, which has been named "An Appalachian Summer."

Since 1969, with the original objectives clearly in place, Cannon Music Camp has enjoyed great success. Nearly 10,000 young musicians have enjoyed outstanding musical experiences during their month-long stay at Cannon Music Camp. As a result of the continued generosity of the Cannon Foundation and the keen interest and concern of the late Mariam Cannon Hayes, daughter of Charles and Ruth Cannon, approximately eighty-five to ninety percent (85%-90%) of those yearly enrolled have received financial aid to assist them in attending camp. These students have been selected on the basis of talent, potential, and financial need without regard to race or socioeconomic background.

Directors of Cannon Music Camp have included: Dr. Charles Isley, 1969; Mr. James Cole, 1970; Dr. Nicholas Erneston, 1971-72; Dr. Erneston and Mr. Clinton Parker, 1972; Mr. Parker, 1973-1978; Dr. Erneston, 1978 (while Mr. Parker completed doctoral studies); Dr. Parker, 1979-80; Mr. Bill McCloud, 1980-82; Dr. Scott Meister, 1983; Dr. William Gora, 1984-1994; Dr. Jay Jackson, 1995-2000; Dr. Stephen Hopkins began serving as Camp Director in 2001.

Cannon Music Camp enrollment has come from twenty-seven states and eleven nations abroad including North Carolina, Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Ohio, Texas, New Jersey, Kentucky, Maryland, Louisiana, New York, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Oregon, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Other countries represented have included Taiwan, Japan, Philippines, Gamboa, France, Mexico, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Venezuela, Italy, and the Middle East.

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