

## From the Archives

### Provenance of the Sanctuary Steinway Grand Piano

First Congregational Church  
Columbus, OH

My parents were Richard Kipling Patterson, Sr., and Margaret Irene Anderson. They met at Westminster Choir School, where my mother was an organ student of Carl Weinrich, and my father was a voice student. They moved to Columbus in 1940 where my father worked for Battelle Memorial Institute until retirement and, in addition, as a choir director at several churches.

At Battelle he started a music program which included a male chorus, a female chorus, and a brass choir. At that time, Battelle was headed by Dr. Bert Thomas, and, during his tenure, Battelle constructed an elaborate “auditorium,” actually a theatre, quite nice. As the auditorium was nearing completion, my father returned from lunch one day to find Dr. Thomas in his shop. This conversation followed:

“Dick, I was playing the piano in the old auditorium over lunch, and I was concerned about its condition. We need to purchase new pianos for the new building. Please see to it.”

“Pianos, plural? What did you have in mind”

“Steinways, of course, a model B for the stage and a D for the rehearsal room”.

Dad was shocked at how casual this request was, but he collected the Chorus’s accompanist, Norm Broadway, and off they went to the local Steinway dealer. From the pianos in stock, they selected two. (It astonishes me that there existed in Columbus a dealer that had several of the largest concert-hall Steinways in stock!) There was a dedication of the Auditorium, and Battelle made a show of it, hiring a Steinway artist for the occasion, and both choruses and the Brass Choir also performed.

As time went on, Battelle repurposed the Auditorium, choosing to give the pianos to Capital University and Opera Columbus. Opera Columbus performs in the Southern Theatre which has limited backstage space, so it was agreed that the First Congregational Church would store the piano and be free to use it when it was not needed for performances at the Theatre. More recently, Opera Columbus decided to sell the piano, and, thanks to a generous donor, the Church was able to acquire it.

My father, Norm Broadway, Dr. Thomas and the Battelle music programs have passed away. The piano is in your care. Admire it, treat it gently.

Richard Kipling Patterson, Jr  
November 6, 2024