Janos Starker, 88

Legendary cellist Janos Starker died at a hospice in Bloomington, Ind., on April 28, 2013. With his peerless technical mastery and intensely expressive playing, he is universally recognized as having been one of the world’s preeminent musicians. During the course of his extraordinary career, he appeared as recitalist and soloist with the most prestigious orchestras around the globe and became one of the most sought-after virtuosos and teachers of our time.

Starker was born to Jewish parents, Sandor and Margit Starker, in Budapest, Hungary, on July 5, 1924. His father was a tailor. His two older brothers, Tibor and Ede, were violinists, and he was given a cello before his sixth birthday.

A child prodigy, Starker gave his first public performance at age six. He entered the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest and made his debut there at age 11, giving his professional debut at 14. Starker spent three months in a Nazi concentration camp. His parents also survived the camps, but his two brothers were killed during the war.

In 1946, he worked as an electrician and a sulfur miner en route to Paris. Starker made his first recording in 1947, a sonata by the Hungarian composer Zolán Kodály. It won a Grand Prix du Disque and brought him early international fame.

He immigrated to the United States in 1948 and played for the Dallas Symphony, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and Chicago Symphony before becoming a full-time concert soloist and teacher when he joined the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in 1958.

Eventually earning the title of Distinguished Professor, his classes attracted string players from around the world, and he continued to teach until close to his death.

In 1979, Starker established the Eva Janzer Memorial Cello Center at Indiana University, honoring and fostering a comradeship amongst cellists in the world in the 30 years of the center’s existence.

Starker was the first recipient of the Tracy M. Sonneborn Award, an honor given by the university to a faculty member who has achieved distinction both as a teacher and as a performing artist.

He held five honorary doctorates, including one from the New England Conservatory in 2006. In 2009, he received the title of Honorary Professor of the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest.

Highlights of his later career included a return visit to Tokyo and Hong Kong for recitals, master classes, and performances of the Elgar Concerto with the NHK Symphony Orchestra, appearances at New York’s 92nd Street Y, and a tribute organized by the La Jolla Chamber Music Society, in which he was honored with two sold-out concerts.

He performed a special concert at the Kennedy Center celebrating his native Hungary and appeared with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony, New Haven Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, and the National Symphony in Washington, D.C.

In New York, Starker performed in a benefit concert at Carnegie Hall, appeared with the New York Chamber Symphony at Lincoln Center, and featured the complete Beethoven works for cello and piano as well as all Bach suites for unaccompanied cello.

The master cellist amassed an extensive discography of more than 165 works.

Releases on BMG’s RCA Victor Red Seal label include the version for cello of Bartók’s Viola Concerto, the Dvorák Cello Concerto, and Richard Strauss’s Don Quixote.

Other recordings are concertos by Hindemith, Schumann, Elgar, and Walton, and Schumann’s Adagio and Allegro and Fantasiestücke as well as sonatas by Brahms, Debussy, Martinu, and Rachmaninoff.

Additional releases can be found on Angel, CRI, Delos, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI, London, Mercury, Philips, Seraphim, and other labels worldwide.

He re-recorded the Bach suites for BMG’s RCA Victor Red Seal label, a release which won a 1997 Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Soloist Performance (without orchestra).

The author of An Organized Method of String Playing, Starker was the inventor of a bridge designed to enhance the acoustical properties of stringed instruments.

His memoir, The World of Music According to Starker, was published in 2004 by Indiana University Press.

Janos Starker, King of Cellists: The Making of an Artist was published in 2008 by CMP Publishing.

Starker’s first marriage, to Eva Uranyi, ended in divorce. Survivors include his second wife—of 52 years—the former Rae Busch, of Bloomington; a daughter from his first marriage, Gabriella Starker-Saxe of Toronto; a stepdaughter from his second marriage, whom he adopted, violinist Gwen Preucil of Cleveland; and grandchildren Alexandra Preucil, Nicole Preucil, and J. P. Saxe.

In lieu of flowers, the family has asked that memorial contributions be made to the Starker Research Institute and Archives, P. O. Box 5462, Bloomington, IN 47407.

To share your remembrances of Professor Starker, please visit his memorial site at the Jacobs School of Music: blogs.music.indiana.edu/janosstarker.
MARY WALLACE DAVIDSON, 77

Mary Wallace Davidson, former director of the Cook Music Library, died on Oct. 11, 2012, following a battle with lung cancer.

Born on June 9, 1935, in Louisville, Ky., Davidson came to IU in 2000, after running the Sibley Music Library at the Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester for 15 years.

One of the most highly regarded music librarians in the United States, she retired from her post as director of the Cook Music Library after five years and spent her last semester with IU at the Lilly Library to create a database of their music manuscripts.

She also held head music librarian positions at Brookline Public Library, Radcliffe College, and Wellesley College during her career.

Davidson attended the Louisville Collegiate School before a Pendleton Scholarship took her to Wellesley College, where she earned a B.A. in music history, theory, and composition.

Davidson served as president of the Music Library Association (MLA) from 1983 to 1985 and as president of the U. S. branch of the International Association of Music Libraries from 2005 to 2008. She was very active in the American Musicological Society and the Society for American Music, serving on their boards and various committees.

She received MLA's Citation in Recognition of Distinguished Service to Music Librarianship in 1998, and, in 2006, she received a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship for her work on early American music periodicals.

She wrote and published extensively on music librarianship topics, including library facilities, collection development, and copyright.

At IU, Davidson coordinated the Music Librarianship Specialization in the School of Library and Information Science and taught music bibliography and librarianship.

She was one of the principal investigators in both metadata and copyright in IU’s Variations2 research project funded by the National Science Foundation.

GLORIA DAVY, 81

Soprano Gloria Davy, a Jacobs School voice faculty member from 1984 to 1997, died on Nov. 28, 2012, in Geneva after a long illness.

The daughter of parents who had come to the United States from St. Vincent, in the Windward Islands, she was born on March 29, 1931, in Brooklyn. Her father, according to a 1959 article about her in Ebony magazine, worked as a token clerk in the New York City subway system.

Davy graduated from the High School of Music and Art in Manhattan. In 1951 and 1952, she received the Marian Anderson Award, going on to earn a bachelor’s degree in 1953 from the Juilliard School.

In May 1954, she replaced Leontyne Price as Bess in an international tour of Porgy and Bess, making her first significant stage appearance.

Davy was the first African American to sing Aida with the Metropolitan Opera, in 1958, and the fourth African American singer to perform at the Met. Previously, the role of the Ethiopian princess was perennially sung by white singers in dark makeup.

She also appeared with the American Opera Society and at the Vienna Staatsoper and Covent Garden.

She performed mainly in Europe from the 1960s onward and was equally, if not better, known as a recitalist. In particular, she was an interpreter of twentieth-century music, including the work of Richard Strauss, Benjamin Britten, and Paul Hindemith.

Davy had made her home in Geneva for decades, returning to the United States to perform and teach, including her time at Jacobs.

She was married several times, and survivors included a son, Jean-Marc Penningsfeld.

ROBERT KLOTMAN, 93


A national leader in his field, he retired as chair of the Jacobs Department of Music Education in 1983.

He came to Bloomington in 1969, where he was celebrated for his far-reaching work on string pedagogy and music administration, and for helping bring Shinichi Suzuki (and the Suzuki method) to the United States.

Previously, as music director for the Akron, Ohio, and Detroit public school systems, he pioneered programs for resident composers and opera in the schools.

Klotman’s extensive publications on teaching strings and his orchestral arrangements for school-age musicians continue to be important resources for youth here and abroad.

He was elected president of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) and the American String Teachers Association. He served on the Ford Foundation’s Advisory Board of the Contemporary Music Project and received a Distinguished Service Award from MENC and a citation from the Black Music Caucus. In 2004, he was inducted into the Music Educators Hall of Fame.

A Cleveland native, Klotman received a B.S. from Ohio Northern University, M.A. from Western Reserve University, Ed.D. from Teachers College, Columbia University, and Mus.D. (hon.) from Ohio Northern.

He was a veteran of World War II, appearing as a violinist in USO shows.

He is survived by his wife, Phyllis (IU professor emerita); daughter Janet; son Paul; grandchildren Katya, Paul Max, Sam, and Alex; and great-granddaughter Stella.

JAMES LUCAS

James Lucas, opera stage director, teacher, and coach, died on June 1, 2012, in New York after a short battle with cancer.

His career as a stage director for operatic productions took him across the United States, Canada, South America, Russia, and South Korea. He was involved in staging well over 100 operas, making his debut as a stage director with the Metropolitan Opera in 1962.

After guest stage directing at the Jacobs School several times, Lucas was appointed to the faculty in 1987.

Before leaving in 1994, he directed 39 operas for IU Opera Theater, including Otello starring James King, and the world
premiere of John Eaton’s *The Cry of Clytemnestra*, hailed as the first feminist opera.

He directed productions for opera associations in nearly all major U.S. cities. He directed productions with such notable performers as Luciano Pavarotti and Roberta Peters. He shared his vast knowledge of stage direction, conducting, and history with many, teaching and conducting numerous workshops throughout the world.

Lucas received a music degree from Hiram College in 1951, where he staged and conducted numerous dramatic productions and also founded and conducted the Glee Club.

After graduation, he went on to receive his Master of Art degree in 1952 from Stanford University and did further study at the Juilliard School and the Operatic Leadership Training School.

In 1985, Lucas received the Hiram College Distinguished Achievement Award for his professional accomplishments.

WASHINGTON MCCAIN, 52

Washington McClain, adjunct assistant professor of baroque oboe, died on Feb. 24, 2013. Born on Oct. 15, 1960, McClain was a former member of the Talemusik Baroque Orchestra and principal oboist of l’Ensemble Arion (Montreal) and Apollo’s Fire Baroque Orchestra (Cleveland).

He was appointed to the Jacobs School of Music faculty in 2001. McClain’s extensive teaching and performing in workshops and festivals in North America included the Amherst Early Music Festival, Albuquerque Baroque Music Festival, Madison Early Music Festival, International Baroque Institute at Longy (Boston), Festival International de Musique Baroque de Lamèque (New Brunswick, Canada), Staunton Music Festival (Virginia), and Boston Early Music Festival.

He was the first period-instrument performer to be featured in an article in *Windplayer* magazine.


He is survived by brothers Paul Davis and his wife, Debbie; Danny Moore and his wife, Nina; Steve Davis and his wife, Diana; George Davis and his wife, Sharon; and Isaac Davis and his wife, Annie; and is sadly missed by many nieces, nephews, extended family members, friends, and colleagues.

ETHEL MERKER, 88

Retired Brass Department faculty member Kathryn Ethel Merker died of a heart attack on July 12, 2012, in Chicago Heights, Ill. She had lived for many years in the home where she grew up.

As a French horn player, she began her career at a time when few women played the instrument and is considered a pioneer in the field. She was also noted for encouraging young people in music and for proficiency in musical styles ranging from classical to pop.

While attending Northwestern University, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in 1946 and a master’s degree in music in 1947, she worked full time as the principal horn with the NBC Radio Orchestra in Chicago. She was its only woman member and one of its youngest players.

She later taught at several schools in the Chicago area, including Northwestern, DePaul University, Valparaiso University, and VanderCook College of Music.

Merker played with the Chicago Symphony, Chicago Pops, and Chicago Lyric Opera, and many other orchestras around the world. She also played with numerous famous artists, such as the Jackson Five, Barbra Streisand, Diana Ross, Ramsey Lewis, the Rolling Stones, and Quincy Jones. Peggy Lee insisted Merker play with her when she performed in Chicago.

Merker received an honorary Doctor of Music degree from VanderCook College in 1995 and the International Women’s Brass Conference Pioneer Recognition Award in 2001. She was elected an International Horn Society Honorary Member in 2009.

She collaborated in the development of several new models of French horns, including the Merker-Matic, with Holton.

Merker is survived by nephews Todd Van Slyke and his wife, Stephanie; Bruce Van Slyke; and George Merker III.

RUGGIERO RICCI, 94

Ruggiero Ricci, regarded as one of the greatest violin virtuosos of his generation, died of heart failure on Aug. 6, 2012, at his Palm Springs home.

He served as a professor of violin at the Jacobs School from 1971 to 1974.

Ricci was born July 24, 1918, in the San Francisco area into a poor family and named Woodrow Wilson Rich.

He was soon recognized as a prodigy, studying with noted teacher Louis Persinger by age six. At age 10, he gave his first public recital—in 1928 in San Francisco playing the Mendelssohn Concerto—and was hailed as a genius.

When young Woodrow’s talent became apparent, he was given the stage name of Ruggiero Ricci to make him sound the part. His friends called him Roger.

Ricci credited his years as an “entertainment specialist” in the Army Air Force during World War II with his interest in solo violin pieces because he typically performed without accompaniment.

His repertoire included about 50 major violin concertos. He had given more than 5,000 concerts in 65 countries after first touring Europe in 1932. His final U.S. performance was in 2003, at the Smithsonian Institution.

Ricci also taught at the Juilliard School, the University of Michigan, and a conservatory in Salzburg, Austria, as well as giving master classes and writing two texts on left-hand technique. He continued to give private lessons into his 90s.

Survivors include his wife of 37 years, Julia, sons Gian-Franco and Roger, daughters Riana Muller and Paolo Hopp, and several grandchildren.