



The Cobbett Association for Chamber Music Research

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New Group Promotes Neglected Chamber Music

Chamber music enthusiasts will be pleased to know that this new organization was formed in September with their interests at heart-- especially if they delight in exploring rarely played works of the past that suffer from neglect.

The Cobbett Association for Chamber Music Research was named in honor of Walter Wilson Cobbett (1847-1937), the renowned Englishman who devoted much of his life to promoting the art of chamber music. It was formed by Sarasota violinist Robert Maas who recognized a need for such a group, and it is believed to be the only organization of its kind in the country.

Purpose

The purpose of the new group is to study, evaluate and preserve rare and neglected chamber music of special merit and to share information and encourage the performance of such music.

It is not the intention of the association to suggest that anyone neglect the great classical composers; but on the other hand, it is unfair to ignore other fine composers whose creative achievements have contributed worthy additions to the art. Composers like Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms receive extensive coverage from the news media and in concert programs. Our association will strive to bring recognition to the neglected composers

of the past who deserve attention. For example, compositions by Serge Taneiev, Henry Sauget, and Joseph Lauber have been well received in Europe but are almost never performed in the United States.

Advisory Council

An Advisory Council of eleven distinguished musicians has been appointed. They are introduced on page 2. Maas will lead the Association as Coordinator and Research Specialist. Following in the Cobbett tradition, the Council members have been studying and playing chamber music for many years and offer a wealth of valuable experience in the field.

Newsletter & Activities

This newsletter, first of a series, has been sent to 100 selected amateur and professional musicians across the country. Future issues will report on the Association's activities and comment on rare chamber works as evaluated by the Council and other musical groups. Whenever possible, the Association will endeavor to get rare works played by professional ensembles so they can be heard and appreciated by the public. The Advisory Council and our newsletter readers are invited to send us their evaluation of non-standard chamber music they play or hear so it can be filed for future reference. This information will be used in answering inquiries from musicians on our mailing list.

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Introducing Our Advisory Council

HELEN BLACHLY, St. Augustine, FL, studied cello with Diran Alexanian and holds a BS in Music from Rollins College. She also studied at the Manhattan School of Music and Peabody Conservatory. Her articles on rare chamber music have been published in music magazines, and she is active in chamber music groups.

Violinist DR. DAVID CANFIELD, Bloomington, IN, holds a Master and a Doctor's Degree in Music from Indiana University and a BA Degree from Covenant College of Tennessee. He is a composer and his works have been performed publicly in the U.S. and in Switzerland. He owns and operates Ars Antiqua which is considered the largest business in the world specializing in out-of-print classical LP records. Articles on music by him have been published.

JOHN CATALDO, violinist and violist, Atlanta, GA, completed an impressive career as Vice-Pres. of a large electrical firm and was chosen "National Engineer" before retiring from that profession. He holds BS and MS Degrees in Electrical Engineering and has 80 patents to his credit. He has been concertmaster and soloist for various community symphonies in the Chicago area. He serves on the faculty at the annual Interlochen Chamber Music Conference in August, has a private teaching studio, and is very active in chamber music groups.

BONNIE CATALDO, wife of John Cataldo, studied cello with Raya Garbousova, Oliver Edel, and Frank Miller. She holds a BM from Mich State U., and a MM from DePaul U. of Chicago. Bonnie has played in the Milwaukee Symphony and the Houston Symphony, and is currently teaching cello at Agnes Scott College near Atlanta. She also serves on the faculty at the Interlochen Chamber Music Conference in August and participates regularly in chamber music activities.

MARTHA DE YOUNG, Grand Rapids, MI, holds the position of Curator of the Cayvan Collection of Chamber Music at Calvin College. She has ten years of experience teaching in public schools and is currently teaching strings in the Christian schools of Grand Rapids. Martha has a BS Degree in Music Education from the University of Wisconsin and a MA from the U. of Minnesota.

ANN SHARP EDELSON, Sarasota, FL, received her BS Degree in Music Education from State Teachers College of Indiana, PA where she majored in violin. She also holds an MA in music from the U. of Texas. Along with teaching privately and in public schools, she has played in the East Texas and Austin Symphonies. At present, she is violinist in the Palm Strings Quartet of Sarasota and is active in other chamber music groups.

DR. HERBERT FISS, Bradenton, FL, began his career as a violinist, then turned to conducting symphonies, operas, and choral groups. He has conducted the Philadelphia Chamber Mus. Soc., Wilmington Opera Co., Philadelphia La Scala Opera Co., Starlight Operetta in Dallas, and Lehigh Valley Sym. Orch. (PA). Villanova University, where Fiss directed the music department for twenty years, awarded him an Honorary Doctorate of Music. Currently, he is first violinist of the Palm Strings Quartet of Sarasota, and is active in various chamber music groups.

ELIZABETH HARTER MARTIN, Sarasota, FL, holds a BM Degree from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and an Artist Diploma from the Juilliard Graduate School. She studied cello with Leonard Rose, Felix Salmond, Peter Howard, and John Frazer. She has been a member of the Conn. String Quartet, the Ft. Wayne Phil. Quartet, and the Shreveport Summer Festival Quartet, and has played faculty chamber music concerts in colleges where she has taught. She has also played in numerous symphony orchestras including Seattle Sym., Min-

nesota Orch., Bangkok Sym., and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Presently, she is a member of the West Coast Symphony of Sarasota and the Palm Strings Quartet and plays regularly in other ensembles.

MARY SANKS, Bozeman, MT, is well known as the director of the Adult Chamber Music Festival at Montana State University for the last 20 years. She is a graduate of the Julliard Institute of Musical Arts and holds an MS Degree from the University of Calif. at Berkely where she taught. She also held teaching positions at San Francisco Conservatory and the University of Utah. Mary is an Asst. Prof. Emeritus at Montana State University where she taught from 1966 to 1981. She is a pianist, violinist, and violist and a devoted chamber music player.

Pianist CATHERINE SAURER SMITH, Maderira Beach, FL, holds BS and MM Degrees in piano and composition from the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago and has also studied with eminent teachers in Europe. She has appeared as soloist with such prominent orchestras as the Chicago and St. Louis Symphonies and the WGN Symphony of the Air. As a composer, her compositions have won numerous national and state awards, and have been extensively performed.

Cellist ELEANOR LEEK SMITH, Deland, FL, earned her BM and MM Degrees at Eastman School of Music and the University of Rochester. She taught at the University of Southern Mississippi before joining Stetson University as Prof. of cello and theory. In 1981 she was appointed Professor Emeritus. Eleanor is a member of national and state music clubs and continues to play professionally in various music groups in the Deland, Daytona, and Orlando area.

ROBERT MAAS, Sarasota, FL, holds a PHB Degree in Economics from the University of Wisconsin where he also studied violin with Prof. Cecil Burleigh. He then served as a personnel representative with the aero-

space industry for thirty years, but always devoted time to his avocation of chamber music. He is a collector of rare chamber music and recordings and has performed extensive research in this field. For fifteen years he has served on the Advisory Council of the Amateur Chamber Music Players, Inc.

Who Was W.W. Cobbett?

Walter Wilson Cobbett(1847-1937), for whom this Association is named, was a renowned Englishman and probably the greatest promoter and patron of chamber music in all history. An accomplished string player as well as an outstanding researcher, he devoted much of his life and fortune to the cause, spending many years compiling and editing the Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music (3 vols.), a reference book that is still unequalled in its field. Most music libraries and some public libraries have the work and all chamber music players should be familiar with the wealth of information in it.

Cobbett was also famous for creating the Cobbett Competitions where young and promising composers were rewarded for prize-winning works.

Non-Standard Music

Since the activities of the Cobbett Association will focus on non-standard music of the past -- from Baroque to Modern-- one may ask, "What is standard chamber music?" There are bound to be some grey areas, but generally speaking, standard music is by composers like Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Bartok, and Shostakovich.

Because of limited interest, we will not be concerned with electronic chamber music, other Avant Garde types and "pointillistic" music (here a plunk, there a plunk).

(Cont. from P. 1)

Palm Strings Quartet

Our Association first developed from the activities of the Palm Strings Quartet of Sarasota. Without neglecting the great classics, this quartet has been studying and evaluating rare music from the Maas library for three years. With each new discovery the member's enthusiasm has grown. Quartet members are Dr. Herbert Fiss and Robert Maas, violins; Ann Edelson, viola; and Elizabeth Martin, cello. They met originally through the Amateur Chamber Music Players, Inc., an international organization of almost 5,000 amateur and professional musicians.

For many years, Maas has been collecting, researching, and playing neglected chamber music with fellow members of the ACMP. Recently, after sharing some of his "discoveries" with enthusiastic players at chamber music conferences, he recognized a need for an organization to acquaint others with the almost unlimited opportunity offered by forgotten music.

"There are many treasures out there," he states, "that need to be revived and enjoyed. When one discovers, studies, and plays works that no one in the group has encountered before, one has the great satisfaction of learning and growing. If such music isn't preserved and performed, it could be lost to future generations even though it remains on some library shelves.

"I have found that many top professional ensemble players know little about non-standard music of the past because their intensive musical education has emphasized the classics. When rare music is brought to their attention, however, many of them show real enthusiasm and even add it to their repertoire."

Notice To Our Readers

Please tell your musical colleagues about our new organization and its purpose and activities. If they are seriously interested, urge them to write us so they can be sent our periodic Newsletter.

The Manhattan String Quartet Connection

Eric Lewis, first violinist of the Manhattan String Quartet, has expressed an interest in the chamber music research activities of our Association. Any information requested by him or a member of any other ensemble will be gladly furnished.

One of America's leading ensembles, the Manhattan String Quartet celebrated its 20th season with a July concert at Interlochen, as part of the Interlochen Chamber Music series. For many years the quartet has been in residence at the annual Interlochen Chamber Music Conference in August. This year's conference was the 39th and was attended by over 200 musicians.

Coordinator's Corner

One of my chief critics nabbed me recently, and with anger in his voice said, "What's this I hear about you abandoning Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven?"

Stunned, my reply was, "For fifty years I've been giving the great classical composers my undivided attention -- with only a few obscure composers sprinkled in -- and frankly, I still can't live without the classics! But when I heard the unfamiliar tunes of some forgotten composers, they got under my skin.

"Besides, I found I was in good company when many of my colleagues related similar experiences. I'm merely shifting gears and devoting more time to worthy composers of the past whose God-given talents have created beautiful and inspiring music that has fallen by the wayside. Anything wrong with that?"

With a big grin, he replied, "Well, now I understand. Who are all these chaps, anyway?"

My answer was, "Please stay tuned and our Association will keep you posted."

--Robert Maas, Coordinator