

Banks doesn't play favorites when it comes to NMM collection

By Travis Gulbrandson
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Although she has worked as curator of musical instruments at the National Music Museum since 1978, Margaret Banks said she does not have a favorite piece in the more than 15,000-instrument collection.

"That's hard," she said. "Somebody said it's like (being asked), 'Which is your favorite child?' It's hard to point out which is your favorite."

Banks said she has favorites on many different levels – several of which come from Conn Instruments, now known as Conn-Selmer, Inc.

There's a Conn cornet dating from about 1876 – the third one ever made.

"It's the oldest one that anybody knows to survive," Banks said. "We don't know where numbers one and two are."

"We also have Conn's 1

millionth trumpet, so those are interesting numbers," she said.

Banks has been interested in Conn since the 1980s, she said.

"Their history is just fascinating," she said. "Conn was one of the biggest instrument manufacturers, one of the most important ones in this country, and actually the world, at the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries."

Among Banks' other favorites are some Stradivari pieces, the world's oldest playable harpsichord and the oldest surviving French grand piano.

"It's fun to say that we have the oldest and the most, but it's really true. We do," she said.

Although Banks has been a curator at the museum for more than three decades, her duties expanded to include an even higher office in January 2011: Interim executive director.

"It (involves) manage

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the whole museum, the finances, the collections," she said. "It has to do with marketing, public relations – most of the things you would think of for managing a business."

Banks took over for museum founder and current director emeritus André Larson.

"I think it's going well," she said. "It's challenging. Every day there's something different to deal with, but it's pretty exciting, actually."

Musical instruments have long been a passion for Banks.

"I played the piano

starting when I was five years old," she said. "I took up the violin in second grade, took up the clarinet in the fifth grade."

"During the summers, I would say to my band director, 'Is there an instrument I can take home and learn to play?' I took a flute home one year, a French horn one year," she said.

As she went through college and graduate school, Banks became more interested in organology – the study of the history of musical instruments.

She has been able to



devote herself full-time to that study as a curator for the museum, which finds her dealing with musical instruments, archival photos, sound recordings and ephemeral materials from musical instrument companies.

"I've been overseeing the cataloguing, the organization and the

dissemination of knowledge of all those different categories," she said.

And Banks said she couldn't be happier doing it.

"It's a great place to work," she said.

DAKOTA SENIOR MEALS

Served at the Main Street Center and Town Square, "Meals on Wheels." Please call before 9 a.m. to schedule or cancel a meal at 624-7868. Menus listed below are for the week of June 19-25.

Menus are subject to change without notice. All menus are served with whole grain bread and 1% milk, unless otherwise noted.

Tuesday - Tater Tot Casserole w/ Green Beans, Banana

Wednesday - BBQ Pork Ribs, Potato Salad, Corn, Seasoned Greens, Fruit

Thursday - Porcupine Meatballs, Whipped Potatoes, Gravy, Calif. Vegetables, Peaches

Friday - Teriyaki Beef, Brown Rice, Chinese Vegetables, Spinach Mandarin Oranges w/ Sesame Vinaigrette

Monday - Brat on a Bun, Kraut, Scalloped Potatoes, Carrots, Apricots

'Clearly Clarinets: Tools of Human Expression' on display

From "licorice sticks" to walking sticks n— you can see them both this summer at a special temporary exhibition, "Clearly Clarinets: Tools of Human Expression," at the National Music Museum on the campus of the University of South Dakota.

Discover for yourself a dizzying variety of clarinets with more than 50 never-before-displayed instruments and related materials. Browse through the display to discover the ancient and more recent

ancestors of the modern clarinet. See from what kind of materials clarinets have been made as well as how the keys and fingerings have developed. Highlights of the exhibition include bright green and dazzling pink clarinets and a silver "Thermos" clarinet. Special guests invited to visit the exhibition this summer will include members of the International Clarinet Association, who will be attending ClarinetFest® in Lincoln, Neb. in August.

"Even with the modern

technological wonders of entertainment, we still revel in blowing our own breath through the clarinet, we delight in moving our own fingers, and we savor the sounds that are produced in the process," noted Deborah Check Reeves, curator of Education and Woodwind Instruments at the NMM and one of the designers of the exhibition.

"Clearly Clarinets" runs from June 1 through Aug. 31 and can be viewed at the National Music Museum Monday through Saturday

9 a.m. until 5 p.m., and Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m. Admission on Fridays is always free. "Clearly Clarinets" is made possible through generous donations from the Vermillion Rotary Club, First Dakota National Bank, the South Dakota Arts Council, and Ray's Midbell Music in Sioux City. The exhibition design was a collaborative effort of Reeves and graduate assistant, Ana Sofia Silva (Lisbon, Portugal).

NOTICE
Clay Creek Ditch & Yankton Clay Ditch JOINT MEETING
Tuesday June 26, 2012 at 1:00 P.M.
At Toby's Lounge, Meckling, SD
To discuss maintenance on the ditches for 2012/2013 and other matters to come before the Board. All interested persons are urged to attend.
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