

MUSIC FOR THE LOVE OF IT

OCTOBER 2002



Detail of Nativity Facade, Church of the Sacred Family, Barcelona, Spain. Antonio Gaudí, architect.
photo by Lang Rust ©2002

JUST KEEP PLAYING:

THE IU BAROQUE WOODWINDS AND DANCE SEMINAR

by Sara Anne Hook

For the past few summers, I have tried to invest at least a week of my vacation time to attend music conferences. With the many wonderful offerings both in the United States and abroad, it was hard to make a selection for summer 2002. However, in the end I chose the *Baroque Woodwinds and Dance Seminar*, held at the esteemed Indiana School of Music in Bloomington, Indiana. During the past two years, I have been learning to play the Baroque flute and this seminar included the opportunity to study with Janet See, a world-renowned Baroque flute teacher and performer.

Comfortable and affordable housing is available for the seminar and the campus is beautiful, but since I live in Indianapolis, I was able to commute to the seminar. There are many interesting things to see and do in Bloomington, including nightly concerts at the IU Auditorium, along with the evening lectures and masterclasses that were offered as part of the seminar. In addition, IU's music library is excellent and there are also several good music stores in the immediate vicinity of the campus.

Registration on Sunday evening was a simple process, allowing time for antiquing during the afternoon and dinner with other participants. Bloomington has many

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DRUMMERS ON FILM

by Tammy Ruggles

Backbeat. Heartbeat.

Drummers in the movies: Mysterious loner. Shy outsider. Brooding lover. Easygoing mediator. Sometimes even the leader. But usually, definitely, the glue, or steady beat if you will, that holds a band together.

Drummers can be overshadowed by the front man and underreported by the music reviewer, so here are some drummers in the movies, to highlight these essential and often under-valued talents:

Bandwagon, starring Matthew Hennessey and Lee Holmes. A drummer named Charlie and an aspiring lead singer who just quit his day job round up some other players to start a band. 1996.

Satisfaction, starring Justine Bateman, Liam Neeson, Julia Roberts in this story of an all-girl band with an all-girl drummer. 1988.

That Thing You Do, starring Tom Everett Scott as the drummer and leader of a fresh-faced early-Sixties band that makes it to the top. Directed by Tom Hanks. 1996.



Jonathon Schaech, Tom Everett Scott, Steve Zahn and Ethan Embry in "That Thing You Do" (20th Century Fox, 1996)

Black Jack, starring Carl Kjellgren as a Romeo drummer named Tommy who has an affair with his band mate's girl behind his back. (Foreign film) 1990.

Drum Struck is about two rival drummers who compete at an audition. One of them is a very sore loser. 1991.

Thank You, Good Night, with Christian Campbell as the leader and drummer of a struggling rock band determined to do one last tour following the suicide of Kurt Cobain. 2001.

Splendor, starring Matt Kessler as a punk rock drummer who is desired by a loose blonde. And so is a rock critic. And so is a director. You get the picture. 1999.

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THE IN BOX



Sara Anne Hook on her recital day story on page 1

FOCUS

Dear Ted,
I greatly enjoyed your superb article on ensemble playing. (August, 2002)

Joe Beck
Lafayette, CA

PRACTICE TIPS

Editor:
The "Practice Tips" (August, 2002) is a great section.

Mary Lindberg
New York, NY

To be continued! — editor

A CANADIAN THANKSGIVING

CAMMAC will host a chamber music weekend and Thanksgiving banquet at the Lake MacDonald Music Centre, Quebec, October 11-14, 2002. Details at www.cammac.ca or 1-888-622-8755.

CHAMBER MUSIC HOLIDAYS: PRAGUE, SYDNEY

Vivienne Pittendrigh has just sent us her brochures for upcoming musical holidays in Prague, Czech Republic, December 28, 2002-January 4 or 7 (your choice), 2003, and in Sydney, Australia, February 14-23 or 26, 2003. Both programs include professionally coached chamber music sessions every morning, as well as organized sightseeing, concerts and opera, meals and lodging. Contact Chamber Music Holidays and Festivals, 57 Chatsworth Road, Bournemouth, England BH8 8SL, phone (44) 1202 528328, fax (44) 1202 524081, email info@chambermusicholidays.co.uk or consult their web site at www.chmf.co.uk.

ELDERHOSTEL WINTER WORKSHOPS

Elderhostel Chorale: Bach's *Magnificat*, Canterbury Retreat and Conference Center, Orlando, FL, January 19-24, 2003

Create Chamber Music Memories, Atlanta Center for Arts and History, Atlanta, GA, March 2-7, 2003

Epworth Elderhostel Singers: A Choral Music Workshop, Epworth by the Sea, St. Simons Island, GA, February 16-21 and March 2-7, 2003

"Let it Swing": Big Band Music of the 1940s to 1960s, University at Albany Music Department, Albany, NY, February 16-22, 2003

National Elderhostel Woodwind Ensemble, University at Albany Music Department, NY, March 2-8, 2003

Programs are for adults aged 55 or more. For details and reservations contact Elderhostel, Inc., 11 Avenue de Lafayette, Boston, MA 02111-1746, 1-877/426-8056, or consult the Elderhostel web site at www.elderhostel.org.

EUPHORIC ABOUT THE EUPHONIUM — AND ELDERHOSTEL BAND WORKSHOPS

Well into my seventies I took up the euphonium, having been a so-so string player for years. I was inspired by the *esprit* among members of community bands and wished to participate. Therefore I was thrilled to note in the February issue of *Music for the Love of It* that Elderhostel was offering several band programs. I hastened to call Elderhostel in order to sign up. The representative said "Oh, I don't think we have anything like that." Then to my relief, after a long pause accompanied by much rustling of papers, "Why yes, we have several programs under 'Performance'." I signed up immediately.

Never having attended an Elderhostel, I had no idea what to expect. I was pleased to receive the music for the Albany Community Band Elderhostel, in New York state, weeks in advance, all of it well assembled in a notebook, complete with an array of directions and suggestions. From there my experience with the Albany workshop was nothing short of euphoric. The level of organization was superb. I loved all the details such as my name emblazoned on the music stand, accompanied by a sharp pencil. Henry Carr conducted brilliantly, and I had the good fortune to sit next to his wife who plays a wicked euphonium. The band made excellent strides during the week and we turned out a competent final concert and recording. The entire experience was exhilarating.

Later in the summer I attended a similar program with many of the same participants at Portsmouth School and Abbey in Rhode Island. There we had the pleasure of being on a beautiful campus and close to Newport with all its attractions. The band was less proficient but the experience was still very enjoyable.

Elderhostel runs a concurrent program for spouses, which means no one need stay home. Non-band members are treated to trips and lectures and kept well occupied and stimulated while the band plays on. I had a ball.

Maisie Kohnstamm
New Canaan, CT

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QUIZ CORNER

EMINENT AMATEURS by Ted Rust

1. Which of the following heads of state was NOT an amateur musician, and what did the others play or do as a musicians?
 - a. William Jefferson Clinton _____
 - b. Frederic II ("The Great"), King of Prussia _____
 - c. Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa _____
 - d. Edward Heath _____
 - e. Adolf Hitler _____
 - f. Nero, Emperor of Rome _____
 - g. Thomas Jefferson _____
 - h. Harry Truman _____
2. What was the reward for playing the flute better than
 - a. Frederic II _____
 - b. Apollo _____
3. What amateurs composed the following:
 - a. "A Mighty Fortress is our God" _____
 - b. "Silent Night" _____
 - c. "Taps" _____
 - d. "Stranger in Paradise" _____
4. What were the day jobs of the following composers?
 - a. Alexander Borodin _____
 - b. Charles Ives _____
 - c. Modest Moussorgsky _____

Answers on page 9. Score 1 point for each correct answer. If your total score is

16-17: Please apply to be our fact-checker

14-15: Congratulations: you're a blooming prodigy

12-13: Consider yourself well-informed

10-11: Not bad for an amateur

0-9: A few more Quiz Corners will bring you up to speed

PRACTICE TIPS START-UP

by Janet Telford

Music for the Love of It periodically publishes practice tips. Following up a recent letter to the editor (see this month's In Box), I am starting a column on practice tips I have known and loved — or at least used and been all the better for it. This issue I've begun with start-up tips, including planning, thinking, and warm-up, with more topics to follow.

1. Practice almost every day, even if it not for very long.

I don't do very well with this one, but it makes a big difference, especially with second instruments. Piccolo virtuoso Lior Eitan (April 2000) claims that 20 minutes a day is plenty for him. Eat your heart out.

2. Have a plan before starting to practice.

It is important to give myself a sense of direction and to practice purposefully. When I have a plan, I practice longer and enjoy it more.

3. Keep a record of practice time.

I don't do this much myself, but it really works with my students, and I know it is a good habit. If practicing is built into the daily routine, this probably is not necessary.

4. Warming up the breath or the bow is more important than warming up the fingers.

This is an important one since the breath and bow are so fundamental to sound production. When I lurch into playing without warming up the breathing and blowing, sometimes the tone never comes into focus and I don't have enough air. Of course, that can happen at other times, as well, but a warm-up routine gets me off to a better start. Warming up the breath includes some light stretching and movement to loosen the muscles. I like to bend over from the waist (rag doll) and take big long relaxed breaths in and out, getting the correct muscles involved and moving.

5. Spend at least 1/3 of the practice time on fundamentals. Start with long tones and include scales and chords every day.

If I don't have a plan, this one can get sloppy and very random. Sometimes I need to work on low tones for a particularly challenging piece, sometimes I need extra work on articulation, a particular finger change, or dynamic range. When it's all of the above (and when isn't it?), a plan will take me through the routines over a period of time.

I encourage you to send in your best tips to *Music for the Love of It*. I'd love to hear what works for you and include your favorites in future columns.

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March 25-April 1, 2003

Moulin d'Ande, Normandy, France

May 26-June 2, 2003

MUSIC AS A PASSPORT

by Ted Rust

"The Piano Shop on the Left Bank: Discovering a Forgotten Passion in a French Atelier" © 2001 by T. E. Carhart, Random House, Inc., New York, ISBN 0-375-75862-3 paper \$13.95

Without embarrassment, we at *Music for the Love of It* publish a great many variations on the our most popular and heartfelt theme, "How I rediscovered my love of making music." Every story is unique, and every one warms our hearts. Some writers express love for an actual instrument, the sensual beauty of its sound or the physical grace and skill they are gaining as they play it; others for a musical genre; still others, like Thad Carhart, for a culture that has become accessible to them through involvement in its music.

An American writer living in Paris, Carhart passes a small storefront every day while walking his children to and from school. Stencilled on the window is "*Desforges Pianos: outillage, fournitures.*" A few piano tools and parts are on display in the window, the little front room is empty, and while no actual pianos are visible, a curtain is drawn secretly across the door to the main part of the building. Often he sees pianos being delivered to or from the shrouded back room. Driven by curiosity and perhaps a twinge of nostalgia for the piano of his youth, he finally stops in and asks if the shop has any used pianos for sale. Summoned by the bell, the aged proprietor acts puzzled, and replies that it would be most unusual, but if he were to stop again a client might perhaps have one for sale. After several fruitless visits Carhart luckily meets the proprietor's young employee, Luc, who patiently explains that what Carhart lacks is a reference from one of their customers.

In due course a friend in the *quartier* provides the necessary reference, and Luc, overruling the proprietor, invites Carhart behind the curtain, into his — for this is Luc's realm — fascinating private world of old pianos, their history, their artistic qualities and their users. As their friendship evolves, Carhart becomes a member of Luc's inner circle of frequent visitors to the workshop. We meet Jos, a charming, talented, but hopelessly alcoholic piano tuner. We meet Carhart's teacher Anna, as well as Jean-Paul, a miraculously patient accompanist to tone-deaf singers, and Luc's special friend Mathilde. We meet wonderful pianos: a huge rosewood Steinway (too big for Luc's house, or he would have kept it), Pleyels and Schimmels and Grafs, the sweet little Stingl baby grand that Carhart buys (rather than the upright that would actually fit in his tiny apartment), Anna's glorious Bechstein (which barely survives a house call from Jos), two pianos that might have belonged to Beethoven, and a tiny English miniature piano.

Through Luc's insightful commentary we learn what uniquely French — and often contradictory — qualities he prizes in a piano: a magnificently crafted case, a brilliantly articulating action, a unique voice. As Carhart's musical awareness broadens, we listen with him to the sounds of working musicians in his own courtyard, visit an ancient but still vital music school, visit the great piano maker Fazioli, attend master classes, and stand for an hour outside an open window one night as an unseen pianist pours forth the *Diabelli Variations*.

"The Piano Shop on the Left Bank" reminds me why I find the manners of the French so off-putting, their art and writing so style-obsessed, their cooking so difficult, their music so flashy (they mustn't let anyone in, after all, who isn't willing to make the proper effort) but most importantly why they are so worth getting to know. Carhart writes as an outsider, an American, a musical novice, lucky enough to have gained access to Luc's workshop circle. His sincere love of music and desire to learn were his passport. His keen eye, warm heart and clarity of expression have transformed this experience into a book any musician with a shred of curiosity about Paris, the French and the piano will enjoy, with the vicarious thrill of being admitted to a secret society, and the knowledge that as fellow musicians we, too, might be allowed behind the curtain.



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MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH THE HAMMOND ORGAN

by Betty Kobak



source: theatreorgans.com

As it says in the Bible: There is a time for everything. Fifteen years ago I bought a “grand” Hammond RT3 organ. It was hard work to learn to play an instrument at the age of 45, but it gave me a sense of accomplish-

ment. I will always remember my love affair with music and how the Hammond played a part in it.

I had always wanted to play the piano that Bob’s parents gave us. Our five children learned to play, but I never had the time.

For our anniversary, Bob brought home a small Lowery organ. I thought to myself, “What do I want an organ for? Playing an organ was so confining. It looked like a piano, but it didn’t sound like one. It was only played in church. I’m not learning it.” The organ sat in the corner by the piano for about a year. Then one day I changed my mind.

In 1980, when our church was founded, the congregation met in a school gymnasium. We had the use of an organ but I was afraid to even turn it on. Being actively involved in church activities, I led the singing at the 7:30 A.M. Mass on Sundays with no accompaniment. Many times, I sounded the beginning note too high or too low. I embarrassed myself and imagined the eyes of everyone in the congregation rolling back in their heads every time they had to suffer through one more awkward church service. Occasionally someone would offer to accompany me, but not every week. Finally, Mickey, the organist for the choir, found me an accompanist who would play every Sunday for 5 short months.

I asked Mickey if she ever taught any students. She hesitated and then said, “Who’s the student?” She said she usually didn’t teach children.

“It’s me,” I replied. “Will you teach me to play the organ?”

“Sure!” she said, smiling.

I learned to play a few chords. I practiced all summer learning one song. In the fall my accompanist left for college.

Mickey told me, “You can play for yourself.”

“But, I’m not ready!” I protested.

“You’ll never be ready. Just do it.” she replied.

For two weeks I practiced the one hymn I knew and

some Ordinary parts of the Mass. Sunday morning arrived. I awoke early and played through the music one more time at home. Arriving at church, with giant butterflies in my stomach, a bass drum beating in my chest and my hands trembling on the keyboard, I climbed onto the organ bench and practiced for another half-hour. The priest appeared in the doorway; I struck the first note. After that I remember nothing. The God of Mercy had given me amnesia for the next hour.

Afterwards, Jackie, a friend from choir, came up to me and said, “I’m so glad we finally have an organist at this Mass.” Joe, another friend in the choir who knew how scared I was, told me, “Forty-five minutes and it’s over.” Because of Jackie and Joe’s encouragement, I kept coming back.

Mickey continued to teach me. I learned more religious pieces of music but I didn’t improve right away. Most of my introductions were unrecognizable.

For months the congregation lived through some dreadful, dissonant chords. I would leave church in a sour mood, disappointed that I had struck wrong keys again. “Why do you put yourself through this?” Bob asked. “Why don’t you quit?” I didn’t want to quit; I just wanted to get better. I played and sang for about a year. The church community, including Bob, tolerated my awkwardness. And I persevered.

Then Mickey connected me with some cantors who were willing to sing with “the new kid on the block.” I had a reprieve. I did not have to be the one-woman band using my hands, feet, voice, and eyes. I still had to practice six days a week in order to play knowledgeably on Sunday, but, to my surprise, I had become the organist instead of the cantor.

Then came the day when Mickey found the Hammond. A friendly realtor told her of the Hammond he had seen in a vacated home. Mickey is an accomplished organist and keyboard player. She invited me to go with her to examine the organ. From the powerful, splendid sound it produced when she played it, to the beautiful dark walnut cabinet, we could see that it was in excellent condition. Did I want it? Would Bob help me bring it home? Could I afford it? Yes, yes, yes! I unhesitatingly bought it. It was mine at last. What a wonder! Me with a Hammond! Some people have computers or motorboats or guitars. I had a Hammond organ. It was the biggest “toy” I ever owned. The following week, Mickey, Dick (Mickey’s husband) Bob and I, and our two sons, brought this marvelous instrument to our home. I was galvanized to practice and learn all the music that I could cram into my free time.

I played the organ at church for seven years, learning more music than I ever thought possible. Having a Hammond to play and learn on gave me much joy and a sense of accomplishment.

continued on next page

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HAMMOND ORGAN

The Hammond and its inventor present a marvelous study in technology, in electronics and in our enjoyment of a “finely tuned” instrument.

The original organs were built to make very loud sounds, by forcing air into tuned pipes at higher pressures than human lungs can produce, both for entertainment and to frighten enemies. Two forms of organ were developed by the ancient Greeks and Romans. The hydraulis or water organ, in which air pressure is maintained by a reservoir of water above the wind chest, was known to exist by the 3rd century BC. A few centuries later, the Roman emperor Nero played one. There was also a pneumatic organ in those times, operated by bellows.

The organ has been exalted and later discarded or destroyed, only to be raised up again. In the early Christian church, many theologians, such as St. Jerome and Erasmus, rejected the organ as an instrument of worship. Then during the Middle Ages, organs became popular; huge, beautiful pipe organs were installed in churches. Famous composers wrote pipe organ music for worship services. During the 1600s the Puritans, especially in England, prohibited playing during worship services. In England and North America, organs were ordered destroyed because they were not considered an instrument to use in divine worship. But, today the organ is the instrument of choice in most churches.

Originally, pipe organs needed at least two people to play them: one or more who pumped the air and one who played the keyboard. Small home organs with foot-operated bellows were popular in the 19th century, but they were very limited in the volume and variety of sound they could produce.

The Hammond organ is an electronic instrument, seemingly like a compact pipe organ but operated by electrical impulses. In place of pipes, there are rotating magnetic tone wheels, an amplifier and speakers. Instead of muscle-powered bellows or water pumps, the Hammond has an electric synchronous motor. With a Hammond, one person controls everything on the organ: the music, the volume and a variety of sounds. The feet are free to operate pedals, and the entire Hammond organ is easier to move than a small piano.

Laurens Hammond was an inventor and entrepreneur. He studied engineering and physics, and worked on the synchronization of electric impulses. When he developed his first organ in 1933, Laurens Hammond was already a successful clock manufacturer and

owned several patents, among them a “tickless” clock, an electric bridge table and a hand-held synchronous rotating shutter that brought 3-D movies to life in 1922.

Hammond decided to build a “low cost substitute” for a church pipe organ, using his synchronous clock motor to produce musical tones. After many labor-intensive months of experimenting, Hammond and John Hanert, a fellow engineer, developed an electronic instrument including a sound generator made up of 91 magnetized “tone wheels” in an attempt to duplicate the sounds of a pipe organ. The pitch was too pure to resemble a pipe organ so he built a “chorus generator” to add slightly sharp and flat tones to the original tone wheels. Within a few years of its invention there were 50,000 Hammonds in churches all over the world. Don Leslie, who owned Electro Music, invented the Leslie speaker, which helped the Hammond to sound more like a theater pipe organ. The Hammond organ and the Leslie speaker were very compatible, which helped musicians create a new type of music that embraced a larger audience, especially in popular music, jazz and rock. Advertisements promised that you could learn to play this organ by yourself. No teacher required!



Laurens Hammond at his Model A
source: B3Organs@aol.com

Laurens Hammond is reminiscent of the people who invent products for the medical profession but are not doctors or nurses. These inventors develop products like the artificial heart, lung and prostheses for arm, leg or hand. Each of us has a gift to offer to our fellow humans. Hammond gave us his ability to use electricity to help musicians produce a beautiful sound with a synchronous motor and a keyboard and pedalboard. His invention is now used not only in religious ceremonies but also in every facet of our musical enjoyment: pop, jazz, rock and roll, new age. It is used everywhere in concerts, orchestras, baseball parks, churches, and homes and found on audiotapes, CDs and DVDs. What gifts we have because of you, Laurens Hammond. Thank you!

© 2002 Betty Kobak

Betty Kobak lives with her husband in rural Ohio. She writes “I have loved music all my life. I sang in many choirs and was a cantor at church for many years. Over 20 years ago, I taught myself to read music when my children took piano lessons. I would sit in the same room with them when they took their lessons so I heard what the teacher was teaching them. I played the organ in church for 7 years. Now that I don’t have the organ anymore, I am finally teaching myself to play the piano. I am a very amateur musician; I learned to play chords with both hands, so I improvise, instead of playing the bass clef.”

good restaurants and this meal was one of many I enjoyed at a Thai restaurant called the Siam House.

The seminar started in earnest on Monday with an overview session and then I was off to my first lesson with Janet. The seminar is arranged so that everyone can sit in on each other's lessons. While it was nerve-racking to be "first up" on the schedule, the good will and encouragement of those attending the seminar was evident from the beginning. One of the best dividends of attending other people's lessons is learning about exciting new repertoire to try and by the end of the week, I had quite a list. I attended another lesson, then participated in a recorder consort, playing tenor recorder for the first time. Lunch was followed by a Baroque dance class, which I skipped in favor of practicing and a trip to the local music stores. In the late afternoon we were paired into chamber ensemble groups of three and then four, with a harpsichord accompanist. These were coached groups and, happily, Janet was the coach for one of my groups, with my other group assisted by Washington McClain, Baroque oboist. There was great seriousness even at our first session as we had to quickly choose a piece to prepare for the recital on Sunday.

Each participant was scheduled for a private session with harpsichordist Brian Bailey. My session was on Tuesday and we worked on the Telemann *Methodische Sonaten*. How wonderful to hear what these pieces sounded like with basso continuo and to have assistance in phrasing and interpretation. I decided to concentrate on these pieces for the remainder of the seminar. The rest of the day was devoted to sitting in on Janet's lessons, playing in the recorder consort, having lunch at the Thai restaurant, participating in my ensemble groups and lots of individual practicing. The ensemble groups were settling into their recital pieces. My group with bassoon was leaning towards the Andante and Allegro movements from Sonata V by Joseph Bodin de Boismortier and the group without bassoon would play the Largo movement from Johann Christian Schickhardt's F Major Quartet, Op. 22, no. 1.

One of the nicest things about attending music workshops is the opportunity to meet new people. Marilyn Flowers, recorder player and faculty member at Ball

State University, asked if I would like to get together for some duets. We met nearly every day of the seminar and we even had an opportunity to try one of our pieces with the harpsichordist. Since the seminar, we plan to continue to meet to play music and she has also put me in contact with the Indianapolis Recorder Society, an additional playing opportunity.

The remaining days of the *Baroque Woodwinds and Dance Seminar* were a blur of lessons, ensemble group rehearsals, individual practice time and more trips to the Thai restaurant. I had another lesson with Janet, working on the *Methodische Sonaten*, as well as a lesson with Eva Legene, recorder. She used the baritone recorder as a continuo on the *Sonaten*, which sounded wonderful, and she had many helpful comments on phrasing and for shaping every note. By the end of the week, our ensemble pieces were significantly improved

and our coaches became quite exacting in their comments. It is particularly helpful to have such detailed attention to each note, phrase and measure, since sometimes it is easy to let the finer points of a piece slide when you just play for your own enjoyment. In addition, I had a very demanding section in one of the pieces and by the end of the week my hands ached from all the extra practicing.

Sunday arrived and my ensemble groups convened for their final rehearsals. We discovered that the recital hall was empty, so we rehearsed there, giving us a good sense of our intonation and dynamics and helping each group to finalize its seating arrangement. Then we broke for lunch and I waited nervously until it was time to return to the hall. My ensemble groups were scheduled in the first half of the program and both of the performances went quite well. What better way to celebrate a beautiful day in July than to participate in a program of early music that included various combinations of recorders, flutes, oboes, bassoons, harpsichords and even voice and dance. As participants left the hall, there were numerous words of encouragement. Surely, the sweetest words for an amateur musician to hear are "just keep playing" at the conclusion of a successful workshop.

Sara Anne Hook is Associate Dean and Professor at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis. She plays viola with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Indianapolis. She studies viola with Colette Grossman Abel and Baroque flute with Barbara Kallaur.



Johnna Meadows, Alex Shaffer, Yvonne Miller-Nixon and Sara Anne Hook at the IU Baroque Woodwinds and Dance Seminar

DRUMMERS

continued from page 1

Wayne's World, starring Dana Carvey as Garth, the nerdy teen who can beat the skins with the best of them. 1992.

The Little Drummer Boy, with Ted Eccles doing the voice of a little jaded orphan who travels with the three wise men, finding his heart again by playing his drum for Baby Jesus. 1968.

Rodrigo D: No Futuro, starring Ramiro Meneses as Rodrigo, an aspiring but violent teen drummer. 1990.

The Reluctant Debutante, starring John Saxon as an orchestral drummer who plays at debutante balls. This is how he meets Jane, a girl who is resistant to being a society girl. 1958.

Some Kind of Wonderful, starring Mary Stuart Masterson as a teenage girl drummer who discovers she's falling in love with her best friend, Keith. 1987.

Meet the Mosaics, starring Matt Smith and Brian Groh: A drummer and the leader of an upstart rock band are best friends. The drummer finds himself falling for his best friend's girl, Rose. 1999.

The Gene Krupa Story, with Sal Mineo playing the famous jazz drummer, Gene Krupa. 1959.

The Last of the Blonde Bombshells: There's a cross-dressing drummer in this "all-girl" band. 2000.

The Kids are Alright is a concert documentary containing performance footage of Keith Moon, drummer for The Who, just before his death. 1979.

The Marge and Gower Champion Show, starring the choreographer and dancer as themselves. (It was a TV situation comedy, not a movie, but it's worth mentioning because Buddy Rich, the drummer, is Cozy.) 1957.

Tammy Ruggles lives in Tollesboro, KY. She has a Bachelor's in Social Work, and a Master's in Adult Education and Counseling, with over 10 years' experience as a child/adult protection social worker. Last year she retired due to becoming legally blind from retinitis pigmentosa, and is pursuing a second career as a freelance writer.

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A TEACHER TO REMEMBER

by Helen Kitchen Branson

The teacher I remember most from my childhood never stood before a classroom of students. When I first started taking piano lessons from her, she taught both piano and organ students at the Presbyterian Church in Boise, Idaho, back in 1926.

Her name was Norma Bell, and she was a very kind and creative person. Nobody told her that I had trouble seeing but she observed it immediately when she tried to show me some music notes on a printed page. "Don't worry," she advised kindly when she saw my disappointment. "We'll figure out a way."

Sure enough, when I came for my lessons the next week, Mrs. Bell had a notebook filled with wide space music staves and large black notes. "You have to look so close to see these," she observed. "You'll have to memorize them."

It was a challenge but I took the notebook home and memorized the whole thing for my next lesson.

Mrs. Bell was very pleased and from then on we had our system of teaching me to play music by note rather than by ear. The next challenge came when I was about 10 years old and had been taking piano lessons for 3 years. Mrs. Bell decided to organize a rhythm band. I thought sure that I would not be included because of my poor eyesight but she told me that I would play a triangle. I knew that playing a triangle meant that I had to strike a small instrument with a metal stick. Before practice began, Mrs. Bell took time to show me how I could strike the instrument without moving it up close to my glasses. She then played a record and indicated where in the music I was supposed to strike the triangle for four quarter-note counts.

Soon after that, Mrs. Bell began to teach her students in a music room in her home. This was even closer to where I lived, so I was delighted. When I was about 11 years old, I came home one day from my piano lesson and found my mother very upset. "From now on you will have to practice without your teacher. Your father has to go away for medical treatment and I can't find a job anywhere." She paused and I knew what she was going to say before she said it. My music lessons were over. "I'll have to call Mrs. Bell and tell her," my mother finally said. She was as sorry as I was because my music lessons were very important to her. She hoped some day that I would be a concert pianist.

At school the next day and when my fifth grade teacher asked me what was wrong, I told her.

"I was just going to suggest that you try out to play the piano in the school orchestra," she said. "During 3rd

period, you will go down to the assembly room where they will hold try-outs.”

I was very nervous. I thought, “What if they ask me to sight read?” I felt like making an excuse for not going down there. I almost went home from recess instead of going back into the schoolhouse.

My teacher was waiting at the door. “You have to go to the assembly room,” she sternly reminded me.

Reluctantly, I slowly turned around. Again the temptation was to turn to the outside door and go home as fast as I could. But the janitor was in my way as I started to push the outer door open. “Where are you going?” he asked. “No place,” I murmured, and turned around toward the assembly room.

When I arrived and opened the door, I heard a strange man’s voice, “Are you Helen Kitchen?” he asked.

I admitted that I was.

“Good,” the man said cheerfully. “Don’t be nervous. I only want to see how well you can play.”

“She can’t see very well,” one of the other students volunteered.

“Who is your piano teacher?” the man inquired as I moved toward where I hoped the piano was located. There was a pause. I heard the other students whispering.

“That doesn’t matter,” the man reassured as I sat down on the stool. He took several pieces of music from the piano and he flipped several pages.

“Oh no,” I thought. “Here it comes. He wants me to sight read.”

“Just play that last piece you memorized for Mrs. Bell,” he suggested.

I breathed a sigh of relief. I played the whole piece through to the end. I couldn’t tell if it was a good sign or not that he didn’t stop me in the middle as I had heard him stop another student.

“I’ll let your teachers know,” he told us all.

We left and I returned to class. When I got home, I told my mother that I tried out for the school orchestra. She was very pleased. “Now, I’ll have to make your music in large notes,” she said, “Because you will have to memorize quite a few new pieces for the orchestra.”

Mrs. Bell offered me a part-time job after school as a way to pay for my lessons. She paid me a small wage in addition. My duties included all phases of housework and preparation of food for parties and recitals. I was the only student in the 5th grade who had an after-school job.

Mrs. Bell treated me like a member of the family and never like a servant. I played in all of her recitals and

she arranged for me to do background music on a local radio show called “The Friendly Chatter.” She helped me select appropriate music to accompany the reading of poetry.

She told me that if my family had to sell my piano, she would let me use hers for practice after lesson hours. Fortunately, we weren’t able to sell my piano because it was during the depression and nobody had the money to buy it.

When I went to high school, Mrs. Bell encouraged me to participate in the state piano contest. She also included me in her encouragement of all her students to try out for solos in Music Week.

When my mother asked Mrs. Bell if I should practice four hours a day in hopes of becoming a concert pianist, Mrs. Bell said, “Helen will never be a concert pianist. Let her practice one or two hours a day and she will develop enough skill to make extra money as a part-time musician. Her muscular coordination in her hands is not strong enough to be a concert musician.”

I was delighted. I loved to play the piano and I hoped to make money at it, but I knew I would never be able to meet my mother’s very high expectations and Mrs. Bell saw my dilemma.

This insightful lady is truly a teacher to remember. Because of her I developed not only a life-long love of music but also the ability to play classical music well into my 70s even though I slowly lost my eyesight during my childhood. This gift from Mrs. Bell has been a great comfort to me. Her greatest gift though was her emotional support during a very difficult period in my life as I grew up with my failing vision.

Helen Kitchen Branson lives in Honolulu, HI.

QUIZ ANSWERS

(from page 2)

1. Hitler was no musician. Clinton plays saxophone, Frederic II was a composer, flutist and violinist, Gesualdo a composer, Heath a conductor, organist and pianist, Jefferson a violinist, Nero an organist (not a fiddler), and Truman a pianist.
- 2a. Staying alive (a lifetime job) for Quantz.
2b. Flaying alive, for the satyr Marsyas.
- 3a. Martin Luther, a priest
3b. Franz X. Gruber, a schoolteacher
- 3c. General Daniel Butterfield (see October 2001 issue)
- 3d. Alexander Borodin, the tune is from his Polovetzian Dances, in the 1888 opera, *Prince Igor*
4. Borodin was a chemist, Ives an insurance broker and Moussorgsky a naval officer.

MUSIC FOR THE LOVE OF IT

OCTOBER 2002

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