



Elliot Weisgarber was a composer and music professor at the University of B.C.

# A legacy of beautiful sounds

## Two Americans leave a rich musical heritage to Vancouver

By JOHN MACKIE

Two mainstays of the Vancouver classical music scene have died.

Elliot Weisgarber passed away from congestive heart failure on Dec. 31 at the age of 82. Cortland Hultberg died from cancer Jan. 3 at 70.

Both were Americans who were brought to Vancouver to join the fledgling UBC School of Music in 1959-60, and went on to become fixtures on the classical scene.

Weisgarber was a gifted musician but became primarily known for his compositions, many of which had a strong Japanese influence. He was a prolific writer, with an estimated 300 works.

"Elliot was a dynamo, a great force,"

said violinist Victor Costanzi. "The energy around him was remarkable. He was a guy who really lived his life. What I loved about Elliot was that he was enormously cultured and studied and worked hard in his discipline, [but] he had a verve for life, he wasn't afraid to take a chance. Thank God he's the kind of person at whose funeral you can say 'we are celebrating a life, not mourning a death.'"

Hultberg founded and conducted the UBC Chamber Singers for three decades, and also conducted the Phoenix Choir, which won several CBC competitions during his tenure from 1983-95. But his real forte was teaching.

"He was very, very well loved as a professor of theory and composition at

the University of British Columbia," said Colin Miles of the Canadian Music Centre. "I know composers who have named their children after Cortland."

Weisgarber was born in Pittsfield, Mass. on Dec. 5, 1919. He received his masters degree in music from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., where he met and married his wife Bethiah. After graduating he taught at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro from 1944 to 1960. When a fellow professor from North Carolina, G. Welton Marquis, was lured to UBC to start a music program, he recruited Weisgarber.

In Vancouver, he had greater access to Japanese culture, and his interest in Japanese music blossomed.

See **MUSICAL PIONEERS** B11



Cortland Hultberg was a choir director and music professor of music at UBC.

**The Vancouver Sun**  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada  
Wednesday, January 9, 2002

Page 26, Columns 1-5