Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6616

McCarthy, Margaret Patricia

(1928 - 2014)

Born	19280927, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Died	20141217, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Occupation	Librarian, Music teacher, Musician

Summary

Margaret McCarthy was a music teacher and music librarian. She was the founding librarian of the Victorian String Music Library, establishing this institution as a thriving educational resource in Victoria.

Details

Margaret McCarthy (nee Vance) was born on 27 September 1928, the fifth and youngest child of Canadian parents Mary Edythe Boyd and Neil McMillan Vance, who had arrived in Australia two years previously with their elder four children. Neil Vance had been sent to Australia to assist with the merger of Massey Harris with the Australian H V McKay Sunshine Harvesters.

The family settled in Sunshine, Victoria and Margaret attend Sunshine State School and Sunday School at St Marks Church of England, establishing a lifelong connection to the Anglican Church. As a primary school aged child, she began her musical education in Piano under Elsa Haas, and had passed the Grade 6 exams as set by the Melbourne University Conservatorium by the age of ten (Sunshine Advocate, 19 May 1939,1). Following her secondary schooling at Lowther Hall she enrolled in a Diploma of Music at the Melbourne Conservatorium. Winning both a Thomas Dick Bursary and a Commonwealth Government Scholarship enabled her to complete a Batchelor of Music at the University of Melbourne. During her university studies she worked as a freelance piano, singing and theory teacher, advertising her services for students in the local Sunshine paper (Sunshine Advocate, 24 January 1947, 8; Sunshine Advocate, 2 February 1951, 8). Her skill was also employed by the Shire of Braybrook as a solo pianist for official council functions (Sunshine Advocate, 17 November 1950, 1).

Upon graduation from the University she found employment as a music teacher at Sacre Coeur, Glen Iris, where she taught class music, theory and piano to individual students.

Marrying Neville McCarthy in December 1952, she continued to teach until shortly before the birth of her first child. The family moved to Yarrawonga and as a mother of five young children, Margaret McCarthy resumed secondary school teaching, teaching in local country high schools. The family returned to Melbourne in 1968 and in 1976 she gained a Diploma in Librarianship, and a Diploma in Education in 1983 (McCarthy 2014).

In 1974 she was seconded by Alexandra Cameron as the librarian for the String Music Library which had been established to provide scores for string teachers, school orchestras and students, housed initially in rooms at Camberwell High School. Under Margaret McCarthy the venture flourished, beginning with ten borrowers per week in 1975 and reaching 1600 borrowers and 6000 scores (McCarthy 2014). Margaret McCarthy expanded the library to include full orchestral scores, wind ensembles and choral works for schools. She was also required to develop the skills to negotiate copyright for the use of the music with international publishers.

Margaret McCarthy continued to play music throughout her life, taking up the cello and viola, and playing in municipal orchestras. As her children also began their musical education, she became involved in the Youth Orchestra and State Music Camps her children attended.

Margaret McCarthy died on 17 December 2014.

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