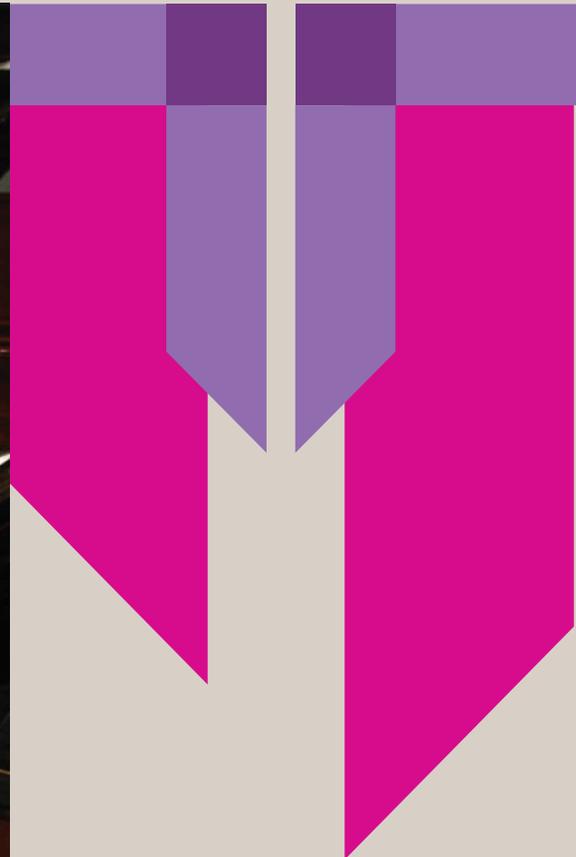




Bill McCormick '59 and his son, Joe '95,
of Jordan Kitt's Music



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Bill McCormick '59 donates seven pianos.

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Music Department Reaches Crescendo with New Pianos

By Mark J. Cadigan

The newest additions to the Holy Cross music department arrived wordlessly, but with a definite flourish. One of them made a grand entrance, hoisted by a crane through a second-floor window.

“It’s like a wonderful member of the department, and it sits there in all its glory in Brooks [Concert] Hall,” says Professor Marian C. Hanshaw, who has taught at Holy Cross since 1980. She is referring not to a new faculty member but to a Steinway Concert Grand Model D piano. It’s one of seven new pianos recently donated to the College by Bill McCormick ’59, chairman and president of Jordan Kitt’s Music, the largest retailer of keyboards in the country, according to *The Music Trades* magazine.

Professor Shirish Korde, chair of the music department, calls the Model D, “the standard concert instrument for professional pianists. In other words, it represents the high-water mark for piano performances, whether in chamber music contexts or orchestra and solo contexts.”

One pianist who’s very familiar with Steinways is Professor Sarah Grunstein—she received the honor of being named a “Steinway artist” in 1987, after performing Bach’s complete “Well-Tempered Clavier” in New York, London, and Sydney, Australia, her birthplace. “In this case, we have a most superb instrument,” she says. “It offers unlimited capability in terms of palette of sound, timbre and texture. Our hope is that through proper care and maintenance, this instrument will always be at its utmost capacity. Therefore, for every concert, both students and faculty will have at their fingertips—no pun intended—a world-class instrument, which will serve as a wonderful inspiration for the creative spirits of those performing and for the audience.”

Since its arrival in March, the Steinway has been utilized by both faculty and students for a number of

performances, including: a recital by Grunstein; a voice/piano recital by Jennifer K. Ashe and Alison d’Amato, also of the music department; a Contemporary Music concert; a Holy Cross Chamber Players concert, featuring Grunstein, Associate Professor Carol Lieberman and guests from the Boston Symphony Orchestra; a student-faculty recital; the Student Chamber Music Festival; Brooks Scholar Jonathan Yasuda ’05 performing Rachmaninoff’s *Second Piano Concerto* with the Holy Cross Chamber Orchestra; and student recitals.

“They felt privileged to play it,” Hanshaw says of her piano students’ reaction to the Model D. “And what they discovered, of course, was that it was a completely different ballgame, because there is so much more resonance there, so much more variety.” She states that the students also played better on the new Steinway.

“If we are going to teach the full range of piano literature to students,” says d’Amato, “it is wonderful to have this piano to illustrate the wealth of sounds and colors available to us.”

The Model D joins a Steinway Concert Grand Model B piano in Brooks Concert Hall, which will now be used for two-piano pieces and rehearsing. The Model B was donated to the College in 1993 by Dennis Hanson ’76, chief financial officer of Steinway Musical Instruments, Inc. “It’s slightly smaller but also a very beautiful instrument,” notes Korde.

Steinway & Sons, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary, is known for the care that goes into each piano it builds. “Steinway remains one of the last outposts of hand craftsmanship in a machine-dominated industry,” *The New York Times* declared in a May 11, 2003, front-page story. *Steinway*, a book by Ronald Ratcliffe and Stuart Isacoff, provides plenty of details about the company’s approach.

“Combining twelve thousand parts to construct a modern grand piano is a labor-intensive process that takes nearly a year,” according to Ratcliffe and Isacoff. “As many as two hundred craftsmen may have worked on a piano before it is sent out for sale.”

A group from Holy Cross that included Rev. John E. Brooks, S.J., '49, president emeritus, Korde, Grunstein and Hanshaw, toured the Steinway factory in New York (there's another in Hamburg, Germany) in January to observe how the pianos are made and to select one for the College.

“It was a day that I will never forget, really,” recalls Hanshaw. “It was quite remarkable. And what I think is interesting is that when it came right down to choosing a piano, three of us there were musicians, and our ears were practically hanging on the strings, listening, because each one had a different reaction to a different part of the piano.”

“The selection process gave Holy Cross the chance to be able to select from six concert-ready, nine-foot grand pianos,” says Joe McCormick '95, merchandise manager and distribution manager for Jordan Kitt's Music. He accompanied the Holy Cross group on the tour, along with his father and Henry Z. Steinway, great-grandson of the company's founder.

“Each Steinway is unique,” he continues, “so when you are selecting an instrument that could last for the better part of 70 years—and could launch the musical careers of some fortunate Holy Cross students—you want to ensure that you are selecting the instrument that is right for you and your institution.”

By all accounts, the College is now in possession of an excellent instrument, one that Korde calls, “the Rolls-Royce of all pianos.”

“I think it was a wonderful gift,” says Hanshaw, “because when the young people play this piano, they have much more of an awareness of what is possible. You play a note quietly, and it carries beautifully. ... And it has more color, more possibilities. We have a lot of very musical people, and they instantly recognized that. So everybody wants to play that piano. It's a great treasure.”

The College is also benefiting from Bill McCormick's other recent gifts: two Boston grand pianos for the piano studios—which replace two pianos that have since been moved to practice rooms—and four Roland electronic



pianos for the ear-training lab, which should be fully implemented this fall, according to Korde.

“There's a computer hooked up to the piano, and it's going to be used for ear training and also for piano practice and composition,” explains Korde, who began teaching at Holy Cross in 1977, when the music department was actually a division within the visual arts department.

“Ear training is a most important component of a musician's training,” says Grunstein. “As a musician, one has to have the sound in one's head in order to be able to produce it at the instrument. If your inner ear is not trained to its



Dan Vallincourt

because I'm playing one and the students play another. And that gives them a little push. If you're reading by yourself, it is much less demanding than if someone is right there, keeping that beat going. And students seem to like it very much. ... We've had two pianos that were not unhappy together, but these are relatives—close relatives—and that's just perfect.”

“The department should stand for top quality, just as Holy Cross does ... the best quality product in the broadest sense—faculty, facilities,” says Bill McCormick.

“I've been very successful in the piano industry,” he continues, “and I've been very well rewarded by that success. So I thought it was appropriate to give a part of that back to Holy Cross, to which I can give some credit for that success.”

Ana Alvarado, a Holy Cross capital gifts officer who has worked with Bill McCormick on these donations and who also attended the Steinway tour, calls him, “tremendously philanthropic”; she points out that he's involved with many institutions and organizations besides Holy Cross, particularly in the Washington, D.C./Md. area. McCormick lives in Potomac, Md., and his company is based in College Park, Md., with keyboard stores located in several metropolitan areas, including Washington, D.C.

In addition to being a member of the Holy Cross President's Council and the Washington Regional Campaign Committee for the *Lift High the Cross* Campaign, he is also affiliated with the Washington Performing Arts Society, the

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and other groups.

In 1983, he became sole owner of Jordan Kitt's Music (JKM), which regularly gives used instruments to inner-city schools in the D.C. area. “We have a pretty liberal budget,” he says. “Our charitable giving budget is 18 percent of net income.”

The company's endurance and exemplary status within the retail musical instruments industry—it has provided pianos to both the Kennedy Center and the White House—derive from its vision and persistence, according to McCormick. “You couldn't survive for 91 years in

capacity, you can't, at full awareness, hear all that's in the music, and, as performer, you also can't utilize all the instrument has to offer. For musicologists, composers and theorists, ear training is equally important. Our ears are like the artists' eyes.”

Hanshaw says that she is thrilled with the two new Boston pianos and their impact on her students. “It's wonderful because they are matched. I teach in the studio with the two pianos, and I use them constantly because I have a great emphasis on sight reading. ... We work on that very intensely, and that takes two pianos,

any business without a lot of effort to be the best that you can in each category.”

Two key components of JKM’s success have been its music instruction programs and its attention to cultivating skilled, dedicated employees through encouragement, classes, seminars, bonuses, extra commissions and more.

“We have several employees with over 30 years’ tenure, and that is something that you do not see in very many companies today,” says Joe McCormick, who notes that some of his co-workers remember the day he was born.

JKM’s Keyboard Learning Centers offer private and group piano and keyboard instruction for all ages and ability levels, a program Bill McCormick believes is vital to the company’s growth and reputation.

“We really believe in music education as the premise for our whole business,” he says. “Obviously, if there were no piano teachers, there would be no piano students, no piano customers. . . . And then, going around in a circle, we really believe that the promise we give customers—that they will enjoy playing, that it will be personally rewarding to them—is fulfilled only through music lessons. So all 11 of our stores have recital rooms that seat anywhere from 100 to 120 people, available to local area music teachers at no charge. Steinway grand pianos, of course, are on the recital stage. And in some of our better stores, we do as many as 250 recitals a year.”

“It’s clearly a way of our contributing to the community, but it’s also a self-rewarding investment,” he says. Thus, McCormick has found a way of joining some of the Jesuit philosophies he soaked up at Holy Cross with the business acumen he gained at Harvard Business School (M.B.A., 1961) and honed during subsequent years as a consultant for many Fortune 500 companies.

Likewise, Joe McCormick has learned about giving back; he and his father donated a Boston grand piano to the College’s St. Joseph Memorial Chapel in 2001.

“The piano that was in that chapel was not up to the standards of the rest of the building,” says Joe McCormick. “It was an old vertical piano that really could not efficiently carry the sound throughout the Chapel. We were fortunate enough to be in a position to make a significant improvement to that, so it seemed like the right thing to do.”

Joe McCormick has another strong connection to

the Chapel. He and his wife, Ann Marie Boole McCormick ’95—who is the operations manager and divisional vice president for the Bethesda, Md., branch of UBS PaineWebber—were married there in 2001.

In summarizing the generosity of the McCormicks, Grunstein says, “The gifts that Bill and Joe McCormick have given to Holy Cross are extraordinary, and are a tremendous source of inspiration for music-making among our students and faculty. My hope is that the music department concerts will attract an even greater cross section of the Holy Cross and Worcester communities, so that the inspiration can be all the more far-reaching.”

Mark J. Cadigan is a freelance writer from Stamford, Conn.



left to right: Joe McCormick '95, Henry Steinway, Professor Marian Hanshaw, Rev. John E. Brooks, S.J. '49, and Bill McCormick '59



Bill Teuber '73 and John Mahoney '73



Karen Andreoli and
Kimberly Froude



Lisa Breen '84 and
Jack Welch

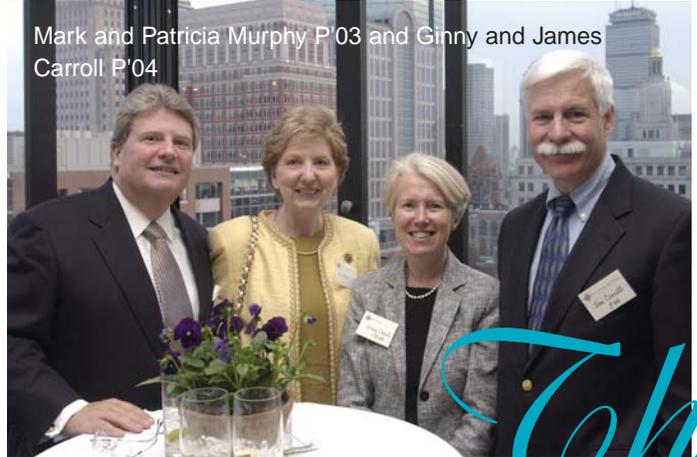
Mahoney Teuber President's Council Reception at the Ritz

May 7: Rose and John Mahoney '73, P'00 and Ann Marie and William Teuber '73, P'02, hosted distinguished, regent, and benefactor members of President's Council for the 4th consecutive year. The reception was held at the Ritz-Carlton in Boston.

Holy Cross Leadership Council of New York Fund-Raiser Honors John Sinnott '61

May 13: The Leadership Council honored John T. "Jack" Sinnott '61, recently-retired Chairman of Marsh Inc., at its annual dinner fund-raiser, held this year at New York's Palace Hotel. The dinner raised \$305,750 to support the Council's initiatives, including the Summer Internship Program. Jack Sinnott and Marsh Inc. have supported the Internship Program since its inception by providing summer leadership opportunities for Holy Cross students.

Mark and Patricia Murphy P'03 and Ginny and James Carroll P'04



The



Parents Michael and Deborah Golden with daughter
an '04 and Marie '04



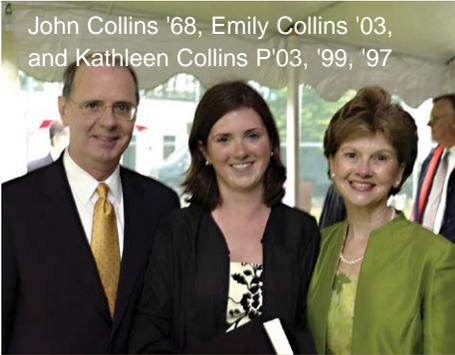
Frank Murphy '61, Jim Freeman '61, P'87, Jack '61 and Eileen Sinnott, John Hogan '61, P'86, '85, Joan Hogan Gillman '85, Henry '61 and Nancy Sampers and William Sichel '61, P'02, '96



Amy and Tim McCooley '91, Tim Doern '91 and Bill O'Connor '91



Ken '66 and Jane Padgett P'07, '05, Jack '61 and Eileen Sinnott, and Fr. McFarland, S.J.



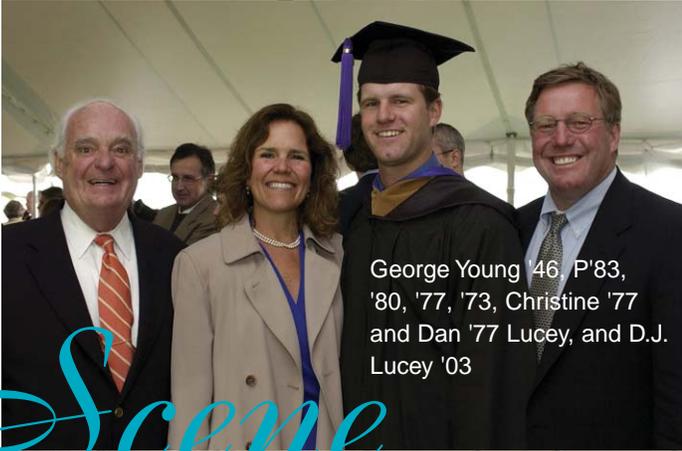
John Collins '68, Emily Collins '03, and Kathleen Collins P'03, '99, '97



Andy Simons '03 with nephew, Matthew



Douglas Taggart '03 with his parents Dan and Barbara



George Young '46, P'83, '80, '77, '73, Christine '77 and Dan '77 Lucey, and D.J. Lucey '03



Christine Kettmer '03 with parents, Harry and Martha

Scene



Illona Nagy '03 and family, including Andrew '96, Thomas '06, Marta '00 and Professor Blaise Nagy of the Holy Cross Classics Department



James Powderly '03 and family, including Robert '69 and Gerry '93



Patricia Barr '03 and family



Jacqueline Laux '03 and family, including sister Jeannine '05

President's Reception, Commencement 2003