



Marie Louise Gollner

June 27, 1932 - May 29, 2022

Marie Louise Gollner, a renowned American musicologist whose scholarly interests examined the relationship between language and music, and who was one of the first women to lead the music department at the University of California, Los Angeles, has died. She was 89.

Professor Gollner passed away peacefully at her home in Montecito, California, on May 29 after a long illness. She was surrounded by her husband, the retired German musicologist Theodor Göllner, 92; her daughter Katharina Gollner-Sweet, and long-time caregivers. Professor Gollner had been in declining health since a fall in 2012.

In earlier years, Professor Gollner had led a full life of intense scholarly ambition and achievement that spanned two continents and drew on fluency in German and English and facility in French, Italian and ancient and medieval Latin. She served twice as chair of the music department at UCLA, from 1976 to 1980 and as head of the newly formed musicology department from 1985 to 1989. She retired in 2000.

Her former colleague at UCLA, the ethnomusicologist Steven Loza, remembered her as “gracious and fun,” a sentiment shared by her many students, family and coworkers including Raymond Knapp, whom Professor Gollner helped bring to UCLA in 1989 and who also served twice as musicology chair.

Professor Gollner’s improbable career took her from humble roots in the small-town farmland of the Colorado Rocky Mountain foothills to the pinnacle

of academic scholarship in post-war Germany's leading humanistic universities.

Marie Louise Martinez was born June 27, 1932, in Fort Collins, Colorado, about an hour's drive north of Denver. The only child of Francis G. Martinez and Gertrude V. Steele, she developed an early passion for music as organist at the local Episcopal church, where her mother was an active parishioner. After graduating from Fort Collins High School, she studied music at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, and graduated in 1953 at the top of her class with a bachelor's degree in music.

She pursued postgraduate studies at the Eastman School of Music in 1954 and learned German fluently. As a Fulbright Scholarship recipient from 1954 to 1956, she studied at the University of Heidelberg in Germany. Professor Gollner received her PhD from the University of Munich in 1962 with a dissertation that was awarded the distinction of *summa cum laude*, the highest such honor for a dissertation in the Munich university's music department in 30 years.

It was at Heidelberg, an idyllic Medieval town on the Neckar River with a vibrant, centuries-old intellectual culture, that Professor Gollner met her future husband, Theodor Göllner, who had come to love all things American during a study-abroad program at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas. At Heidelberg, both were students of Thrasybulos Georgiades (1907-1977), a Greek-German scholar who developed a philosophy of music centered on rhythm and language.

Professor Georgiades drew on German Idealism to develop a theory of music history as an organic whole rather than as an unrelated series of events. Georgiades' view of music "arrived at an essentially new approach to an interpretation of its history, one in which music is thus dependent not only on technical changes within its own boundaries but also on changing concepts of religion and philosophy," Professor Gollner wrote in the introduction of her translation of Georgiades' groundbreaking 1954 work, "Music and Language" (Cambridge University Press, 1982).

Georgiades, and later both professors Gollner, turned to the Roman Catholic Mass to illustrate the changes in Western music from the ninth century to the Viennese classical composers, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Georgiades chose the mass because it was the one text that had remained constant throughout its history spanning more than a millennium.

After moving to Munich from Heidelberg with her husband in the late 1950s, Professor Gollner worked towards her PhD under Prof. Georgiades at the University of Munich while her husband was an assistant professor there, also under Professor Georgiades. The couple were married at St. Willibrord Episcopal Church in Munich in 1959.

While in Munich, Professor Gollner worked as research assistant at the Bavarian State Library, cataloguing manuscripts in the music manuscript department. It was there that she developed a passion for archival work, sifting through dusty and often forgotten manuscripts dating to the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

After her husband took a job as professor of music at the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1967, Professor Gollner became lecturer there in 1968 before joining UCLA's music department as assistant professor in 1970. She became associate professor in 1974 and full professor in 1978. The couple had earlier bought a home in Montecito overlooking the Pacific Ocean and the Channel Islands, which they would keep as their cherished retreat during decades of cross-continental work and travel.

When Theodor Gollner returned to the University of Munich in 1973 to succeed Georgiades as chair of musicology, his wife stayed at UCLA and the couple embarked on a bi-continental marriage for the next 27 years, alternating between Montecito and Munich. Professor Gollner commuted for many years between Montecito and Westwood.

Among Professor Gollner's works and tributes are Orlando di Lasso: Complete Works (Neue Reihe, Das Hymnarium, 1580-1582 (1980)); The Early Symphony: 18th Century Views on Composition and Analysis (2004), and

Echo of Music: Essays in Honor of Marie Louise Gollner (2004).

In conversation, Professor Gollner moved with ease and humor from observations about rhythmic patterns in medieval Latin motets to the health of the latest barley crop on the Colorado farm she inherited from her father, Francis G. Martinez, in the 1980s.

Mr. Martinez, a native of Taos, New Mexico, was a real estate agent handling farm and ranch sales in the area around Fort Collins. Professor Gollner's mother worked as an advertising executive in Hutchinson, Kansas, where she met Mr. Martinez. The couple were married in 1929.

At 6 feet tall with a shock of wavy pitch-black hair, Professor Gollner was a towering and stunning presence, whether making small talk during intermission of a performance of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at Munich's Nationaltheater or taking walks with the family's beloved collie, Andrew, near her Montecito home.

Professor Gollner is survived by her husband; her daughter Katharina Gollner-Sweet (Jeffrey Sweet) of Falls Church, Virginia, and son Philipp (Cecelia Mautner) of Berkeley, California. She has four grandchildren: Dasha and Alex (Katharina) and Emma and Daniel (Philipp). Katharina and Philipp have degrees from UCLA and Emma attends UCLA as a biochemistry major. A service in Professor Gollner's honor will be held at Welch-Ryce-Haider Funeral Chapels in Santa Barbara on June 13, followed by interment at Santa Barbara Cemetery.

Cemetery Details

Santa Barbara Cemetery

901 Channel Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93108

Previous Events

Funeral Service

JUN 13. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider - Downtown
15 E. Sola St.
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