

# MUSIC FOR THE LOVE OF IT

OCTOBER 1999



Studio Session at Chico Chamber Music Workshop — Review on pg. 3

## A FOCUSED WORKSHOP: THE PRAIRIE SCHOOL *by Marion Taylor*

A whole week working on just two string quartets is an exhilarating experience. The Prairie School Chamber Music Institute in Racine, Wisconsin does just that. Each of the approximately fifty string players is expected to arrive having spent substantial time learning his or her parts for two pre-assigned quartets, violinists learning both first and second. The first year I went, Shostakovich's *Fourth Quartet* was assigned; it was a major attraction for me.

The Manhattan Quartet, plus a fifth coach, work with the assigned groups who play for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon each day. The last hour of the morning is for sectionals (for example, all violists get tips on the hardest passages), master classes or mini-master classes. Freelancing takes place in the late afternoon and in the evening.

All participants work on the same assigned movements each day but players are rotated to different groups each day. On the second or third day the Manhattan Quartet gives a formal concert performing the assigned works. On the last days of the workshop all movements are re-assigned, so participants experience everything again in a different, larger context.

The setting is The Prairie School, an independent day school designed by Charles Montooth of Taliesin Associates. Basically three circular buildings, it is a beautiful place to be. The dining room where participants have three meals a day is a focal point as is the

continued on page 8

PFURTHER MUSICAL RESEARCHES OF  
ERASIMUS PFLUGG,  
DOCTOR OF MUSICAL DETRITUS

## WOLFGANG GOES AWOL

*by Ellie Dusté*

Leopold Mozart knew there was going to be trouble when his son Wolfgang, ten years old at the time, threw a tantrum just before a performance at Baron Somebody or Other's castle.

Wolfgang jumped up and down and ranted, "I'm NOT going to play that dumb Scarlatti sonata one more time; I'm not going to wear this silly silk suit anymore, and I'm NOT going to be chucked under the chin by fat old ladies with bad breath wearing forty kilos of brocade!"

Patiently, Leopold let the child's temper run its course, and after he informed Wolfgang that his behavior was putting his weekly allowance of *kroner* at risk, the performance went on as usual. That, of course, was not to be the end of it.

Several days later, Wolfgang sat at the harpsichord dutifully practicing his scales and exercises. Next to the harpsichord was a window overlooking the *Strasse* below. Wolfgang stole glances at the comings and goings of a busy Salzburg. He watched with particular interest the fine black carriages pulled by wonderful pairs of matched horses that carried the gentry about their daily business.

Wolfgang was overcome by a great longing. Like all boys his age he was preoccupied with the idea of obtaining his carriage driver's license so that he too could enjoy the freedom of the streets. If he carefully put aside a few *kroner* a week he might be able to hire someone to give him carriage driving lessons. However, with the impatience of youth, he thought: "Why do I need a license? It looks simple enough. One little wiggle of the reins and the horses go; then a tug to the right or left — what could possibly go wrong?"

continued on page 9

# THE IN BOX

## FROM OUR READERS

Subscriber Harold Ressel writes:

"I am a retired public school instrumental music teacher in the Buffalo, NY school system. I get much pleasure and fulfillment entertaining Jewish oriented audiences in the Buffalo, NY area as well as in Florida. I can perform on many musical instruments, and encourage the audience to sing along. Basically my program begins with the *shofar*. This is a wind instrument made from a ram's horn, played by buzzing the lips, as when playing the trumpet. I tell of its importance in Jewish history. Next I play *Kol Nidra* on my cello. Played on Yom Kippur, this is the most recognized melody of the Jewish people. The next portion of my program consists of familiar tunes such as *Hava Nigela*, *Tsena*, *Ose Shalom*, *Tumbalalaika*, which I play on my violin and trumpet with a back-up band (music minus one) on a CD track. I wind up my program with Klezmer music on my violin and then the trumpet: such songs as *Der Stetler Bulgar* and *Tanz, Tanz Yidedhla*. Sometimes I receive remuneration for this program, and sometimes I do it voluntarily. My audiences are enthusiastic and tell me how much they enjoy it. I enjoy reading about the musical experiences of others in Music for the Love of It and eagerly look forward to each issue."

A reader from Waco, Texas writes: "Music for the Love of It gives me a glimpse of the cultural world I miss here in the virtual musical desert where "Cottoneyed Joe" is king and "The Yellow Rose of Texas" is highbrow entertainment. Keep up the diversity!"

And from Joe Horner of Belmont, MA:  
"Re the letters in the August issue about annoying applause, there is something I find just as gauche. In a chamber music concert the group, usually a quartet, frequently retune their instruments between movements. This is particularly annoying after you've just heard a beautiful slow movement for instance. There are some quartets that retune every string between every single movement! I was talking to a member of the Tallish quartet about this. He agreed with me and said they were very aware of this and only allowed it when absolutely necessary."

## NEW TOPIC REQUESTS

Readers have asked us to address a number of new topics. Anyone with knowledge or opinions on the following is invited to pitch in.

- Writing music and getting it published
- The whole world of brass chamber music
- Dogs and music
- Community orchestras: finances, fund raising, personnel selection, sources of music, etc.

- Learning to improvise
- Going back to school — in music, for a change!
- Successful mentoring — attitudes and styles
- What to do when a beloved ensemble member of long standing slips in hearing and playing ability
- A consistent rating system for music workshops
- Works for odd combinations of instruments
- Ways to connect with other musicians of similar experience (classically trained but not professional) to create performing opportunities.

## WINTER WORKSHOPS

The **Florida Chamber Music Workshop** will be held in Starke, Florida, December 2-5, 1999. They sent us this description of their offerings: "Amateur chamber music players (strings, woodwinds, piano) are invited to participate in a relaxed, non-competitive four-day workshop located at the Montgomery Conference Center in Northern Florida. Play fine music with an excellent faculty, enjoy excellent food, and relax in delightful accommodations in a lakeside, tree-laden setting. Faculty includes Sarah Baird Fouse, Carlos Beltran, John Kitts-Turner, Miriam Zach, the Gainesville Wind Trio and Trio Varioso. Approximately \$425 covers all costs. Contact: Norma Homan, Gainesville Association for the Creative Arts, P. O. Box 12246, Gainesville, FL 32604. Call toll free 888/917-7001, or e-mail: <shakes@ufl.edu>."

**Princeton Chamber Music Play Week** plans workshops for adult string players on the following weekends:

- in Windham, NY, October 29-31, 1999;
- in Ocean Grove, NJ: November 12-14, 1999, February 4-6, 2000, March 24-26, 2000;
- in Orlando, FL January 28-30, 2000

Contact Mary Ann Thomas or Jerry Bank at 924 Riverside Ave., Trenton, NJ 08618, 888/255-6322, <Playweek@juno.com>.

**Chamber Musicians of Northern California** will hold workshops in Hayward, California, October 9-10, 1999, and February 19-20, 2000. Contact CMNC at 718 Walavista Ave., Oakland, CA 94610, 510/452-1221.

**Symphonic Workshops** will hold its 8th Marienbad Workshop for conductors in Marianske Lazne (Marienbad), Czech Republic, November 29-December 6, 1999, with Jonathan Sternberg and the West Bohemian Symphony Orchestra. Contact Symphonic Workshops at 416/760-9319 <phitchcock@home.com>. Details at <www.symphonicworkshops.com>.

**San Francisco Early Music Society** sponsors six Collegium Evenings for mixed instruments and singers during the year starting October 27th, and viol consort classes from October 5th. For information call Frances Feldon at 510/527 9029, <franfel@aol.com> or visit the SFEMS web site, <www.sfems.org>.

## A NOVEL WORKSHOP FORMAT AT CHICO *by Ted Rust*



Ray Barker and Keith Seppanen at the Controls

Capitalizing on the skills of the eminent recording engineering faculty and the well-equipped recording studio at the California State University at Chico, Chico Chamber Music Workshop Director Al Loeffler fashioned a novel chamber music workshop this summer. The new format, designed for fixed groups who rehearsed together every day of the program, added a recording seminar, two recording studio sessions and a public concert in addition to the usual coaching and workshop performance sessions.

Individuals who registered independently were assigned by Al to fixed groups for the week, with such success that one such group decided to attend next year as a pre-formed group. The traditional format, with one-day group and repertoire assignments, was followed on the mornings and afternoons of Days 2 and 4; everyone then returned to their fixed group for an evening rehearsal. The new format was used only in Week 1 of the summer program, leaving participants the option of attending a full week of mixed assignments in the second session.

The first evening's program consisted of an orientation meeting, followed by an "aleatoric freelance session." The latter was a sort of musical mixer, in which participants were randomly assigned to ensembles and given some pleasant, non-threatening music over which to get to know each other.

Groups received six coachings during the week, with some input from several different faculty members. Their coaching of my group was enthusiastic, insightful, supportive and cheerfully undogmatic.

Each group's first recording session was scheduled early in the week. It served to familiarize us with the

recording procedures and provided each group a cassette tape of its piece at that stage. Our group found the tape helped us isolate trouble spots and set priorities for the remaining coachings and rehearsal time.

As the week progressed, it became clear that the extra activities — and the incentive of preparing for a studio session and public concert — were making this a very intense program. There were no noontime swimming expeditions or late-night ping-pong marathons. Every waking moment was devoted to music; sleep was urgently needed when the time came.

The second studio session was used to record each group's best efforts, which were compiled in a two-CD album and sent to all participants. I was delighted with the recording quality: a

clean transcription of our instrument colors with only a moderate amount of added "ambience."

I was even more pleased with the quality of our live public performances at the end of the session: every group had improved enormously in the course of the program. It made me feel proud for all of us.

*For information on future Chico workshops contact Al Loeffler at 530/345-3772, <loeffler@ecst,csuchico.edu.*



Laurie Meyer and Andrea Bowman



Yvonne Bernklau, Judy Clark, Ros Askin, Cynthia Crouse, Linda Wilson, Susie Lundberg

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# BIRDS OF A FEATHER

by Sydney Rott

Most instruments have a national or international organization that has an annual conference. If you're like I was, you never attend these conferences for the same reasons I didn't. I don't like meetings, I don't like crowds, I don't like regimentation, I wasn't sure, as an amateur player, that I'd find much that interested me. Then I attended the International Double Reed Society conference in Tempe, AZ, in 1998 because a friend was going and wanted a roommate. The result was that I didn't even consider missing this year's conference in Madison, WI.

The Tempe and Madison conferences were two different experiences. In Tempe, I was with a group of professional double reed players for whom the conference was all business. They networked, sought new repertoire and teaching techniques and shopped for instruments and music. We did not miss a session except to visit the exhibits. We did not drink a drop of alcohol. We ate no meals outside of the university cafeteria. Meal time conversations were about music. It was very intense. It wasn't until I got home and found I could think about nothing but the conference that I realized what a good time I'd had.

My husband accompanied me to Madison this year. This experience was not intense. We knew we were having a good time from the beginning. We tried Madison restaurants, we relaxed over a cocktail before dinner. We went together to sessions that he (a non-musician) would enjoy too, and I attended some on my own while he explored the area around the campus. Afterwards we agreed that it had been a great vacation.

What is it about the conference that makes it such a rewarding experience? First, of course, is the music. You hear the best performers in the world performing in every style — from early music to world premieres of new music. It goes on all day. It's a shock to me (not a morning person) to see someone whose records I own performing at 9:00 a.m. To one who is accustomed to perfect recorded performances, it's heartening to see that even the greats make tiny errors when performing live. One Really Famous Oboist forgot what, to me, is a primary rule of oboe playing: he left his reed case on his stand. It fell off, opened, and there he was in the middle of a performance with a dozen reeds scattered at his feet.

Second is hearing the whole spectrum of performers on your instrument. My teachers have always implied that a certain type of sound is right and all other sounds are wrong. An international conference shows you that the whole world does not agree on what constitutes a "good" or "bad" sound. You hear marvelous

performances by people who sound so different from each other that it's hard to believe they play the same instrument.

Third is the feeling of being part of a group of people who share your preoccupation with your instrument. Most performances are fairly formal, but there is, at times, a certain amount of "in" humor inserted. One oboist took a long time to remove water from her oboe—completely disassembling it and carefully cleaning each section with a feather and the tone holes with paper after almost every movement. The third time she did this her accompanist pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and began to polish the stick that holds open the lid of the harpsichord. Since the audience was composed entirely of oboe players, it caught on to the joke immediately — the poor soloist caught on to what we were laughing at only because it apparently wasn't the first time the accompanist had done that to her.

Fourth is actually being near the Great Musicians. It's a strange feeling to find yourself surrounded by people whose names you know and whom you've heard on your local PBS station. Peter Schickele sat two rows behind me at one presentation — we heard him speak later that day. When I was with the professional musicians at Tempe I met several Famous Musicians that they knew, and even ate meals with some of them. I wasn't quite sure what to do when I found myself sitting next to one of these Important People this year. I hesitated to speak to them, but that would be rude if they sort of recognized me but didn't know why. I opted for saying, "Hello, I met you last year with \_\_\_\_\_," followed by a remark that didn't require them to continue the conversation beyond returning my greeting. They all did continue the conversation — but someone invariably came up and interrupted after 30 seconds or so.

The others attending the conference are an important part of the experience too. It's easy to meet people because you're all interested in the same thing. You find people whom you've read on an e-mail list or who studied with someone you know.

Finally, a conference is the ultimate place to shop. You can buy anything related to your instrument at the exhibits. There are hundreds of instruments to try, music, CD's and any accessory you can imagine. You can also meet and talk to the people who make the instruments and accessories. It's nice to be able to put a face to people you've been dealing with by mail.

Try it. Join your instrument's association or society and attend a conference. You will find what a wonderful experience you've been missing.

*Sydney Rott is an oboist and retired schoolteacher who lives in Fresno, CA.*



Fish Boil at the 1999 International Double Reed Society Conference in Madison, Wisconsin



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## PUTTING THE "CLASS" INTO "MASTER CLASS" *by James Kimberly*

The Music Academy of the West, 90 miles north of Los Angeles in the prosperous town of Montecito, California, polishes the skills of advanced music students during its summer programs. It was founded in 1947 by Lotte Lehmann, a Metropolitan Opera star. At its master classes, the audience learns almost as much as the students.

The Academy programs are so popular in the community that a majority of attendees buy season tickets. The ten Friday evening picnic concerts are guaranteed to be sold out early. Locals dress in their best casual finery, bring picnic baskets around 5 PM and enjoy shrimp cocktails and lobster sandwiches with their favorite wines while sitting in a sumptuous garden. By 7:30 it is time to put the baskets away and head for the main concert hall to hear very good chamber music. All this is for \$7-10 per person.

This year the final string quartet master class, one of 150 in the season, featured a Beethoven quartet. The four earnest young string artists had first seen the music only two days before. They were to play the first movement only, which they did with impressive competency. All the notes were correct, so how could they improve it?

Violin and String Chamber Music Coach Peter Saloff, a founding member of the Cleveland Quartet, is currently Director of String Chamber Music at the Cleveland Institute of Music. He had some ideas of how to improve the musical performance of the quartet: a happy section ought to sound really happy; a sad section ought to sound really sad. Here was coaching on the meaning and character of the music, with no talk about whether a note was accurate. Let the music convey its own mystery, urgency or unrest, he emphasized. In so doing he was always complimentary, never overbearing; and this seemed to make the students want to give it everything they could. The first violinist at one point jumped up and kissed him!

At the end of the coaching session, he asked if there were any questions from the audience. There were a few, and then I chimed in: "Why not," I suggested, "ask the quartet to play a section of that same first movement again, using all the improvements they just learned?" Peter Saloff said OK. They played the passage again, this time with so much more passion that audience members were on their feet almost before the piece was over, clapping furiously, demonstrating to even the most inattentive day-dreamers that a miracle had just occurred.

Musicians interested in the Academy can contact it at 805/969-8787.

*James Kimberly is a singer, drummer and fundraising consultant in Montecito, California.*

# HELPING AUTISTIC PEOPLE MAKE MUSIC

by Brenda Alony

I am one of those people who say, "It is never too late in life to begin something new!" What began as a volunteer job has changed my life!

I had been thinking for quite some time about adding a new dimension in my life by doing something in music other than playing and teaching the oboe. I have always had a special interest in psychology and have often felt myself drawn towards troubled people.

About two years ago I began to volunteer at a home for autistic people, helping with existing orchestras, one consisting of five instruments: electric organ, synthesizers and percussion, and another of less experienced players. At that time there were a few people working with them, but by the end of the year when their budget ran out, they were left with one worker and me, the volunteer. They decided to offer me a part-time job, which I accepted, to ensure my staying.

Autism is still not completely understood, but is now generally accepted as a biological problem, not an emotional one. There are many levels of autism, and autism can be combined with other problems. Autistic people generally relate more positively to visual aids than to spoken words; colored stickers on the piano help some remember the notes. They basically live in their own world and have trouble understanding what the outside world wants and expects from them.

To think that an autistic person can learn to play an instrument and perform with others probably surprises many people. I find it exciting that people who have such serious problems with communication can make music together. It is amazing enough that they can learn to play an instrument on their own and more amazing that they can play together as a group. The repertoire is, of course, matched to their capabilities.

Each person in the orchestra needs personal attention. For example, one of them is very quiet, plays on his own with instruction, but at first didn't pay much attention to the others when the group played together. I watched him as he gradually opened himself up and began to be aware that others were also playing. I enjoy seeing his occasional smile now, which was non-existent before, since I know that he has changed immensely during the past year. I also know that he is more sociable outside the orchestra, which is certainly one of the purposes of the program.

**What began as a volunteer job has changed my life!**

**I have watched myself changing over the past two years and being pulled into this new world**

Another player is often quite violent outside the orchestra - violent to others and to himself. Although occasionally he has a problem at the rehearsal, he is usually quiet and likes to play. He plays quite well and with both hands together.

Yet another player is definitely a different person outside the orchestra than within the orchestra. She is known to have violent attacks, but when she enters the room of the orchestra rehearsal, she is very well behaved and enjoys playing. If she feels that she cannot control herself, she tells us that she doesn't feel like playing and asks to be excused. We do not force anyone to stay at the rehearsal if they do not want to. These adults deserve to be treated with respect.

The behavior of autistic people is not always consistent from day to day or, for that matter, from moment to moment. We never know what awaits us that day when they enter the room.

I am also helping out with a small chorus at the same home. The person in charge, who also leads the orchestra, has taught them successfully to sing in parts: soprano, alto and bass. He is an absolutely amazing and dedicated young man!

I have watched myself changing over the past two years and being pulled into this new world, and find it very exciting. This experience has led me to other musical activities with autistic people and also to interact with mentally ill people. I am now looking for an educational program to learn more about autistic people and to work in music with other people who are outside the norm. I have not decided whether I want to become a music therapist or just to work with musical activities with people with special needs, but whichever it is, I am very excited about my future.

*Brenda Alony is an oboist in Ramat-Hasharon, Israel. She performs with The Pearls of the Baroque and co-directs a series of weekend chamber music workshops.*



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## BOOK REVIEW

by Ted Rust

Ada P. Kahn, Ph.D., *KEEPING THE BEAT: Healthy Aging Through Amateur Chamber Music Playing*. Wordscope Associates, Inc., 2562 Wellington Court, Evanston, IL 60201-4975, 1999. Paperback: ISBN 0-930121-01-5, \$21.95; cloth, ISBN 0-930121-02-3, \$27.95.

Does playing chamber music contribute to healthy aging? Ada Kahn would like to introduce you to a spirited assortment of older chamber musicians, from beginners on their instruments to highly skilled professionals, who will make you think it does. Her questions lead them to discuss how playing chamber music contributes to the social, emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual quality of their lives, and how age affects their chamber music playing. Their answers illustrate how the joy of making music has little to do with youth or virtuosity!

A chamber music ensemble at any level of proficiency is a little realm whose members share a goal, stretch themselves, help each other, act creatively, resolve conflicts, achieve a sense of mastery, and know they are needed. For those rewards, Ada's friends have found ways of compensating for diminished hearing, vision, mobility, memory or endurance. They have found music that is playable and people who want to play it with them. Their zest for new challenges should inspire all who love making music.

### TO A BASSOONIST ON HER BIRTHDAY

by Dorothy Wright

How neat it is to celebrate/With someone so adaptive!  
Who plays a horn one can't describe  
'Tis truly a contraptive!

It clanks and shakes the very roof,  
Also the floor beneath us.  
It honks and burps, devoid of shame  
In rank, it's no elitus.

It takes a brilliant engineer/To put the thing together.  
A fearsome sight for one to see,/It should be on a tether!

But then when there are four of us  
Who try to play a tune,  
The "missing link" who anchors us  
Is naught but the bassoon!

We really find we miss the mark  
Without that bass emotion!  
So here's to it and here's to you,  
And to your deep devotion.

With great admiration, happy, happy birthday.

**PEGGY LEWIS, VIOLIST** *an excerpt from*  
*KEEPING THE BEAT: Healthy Aging Through Amateur*  
*Chamber Music Playing, by Ada P. Kahn, Ph.D*

Peggy Lewis was born in October, 1925, and lives in Evanston, Illinois. Her major musical interest is playing viola with a quartet and in small chamber orchestras. She retired from her public school teaching position in 1986.

"I grew up in a family with two pianos. I started piano lessons at age four. I don't remember a time when I didn't play piano. Music is my life. It's not a hobby, it's a way of life. I think it always has been, unconsciously if not consciously. I'm never without music going through my head."

#### What motivated you to choose the viola?

"Catherine Drinker Bowen, who has been dead a long time, wrote a little book called *Friends and Fiddlers*. In it, she said that she would not start going to concerts until she was old, but until that time she was going to play chamber music. I really started playing viola because of her book. I wrote to her and told her that. I got a note back from her, 40-odd years ago.

"For many years I did choral singing, and when I could no longer sing because of heavy smoking and aging, I had to be a violist. I had to be an inner voice. . . . I had only taken a few years of viola lessons twenty years back, and you cannot start a stringed instrument in your fifties and expect to be any good, but you sure as hell can have fun."

#### When did you resume playing the viola?

In my 50s, I had a severe illness, called vasculitis. . . . It nearly did me in. I said to myself, 'If you get through this, you're going back to the viola.' From the hospital, I called the Music Institute of Chicago (Winnetka, Illinois) and asked for a viola teacher. Carol came to see me in the hospital. As soon as possible, we started lessons. At first, I couldn't hold the instrument for more than two minutes at a time . . . but we persevered."

(The interview then covered Peggy's playing in her quartet, in two community orchestras, in summer camps at Interlochen and Hummingbird, and as a guest soloist for a music appreciation class.)

#### Are you self-conscious about making mistakes?

"For years I was not willing to play in public. My first orchestra experience was with the Music Center Children's Orchestra. . . . I was absolutely embarrassed most of the time, especially when my stand partner would point to a measure, showing me the place. Very kindly, however. He was nine years old, and I was in my fifties. . . . I stopped being nervous earlier this year. I realized there was no benefit in being nervous."

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commons in the Upper School. Participants stay in private homes of community volunteers or in hotels.

In 1999 Bartok's *Sixth Quartet* was the focus. While it scared off some long-time participants, it made me decide once more to travel from Santa Cruz, California, to Racine. When I started looking seriously at the music, I had second thoughts. I knew I could not play it and should not have signed up. However, I decided that the other players were likely to be having the same sense of impossibility and that I would at least get to know the piece a lot better.

Participants agreed that this was a wonderful workshop. Of course, we could not play the Bartok at all; every time we tried a movement it was a series of starts and stops and much re-working of complex passages.

But each time we learned more about it and that was exciting. It was amazing at the end of the week to play a movement with new people and find how much each person brought to it from their previous groups and previous coaching.

Up to now the assigned literature has been one "major" and one "lighter" work, e.g., Bartok No. 6 and Haydn, Op. 33, No. 3. Now planners are thinking of focusing only on two big works, e.g., a middle Beethoven and a major Shostakovich quartet.

For me this method of getting to know works in depth is superior to playing a new work every day, that is, sight-reading something or playing a familiar work, often with others who are sight-reading it, and then playing it for others later in the day. I have attended many of the second kind of workshop and it's there that I have met players who have become decades-long friends and playing colleagues. But now I find the focus on big pieces more rewarding.

*Marion Taylor is a viola player and retired librarian living in Santa Cruz, California. Her most recent article in these pages, "The Haydn Quartets: A Chronological Approach," appeared in the August 1996 issue.*

#### Contact information:

Pat Badger, Administrative Director  
Prairie School Chamber Music Institute  
The Prairie School,  
4050 Lighthouse Drive, Racine, Wisconsin, 53403  
414/260-3845, <pbadger@prairieschool.com>.

The same format, coaches, and assigned literature are used at KentMusic at Marvelwood School, Kent, CT.  
contact: Rae Eastman  
24 Cleveland St.  
Lakeville, CT 06039; 860/435-1338, fax 860/435-4629.

His name is Mr. Kubo. He is the music teacher in my school. He wants every one of us in the third grade to play an instrument. He makes music sound so good. He says the next thing we know we will all be good enough to perform in the Holiday Concert.

He brings musicians to our school. We all sit on the floor of the music room. They play jazz and rock. We clap and clap. They play old songs and new ones. We hear classical music and like it. We even see our teachers tapping their toes.

The time has come to sign up for the school band. All my friends want to join. I pick the saxophone. Mr. Kubo says, "You've got it!" I am lucky. Some of my

friends have to take an instrument they didn't really want. Mr. Kubo says a band needs balance. "Ever see a band with twenty-five trumpets?" he tells them. They understand him. They will do anything to be with Mr. Kubo.

I take my sax home. It is beginning to look hard. I blow. Nothing! I stick my tongue out. Nothing! I pull my tongue back. Nothing! Wetting my lips doesn't help. I can see how much I need lessons.

That's okay. Mr. Kubo will show me how. At the next practice class, he takes my saxophone and plays. It sounds GREAT. I watch his mouth. I watch his fingers. I listen to the music he makes happen.

He says if I can learn one song in one week, I can have pizza with him. How did he know I LOVE pizza? He tells everyone the same thing. We are all practicing like crazy. We want to make him smile and we want him to buy that pizza.

At our pizza party, he tells us jokes. He tells us about his brothers. He tells us about the band he plays in after school. He reminds us how good we will sound at the concert in four months.

I love music. Mr. Kubo is the best musician. I always practice. My sounds are becoming music. My tongue and lips know just what to do. My fingers are pushing the right keys more and more each day. My mom is going to enjoy this concert. I just know it.

And I never miss one of Mr. Kubo's pizza parties.

*Marian Brovero is a retired schoolteacher in West Palm Beach, Florida..*

## Sixth Quartet I

Béla Bartók

Mesto,  $\text{♩} = c.96$

Viola

*mf* *f* *mf* *p* *pp*

That afternoon when his father was out of the house on business, Wolfgang left quietly by the back door. He wrapped his cloak around him against the chill, concealing his face. However, without the silk suit, he reflected, no one would recognize him.

A few blocks away behind the town hall lay the Carriage for Hire Stables, Salzburg's equivalent of the Yellow Cab Company. Wolfgang made a brief reconnaissance, noting the large number of vehicles parked idly at that time of day. Five or six drivers, sturdy men dressed in black with jaunty caps, stood in a group at the end of the carriage row, engaged in some kind of gambling. Wolfgang could hear an occasional shout of "No trumps!" but he had no idea what it meant.

With the drivers so occupied, Wolfgang was able to make his way unseen to the other end of the row where a fine two-door carriage stood ready, its pair of rich brown horses scuffing the ground as if restless to be on the road. How BIG the horses were, how the high iron clad wheels creaked in anticipation! Very quietly Wolfgang climbed up into the driver's seat and took hold of the reins. He gave that little clicking sound with his tongue that he had heard a million times. With a lurch, the horses, perhaps instinctively aware that a novice was aboard, bounded forward, tossing Wolfgang about on the seat. He grasped the seat handle with his free hand and steadied himself. HOORAY! He was off down the *Strasse*, the big wheels and the hooves clattering on the cobbles. What heavenly noise! It was exhilarating, the wind in his face, the racket, the SPEED! When he was old enough to own a carriage it would be a two-door convertible just like this one!

Suddenly Wolfgang realized he had no further plan after capturing the carriage. Where should he go? At that moment the horses turned a corner into an open square where the town band, having organized itself in the center, had just begun to play. The horses reared up, whether offended by the sound of a hooting tuba or a miscreant oboe Wolfgang was never sure. They bolted headlong into the band, scattering music and musicians and instruments everywhere. Angry shouts upset the horses even further and they swerved, tipping the carriage up on one wheel and throwing the poor boy into the air. He landed with a loud THUMP in the middle of the bass drum. The band master came for him like a charging bull, head down, snorting Tyrolean oaths. Wolfgang was stuck inside the drum, his arms and legs dangling over its rim. He managed to turn himself over and, like a turtle, scuttle to safety under the carriage.

By now a crowd had gathered, police were arriving, musicians were struggling with a jumble of equipment,

and the two horses were thrashing about, tangled in their harnesses. Beneath the carriage, Wolfgang freed himself from the drum and peered cautiously outside. To his horror he saw approaching through the melee his father, the mayor, Baron What's His Name and Mrs. Baron What's His Name. Wolfgang willed himself to become smaller, a dog or cat perhaps, an insect even better, so that he could HIDE! But it was too late.

Later, at home, a penitent Wolfgang stood before his father. "Therefore," intoned Leopold Mozart, after a very long lecture, "Your allowance is suspended for the foreseeable future and you are required, every day after school for the next month, to compose one movement of a string quartet."

"Aw, gee, Dad, string quartets, do I HAVE to?"

"No arguments, young man. I could make them krummhorn trios."

"OK, Dad, string quartets are cool."

In the month that followed, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart penned a set of string quartets (and one krummhorn trio just for spite) which were destined to become known as the "Carriage Quartets." They were finally lost to history, however, when the band master sued the Mozart family for a host of injuries and insults. The Mozarts, not in happy financial circumstances at the time, gave over the "Carriage Quartets" in settlement. The band master immediately arranged them for band, rendering them forever musically unintelligible.

*Oboist Ellie Dusté teaches in Berkeley and lives at Lake Don Pedro, California. She writes frequently for this publication.*

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## OCTOBER 1999 CONTENTS

WORKSHOP REVIEW: The Prairie School	<i>by Marion Taylor</i>	1
Pfurther Pfrom Pflugg: WOLFGANG GOES AWOL	<i>by Ellie Dusté</i>	1
THE IN BOX: Correspondence, New Topic Requests, Winter Workshops		2
A NOVEL WORKSHOP FORMAT AT CHICO	<i>by Ted Rust</i>	3
BIRDS OF A FEATHER	<i>by Sydney Rott</i>	4
PUTTING THE "CLASS" INTO "MASTER CLASS"	<i>by James Kimberley</i>	5
HELPING AUTISTIC PEOPLE MAKE MUSIC	<i>by Brenda Alony</i>	6
Book Review: Ada Kahn's KEEPING THE BEAT	<i>by Ted Rust</i>	7
PEGGY LEWIS, VIOLIST	<i>by Ada P. Kahn, Ph.D.</i>	7
TO A BASSOONIST ON HER BIRTHDAY	<i>by Dorothy Wright</i>	7
FUN MUSIC	<i>by Marian Brovero</i>	8

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