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Oberlin's Musical Heritage

Throughout spring semester, students in Colin Roust's "American Art Music" course at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music have been researching and documenting varied and little known aspects of Oberlin's rich musical heritage and the musicians who have passed through the town and college. Professor Roust and his students will present the results of their work in a free public program sponsored by the Oberlin Heritage Center on Sunday, May 16th from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at Heiser Auditorium at Kendal at Oberlin. All are welcome. You'll enjoy hearing about the people and organizations that have made our town one of the leading musical centers in the country.

Most of the presentations focus on Oberlin's 20th century musical history and will be illustrated. Chad Putka will focus on the College's Men's Glee Club, conductor Jack Wirkler, and an alternative version of Dvorak's "Going Home" spiritual that was unique to Oberlin. Anna Ernst will discuss a 1944 performance in Finney Chapel by the Frank Williams Sextet, a concert that signaled the changing face of jazz in Oberlin. Andre Kuney will investigate the Oberlin Gilbert and Sullivan Players and their remarkable 1961 summer season in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Jesse Diener-Bennet, Steuart Pincombe and Matthew Griswold will examine different aspects of musical life in the 1960s and 1970s, focusing on the InterArts program, the New Music Festival, and the Vietnam War, respectively. Bud Stracker will discuss the origins of ethnomusicology in the Conservatory. Last, but not least, Katherine Gluck will examine the rise and fall of classical saxophone studies in the Conservatory. The students did extensive archival research at the Oberlin College Archives and at the Oberlin Heritage Center and also conducted interviews with key individuals.

For more information about this and other upcoming programs, contact the Oberlin Heritage Center at 440-774-1700 or e-mail members@oberlinheritage.org. For a calendar of events, visit www.oberlinheritage.org.

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