Grand Finale
David Stock, composer-in-residence and professor of music, as well as one of Pittsburgh’s most influential and renowned composers, retired from full-time teaching and was awarded the rank of professor emeritus.

Grand Finale, a special concert on April 16, 2009, marked his retirement with four premiere works, three of which were composed in Stock’s honor. The music was at turns playful, surprising and breathtakingly beautiful, a fitting tribute to Stock’s efforts and influence as a composer.

Reza Vali, a professor of music at Carnegie Mellon, wrote a piece that involved three conductors leading three groups of players, making similar music but at different speeds in different parts of the auditorium. Duquesne faculty colleague David Cutler’s work incorporated Indian rhythms and dance. Brooklyn-based Randall Woolf’s work incorporated “scratching,” which involves manipulating a recording on a turntable, a technique associated with hip-hop, but in this case, it was a recording of Stock’s music that was scratched.

The fourth premiere, Rumi Sings of Love, which Stock wrote for vocalist Kathleen Soroka, was inspired by his 2007 sabbatical year in Turkey where he visited the tomb of Rumi, a 13th century Sufi mystic and poet.

In 1976 Stock founded the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, and he continues to serve the group as conductor laureate. He is also a former composer-in-residence for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and has been the driving force behind the U3 festival, Pittsburgh’s biannual new showcase for Pitt, Carnegie Mellon and Duquesne composers.

In addition, Stock has been music director of The Duquesne Contemporary Ensemble since 1987 and a full-time member of the School of Music faculty for the past 19 years. Taking the stage at the Grand Finale concert, Stock remarked that he has a combined total of 52 years leading various ensembles. “I’m really ready not to be the leader of anything,” he quipped.

Stock’s reputation as a composer extends well beyond Pittsburgh. Orchestras throughout the
United States and Europe, as well as in Asia and Latin America, have performed his compositions. He has served as composer-in-residence with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, and his photo is on the walls of Avery Fisher Hall, the home of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, part of a permanent exhibition of portraits of composers whose works that the orchestra has performed.

Last fall, in an article about Stock, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette music critic Andrew Druckenbrod quoted Nancy Galbraith, professor of composition at Carnegie Mellon, who called Stock “the central figure of Pittsburgh’s new music scene” for the past quarter century.

Dean Edward Kocher credits Stock for attracting some of contemporary music’s biggest names to campus to inspire and teach music students, including John Adams, one of America’s most respected composers (see story, p.14).

Christian F. Martin IV, chairman and chief executive officer of the Nazareth, Pa.-based Martin Guitar Co., received the Lifetime Achievement Award at Duquesne University’s sixth Annual Summertime Jazz Concert, July 29, 2009.

Martin is credited with turning around his family’s now 173-year-old business by directing the organization’s focus onto steel stringed acoustic guitars and strings as well as implementing a team-oriented management style. He regularly joins his employees on Outward Bound programs and hosts instructional clinics at Martin dealerships around the world.

The Martin Guitar Company has an international reputation as the builder of the highest quality guitars, and they make more acoustic guitars than any U.S. company. Among the hundreds of famous Martin guitar owners are Sting, Jimmy Buffett, Eric Clapton, Tom Petty, Bonnie Raitt, George Jones and many others.

Chris Martin (center), chairman and CEO of Martin Guitar Company, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Guitar Department. With Martin are faculty members Bill Purse, chair of the guitar program, and Mark Koch, assistant chair.