

Music At Palomar

Stanford

has been important in the history of Palomar College from the very first year classes to the present time. Governing boards and their administrative staffs have given leadership to Fine Arts with a high priority.

The first year of the history of Palomar College Music was a whirlwind of activity in the community. Approval for the new college district, the choice of an appropriate site, Palomar College, with plans to open classes in the Vista High School facilities preceded by only a few days the announcement of employment of the first music fac-

The name "Palomar" was announced in the *Escondido Times Advocate* on August 16, 1946; at the time the name was chosen, faculty positions were being filled. Events happened quickly in order that classes could open on September 23, 1946.

One of the first faculty members employed for the new college was William Arthur Vogel, known as "Bill," a name announced by Director Dr. Daniel C. McNaughton. McNaughton and Vogel knew each other in their years in the armed services. McNaughton had been an Army captain, and Vogel was connected with the Red Cross. After meeting in an officers' mess they became friends and speculated what their futures would be after the war was over.

Mr. Vogel had been director of the School of Music at the University of Alabama for five years. He had many years of training as a pianist and composer, including studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London, the Leipzig Conservatory, the Paris Conservatoire

under Block and Widor, and at Yale University, with his initial degree from Denison University of Granville, Ohio. Mr. and Mrs. Vogel and their two young daughters, Siglinda and Sandra, arrived in San Diego County on August 27, 1946. Mrs. Kay Vogel was a graduate of the University of Colorado, and had been a teacher of Latin and Greek. And so the College opened on Sep-



A Capella Choir
Approximately 1949

tember 23, 1946, with a total of 198 students.

The first public concert given by Mr. Vogel was on November 7, 1946, at the Vista High School Auditorium in which he played a program of romantic piano compositions and his own composition, "Desert Suite." The first concert involving students and the community featured three performances of Handel's *Messiah* on December 12, 13, and 15 in Escondido, Fallbrook, and Vista. For these concerts, Vogel requested that local ministers "inform their congregations of some of the basic concepts behind the oratorio." [1] The performances, conducted by Vogel, included soloists Mrs. Virginia Arnold, soprano; Mrs. J. W. Skinner, contralto; Mr. Larry Glover, tenor; and Mr. Russell Avery, baritone, with a chorus and orchestra of 80 performers. [2] In December, Mr. Arthur Vogel, pianist, and Mrs. Alvin Chandler, cellist, gave a program of "distinctive chamber music" at the President's Tea attended by the faculty, the Governing Board members, and students. The evening concluded with singing of Christmas carols and holiday songs led by Bill Vogel.

December was also the month of another first for Palomar Music. On December 12, it was announced that Palomar College now had its own dance orchestra which was organized and directed by Alvin Chandler, chairman of the committee of student affairs. They had made their first appearance at a Thanksgiving dance and had christened themselves "The Stargazers," with their theme melody Hoagy Carmichael's *Stardust*.

Although not much was reported in newspaper articles about the beginning of the College orchestra, it must be assumed that the first orchestra was formed to accompany the first oratorio performance, *Messiah*. News articles from the beginning of the spring semester showed a shift in emphasis in music offerings in favor of the orchestra.



William Arthur "Bill" Vogel
Palomar's first music
instructor
1946 to 1949

On January 9, 1947, an announcement was made that "one of the new courses of the spring curriculum would include ear training and dictation, and that the chorus would begin rehearsing selections from ten grand operas. In March, the chorus plans were canceled because of "crowded high school calendars." [3] Could it have been caused by low enrollment in the chorus? Or, it may just have been too difficult to share facilities with the high school. In any event, it was decided to "put increased emphasis this year upon the new orchestra." [4] An oratorio was planned once a year, with hopes that a permanent oratorio society could be organized in the future.

The final concert by the orchestra for the spring semester of 1947 was given on a Thursday night in the Vista High School Auditorium by an orchestra of 30 players. This program included Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony* and Tchaikowsky's *Nutcracker Suite*. The Glee Club presented an unnamed cantata, interpreted by 22 costumed dancers who were directed by Joy Larrabee, undoubtedly Palomar's first interdisciplinary performance. [5]

During this first year, William Vogel had been engaged in 35 recitals and performances with ensembles which had been heard by 6,500 persons, a very active first year for the new College Music Department.

The fall semester of 1947 opened with an expanded curriculum for the Music Department. The following newspaper article appeared in midsummer 1947:

"... a considerably enlarged program is being offered. For those interested, writing music, learning the basic skills of composition, harmony 1st and 2nd year, and counterpoint are available. There are no prerequisites for first year harmony. For persons who desire to become acquainted with the existing music of symphony and opera, and who wish to acquire necessary judgements for evaluating good music, survey of music literature is available . . . This course has been greatly enlarged over last year due to the acquisition of many fine recordings. History of music is also available.

The chief activity of the first semester will be another oratorio presentation around Christmas time when Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, the most spine-tingling dramatic work in repertoire will be produced. Many have the idea that *Elijah* is more difficult to sing than *Messiah*. The opposite is true. With the basic personnel of last year and a welcome to any one of any age who likes to sing to join . . . , there would be a fine performance given. Several towns outside have already spoken for a performance. The orchestra will begin

rehearsals Thursday of next week . . . Any player of orchestral instruments, particularly strings should plan to join. Music is being housed in a new commodious building in Vista, which will greatly facilitate the program." [6]

A simple but elegant program of the *Elijah* performance given in Vista, San Dieguito, and Escondido in December 1947 may be found in the *History of Palomar College*. [7] There were 42 singers in the chorus and 17 players in the orchestra. Two of the soloists were local persons, but a special guest, Mr. Rollin Pease, who had sung the role over 400 times, was brought in to sing the part of "Elijah." An appeal in the program asked the audience to contribute to a free-will offering upon leaving the concert hall, stating that "Mr. Pease has come on faith. We must not fail him." [8]

January of 1948 saw the onset of a political situation in North San Diego County that was important in the history of Palomar College. Deciding upon the permanent location of the College was a major hurdle for the communities. Controversy over the site seemed to be between Vista and Escondido, and a power struggle for Board representation from the two areas dominated the news concerning the College. An historical account of that debacle will be found in Chapter 2 in this account. In spite of the political whirlwinds going on, the Music Department furnished music and various kinds of entertainment. When the bombshell was



James Weld
Palomar's first piano and organ instructor
Part-time instructor 1948 to 1965
Full-time instructor 1965 to 1990

In the early years, Mr. Weld taught piano to Palomar students at his home in Vista.

ally dropped announcing that the decision had been made by the Board to locate in San Marcos, a "First Annual Founders Day"[9] celebration was planned and held on February 19, 1948, in San Marcos. A musical program by the Palomar College Chorus was directed by William Vogel to entertain the guests, and perhaps to soften for both Escondido and Vista the news that Palomar was to be located in San Marcos. Mr. Ross Cope closed the event with an operatic aria, "Eri Tu" from Verdi's *A Masked Ball*, an unlikely choice of music for such an event, but probably sung in Italian, with the audience not knowing that the subject of the aria was bitterness, jealousy, and revenge.

In May 1948, a name of importance to Palomar College arises in the *History of Palomar College*, that of James H. Weld. At a joint meeting of The Patrons of Palomar College and the Parent Teachers Association of Vista, "James Petersen, a 7th grader in the Vista schools, and pupil of James Weld, charmed his audience both with his personality and poise, and his very able execution of the *Turkish March* by Mozart and *Spanish Dance* by George Eggingel." [10] Weld did not join the Palomar faculty until 1953.

The Band and the Glee Club gave a joint concert on Friday, May 14, 1948, covering a broad spectrum of music. The Band played Sousa, Grieg, and Gershwin; the chorus sang American Folk Song arrangements; and three compositions written by second year harmony students were played on the piano by Mr. Vogel. The Band presented other compositions and concluded with *Donkey Serenade* by Friml.

The college year 1948-1949 continued with an active Music Department steered by William Vogel. There were fewer announcements in the newspapers regarding music activities, but the events reported were full of a variety of musical styles, with several comments on the excellence of the offerings. On April 2, 1949, Vogel, in reference to the Glee Club and soloists, "expressed great pleasure over the progress and excellence of the singing." [11] On April 13, Dr. Daniel McNaughton, who had brought William Vogel to the faculty and tendered support for establishment of a music program for three years, resigned under pressure from a newly elected Governing Board which was intent on ridding the College of any traces that may lean toward communism. The long arms of McCarthyism had reached even to the Northern San Diego County Junior College District. According to Kay Vogel, Bill resigned in support of his deposed friend, Daniel McNaughton.

Following his three years of pioneer work in the Music Department of Palomar College, Bill Vogel taught in a high school in Plymouth, Idaho. After returning to San Diego County, he was an employee of Convair

in San Diego from 1951 to 1962 where he formed and conducted a chorus called the "Choraires," a sizeable choral ensemble which performed in all parts of San Diego County. After Convair closed, Vogel taught at Ramona High School from 1963 to 1965 and was a substitute teacher for local school districts as well as directing the choir of the House of Prayer Lutheran Church in Escondido. He died at this home in Escondido on February 15, 1970. His wife, Kay, now living in Escondido, taught continuously in Escondido High School from the time the Vogel's came to North County in 1946 to 1972.

Dr. Elon Hildreth from Glendale High School was made president of Palomar College in July, 1949, and brought with him the band director from Glendale, Mr. Howard Kay.

The Howard Kay Years

In September 1949, Mr. Howard Kay, his wife, Elizabeth, and two sons, Howard and Kermit, arrived from Glendale. His first announcement was to get the Comet Band organized and underway, setting the tone for his tenure as a music teacher at Palomar. His emphasis was to establish a marching band which would play for sports events and march in parades in southern California. At the same time, he announced a continuation of music courses for the department which included ear training and dictation, elementary harmony, chorus (probably the evening oratorio chorus), a *capella* choir, string orchestra, band, and modern dance band. Although not stated, he probably was not the director of the string orchestra or dance band. Still, choir, band, and theory classes would constitute more than a full load. In October, the Comet Band accepted an invitation to participate in the Annual Hollywood Santa Claus Lane Parade which opened the Christmas season in Hollywood, one of the largest parades in Southern California.

One indication that the chorus may not have been doing so well was an appeal on December 2 for tenor and bass voices. The request was for anyone to come and help prepare for the concert to be given on December 15. In the spring semester of 1950, the choir joined other choirs in San Diego County for a grand county-wide high school music festival to be held in Escondido. The nationally famous conductor, Noble Cain, was brought in to be conductor of the singers. There were about 150 singers involved, and 300 people attend the concert. The group sang religious music including hymns and arrangements by Noble Cain. This was the first choral festival for high school choirs which was sponsored by Palomar College and later by the San Diego County Department of Education. The

festival today is known as the 1000 Voice Choir.

The Board made the decision in the spring of 1950 to move to the site in San Marcos where the college is presently located. Classes were to begin in hastily erected wooden buildings acquired from nearby military bases. Classes could now be offered during the morning hours unlike scheduling at Vista High School where all classes were afternoon and evening offerings.

The Palomar College Orchestra received a new shot in the arm from a group that had been in session in earlier years. Ensembles begun by Vogel probably originated primarily to accompany the oratorio performances, although their concert at the end of the first year was quite a complete concert. Since Howard Kay's emphasis was band, the orchestra had to be di-

rected by someone else. In 1946, Alfred Williams had organized an orchestra that met at San Dieguito High School. Anna MacClanahan was the conductor, followed by Fritz Emrich. At first, the group was associated with the Vista High School Adult Education program, but in 1950, with Palomar's move to San Marcos, it was decided to associate the 40 players with the Palomar College Adult Education program. Its credo is represented by the statement of purpose: "The concerts are given free of charge with the object of creating an even wider interest in the enjoyment of good music." [12] In October, Howard Kay welcomed Ralph Streano's fine Symphonette to the college curricula. Kay announced to the community that the college, for the first time, offered a full lower division program in music that was transferable to four-year colleges.

In the fall of 1950, the Comet Band not only marched in the Santa Claus Lane Parade as they had the year before, but also played and marched for the Little Rose Bowl Game exhibition on December 9th.

The first concert of the fall by the newly acquired Sinfonette was on October 30, 1950, which included music from Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, J. S. Bach's *Concerto #2*, Strauss' *Tales from Vienna Woods*, Beethoven's *Symphony #1*, and Tchaikovsky's *Suite from the Nutcracker*. Alfieri Pierno, who for many years since has played with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, was the soloist for the Bach concerto; later Pierno became the conductor of the orchestra.

Life in the wooden buildings on the new campus was surely eventful for students and faculty. James Weld relates the story that students waited each day to see how loud the explosion would be when the gas heater was ignited to provide heat in the classroom. Speculation on its intensity became a fun game for students. A good day for the students was when it blew the cover off the flue.

One news report of life on the campus indicated that students "will hear concerts every Friday



Palomar Marching Band on Grand Avenue in Escondido in 1950.



*1950 Palomar Marching Band
Location Unknown*

during lunch hour, and these concerts will be request programs.”[13] The music was played over outside loudspeakers, and was said to have received as many requests for the classics as for popular music.

Money was collected from various sources to order new uniforms for the Comet Band in October 1951. The band ordered twenty-five uniforms of a military style, red with grey lapels, gold buttons, white belt, and a gold buckle. The handsome uniforms were ready for the yearly appearances in Hollywood and at the Little Rose Bowl festivities.

In November, President Hildreth resigned after a tenure of two years, and in March 1952, Dr. Phil H. Putnam of Portland, Oregon, was selected as president, coming on duty on July 1, 1952. The next month, Howard Kay received his master's degree from San Diego State College where he had been working on his degree in the evenings. For his work with the *a capella* choir, Kay received a letter of compliment from Howard Swann of Occidental College.

On December 14, 1952, Howard Kay conducted his last performance of *Messiah* at the Escondido High School Auditorium with an ensemble made of San Diego church singers, the Palomar College *A Capella* Choir, and the Rossmoyne Christian Church Choir of Glendale. Soloists were Marilyn Taylor, Sylvia Haining, Paul Mayo, and Richard Davis with accompanists Lorayne Hamilton from Glendale, piano, and James H. Weld of Vista, organ.

Early in the spring semester of 1953, college music students visited various radio and television studios in Hollywood to learn how the professional studio world operated. Their visit included the Art Linkletter Show, the Curt Massey Show, and others as well as radio stations. In April, the *A Capella* Choir joined again with high school choirs of the area in a large music festival in which they sang fourteen numbers. The group of about 800 voices was conducted by Dr. Charles Hirt from the University of Southern California.

In a single news article, the resignation of Howard Kay was announced in May 1953:

Howard Kay, Palomar JC music head, announced last week in a letter to the board thanking personnel for their continued support, that he was rejoining Elon Hildreth, deposed PJC president now at San Mateo. He is reported as having added the impertinent statement that he is 'seeking the security that comes from the assurance that my tenure will not be contingent upon the results of annual board elections but will be based upon the approval and recommendation of a professional educator.'

Such a statement is seen here as insolent, untrue and a reflection upon the present head of the college, Dr. Phil Putnam. A Palomar patron declared that both the board and Putnam have been very good to Kay and that his 'quite unnecessary' criticism is a deliberate attempt to influence the board election Friday, adding that Kay will be easily replaced.[14]

It is not understood by this writer what influence Kay might have had on the election. At any rate, the impression is given that he was politically active, and that there had been tension between himself and the new administration.

On May 13, 1953, an article reporting on actions of the Governing Board included the announcement that James H. Weld was added to the staff of Palomar College, and at the very next meeting of the Board in May, Dr. Putnam announced the employment of Howard Brubeck.

Well known in San Diego County, Brubeck has been choir director and college organist at San Diego State. Before coming to San Diego three years ago, he taught for six years at Mills College in Oakland, where he received a master's degree. He was graduated from San Francisco State College. Brubeck is married and has three children.[15]

The Brubeck Years

In a stroke of good fortune for Palomar College, Howard R. Brubeck was employed after his departure from San Diego State College. Brubeck resigned from San Diego State as a result of a dispute with the department chairman over music theory textbook use for classes.

Howard was one of three musical sons born to rancher Howard Peter and Elizabeth Brubeck in Concord, California. Howard's older brother, Henry, became a music teacher and administrator in Santa Barbara Schools, while David, four years younger than Howard, became internationally famous as a jazz pianist of the 1950's and 1960's. Howard studied piano with his mother and according to his widow, June, he often said that he couldn't remember when he could not play the piano.

He was graduated from San Francisco State College and finished a masters degree from Mills College, studying with internationally recognized composer Darius Milhaud. He became a protege of Milhaud and after his graduate studies, he remained at Mills as a faculty members for six years.

Already in his young career as a musician, he had established himself as a composer of merit. He had con-