

**DR. RONALD CROSS, 84***Professor at Wagner College was expert on music of the Renaissance***Educator specialized in keyboard instruments of past centuries**

Dr. Ronald W. Cross, 84, the Kurt and Auguste Riemann Professor of Music at Wagner College who played harpsichord and organ and was an expert on the music of the Renaissance, died in his Stapleton home on Feb. 22.

Dr. Cross was born in Fort Worth, Texas, and came to New York to study at New York University. He later moved to Stapleton.

Dr. Cross taught at the former Notre Dame College, Grymes Hill, from 1958 to 1968.

He joined the Wagner College music faculty in September 1968 as an associate professor, and became a full professor in 1975.

In 1984, Wagner President Sam Frank named Dr. Cross the Kurt and Auguste Riemann Professor of Music.

Dr. Cross directed the Wagner College Young Musicians Competition for many years, and his scholarship was focused on early music history and world music.

As founder and director of the Collegium Musicum Wagneriensis during the 1980s, Dr. Cross was widely known for his annual Halloween concerts, called "Music from the Court of Vlad the Impaler (Prince Dracula)."

On Oct. 29, 2011, Brooklyn's Metro Chamber Orchestra premiered a musical remembrance of those concerts by Israeli-born conductor Jay Vilnai. Specially commissioned in Dr. Cross's honor by one of his former



Dr. Ronald Cross

2004

students, Metro artistic director Phil Nuzzo, the composition was entitled "Time Is on My Side."

The group toured and recorded, and an online archive of the Collegium Musicum Wagneriensis is being created.

**PLAYED HARPSICHORD**

Dr. Cross also performed on the harpsichord at Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Livingston, and at arts festivals at the Unitarian Church of Staten Island in New Brighton, among other venues.

He was a certified Associate of the American Guild of Organists, and the former dean of the guild's Staten Island chapter.

In addition to playing the harpsichord and organ, Dr. Cross also played the viola da gamba, a stringed instrument.

He was one of the first musicians in the New York area to specialize in perform-

ing on the keyboard instruments of past centuries, especially the harpsichord. This instrument, which somewhat resembles the piano, was revived during the 20th century and is now heard regularly on concert programs and recordings.

"Ron played a role in bringing the harpsichord back to life for local music lovers, especially through annual recitals on Staten Island that he performed up until a few years ago," said David Schulenberg, chairman of the Wagner College music program.

Dr. Cross earned a bachelor's degree, cum laude, from Centenary College of Louisiana. He earned a master's degree and a doctorate from New York University.

He won a post-graduate Fulbright Fellowship that allowed him to study at the Conservatory of Venice, the Accademia Musicale Chigiana, and the universities of Siena, Vienna and Florence.

**PUBLISHED AUTHOR**

In 1966-67, the American Institute of Musicology published Dr. Cross's definitive three-volume compilation of the complete works of 15th- and 16th-century Flemish composer Mattheus Pipelare, titled "M. Pipelare: Opera Omnia."

"Ron made Pipelare's music generally available for the first time in almost 500 years by publishing the composer's complete surviving works in a modern edition, which remains the basis of most present-day perform-

ances and recordings of this music," Schulenberg noted.

**INSPIRATION TO MANY**

"Ronald Cross was an inspiration to many generations of music scholars and performers," said his longtime friend, Jeff S. Dailey, president of the Greater New York chapter of the American Musicological Society, and a Wagner graduate. "He was always willing to share his immense knowledge, as well as countless stories and anecdotes. An incredible scholar and musician, he was outrageously modest, as he if he did not realize the extent of his talent."

He said, "His study of the Renaissance composer Mattheus Pipelare has never been superseded, and no one who ever heard him play the organ or the harpsichord could ever deny his tremendous facility on the keyboard."

Dr. Cross was the long-time organist at St. Paul's-St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Port Richmond, where he was a parishioner.

While music was his life, Dr. Cross also had wide-ranging interests in history, art and literature.

He was also a Navy veteran, serving on submarines in the late-1940s.

The funeral service will be held Saturday at 6 p.m. in the Matthew Funeral Home, Willowbrook, and a memorial service will be held Sunday at 10 a.m. in St. Paul-St. Luke's Lutheran Church. A private interment of ashes will be held at a later date.