



IN MEMORIAM

John E. Gillespie
Professor of Music, Emeritus
Santa Barbara
1921 — 2003

John E. (Jack) Gillespie was born in Greencastle, Indiana, where he received his early education and degrees (A.B. in German, 1941, and B.M. in piano, 1942) at DePauw University. Like others of his generation he saw service in the U. S. Army during WW II in Belgium and France, as a chaplain's assistant. At the end of hostilities, he spent two years at the Conservatoire Nationale de Paris, studying organ with André Marchal and Marcel Dupré. Study at the University of Southern California earned an M.M. degree in piano, 1947, and an M.A. in musicology, 1948. A Fulbright Grant returned him to Paris for two years of study at the Sorbonne preparatory to doctoral studies at USC, where he received the Ph.D. in musicology in 1951.

Thus armed with a rich background in music history and keyboard performance, Jack was appointed Assistant Professor of Music at the newly emerging campus of the University of California at Santa Barbara. It was a time of energetic growth and expanding vision for the campus, and within a short time, Jack moved to a position of leadership, assuming the chair of the department already establishing its reputation as a center for musical scholars and performers. At the center of his teaching were courses in the history and literature of music, which gave birth to a number of books: most notably, *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music* (1964), *The Musical Experience* (1968), and a series of anthologies on European and American music for the piano. In addition, he made a series of recordings of a wide range of harpsichord music, played on his own concert Pleyel harpsichord, an acquisition during his Paris studies. In retirement, Jack continued his research and writing, with the publication of the two volume *Notable Twentieth- Century Pianists: A Bio- Critical Sourcebook* (1995). But his research interests were not limited to the Western tradition: he devoted a long period of study and writing to music of more exotic cultural traditions, especially resulting in a detailed essay and extensive set of recordings of music of the Egyptian Coptic Church.

The campus concert life was enriched by his frequent recitals, both as soloist and in collaboration with his colleagues. Of historical remembrance were the series of concerts with some of his colleagues of the concertos for one, two, three, and four harpsichords by Johann Sebastian Bach. One concert was especially memorable: coming to the concert hall, the performers discovered a large overflow audience standing outside, unable to enter. A quick consultation decided that if the unlucky members of the audience would return in two hours, the entire program would be repeated immediately following the first. The second concert was rewarded with a nearly full house.

Jack possessed a brilliant keyboard technique and an astonishing ability to read at sight almost any score. With this, he was a generous collaborator with his colleagues. His keyboard skills illuminated his classroom lectures which were often miniature concerts to illustrate a musical or historical point. He established warm bonds with many of his students, bonds which continued after his retirement. In the Santa Barbara community, he had a long association as organist for All Saints Episcopal Church, and until shortly before his death he served as organist for St. George's Anglican Church in Ventura.

He and his wife, Anna, were warm and welcoming hosts to their home on Santa Barbara's Riviera. Following his retirement, visitors to their home would often be rewarded with an impromptu concert. His comment, "Guess what I've been working on?" would be followed by a Bach Partita or Chopin Etude, always played from memory.

He is survived by his wife, Anna, who assisted him in many of his scholarly works, his daughter, Frances, and his son, John.

Geoffrey Rutkowski
Carl Zytowski