



MR. BRATT'S OPUS: A Yearlong Celebration

By Sherry Squires

C. Griffith Bratt was the face of Boise State's Department of Music for 30 years. At age 95, he's more than a living legend. Students enrolled this fall in music composition classes taught by his son, music professor Wallace Bratt, will experience firsthand his passion for music and his heart for teaching.



"Grif" Bratt was hired in 1946 by President Eugene Chaffee to head the music department for Boise Junior College. Until 1970, he served as chair of the department where he taught music theory, originated the Meistersingers choral group and was named Composer in Residence by the National Music Federation. He successfully led the department through the transition to a four-year program before retiring from the university in 1976.

Wallace Bratt has organized a yearlong tribute to his father that will include a new generation of students learning and performing Grif Bratt's original music, former students returning to campus to give concerts, and a possible revival of the pipe organ that Wallace and Grif helped install years ago in the Hemingway Center. Father and son have 67 years of combined service to Boise State.

"Griffith Bratt has played a pivotal role in the shaping of this department and many other musical activities in this community and has profoundly

affected the lives of countless students over the years," says Mark Hansen, current chair of the music department. "It is most fitting that we honor him in this way."

Bratt was revered by students and the community alike, serving as organist and choirmaster at St.

Michael's Cathedral for 52 years and performing Sunday afternoon organ concerts that were broadcast by radio from what is now the Hemingway Western Studies Center. He also was a nationally known figure in the world of organ music

and organ renewal, credited in a 1965 Idaho Observer cover story with helping put Boise on the musical map.

Since retiring from Boise State, Bratt and his wife, Mary — also a talented musician, who met Bratt at the Peabody Conservatory for Music in 1935 — have continued to call Boise home. As a composer, he has amassed four full operas, two symphonies and hundreds of vocal, choral and chamber works.

"I'm most proud of my students," he says, delineating all of their recent performances, recordings and accomplishments in the music world. "Boise State has turned out a great deal of talent over the years."

For more information on planned activities to honor Bratt, visit the department's website at www.boisestate.edu/music.

BRATT TAUGHT ...

... BRATT TAUGHT:

WITH KNOWLEDGE, WITH KNOW-HOW,
WITH WISDOM, WITH WILL,
WITH PASSION, WITH PATIENCE,
WITH SPIRIT, WITH SKILL;

WITH FEELING, WITH FAITHFULNESS,
WITH ARDOR, WITH ART,
WITH RELISH, WITH REASON,
WITH HUMOR, WITH HEART

WE LISTENED, WE LEARNED,
WE GARNERED, WE GREW ...
WE KNEW! ... ALL BECAUSE

BRATT TAUGHT.

BY THE LATE FREDERICK GHERTLER, FORMER STUDENT AND LONG-TIME FRIEND OF GRIFFITH BRATT, KNOWN TO MANY AS ACCOMPLISHED PIANIST FREDDY NORMAN (AA, ARTS AND SCIENCES, '53)

Photos courtesy of Albertsons Library Archives.

