

AMATEUR CHAMBER MUSIC PLAYERS

1123 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10010-2007

Newsletter, December 1997

ACMP is FIFTY YEARS OLD this year! It's time to review our beginnings. The research for this brief history was largely completed and communicated on the occasion of our 40th anniversary when several of ACMP's founders were still alive, and collections of their letters were fairly accessible. Since then, about half of our present 4500 members have joined us, and important new historical information has come to light. For our veteran members, the article that follows is a kind of minuet: we trust they will enjoy the repetitions.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The Amateur Chamber Music Players started with one imaginative and energetic woman and one enterprising man, thinking and acting alike, though at first unknown to each other. It was Leonard Strauss of Indiana, practicing his violin in a hotel room and wishing for musical company, who first put words to his dream. He was quickly joined by Helen Rice of New York City and Stockbridge, Massachusetts, who helped Strauss widen his inner circle of 15 to about 75, then over 1000 players both amateur and professional. By 1949, Amateur Chamber Music Players association had published its first Directory and was on its way.



Helen Rice
Secretary, ACMP, 1947-1980

Helen Rice had played, coached and hosted chamber music for many years when, during an evening of music in 1943, she fell into conversation with a well-traveled violinist-physician named William Sunderman. Wouldn't it be wonderful, said the violinist, if chamber music enthusiasts could find each other more easily, round about the nation? "And the world," thought Helen, who had often had a similar dream herself, especially when traveling abroad.

Strauss, the too-solitary violinist, was marketing executive for a venerable midwest manufacturer of "the Kind of Clothes Gentlemen Wear." Too often, Strauss's job took him away from his weekly string quartet in Indianapolis, and from the lively school and community orchestras he had helped create there. If only one could list oneself in some kind of directory, along with others who loved to play chamber music...

One spring evening in 1946, Strauss's longing suddenly became a plan. He tried out his idea on his wife (a professional cellist), on a few fellow amateurs, on a friend who directed the music library of the Library of Congress, and on friends of friends in the Budapest String Quartet. Then, on June 12, 1946, Leonard Strauss wrote a letter to 15 people all over the United States, most of whom he had never met.

The letter posed several questions: What if chamber music players throughout the nation were to join a "Society for the Stimulation of Chamber Music" where they could record their addresses in a "census" so that they could find each other while traveling, and play together? Could not such an association also support informal music-making at a high standard everywhere? Will you tell me what you think (Strauss continued) and ask your friends and fellow players what *they* think, or send me their names so that I can mail them this letter?

The response was astonishing. "I could not feel more strongly on the subject," said a letter from Catherine Drinker Bowen, author, and second violin player *par excellence*. "Traveling from city to city to lecture, I have often wished for a list of chamber music players." One correspondent after another offered to help make Strauss's inspiration a reality.



Leonard A. Strauss
Chairman, ACMP, 1947-1954

Dozens of new names were immediately suggested, and, as July turned to August, Strauss's busy secretary mailed out a new round of letters. "At last!" one writer enthused. "A wonderful idea!" said a typical reply. "Count me in," said another. In a nation physically unscathed but deeply upset by war, among a people searching for new ways of living out long-held values, there were, it seemed, a small host of musicians to whom the making of informal chamber music was the most valued activity of all. "If people inclined the way we are don't get together," wrote one musician, "the world is going to go to the dogs. It may anyhow, but at least let's do that much."

Some respondents reached out on their own. ("Of course you will want to do some missionary work for our Society while you are on sabbatical," Strauss would urge, as determined as he was gentle.) The most energetic missionary of all was ready to join the enterprise. In New York, Miss Bowen had written, "Miss Helen Rice of 15 West 67th Street knows more amateur string players than anyone on the eastern coast..." Leonard Strauss invited Helen to join the "movement" by the next

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mail.

Helen Rice wrote back that she was "enormously interested," and grateful that Strauss had taken the lead. "I congratulate you on...Miss Rice," Maulsby Kimble, soon to be ACMP's first Treasurer, wrote to Strauss. "She is a fine person and an excellent chamber music player. What more could you want?" Helen immediately contacted several dozen musical friends, and the gathering of players in one huge, invisible and lightly held net became an irreversible process which has continued to this day.

In winter of 1947, Leonard Strauss and Helen Rice agreed that it was time to form an organization. Strauss wrote the most eager respondents to call a meeting, and traveled to New York City to meet with three of them on March 19th, a Sunday afternoon, at Helen's apartment. Here our association was born. Strauss agreed to be Chairman of the Committee for Organization, while Helen Rice would be Secretary, Maulsby Kimball, Treasurer, and Ruth McGregor, Financial Secretary.*

"Keep it simple," was the plea of many of those first hundred and more who shaped the original ACMP. "There are enough organizations in this country," contended Robert Haven Schauffler, another writer (*The Unknown Brahms*) and an avid cellist. "Stiff collars are taboo" in American amateur music, wrote an early organizer. Strauss, who had hoped for a corporate charter, bowed to these opinions, realizing that the one basic function of the group would be to assemble a directory of chamber musicians, a project which could be carried out with the funds and resources that had already been offered.

Many suggestions of other roles for the new association were made: it should sponsor a lending library; it should commission new chamber works for amateur players; it should sponsor concerts by up-and-coming new professional groups; it should publish a list of lesser-known chamber works evalu-

ated for difficulty. Though most of these projects would later be furthered by ACMP, they were all tabled in 1947 and 1948. The directory itself seemed an ample challenge.

Nonetheless, several questions remained, and their answers would determine the character of the ACMP for years to come. Through 1947, letters rushed back and forth all over the country on the subject of *dues*. "We will need them soon," Strauss insisted, since only dues can raise the \$1,500 we're likely to need each year. "They will be impossible to collect regularly," rejoined Kimball, the Treasurer. After months, the matter was settled when Helen Rice, who, as the group's unpaid Secretary, would have collected the dues, put her foot down. But not because it was troublesome: no worthy task seemed too troublesome for Helen. "I'm absolutely opposed to mandatory dues," she said, "because that special (ACMP) evening of music might mean everything to the very person who couldn't afford it." From that moment on, every member has been urged, but not required, to contribute.

Another dilemma was the role of *professional musicians* in the association. Then as now, amateur musicians suffered accusations of sloppiness and *hubris*. "Most of those who play this type of music are completely incapable of handling it," wrote one early critic to Leonard Strauss. Yet many of the founding members played frequently with professionals devoted to informal "hausmusik." Meanwhile, many professionals saw the encouragement of amateur music as of major importance in the enlargement of musical opportunities for teachers and performers everywhere. Alexander Schneider and Walter Naumberg had recently joined other professional supporters of the new organization. To welcome professionals as members was to make clear the seriousness of the enterprise and the high musical standards which the founders hoped to promote. The dilemma was resolved as the initially controversial self-rating system fell into place. "Pro's" could designate themselves as such, for example, and the existence of a "Pro" rating would tender the expectation that the next category ("A") should be filled by close-to-professional players.

Finally, should the new organization be an *international* one which welcomed "foreign" members? Regretfully, the organizers decided on a compromise: all communications would be in English; overseas members would not be encouraged—but neither would they be turned away. Thus the organization was able to settle on a name: the National Association of Amateur Chamber Music Players. Here was one

*We know that Strauss, Helen Rice and Ruth McGregor (ACMP's chair from 1984-87, and a Board member for 40 years) were present at the founding meeting, but the fourth founder is shadowy. Maulsby Kimball of Buffalo had hoped to attend (and a few insist that he did), but correspondence before and after suggests that he could not make it. The man "from Buffalo" mentioned by Henry Simon, ACMP's first editor, could have been Cameron Baird. There is also evidence that Robert Haven Schauffler of New York City was present. Helen Rice's mother, Margaret Rood Rice, was co-hostess with Helen.



NOTHING STOPS THESE COUNIERS



INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP! EGYPTIAN? CHINESE? ANCIENT GREEK?

ACMP'S ORIGINAL HEADQUARTERS

decision that would soon and happily be altered in 1952, when the "National" rubric would be dropped and international members welcomed with a whole heart. "Do you approve of expanding foreign connections?" all members would be asked in a 1955 questionnaire. "This above all—toward peace," answered an American violist, speaking for many. The first Overseas Directory would follow hard upon.

For all the conundrums resolved, numbers of the founding generation found their excitement spiced with the sense that they had embarked on a hazardous enterprise. In a land where gangsters were said to carry their tommy-guns in violin cases, "What sort of people will permit their phone numbers to be published in this way and virtually invite strangers into their houses?", asked a Boston journalist-violinist. And even if one makes it safely to the tuning stage, there are other risks. "Not even a game of bridge will disclose the characters of four people to one another so completely and profoundly as an evening of string quartet playing," he continued. Another skeptic worried about the host violinist who "wants to keep rehearsing one passage that is not quite right and stops repeatedly for one reason or another—even perhaps to correct my bowing. That is fun for him but hell for me." No self-rating system is proof against the grandiose self-promoter. "We should issue membership cards to guard against exploitation and fraud," insisted one fearful supporter.

Helen Rice and Leonard Strauss listened to all these anxieties—and took up their letter writing again. "Miss Rice feels that everyone who loves to play chamber music is bound to be nice," a 1965 editorial from *The New York Times* would report. In 1978 she would tell the same newspaper that she had had ACMP guests from all over North America and 45 other countries, and only one unpleasant experience in thirty years.

"And what was that?" asked the *Times* reporter, sensing that Helen was far too ladylike to reveal any unpleasantness without some prodding. "A man from New Jersey wrote to say he'd be passing through and would I arrange a session for him," Helen said. "When he arrived I had a group waiting. I served lunch and spent the whole lunch time on the telephone, madly trying to find an extra viola for him to play. Then I suggested a very nice Haydn that starts with a 4/4 movement in which all the violist does is play a single half note. We had to start 11 times. He was awful. Later someone told me that while I was on the phone he had turned the gin bottle upside down. But one bad time out of 30 years isn't a bad record, is it?" (Ruth McGregor,

who was there at the luncheon, has kindly remarked that the gentleman was probably trying to drown the nervousness he felt when he walked in and saw what fast company he had joined.) Thus in the future as in its earliest years, the ACMP would be built on faith, on hope, and on love—both of chamber music and of many of the people who play it.

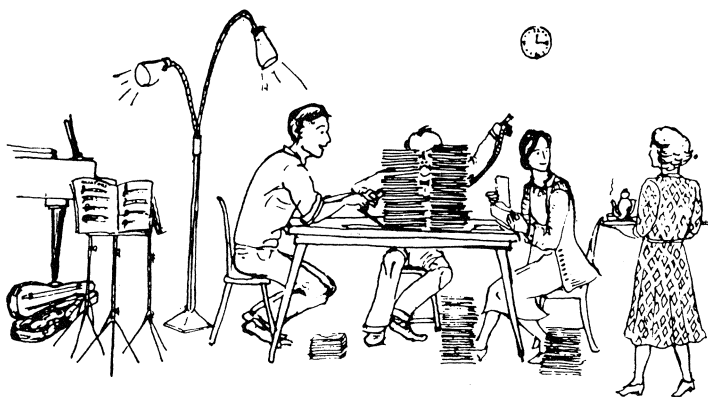


F. William Sunderman, MD, practicing while camped in North Yemen

Meanwhile, Helen Rice plied her pen through 1948 and early 1949, assembling members to be listed in the first ACMP directory. "The response is amazing," Helen wrote Strauss. Her correspondence folder was soon two inches thick. She was both amused and moved by long letters from amateurs grateful to be able, at last, to share their favorite avocation with a kindred spirit. "I cannot resist enclosing a snapshot of myself," wrote two. Several told their musical life stories, and more, in five or six pages. Many letter writers, in their enthusiasm for the new association, expressed the essential connection between ensemble playing and the sensitivity to kindred souls that brings chamber music to life. As one player of Austrian heritage reflected, "*Man kann nicht genug freundlich sein*": "One can never be kind enough."

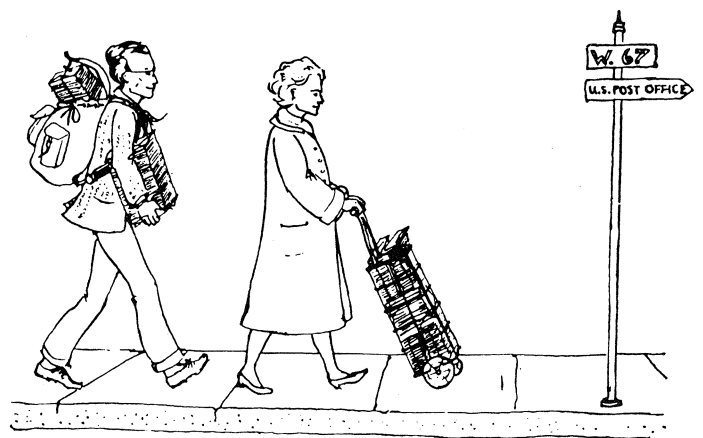
Helen Rice and Leonard Strauss heard about Joseph Stein, an irrepressible Boston area cellist "with an extensive directory of his own." Immediately they wrote to him, and got back dozens of names. A San Francisco physician sent 29 more. Intrigued by this flurry among a normally decorous breed, journalists publicized the search. Inquiries poured in, filling Helen's mailbox.

In September, 1948, every single person known or thought to be interested was mailed a simple address and self-rating form much like that which ACMP uses today. ("What can I say as to the self-rating," Treasurer Kimball asked despairingly, "except that most of the time I am struggling and out of my class?") With virtually no secretarial help—but refreshed by occasional quartets or quintets with co-founder Ruth McGregor and other stamp licking volunteers—Helen sent reminders to



COMBINING A LOT OF BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE

WAS HELEN RICE'S APARTMENT



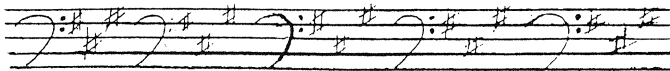
THE LAST MILE

each potential member who had forgotten to return the form. By late spring of 1949, the 1240th member had checked in, and the first Directory went to press.

Now the real fun could begin: the phone or mail queries so familiar to many of us; the expansion of contacts in Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere; the encounters between business people, students, housewives, physicians, taxi drivers and others that led to musical evenings exceeding all expectations, along with the handful of disappointments. An article in Harper's magazine entitled "A Form of Slight Insanity" would soon offer such unvarnished tales as this one (by a "Mr. Harper" himself):

An architect who is a violinist (grade "B" he says) was called one evening by a man who said, "I am the cello. I understand you are the violin. I think I can get the piano." My friend invited him and the piano to his apartment to play. The piano turned out to be a rather timid lady who arrived, looked around, and then asked to use the telephone. "Dearie," she said to her husband. "I'm going to be perfectly all right."

It was clear as day that the association of Amateur Chamber Music Players was going to be all right too.



SOME LETTERS FROM OUR EARLIEST MEMBERS

From William Sunderman of Pennsylvania, who appears in ACMP's very first Directory—and is as old as the twentieth century:

I practice scales, arpeggios, double stops and Sevcik exercises daily and play chamber music every week with friends. In August I shall be going to Europe where I shall be playing string quartets practically every day during my three week sojourn.

From John Rado in California

I think it was about 1950 that I joined ACMP. At that time, soon after the end of WW2, I was playing (weekly) string quartets in Great Neck, NY. Maurice Gardner, a professional, played viola, his wife Sadie played violin (A) and Joe Marcus at 2nd. One of this group told me about ACMP and I promptly joined.

Maurice was a good friend of Leonard Rose, who, at that time also lived in Great Neck. One evening while we were playing quartets Lennie (as we called him) dropped in unexpectedly to visit Maurice. He had his cello under his arm and suggested that we play the Schubert quintet. Wow! what a thrill! Lennie and I became very good friends. Our paths crossed many times.

I am still playing string quartets here in Los Angeles with folks that I found by referring to the ACMP list. I am still considered a very good chamber music player although my cello technique "ain't what it uster."

From Edward Shapiro of California

I recollect that I joined circa 1950, because my joining was long before celebrating my viola's bicentennial in 1960. In that year the use of ACMP's roster led to my participation in the Humboldt Chamber Music Workshop for the following 22 years. This was a looked-forward-to and memorable part of my musical life and enduring musical friendships.

I'd become accustomed to carrying my viola everywhere during

my wanderjahren of medical training. Practicing medicine in the Los Angeles area has enabled me to play in a series of self-replenishing quartets, more via summer workshop contacts than through ACMP. I've also had the good fortune to play with dozens of former strangers whose musical lives have been saved by ACMP.

I find the Newsletter of great interest, the lists of music rewarding, and the sharing of both triumphs and less-so valuable.

*Your C-cleffriend,
Ed*

From Alan Miller of Delmar, NY

I must be among the very first ACMP recruits. I think I joined in late 1947 or early 1948.

I had two reasons for joining. The first was the Directory itself. It would, I thought, help me to find other amateur musicians—and to be found myself. ACMP has done that, many times, and has thus changed my life. When I am asked to describe ACMP, I begin by characterizing it as one of the most perfect organizations that I have ever known: It started with a simple and clear function—to publish a directory—and it has done that beautifully, clearly, carefully, reliably and with style. The Directory has remained central to ACMP, undistracted and undiluted by a variety of related enterprises. The Newsletter, with its drawings, is delightful; the library is useful; the Fellowship program is WONDERFUL, and I hope it grows; but the Directory is still the centerpiece, and I would be lost without it.

The other reason for joining was that it was like becoming part of a national, and then international, fellowship of kindred spirits. I think that I first heard about ACMP from Ernest Bueding, one of my professors at NYU College of Medicine, who became a friend, and with whom I played string quartets.

Dr. Miller goes on to describe a chain of ACMP contacts, linked together as he traveled throughout the world. These include "two sisters in London (the President and Vice President of the Royal Society for the Abolition of Cruel Sports), one of whom astounded us by singing in a downtown church while accompanying herself on the violin"; and several other "gifted and generous people" met through ACMP. "Heartfelt thanks to our founders," he finishes, "and to all those who have continued and nourished their work. If there is anything I can do, please let me know."

...AND FROM SOME OF OUR NEWER MEMBERS

From Margarita Maymi-Gascue of Maryland, "fluent in Spanish and English; speaks some French"

I am mainly interested in Baroque, early classical and obscure works, and prefer to study a work over several sessions or until it sounds well. Sightreading is also helpful to practice.

My belief is that improvement and ability come gradually. In my little experience with group playing, I have found that too often people (and conductors) want to play works that are too difficult for their level of playing. This leads to frustration. Music does not have "short cuts," and its sound cannot be faked.

It will be very enjoyable to find persons with more or less the same goals with whom to share the joy of this playing experience.

From Fan Xiaoqiao, Peoples Republic of China

Greetings! I hereby begin with my many thanks for the newsletters sent to me in the last few years, always on time. In China, a

country about the same size as USA but with a lot more population, I am very happy to receive your letters from across such a great distance and I am pleased too to learn the new stories about other members of ACMP through newsletters. Being a member of ACMP, I would also be willing to arrange occasions for making music with the visiting ACMP members and other members or non-members in Beijing, as I have done in the past. Since I joined in 1990, I have received many of our members, including Dr. Marvin L. Mausner, Mrs. Adrienne Nassau and others. We all enjoyed very much the opportunity of playing the musical instruments that we are adroit in. We belong to different nations, but belong to the same musical world.

China is now a country undergoing a lot of changes, and reforms have brought a great deal of vitality to the country as well as its people. In the late 1980s, I had the chance to join several domestic orchestras and visited almost ten countries and regions. In the 1990s, owing to the depression of the cultural circles, such chances have been on the decrease, so I've switched my focus from playing with orchestras to teaching. I enclose with this letter a photo showing my teaching career and a class of child players under my guidance. They are all lovely pupils of ages ranging from 5-18 years.



Fan Xiaoqiao at work and playing in Beijing

Maybe my new telephone number in Beijing (6396-1869) has prevented the co-players of ACMP from contacting me any more lately. However, I should express my welcome to all members who happen to visit China and who are willing to seek playing opportunities through me. Thank you very much.

From John and Lou Gurzynski

We're long-haul truckers, always on the road. Lou is VI/Vla-B+. John is Vla C. We usually have an extra violin and viola with us. Phone: 1-800/355-5745; address: Interstate Highway, USA.

At their annual meeting, ACMP's Directors decided that the Newsletter needed space we have customarily given to the financial report. A copy of ACMP's last annual report may be obtained from the New York State Office of Charities Registration, Department of State, Albany NY 12231.

* * *

Four gifts have been made to the Helen Rice Memorial Fund in memory of Doris Jason, Rustin McIntosh, Helen Rice, and Joseph Stein.

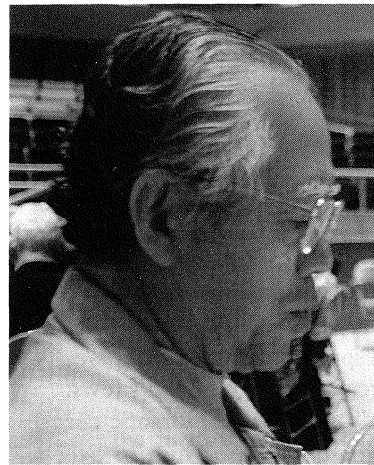
Have you thought of sponsoring an ACMP PLAY-IN with the help of some of our members most experienced in doing the same? If so please call ACMP's New York office for information, and for mailing labels if you need them. While most play-ins are held near the anniversary of ACMP's founding in mid-March, you can pick your time. The only condition is that your gathering be open to all players from D to Pro—or be specially arranged to give C and D players a good time.

ACMP INTERNATIONAL

Our members have given us news of many opportunities to join workshops and courses all over the world, several of which are briefly described on the ACMP Bulletin Board, last page. In addition, David William-Olsson, our Swedish Advisory Council member, tells us that ACMP members wishing to join in the weekend play-ins in *Stockholm*, sponsored periodically by the Mazer Quartet Society, are welcome to contact him ahead of time. At the last Mazer Society gathering, 72 participants played 119 different chamber works, some rare pieces being tried for the first time, a few classics being played by two or three groups. Please see the Bulletin Board (last page) for details of the next Mazer Play-In.



Our *Japanese* members have asked us to pass on news of the many chamber music sessions sponsored by the Amateur Chamber Music Players Association/Japan (the APA). Each district holds local sessions monthly in a public facility, attended by 10-25 players. Tokyo has ten different groups planning such monthly activities. "Private group activity is unknown in Japan," writes one ACMP contact person; "however, APA members are very cooperative in assisting ACMP members when they visit Japan. A short letter or telephone call to the contact person will receive our immediate attention. There may be a slight language barrier—but many of our members speak English."



One of ACMP's (and APA's) most active contact persons is Advisory Council member Captain Konosuke Yamamoto (pictured here at work in Chautauqua—see page 12). To telephone him within Japan, dial 048-862-2471; from the U.S., 011-81-48-862-2471 (or see ACMP International Directory for his address). The APA's address is APA, 2-6-16-201 Kabuki-cho, Shinjuku-ku,

Tokyo. Many of our members have enjoyed wonderful chamber music in Japan, thanks to the hospitality of Captain Yamamoto, Dr. Masazumi Inouye and many others.



TWO INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Neither Roger Serpolay nor Felix van Raalte is new to the Advisory Council, but we have not described them to you before; hence these short musical biographies:

Roger René Serpolay is a flute player who lives in Romagnat, in the Auvergne, FRANCE. Like many French amateurs, he is the cheerful survivor of the rather hostile environment that French professionals have, in the past, created for those who play for love alone. All this is changing now as the government's Cultural Ministry begins to pay attention to amateurs' needs and to their vital contributions—and Roger is helping to hasten the change through his leadership role in the French *Association des Musicens Amateurs* (AMA), which has begun to work directly with the Ministry. It is a new mission for the 700-member AMA, which was modeled on the ACMP at its founding in 1953, and is now organized as a federation of regional AMA affiliates.

Until his recent retirement, Roger was professor of cloud physics at the *Observatoire de Clermont-Ferrand*; but his present life can hardly be called "retiring." Since the mid 1980s, Roger has been a chief organizer of the annual gatherings of AMA members (and sometimes, their ACMP friends) to play with and perform for each other. Most such occasions have been held at La Bourboule in the Auvergne; the next one will be this coming April, in Sarlat, which has a fine building for rehearsing and performing groups. ACMP members interested in knowing more about the 1998 *rassemblement des amateurs* are welcome to get in touch with Roger through the International Directory.

Felix van Raalte has been an ACMP member since 1975, when he became the NETHERLANDS' ambassador to Ireland, and had a chance to meet and play with some of our Irish members. He had played violin since childhood, initially "choosing" the instrument because two sisters played piano, and his parents said it was "violin or nothing." His musical studies—and his studies in international law as well—were interrupted during the War, however, when the Nazis closed down the University in response to student and faculty protests against the occupiers' treatment of Holland's Jews.

Soon after liberation, Felix joined the diplomatic corps, finding little time for music as his duties took him to over a dozen countries in Europe, Asia and West Africa. It was experiencing the Cold War in Poland, with its suppression of informal contacts, which inspired Felix (as though again in protest) to study violin seriously again, and he has never been sorry. Back in the Netherlands, his personal mission has been to counter the government's assumption that "chamber music

is for wealthy people," and work for public support of chamber music. Last year brought the first government-supported two-week music camp for young people 12 to 20 years old, a happy outcome for Felix, who is one of chamber music's most ardent advocates.



The headquarters of Benslow Music Trust in Hitchin, Herts., England

We are happy to once again be back in touch with the **Benslow Music Trust** in ENGLAND. The BMT has grown vigorously over the last few years and has much to offer. The Trust's origins lie in the founding of the volunteer Rural Music Schools Association in 1930; its activities now center at Little Benslow Hills in Hitchin, Herts., where the BMT has added a concert hall to its original home, and offers over 100 three-to-four-day music courses, as well as a "Cello Orchestra Half-Day" and a week-long "Wind Plus" Summer School. Singers, chamber and jazz musicians, early music enthusiasts, musicians who'd like to learn the details of instrument maintenance, and many others can find a course to their liking at Little Benslow Hills. International visitors are welcome; charges for a standard weekend start from £99 for weekend residence, and £79 for those who decide to stay nearby, or in London (30-40 minutes away).

Esther Cooper, one of the BMT's trustees, has written us that Little Benslow Hills "is the only Music Centre of our kind in the U.K." Course enrollment is limited to about 50 participants "as we all feel that intimacy is the essence of Benslow, together with its old-world buildings and gardens." She adds that "we also run an 'Instrument Loan Scheme' for keen, hardworking youngsters who may wish to take music as a profession or as an important relaxation but cannot afford a suitable instrument. Our Music Library is quite large and unique and always growing."

For information on how to contact the Benslow Music Trust for any reason, please see the ACMP Bulletin Board (last page).

A Letter from ROMANIA

Dear Friends at ACMP,

I want to thank you all for your very kind letters! We are grateful for ACMP's and your personal support and understanding concerning our attempt to develop amateur chamber music activities in Romania. It is really exciting to promote this wonderful heritage among friends or even unknown people here, to have the opportunity to meet musicians from all over the



Roger Serpolay describes the French "Annuaire," AMA's directory of amateur players; Felix van Raalte listens.

world and make them our best friends simply by playing music together, to contact and play with such people when traveling abroad, and—last but not least—to enjoy the honor to belong to an international community as professional, generous and supportive as ACMP proves to be. This way people never feel alone. It doesn't matter how hard the life is, how far the friends are or how long it takes to meet them again.

Thank you very much for having accepted my modest contribution and for your encouraging words regarding our efforts to be an "ambassador of ACMP" in Romania. I was very impressed with the beautiful book about the great Helen Rice you have sent me. It helps a lot in better understanding ACMP's origin, vision, goals and role, and to promote here ACMP's ideas and actions.

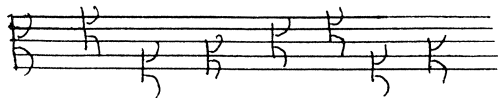
Now, to inform you about our music activities, I shall stress that both our chamber group "Credo" and the chamber orchestras we are playing with (engineers and physicians respectively) are rather active and successful. The group "Credo" has offered several trio and quartet concerts in 1996 and is going to perform soon a quintet concert and some other quartet concerts. The audience is always unexpectedly big and enthusiastic. Very many people, mostly young, are attending our concerts and appreciating these opportunities to discover one of the most valuable and pure parts of the music culture and—more generally—of the culture as a whole. Of course, our explanatory presentations always mention ACMP, its goals and our commitment to them.

We continue to play at home for our own pleasure, which seems to be the basis for sustaining an appropriate development of our music skills and experience as well as a unique and strong friendship. I cannot express how much I owe for that to my father, who is leading with unchanged passion and professionally our home chamber music sessions. Moreover, we are expecting lovely guests from England, with whom we shall play a lot privately, and perform a couple of concerts as well.

Dear friends, we are always happy to hear of you and to receive news from you or ACMP. We would be even happier if you could accept our invitation to visit Romania and to have us as your hosts. Of course, I am aware about the uncertainty of such a project for the time being. That is why I would appreciate it if you would consider this invitation continuously open, as it is in fact for any ACMP member or music lover.

Petru Dan, Bucharest

This letter was accompanied by a brochure announcing the six "Credo" musicians' willingness to perform in homes or halls without charge or for charity.



Bill Selden writes on

HOW TO ORGANIZE AN EVENING OF CHAMBER MUSIC

Special note: this article is not written for the "chamber music junkie" who has a regular group, or meets often with other players: these people already know how to get music going in their homes, and the author might well take advice from them. Instead, this article is for those who long to play more chamber music than they do now, but don't know how to get started. It is not a road map; while some of my suggestions may seem quite obvious, what counts is that herein you may find one or two ideas (perhaps more) that will make your musical life more pleasant, I hope.

Years ago, playing in community orchestras, I used to jealously overhear other musicians planning to meet for chamber music. I longed to be included, but I wasn't in their network and didn't know how to get there. My name was listed in the ACMP Directory, but no one ever called. Finally I realized that most of the others in the Directory were waiting for calls too, and that I was never going to get one until I took some action.

I picked up the Directory, marked off prospects and started making calls. It was a lot easier than I ever had imagined. Now perhaps I was lucky; I lived in metropolitan Cleveland and other musicians were available. But still, I had to make the first call.

If you live in an area not so pregnant with possibilities, all is not lost. If (as a violinist or oboist) you can find one pianist, you've started. Next look for a cello! But even another treble instrument by itself, or with a piano, is a trio sonata possibility. The point of all this is to start: find a partner. If a string quartet or wind quintet is possible, all the better, but start with the musicians available to you.

Planning the first session can be very intimidating. Calling strangers is never fun when you want something. Don't forget, however, it's not like trying to solicit a contribution: you're asking the person to join in and have some fun. That's flattering. The other guy may have been waiting for your call for ten years.

Who to call first? If it's a string quartet the number one target is the first violin (if you do not plan to fill that chair). Then the cello. With a good top (who is a leader) and a solid bass, the two middle parts will fill in (I say this as an experienced viola and second violin: these parts are important but the other two are "make or break").

How do you select the group? Obviously you want the finest players available (A+ in the ACMP Directory)—or do you? The answer is "yes" if you are also an A player. But if not, then it might be better to select partners who appear to be at a compatible playing level: if you're eager and inexperienced and rate yourself an honest B-, stick to the Bs or C+s. If a fine player shows up and has to mark time for the group, you've made everyone uncomfortable.

A good policy, and a polite thing too, is to ask your contact to suggest the names of others who might be interested in joining in. If your contact can't come, ask for suggestions anyway.

One way to sort out compatibility is to inquire about the other's experience and playing level, including sight reading. ACMP's self-grading questionnaire is worth reviewing in that respect (it's on our application blank). The kinds of questions asked there are perhaps the things you might discuss in your conversation when it turns to "what would you like to play?" You can add, "do you enjoy sight-reading?"

While on the subject of sight reading: you can practice it. The method I used to use was to take a volume of sonatas to bed at night and "read" my part to myself. I used the violin part of the Mozart Sonatas. My sense of rhythm improved immensely. (Of course I did it silently, to save my marriage.)

In making the first call, be sure not to imply that you are recruiting for a group that will meet regularly. That scares off strangers. Sure, it would be great to have such a group, but decide that after an evening of compatibility and good music making. Don't even push it then. If it's to happen, it will.

When speaking with the first violin, discuss repertory. That will give some idea of his/her experience level and will also allow you to answer the question of "what do you want to play" when you call the other two. If you are all rank beginners suggest starting (if a quartet) with minuetts and first movements of Haydn or Mozart played under tempo. Volume II of Mozart Quartets makes a good start (not the "Ten Famous" group).

Inexperienced groups should pick selections in advance and practice beforehand. (And speaking of practice, experienced players need it too!)

When planning the first night, pick a date ten days or two weeks

away. That helps create a larger "window of opportunity" in which to reach the other players. Ask your first successful contact (let's say the 1st violin) to give you two additional "rain dates." That way if the cello can't make it the first suggested date, you have two other possibilities. If the cello can make either of the two alternates, get a third alternate from him/her in case the fourth member can't make any of the first three suggested dates. That way you'll have yet another alternate choice. Hopefully the fourth person won't force you to call the other two again, except to verify the actual date. Don't forget to do that!

If you are short of music stands don't hesitate to ask the others to provide their own. The same is true of music: ask the others to help provide. In that respect your local library might well be useful. With three or four weeks of lead-time the Helen Rice/ACMP library in Hartford will send music *via* interlibrary loan initiated at your local library.

If you need ideas for new music, or have an unusual combination, ACMP has published Cecilia Drinker Saltenstall's wonderful guide: *List of Recommended Chamber Music for Strings, Winds, and Keyboard*. Its systematic list of over 800 compositions—organized by instrumentation and degree of difficulty—is available from ACMP's office for \$5 postage paid.

No chamber music evening is complete without refreshments. I always serve cold soft drinks about an hour and a half into the session. Every evening ends with coffee and cake or cookies around the kitchen table.

And this is important: Don't leave without making another date. Get the next time nailed down while everyone is present. No more endless phoning. This holds true even if someone is going away for many weeks or months. Why wait two or three weeks (after the traveler returns) and spend all that time on the phone rescheduling?

One final idea: if you're a serious string player, go out and buy yourself a copy of *The Art of String Quartet Playing* by M.D. Herter Norton: a great book of tips for amateurs and a must for the committed.

Well, that's it. By now all you novices have the ammunition to play and play and play. Good luck and great playing.



JULY PLAY-IN AT KIMBALL FARMS, THE BERKSHIRES

Written by Alice Model, an avid amateur violinist who also teaches Suzuki and performs as a professional, and who organized this happy event.

I fell in love with the Berkshires in 1946 when I was a ten-year old violinist at Camp Beaupré in Lenox, up the hill from Tanglewood. In 1993, when we bought our villa at Oronoque in Stockbridge, I joined the Amateur Chamber Music Players in order to get a list of other musicians who play for the love of it. And so, I learned about Helen Rice, who founded the ACMP with Leonard Strauss in 1947. When I went to the Stockbridge Library and talked with the archivist in its basement, she handed me a shirt box filled with correspondence and snapshots of Helen Rice and told me that Helen's family home had been on Prospect Hill Road. That's where our little condo is, too!

And so, an idea was born to hold a "Play-in in the Berkshires" like those that are held each spring in New York and other parts of the world to commemorate Helen Rice's idea that anyone can play together for the love of music.

Twenty-five enthusiastic musicians, including nine cellists, came that Sunday to Kimball Farms' hospitable all-purpose room

from as far as central Vermont and Albany, New York. We played the traditional Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, Mendelssohn's Octet and the Schubert "Trout" Quintet. Several of Kimball Farms' elderly residents came in to listen. During the refreshment break, two of Helen Rice's longtime friends reminisced about her. A violist from Pittsfield, who happened to catch the *Berkshire Eagle* ad for the Play-in that very day, popped in, played with us and said "I had the best afternoon of my life. Can we do this again in two weeks?"

Little do some people know how much advance planning it takes to organize an afternoon like that! To my friends Ruth Mann, Doris Foster, Cy Slavin and others, thank you for your help, and thank you Kimball Farms staff for your generous hospitality.

BACH SOCIETY OF NEW YORK CITY IS FORMED

Tom Nugent, VI-B+, is forming the Bach Society of New York City to provide opportunities for musicians to play chamber music. "At this early stage," he writes,

we will focus on bringing together small groups to play chamber music, including string quartets, trios, quintets, piano ensembles, etc. The primary purpose will be the enjoyment of participating musicians, although we can arrange for audiences if performance quality is there. In addition, there may be potential for developing a small chamber orchestra as we become better established and develop greater resources.

Tom tells us that the name of the group is derived from the Bach Society Orchestra of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

One of my best experiences as a college student was playing in the Bach Society Orchestra. At the time, student soloists included 'cellist Yo-Yo Ma, conductor Hugh Wolff, pianist Richard Logan, violinist Lynn Chang, and others. I'd like to continue in that same spirit with the Bach Society of New York City.

The Bach Society would like to hear from musicians and others wishing to participate. "Nothing is really cast in stone here," Nugent observes. "We welcome anyone who can contribute musically, or who might be able to assist with organizational efforts. We would also be delighted to accept contributions of chamber music and scores to start the Bach Society's musical library."

Please send a postcard to Tom Nugent at 1680 York Avenue, Apt. 6-A, New York, NY, 10128 with your name, address, telephone number, and fax and e-mail address if available. Mention instrument(s) played, experience, and chamber music interests. Mr. Nugent can be reached at home (212/628-4843), and at his office (212/880-2662).

CADENCES

Karin and David William-Olsson have written us that

KARL STENSTADVOLD, grand old man of Norwegian chamber music, died in Trondheim on July 30th at the age of 82. He was an early member of ACMP and one of the first in the International Advisory Council. In 1965, he wrote a fine little book in Norwegian entitled Chamber Music - Playing Together, with good advice for amateurs, including a recommendation to join ACMP. Lise Stein and other ACMP members will recall their visits to and from Karl as he—and they—traveled about the world.

Karl started violin early in his life, followed by viola, but in his last decades he preferred to play cello. He was a great organizer for Norsk Kammermusikkforbund. This group has arranged

two-week courses for pre-formed groups every summer since 1955. Last summer (1996), we had the pleasure to study our favorite two-violin quintet, Dvořák's E-flat, Opus 97, with Karl playing second violin and a member of the Chilingirian Quartet coaching us. Karl was already then seriously ill, but his health strengthened continuously through the two weeks—so long as he was playing at least eight hours a day. We miss him!

SIDNEY FOX REMEMBERED

"A number of members have asked me to send in reminiscences of Sidney Fox, who died about two years ago," writes Ed Helffrich, Vc-A. "He was one of ACMP's earliest and most enthusiastic members." Starting with a reference to Dear Abby's chamber music manners (June Newsletter), Ed remarks,

I'm glad Abby likes Rule #8: "If you make a mistake, don't explain why." It is not original: Sidney Fox told me about a chamber group beset by a player who insisted on "explaining why." The other members finally put a cup between the stands, and told him that if he made a mistake, that was free, but if he explained why he would have to put five dollars in the cup. According to Sid, the explaining stopped.

I first met Sid about 1950 in Clinton, New Jersey at the Art Center; the parents of Peter Marsh, a fine young player, had seen to it that there was a Chamber Music Open House there one Sunday every month. Sid had a large collection of music which he kept in about 25 inexpensive briefcases. He would call the Marshes to see who was expected that day, and if it was a clarinet, viola and two trombones, he would bring something they could play.

Sid's attitude toward music is shown in an aphorism by which he described himself. He said that if someone called him at 3:00 AM and asked him if he wanted to play chamber music he would answer with the words, "Yes. Where? Who is this?" in that order.

Sid was an engineer at Bethlehem Steel and he loved the plant as much as he loved music. He was also an editor of the Catgut Acoustical Society Journal. Still, it is as a violist that we remember Sid, very proud of his Hutchins viola and his Fleisher bows, and quick with the appropriate remark. Here are some memorable ones.

It is difficult to find the right two for a duet, even if you are one of them.

If you want to test a second violinist, have him (or her) play Mozart, K. 417b, Allegretto, measures 49-72.

I spent more time on Beethoven's fifth quartet than Beethoven did.

(Indignantly) That pianist made a finger exercise out of this beautiful quintet!

(To the cellist as they reached the last movement of Opus 18, No. 2:) What a feeling of power you must have!

(To me:) Ed has two mutes, one which falls off and one which doesn't work.

Sid enjoyed making gentle sport of the uninitiated.

"Do you like Brahms?" "I think so—what are they?"

Have you heard about the lady who came up to a string quartet and told the players, "I hope your little orchestra just grows and grows"? That's exactly what we don't want to happen.

Sid liked playing popular music, and played it weekly with a pianist friend. He paid my son's Rock&Roll band the highest compliment when he said, "These guys could play Beethoven!"

Sid loved ACMP and he told everyone to get their name in "the book." You were supposed to know that he meant the ACMP Directory. If someone looked as if they were going to say, "What book?", I would shush them up and explain it to them

later; I didn't want Sid to be hurt. When Harry Battista first called Sid through the ACMP and asked for a playing time, Sid said, "How about right now?" Years later, we were coming back from Harry's, and Sid knew the end was near. He said, "It was good while it lasted."

British Advisory Council member Alfred Russell wrote us in mid August about the death of BERNARD ROBINSON early that month at the age of 93.

We have since had the chance to read several obituaries of this extraordinary man, whom the *Independent* calls "one of amateur chamber music's most loved father figures." Robinson was a physicist by profession, but his passion was chamber music and his influence on the musical life of the United Kingdom was profound. Professionals as well as amateurs hoped yearly for an invitation to Robinson's "Music Camp," a nine-day music binge which he organized twice each summer from 1927 through the 1980's, with the sole exception of two war years.

Conditions were spartan at Music Camp: nearly everyone lived in tents or trailers, and helped with the dishwashing and the carpentry with no distinction as to class or musical competence; one summer week, every member of the latrine-shoveling crew had a doctorate in the natural sciences. "Robinson was interested solely in substance," continues the *Independent*; "this, combined with his personal modesty and total lack of ceremony, won him many friends." He never claimed that his own violin technique came close to equaling his grand enthusiasm for chamber music playing.

Music Camp ensembles became more and more ambitious as time went on. As Colin Davis wrote in 1977, "there are few places where you can, in the course of ten days, sing music by Josquin Des Prez, take part in a Strauss tone poem, grapple with the last act of *Die Meistersinger*, and at the same time become acquainted with the masterpieces of chamber music."

Bernard Robinson traveled several times to the United States during the War as a designer for the Ministry of Aircraft Production. He met Henry Drinker in Philadelphia, and, later, Helen Rice, through whom he came in contact with several excellent players. (Though, according to the *Independent*, Robinson generally "treated women with a courtly respect rather than as equals," he undoubtedly included Helen among those "honorary men" who had earned their status not at birth but through "demonstrated practical or organizational abilities.") After the War he joined the ACMP, and became the chief advocate for our self-grading scheme, which he had a large hand in designing. He continued his ACMP friendships in both England and the United States throughout his life.

The *London Times* terms Robinson "an autocratic but inspiring conductor." "He could be fierce," writes another memorialist, "when he felt someone did not put music first."

One of his favourite parlor games was a kind of string-quartet orienteering. A viola player would sit down (amid three other players) with a volume of Haydn quartets, and start one at random somewhere in the middle. The three others had to find their places as the seconds ticked away. Few professionals coped as well as Robinson, who knew the repertoire inside out.



Although he wrote a much appreciated autobiographical book entitled *An Amateur in Music*, it was through his generous music-making, his playfulness and his genius for organization that Bernard Robinson most effectively enriched those of us who play music for the love of it.

ARTS AND MINDS

From time to time members write us about ongoing scientific studies that probe the relationship between musical training or practice (on the one hand) and other human activities or proclivities (on the other). A friend sent us a commentary from the *Los Angeles Times* written by Robert Root-Bernstein of Michigan State University and headlined

Hobbled Arts Limit Our Future

Excerpts follow (by permission of the author).

The arts are undervalued. Any examination of budgets or curricula proves the point, and congressional debates underscore it. But those who undervalue the arts have made a huge mistake with much broader ramifications. The arts, despite their reputation of being subjective, emotional, nonintellectual pursuits, make science and invention possible. As a scientist and inventor who has had a lifetime association with art and music, I know whereof I speak.

Scientists and engineers need much more than the objective languages of logic and mathematics to be creative. They must learn to observe as acutely as artists and to visualize things in their minds as concretely. They must learn to recognize and invent patterns like composers or poets, to make models of their visions like sculptors and to manipulate the tools of their trade and "play" their high-tech instruments with the same virtuosity as musical performers.

The best of them become so intimately involved in their work that they experience what Nobel laureate Barbara McClintock called "a feeling for the organism": a subjective identification with the system being studied so complete that the scientist becomes an actor in it, a virus, an electron, totally out of body and in character. Then scientists must communicate their results in the form of graphs, models, blueprints, patents or reports that require solving aesthetic problems of design, language and clarity that would challenge any artist or writer. None of these skills is formally taught in science classes, but all of them can be found in the arts.

In fact, participation in the arts fosters professional scientific success.

Root-Bernstein goes on to cite numerous studies that he and others have conducted, all of which show "a significant correlation between artistic hobbies, specific forms of thinking (visual, kinesthetic, verbal, etc.) and success as a scientist. The Nobel Prize winners and most of the members of the National Academy of Sciences" embodied this correlation in the Root-Bernstein/Gamier/Bernstein study: another study found "that high aptitude in arts and music is a much more predictive of career success in any field than the results of grades, IQ, achievement or any other standardized measures. Business executives who head major technology firms often are very talented artists, musicians and photographers...."

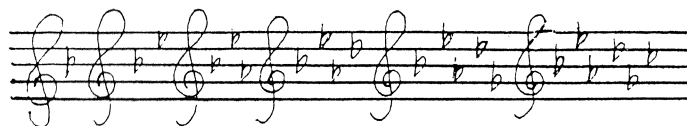
Other studies have shown that general learning skills among children are improved by musical training. Frances H. Rauscher's work at UC Irvine correlates musical training and increased aptitude on various visual thinking tests among children. Similar findings have been reported for adolescents and college students.

But I do not want to advocate art simply for utilitarian purposes. I also advocate art for art's sake. Artists, too, do research. Their research is into perception, structure, design and communication. Thus, art for art's sake often is in advance of science and technology.

Root-Bernstein gives several modern instances of inventors

such as Buckminster Fuller who have transformed playful artistic experiments into usable inventions or scientific findings. He finishes by writing that

there are hundreds of other examples from art, music and even dance in which the artist has provided insight that has made invention possible. ...Our modern technology would not exist without the prior art. My point is simple: By demeaning the arts, as we do when we marginalize them in our curricula and funding, we sap the roots of imagination and invention. Art done for art's sake is valuable. It is valuable as a source of skills, tools for thinking and inventing, insights, processes and even new phenomena. To hobble the arts is to hamstring our future. Even scientists and inventors can agree to that.



LETTERS

Updates, Datedates

Dear ACMP,

Regarding the item on p.6 of the June Newsletter, about noting members looking for regular groups in the Directory: I would be opposed to listing this, or having special markings. "Unlisted" is fine for those who don't want any calls. But as to whether someone is available for a "regular group" or not, as your correspondent indicated, that status changes too often. Many people want calls in order to play an evening here and there but are not available for a regular group. Then their regular group folds, and now they are available.

Speaking of frustration—I also use a local directory that does include such information—musical goals, what the person is looking for. However, it is impossible to update the directory often enough to have correct information, so it is still inefficient.

I suggest not being too frustrated by it! Take the calls as an opportunity to make contact with musicians, even though they may say no. Don't worry about it, and call the next one. Only an interactive electronic database could really keep up, and you have said some don't want that.

—Suzanne Epstein, Maryland

Dear Sirs,

Very recently I became a member of the ACMP. I made ten phone calls today searching for another musician to play with. I can't believe how completely outdated your list is! Six of the ten people I called could not be reached because of disconnected phones. Three other "members" were too old or infirm to play. One person is returning to Florida in November.

I don't think you should take peoples' money under such conditions! If you can't update your list and be responsible, you should not recruit or accept new members.

—Yours truly,

—Dolores Seidon, Florida

Editor's note:

This problem may be especially severe in Florida, where so many leave the State during the warmer months, but it exists everywhere that members fail to update their Directory entries yearly. Older members no longer able to play can remain in touch with ACMP by either telling us they wish to become unlisted members or joining the "non-playing host" category at update time.

The following letter continues the conversation about CHAMBER MUSIC MANNERS begun in June, '97.

Dear ACMP and Sara K.

About TEMPO:

- 1) *The person having the most difficulty in a given passage sets the tempo.*
- 2) *Where [1] doesn't apply, the person with the fastest notes sets the tempo.*
- 3) *Where [1] and [2] don't apply, the person with the "melody" sets the tempo.*
- 4) *All tempos are open to discussion as is everything else. Everyone must contribute to the discussion, and there must finally be a consensus.*

About ONE MEMBER TEACHING OTHERS:

If s/he really knows more, then learn from her/him. (See [4] above.)

About LEADING AND FOLLOWING:

This is very fluid, and should shift from person to person. No one person should lead all the time; everyone has valid ideas about how the music feels (See [4] above.)

—Good luck!
—Amelie Callahan, Illinois

Another of several respondents suggests that the group practice with a metronome. One points out that pro/amateur combinations present special challenges; she asks whether Sara K. has shared her frustration with the other two members, and made a frank attempt to talk things out with "Ingrid," their *Pro* cellist (see [4] above *again*). "Bottling up these resentments only increases the discomfort level." Indeed, Sara K. has let us know that the quartet has now had exactly such an honest talk as the last letter-writer recommends, and that things have greatly improved.

A NEW COLUMN? It depends on you.

Newsletter readers will have noticed that members have a standing invitation to contribute to occasional columns such as *MUSIC RECOMMENDED BY MEMBERS*. Your editor has been urged to introduce a new column entitled *PRACTICE MAKES MUSIC* and devoted to technical suggestions. These could include fingerings for a tricky viola passage, keyboard practice techniques for one of the most-played/hardest-to-play-well piano quartet movements, or general practicing advice. We would be very happy to publish all suggestions that appear to be of general interest to any subgroup of ACMP instrumentalists or singers. Send them to our office, or directly to your Newsletter editor (see addresses opposite).

COMMERCIALS AND COMMUNICATIONS

One of our Advisory Council members has advised us as follows:

As usual, the June Newsletter is a treat to read. A couple of comments:

First, I believe commercial-like entries such as the piece telling how to order the "Travelcelo" have no place on page 1. I don't think Helen Rice would have approved. Perhaps on the Bulletin Board?

Secondly, numerous references are made to the Newsletter's editors ("Editor's notes," for example)—yet the reader does not know who the editors are, or how to address them in a letter by name. Why doesn't this information appear on the top of page 1?

Welcome comments indeed, as is advice from any member. Concerning the first, Helen certainly would not have approved! Your Editor realized this deviation from our usual practice almost as soon as the printer had completed his work, but it was too late to change the placement of the Travelcelo ordering information. I had been too much bemused by the striking photo—which seemed (and still seems) a good page 1 illustration—to recall that all ordering information does indeed belong on our BULLETIN BOARD (see last page). Thank you.

When you write to ACMP, whom do you address? That is a trickier question, with an answer that may amuse our newer members. When ACMP began, of course, everyone knew whom to write, since Helen Rice did practically everything. As we grew—and especially after Helen died—the Board's Chair took on much more work; eventually, the Newsletter editors, the Secretary, and the person in charge of all applications, updates, files, printing and mailing became six different people instead of one. Dan Nimetz, our Executive Director and our one regular staff person, fulfils the last role, in addition to working with the Board members of both ACMP and ACMP Foundation to coördinate the entire ACMP operation. Most mail (including update forms with their many welcome messages) comes to our NYC office. Dan reads it, then sends relevant items to ACMP officers. This is because we all like to see virtually all correspondence from members. Jane Wilson, at present ACMP's Chairman, as well as our Corresponding Secretary, answers most longer letters, and makes sure that others receive some response from the person who can best fulfil a request or answer a question, if Dan has not already done so. Here is where other Board members, especially the two Editors, often get in on the act. Call this inefficient, and you'll be right. It also fits exactly the spirit of ACMP as an association of musical friends.

Back to the Newsletter editors: For some years, Sally Bagg has assisted Susan Lloyd in getting out the Newsletter, which became Sue's responsibility after Helen's death in 1979. Now Sally, being one of the seven ACMP Foundation Directors, is in the best position to concentrate on Foundation news, while Sue continues in charge of other ACMP news. You can reach us through ACMP's New York office, or contact us directly as follows:

Sally R. Bagg, Foundation Editor
181 Linseed Road, West Hatfield, MA 01088
Tel: 413/247-9562; Fax: 413/247-0017
e-mail: sbagg@sophia.smith.edu

Susan M. Lloyd, Newsletter Editor
430 Gulf Road, RR Tinmouth
Middletown Springs, VT 05757
Tel: 802/235-9016; e-mail: lloyds@vermontel.com

To keep us all in the communications loop, e-mail users (and those with handy photocopying machines) may want to send copies of all direct correspondence to Dan at the ACMP office:

1123 Broadway, Room 304, New York, NY 10010
Tel: 212/645-7424; Fax: 212/741-2678
e-mail: acmp@juno.com

The volume of mail to—or concerning—the Newsletter has grown wonderfully since 1980. Our most direct response has been to print three newsletters totaling 24-26 pages each year, instead of one of 8 pages. If we haven't space to print your item or your photo, please know how much we appreciate your sending it. We share many communications with other Board members, and keep all that our archives will hold.

ACMP's annual Directors' Meeting was held at Chautauqua, New York on September 28-29, 1997. All Directors for 1997-98 were present. We were joined by Daniel Nimetz, Executive Director, Henry Saltonstall, Jane Spuehler, violinist, and Tony Finley from the ACMP Foundation Board. Officers and Directors for 1997-98 are:

Jane Stein Wilson, Chairman and Corresponding Secretary
 John N. Loeb, Vice-Chairman
 Donald R. Spuehler, Treasurer
 William G. Selden, Assistant Treasurer
 Susan M. Lloyd, Co-Editor
 Sally Robinson Bagg, Co-Editor
 Kitty Benton, Recording Secretary
 Mimi Denton Bravar, Director-at-Large
 Sonya Monosoff Pancaldo, Director-at-Large
 Cecilia Drinker Saltonstall, Director-at-Large
 (Samuel P. Hayes, Director Emeritus)

Music Recommended by Members

From David William-Olsson:

The excess of cellists at Chautauqua (see article following) was a good reason to often propose my favorite, Luigi Boccherini, whose almost complete quintets (93) I have in an edition printed in Paris 1881. I brought a copy of *Luigi's* favorite, No. 58 in F minor, that I actually had not played before. In July 1797 Boccherini wrote to his publisher: "My dear Pleyel...I recommend my music. See that it is well performed before you pass judgement upon it. I particularly recommend to you two quintets in Op. 42, one in F minor and one in G minor, which are my favorites." The first cello part of the F minor is rather intricate, but was no problem for Sally Bagg in spite of the "trouble clef." I guess Sally, who received my copy, will play it many times.

A major problem is that "The best are the enemies of the Good." That is: many musicians...only play what they think is best = Haydn + Mozart + Schubert + Brahms, and reject good composers like Boccherini, Spohr and Onslow. When playing with young people with little experience of repertoire, that is a good idea, but when meeting with people who already know all the "best," I find it much more exciting to play the less known music, including 20th-century music that is possible, for instance Shostakovich or Wilhelm Stenhammar.

Per August Ölander of Sweden (1824-1886) has written a pleasant string sextet, not so heavy as the "ordinary" sextets (Brahms, Dvořák, Tchaikovsky). I had not actually seen what influences are found in the Ölander sextet until I suddenly the other day played a quintet by Onslow. Ölander has the same way of spinning and weaving the phrases into music. Onslow was very popular and much played by Mazer (1790-1847) and in the Mazer Society (founded in 1849) where Ölander held my position of organizer in the 1870s. If you try it, please try to exaggerate the dynamics and phrasing and perhaps you will discover the sextet as "good."



50th ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE AT CHAUTAUQUA

For nearly ten years, your ACMP Directors have been looking for a way to bring the Advisory Council together for a long look at ACMP's goals, and our strategies for reaching them. Our 50th birthday seemed an appropriate occasion for such a meeting, and the ACMP Foundation was able to provide a grant to supplement attendees' personal contributions. Thus, from September 26 to 28, 1997, members of ACMP's North American and International Advisory Councils gathered with the Boards of ACMP and ACMP Foundation for a beautiful weekend at Chautauqua, NY. It was a first for us, and a very moving occasion. Our organization is alive and full of energy, ideas, musicianship, and wonderful people who care about each other and about our future.



The whole crowd of Chautauqua attendees, minus the photographer, Martin Pergler of Illinois and Ontario.

This event was extraordinarily enriching to all who try to guide the ACMP. The participants found, within a very short time at the first dinner, that we could speak about shared concerns with knowledge, strengths gained from our very diverse occupations and cultures, really passionate intensity about our love of music, and the desire to use the network we have created to its fullest potential.

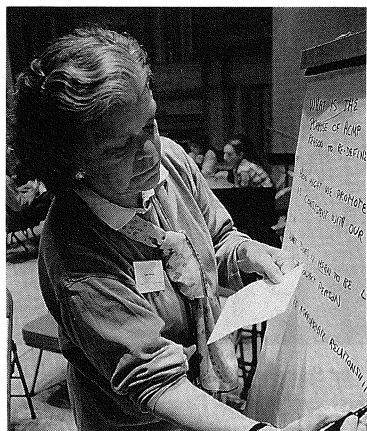
Starting Thursday evening, September 25th, members began to arrive; That first night we played quintets by Boccherini, a special love of David William-Olsson, from Sweden. As we were playing, Aleksander Majdič arrived, having traveled from Slovenia. He joined the Boccherini, and we began the weekend in earnest. While the Foundation Board met on Friday, more members arrived. Music was heard in and around the wonderful old Hotel Athenaeum, on the grounds of the Chautauqua Institution; it drifted into the board meeting, out on to the big veranda with its rocking chairs overlooking Lake Chautauqua, and up the narrow little streets of the village.

Friday evening the entire group gathered in one of Chautauqua's performance spaces, Lenna Hall, to read through some concerti grossi provided—and organized—by Tony Finley. Af-

ter the group session, members broke into smaller groups around town; back at the hotel, late-arriving people had intrepidly organized an impromptu session of the Mozart Clarinet Quintet in the lobby. Music continued in hotel rooms well into the morning hours; the only other guests were young members of a wedding party who were busy with their own events.

Kitty Benton had organized and coordinated the entire weekend; work and playing were well balanced. Before each meeting of the conference, Sue Lloyd passed out song sheets and led everyone singing rounds and chorales. Extensive libraries of chamber music appeared in milk cartons, courtesy of Bill Simmons, Jane Wilson, Nick Cunningham, Tony Finley, and many others who brought their favorite works. Sonya Monosoff arrived for the conference in a van containing five cellos for the use of those cellists coming by air. Later, at the conference's end, the responsibility of guarding this vanload weighed heavily enough that she interrupted a final luncheon many times to inspect their safety in the parking lot.

Saturday the participants gathered in Lenna Hall to form discussion groups; from these came a list of suggested topics to



Kitty Benton, moderator

pursue further. These topics were the basis of organized discussion, moderated by Kitty Benton, among the entire group on Sunday morning. (A summary of the subjects and discussion appears below.) At lunch Saturday, participants honored those International Advisory Council members who were present. Each spoke for just a few minutes about his or her respective country and chamber music activities. Some had brought material describing local organizations, which was passed among the audience.

One of the most extraordinary features of this conference was the careful organizing and coordinating of the chamber music sessions. Time had been reserved for groups to play chosen music, which was provided in rooms at one of the institution's buildings, Bellinger Hall. In this way, all were sure to be included, everyone being mixed together so that it was impossible not to meet all who attended the conference. Mimi Bravar, Jane Wilson, Bill Simmons and Kitty Benton spent many hours both before and during the conference making these arrangements. A final, gloriously appropriate attempt to mix people was Kitty's famous Musical Chairs, which occurred Saturday evening: during this event one arrives with instrument in a room and plays whatever music is on the stand with whoever else is there. Kitty enters, blows a whistle, and one gets up, leaving the music in place, and moves on to the next room.

In fact, during the entire conference, groups formed and played works of chamber music at every possible moment, in every nook and cranny, much to the delight of the hotel staff members and other guests.

Sunday afternoon people began to leave, as the board of ACMP gathered for its annual meeting.

Fifty-nine people attended our 50th anniversary conference. Of these, besides those coming from all over the USA, there were representatives from Canada, England, France, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Sweden.

Sally Bagg, ACMP Foundation Editor



Getting down to the real business of ACMP

Jane Spuehler, violin, Ted Rust, oboe, Don Spuehler, cello, Mimi Bravar, piano

CHAUTAUQUA WEEKEND DISCUSSIONS

What questions should we be asking about the future of ACMP?

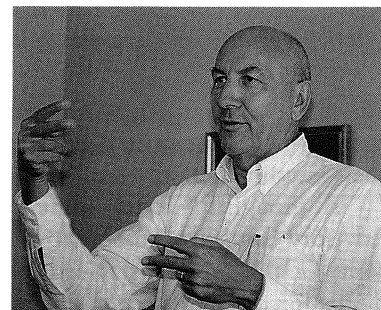
Participants in the conference spent time Saturday morning in informal Round Table discussions, starting from material gleaned from responses to a letter mailed to Advisory Council members during the summer. They formed six groups, discussing issues, framing questions, and narrowing them down to the three most relevant for each group. These issues were then written on large easels for everyone to consider. All participants, armed with colored stickers in the form of dots, placed them on points they agreed were most important to the future of ACMP.

The questions fell into four broad categories:

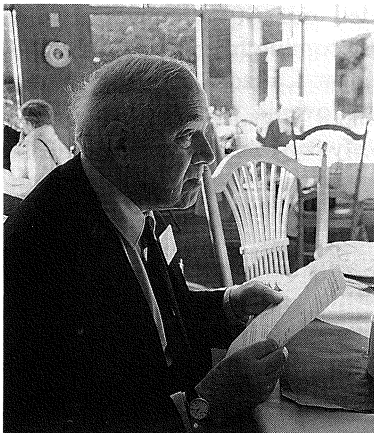
1. ACMP and the Internet
2. International Membership
3. Increasing our membership, particularly among younger people
4. Making membership meaningful

These categories formed the basis for Sunday morning's discussion. One outcome of the weekend was authorization by the ACMP Board to form an Internet committee, which will assemble suggestions and direct progress in this area.

The discussion of international membership explored a number of ideas: ways of creating or supporting existing workshops and play-ins; cooperation with existing groups of musicians across national boundaries; involving people who play professionally with those who do so recreationally.



Don Spuehler, ACMP Foundation Chair, is speaking



Alfred Russell of London, U.K., is listening

Increasing our membership was of concern to a great many who think that, as we grow older, we need to attract people in their twenties and thirties—just like the situation with concert audiences today. How can we increase our visibility in a way that is consistent with our mission? Topics discussed included ways to link adult chamber music players with elementary, high school and college-age students.

Concerns were expressed about making membership in ACMP more meaningful. Is it enough for us to publish a directory? Most thought we should be expanding the concept of membership in our organization beyond the initial reasons for being: can we all work to facilitate recreational playing at all ages and levels of skill? In a culture where musical values are increasingly under siege, how can we carry the torch of chamber music playing to the next generation?

Ted Rust, Advisory Council member from California, sent a letter to the office the next week: "Saturday morning's question-raising process was very energizing and raised a wealth of ideas at my table...the dot-votes seemed to indicate that our strongest collective interest is in doing more to support workshops and playing sessions for amateurs." He listed some suggestions made, including disseminating workshop management skills through consultancies and internships, possibly with support from ACMP Foundation. Ted drew attention to a suggestion to have more workshops in parts of the US and Canada not already rich in such activities, for example the Midwest and South. A related idea was to fund professional groups in residencies away from metropolitan centers. The emphasis would be on interacting with local institutions and their constituents. (ACMP has a set of guidelines available at the office for those who would like to organize workshops.)

Ted made a point about encouraging new music.

We have a hard time attracting young people because they find our repertoire dull. (New music is the norm for rock bands; oldies are the exception.) Older players avoid new music because it is usually too hard.... Contemporary art music composers are perfectly able to respect performers' limitations and still write well...we need to demonstrate that...new chamber music can be written for amateurs, and that if it is, it will really be played and enjoyed.

He suggests that ACMP commission music for chamber ensembles which can be played by those not having top skill on their instruments.

A thoughtful letter came from Alvin Wen, a younger Advisory Council member from Rochester, NY. He addressed some of the concerns raised by the lively Sunday morning discussion on the Internet. His letter concludes:

The Internet is the chosen medium of communication of my generation.... I suspect that Helen Rice and Leonard Strauss

would be thrilled to encounter a situation where online information had progressed so far that amateurs could readily find abundant opportunities to play, both in their hometowns and when travelling.

He urges us to become informed about the Internet's possibilities for the needs of ACMP.

We editors of the newsletter urge you, our members, to write to us about your immediate concerns for ACMP as well; we have heard from our Advisory Council but are keenly aware that many of you have ideas which will advance our organization's usefulness to all. This conference was the beginning of what we want to foster: an on-going discussion of how to make us most effective in the areas described above, and no doubt other areas which will be mentioned by you.

Sally Bagg, with Kitty Benton.



Rare opportunity: *The Schubert Octet*
Dan Nimetz, horn, Sally Bagg, "bassoon," Martin Pergler, clarinet,
Jane Wilson, bass, Jan Timbers, cello, Susan Lloyd, viola,
Kitty Benton and Ron Goldman, violins

Internet and Interknots

The subject of ACMP and the internet generated extensive, lively and informative discussion at the ACMP Advisory Council gathering in Chautauqua. As suggested at the conference, a standing committee of board and advisory members is being formed to investigate the ways that the internet can be used to promote the purposes of ACMP without intruding on any member's privacy.

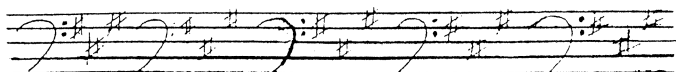
The Advisory Council readily endorsed the Board's firm decision made last fall: the information provided by our members for the ACMP Directory will never be placed by ACMP on the internet without each member's explicit permission.

At present, the ACMP web site, operative since July, provides e-mail users with the same information as that contained in the ACMP brochure, and allows printing of an application form for anyone who wishes to become a member. That site can be found at <www.acmp.net>. Two steps which the committee is looking into are the creation of links on the website to other places of interest, and the possibility for new members to join ACMP electronically from the website, if they prefer e-mail to the Post Office.

As those who have followed this issue in past newsletters know, Don Cohen of our Advisory Council has established an e-mail list (acmp-list@isi.edu) for the use of those who wish to subscribe to it. (Please note that this list is *not* the ACMP Directory and that it does not contain all the information included in the Directory.) No one in our Directory can be placed on this list except through his or her own decision and action. While most of those who have subscribed to the e-mail list are also ACMP members, the list is not limited to our members. The advantage of the e-mail list is that information of general interest can be sent to all subscribers through a single message to the list. The list has been used in traditional fashion to announce a trip and a search for players at a certain date and place. E-mail users have also asked for and received advice on chamber music repertoire, or on topics such as aiding one's practice by slowing recorded performances without changing the pitch of the music.

One does not have to subscribe to the e-mail list to send a message to all those currently on that list, or to some selected subgroup; this is as easy as e-mailing one person. An e-mail can simply be sent to <acmp-list@isi.edu>. If you want to get on to the e-mail list, do NOT send your request to subscribe to <acmp-list> since it will go to all present subscribers. Send your request to <acmp@isi.edu>. For comments and information about the e-mail list you can contact Don Cohen at <donc@isi.edu>.

The Co-Chairs of our new e-mail committee, Kitty Benton and Bill Selden, invite you to send them any suggestions you may have. Kitty can be reached by traditional mail at 285 West Broadway, New York, NY 10013, or by e-mail at <kitbenton@aol.com>; send mail to Bill care of ACMP, 1123 Broadway, New York, NY 10010, or at <wgselden@snet.net>.



ACMP FOUNDATION NEWS

The Foundation Board met at Chautauqua in September before the 50th-Anniversary Conference to review its ongoing funding programs, among other business. It is gratifying to note that in at least two areas the Foundation is serving as catalyst for more effort from communities in which it makes grants. On the weekend of October 24-26, Turtle Bay Music School in New York City hosted a workshop for musicians who classify themselves as "C" and "D" according to the ACMP guidelines. Lisa Tipton of the Meridian Quartet directed this workshop, which she organized with encouragement and input from those on the Foundation Board.

Another kind of program is well underway in the Fairfield, CT High School, under the guidance of Dorothy Straub, Music Coördinator for the Fairfield public schools, and Marianne Liberatore, President of the South Shore Music Festival in Westport, which is the sponsoring agency. Fairfield students who signed up for this program were to be coached every other week by Kenneth Freed of the Manhattan String Quartet. However, as Ms. Liberatore wrote the Foundation,

it turns out that thirty-eight qualified students have applied instead of the twenty planned for. They are all dedicated, and extremely excited about participating in this chamber-music

coaching program! We could not be happier with the interest indicated by the young people in this program, and we wish above all to accommodate all of the students who have expressed such a strong desire to be involved in chamber music.

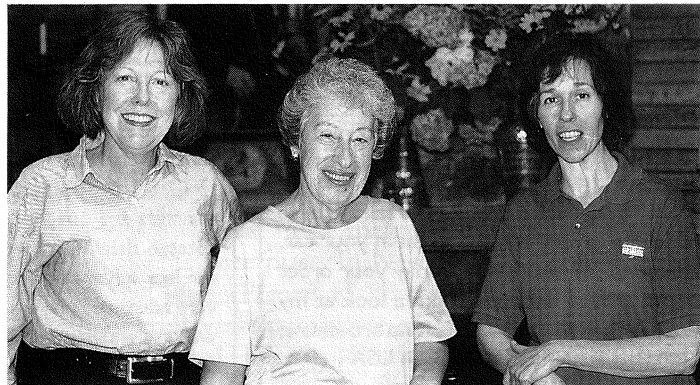
She says that they have secured the help of Kenneth Freed every week, instead of every other week, and have been able to include the eighteen additional students who applied.

This kind of activity is happening because the Foundation is funding chamber music where other support is either lacking or insufficient to establish viable programs. The Board is particularly eager to help start workshops where resident professional musicians are available. Chamber Music America has residency programs around the country, and the Foundation Board has begun discussion with CMA with a view toward providing additional support for these and perhaps creating plans for new kinds of residencies.

The ACMP Fellowship Program has been in place for four years. It works through existing adult workshops to encourage membership in ACMP of relatively younger musicians. ACMP Fellows are selected by each participating workshop as scholarship recipients funded by the Foundation; they become members of ACMP in the process. A happy feature of the program involves the identification of an ACMP member at each workshop to serve as a mentor for each fellow, welcoming him/her to the organization and sharing past and present experiences. (Members who would like to take on this pleasant responsibility should contact the ACMP office early next spring.) Last summer, thirty Fellows at sixteen workshops benefited from the program.

The Community Music Program currently assists some seventy-one community schools and similar organizations in a variety of programs for people of all ages and skill levels. The grantmaking cycle is now in full swing, requests for proposals having gone out in October for review in January. This year a number of youth orchestras with chamber music components, or with dreams of establishing them, have been invited to apply.

Information about ACMP Foundation programs is always available from the office.



ACMP scholarship recipients at the 1997 Kneisel Hall Amateur Chamber Music Institute, Blue Hill, Maine: Sarah Smith, Estelle Holly, Lynn Mattingly

Members are urged to return Update forms as quickly as possible, preferably before the deadline date shown on the form. The sooner forms are received, the earlier in the year the new directories will appear. Sending second notices takes time, energy and money, and delays publication.

ACMP BULLETIN BOARD

I am trying to locate CHARLES DANCLA's **SIX PETITE TRIOS** for 3 violins, Opus. 99. This music is scored with or without piano accompaniment and was published by Schott & Co., Ltd. If anyone has a copy please notify me; it would be appreciated.

Morton Abramson
391 Cottonwood Drive
Williamsville NY 14221
716/689-6033 (eve) • 716/849-3724 (day)

The **DVOŘÁK CELLO CONVERSION KIT**, the work of Eve and Don Cohen, which puts the false treble into readable clefs, is available from:

E.J. Behrman
Department of Biochemistry, OSU
484 West 12 Avenue, Columbus OH 43210
Please send a check for \$5 to cover costs.

Wanted! Looking for "**LIGHT CLASSICS**" arranged for piano trio and/or piano quartet. Please send information to:

Rosalie Krajci
2373 Murphy Road, Corning NY 14830
rkrajci@worldnet.att.net

The AUSTIN CHAMBER MUSIC CENTER offers a new **WEEKEND WORKSHOP**, the Lago Fest Chamber Music Retreat, January 29-February 1, 1998, with the Maia Quartet, the Arundel Trio and clarinetist Amy Blair in residence, Lago Vista Resort on Lake Travis. Tuition: \$175 plus food and lodging. Call 512/454-7562; fax 512/454-0029. Visit our web site at www.austinchambermusic.org re this and other ACMC programs, or write to Felicity Coltman, Director, ACMC 4930 Burnet Road, Ste 203, Austin TX 78756

PUT COMFORTBACK IN YOUR LIFE. I offer a back and seat combination support that will relieve the problem of sitting through a chamber music session or rehearsal on those hard folding chairs. It's also great in your car. Mention ACMP and I will prepay your order and give a 10% discount. Take a look at my home page or call or write me for a brochure:

Dan Scharlin, THERGOfit USA
www.comfortback.com
2111 Los Angeles Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707
Phone or Fax: 510/528-BACK

ACMP's Bulletin Board is a service to members wishing to make musical announcements. Publication of a notice in the Newsletter signifies neither approval nor disapproval by ACMP's Board of Directors.

New Yorkers, New Englanders: Would you like to be on the mailing list for the **BOUGHTON PLACE CHAMBER MUSIC DAYS?** Write or call

Clare Danielsson, Boughton Place
150 Kisor Road, Highland NY 12578
Tel. 914/691-7578

A complete list of residential music courses offered by England's **BENSLow MUSIC TRUST** at Hitchin, Herts. can be obtained by writing to the Trust at

Little Benslow Hills, off Benslow Lane
Hitchin, Herts SG4 9RB ENGLAND
Tel. 44 (0462) 459446 • Fax (0462) 440171
Charges for a typical 1997 weekend started from £99, resident, £79 non-resident.

MUSICAL PASSAGES will organize the following **CHAMBER MUSIC VACATIONS** in 1998:

December 30, 1997 to January 7—Jimena de la Frontera, Spain (strings only)
February 24 to March 3—Seville, Spain (all instruments)

June 13-20 at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie NY (coached workshops, all instruments)

July 3-10 at St. Donat's Castle, Llantwit Major, Wales (all instruments)

There will also be a trips to Sedona, Arizona during the 1998 Chamber Music Festival in late May, to northern Spain (area of Bilbao) and to Monterey, California, dates to be announced. For information, please send name, address, phone number and instrument(s) played to:

Jane M. Carhart/Musical Passages
25 Alden Terrace, Millbrook NY 12545
Tel. 914/677-5092 • Fax 914/677-3210
e-mail: carhartjm@aol.com

STRING QUARTET WEEKS in Tuscany (near Lucca) for amateur musicians, from April to October 1998 (10 weekly programs). 5-6 quartets are coached by experts; groups are rotated daily. One week each year is offered for less advanced players, and one week for very advanced players. Afternoons are spent in walks, sightseeing and/or playing. All-inclusive price (in single or double rooms, as desired) is equivalent to DM 850 for musicians, DM 580 for companions, per person, per week. For more information contact:

Manfred Blumm
Rabenkopf-Str. 5
D-79102 Freiburg GERMANY
Fax 49 761/2020545

NEW YEARS DAY BRANDENBURGS at the home of Audi and Peter Reinthaler. Join us January 1 at 2 p.m. for the 21st annual Texas bash. Call or write to let us know if you'd like to come so we can balance instruments.

4918 Bellview, Bellaire TX 77401
(Houston area) 713/661-2440
(Pete's office is 669-1127 ext. 131)

CROscendo in Sainte Croix, Haute-Provence, France will take place April 13-18, 1998 in an old monastery, with coaching by the Kocian String Quartet of Prague. It is open to proficient string players and 1 pianist. Cost: 590-690 Swiss Francs (90 francs less for non-players). **ALPEGGIO** will again be held in Blonay, Switzerland, June 28-July 4, 1998 at the Hindemith Foundation near Lake Geneva. Open to proficient string players and 1 pianist; coaching by the Bridge String Quartet from London. Cost is 775-875 Swiss francs (75 francs less for non-players). For information on CROscendo and ALPEGGIO, contact:

Floryse Bel Bennett
Ruelle de l'Eglise
CH-1143 Apples SWITZERLAND
Tel/Fax: 41 21-800-55 22

STRING PLAYERS are welcome to our **MAZERSKA QUARTET SOCIETY PLAY-IN** at Riddersvik, 12 km west of Stockholm, Saturday, March 14 and the weekend of October 3-4, 1998. We can play in 10 rooms. This place can also be used as your hotel during your stay in Stockholm at a very reasonable price. Information from

David William-Olsson
Danderydsgatan 18
S-11426 Stockholm, SWEDEN
Fax 46 8-6117542 or 6721932

DID SCHUBERT INTEND to end the Scherzo of his C Major Quintet at about bar 156, leaving the last c. 30 bars as a coda? "YES" says on article we read a few years ago. Do you know the author and source? Contact

Florence and Bob Saphir
2909 Avalon Avenue, Berkeley CA 94705
Tel. 510/548-6099; <fcs@slip.net>

Your ACMP Editors welcome **PHOTOGRAPHS**. If you wish any photo returned to you, please put your name and full address on the reverse of the print; an abbreviated address on each of multiple photos will signal your wish to have them returned also.