

## Inherited Tradition – 75 Years of Enthusiastic Chamber Music in Romania

by Petru Dan (Vn/Va A, Bucharest), ACMP Advisory Council Member from Romania

Whenever I play chamber music, I feel a strong connection to my father, Emeric Dan (Vn/Va A, PhD in Economics), who founded a quartet in Bucharest in 1929. Although amateurs, he and his friends attended concerts and listened to recordings of the famous musicians of their time to develop their own artistic experience and musical standards. My father strongly believes that a musician is supposed to serve music because it was created, rather than using it for displaying his own skills. He also believes that “amateur” does not mean



**Members of the Dan Group in 1935 — Emeric Dan, Founder, is at far left**

“dilettante” (with the pejorative meaning of that word), but an amateur should aim for the style and accuracy of a professional despite any technical limitations. His group shared this approach. Over the decades, many musicians played with him. Some of them — like Ernst Wallfisch, Corneliu Gheorghiu, Janos Starker — were really brilliant and later became famous. Some others were perhaps not so good, but performed for sure with unlimited enthusiasm. They all worked hard to become honest citizens of the Chamber Music World, a world open to professionals as well as to amateurs or even to those who are only music lovers. They kept going even during hard times (like

World War II) and continued their efforts with enthusiasm when things were better.

We children, my elder sister Rodica, my younger brother Gheorghe, and I were encouraged to learn music and were involved in the chamber music sessions from an early age. We became permanent members of the group when we succeeded in reaching the expected level of understanding and performance. We also participated in the discovery of new chamber music treasures, as my father was keen to expand the existing repertoire and enhance it with new works. Besides Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, and Dvořák, we played Smetana, Debussy, Ravel, Frank, Fauré, and went on to Reger, Shostakovitch, Prokofiev, Respighi, and Weiner.

As time went on, older members retired and new friends joined as permanent or temporary members of the group. My father continued to lead, sharing his authority and talent with new players and introducing them to the devotion and experience of the group. Amazingly, my father always aimed for continuous improvement and worked to reveal new ways to understand movements considered “already settled.” For instance, I remember how happy we were when we finally achieved the desired results in Beethoven’s late quartets.

In 1996 my brother, Gheorghe (Pf/Org A, PhD, cardiologist and professor at the Medical University of Bucharest) and I, (Vn/Va A, PhD and MBA, electronics engineer), founded our own musical group, *Credo*, based on my father’s traditions. Our other players are **Tatiana Noia** (Vn/Va Pro, violin professor at the Music University of Bucharest), **Mihai Perciun** (Vn A, computer engineer), **Aurel Isar** (Vn A, PhD, researcher in physics), and **Teodor Chircu** (Vc A, nuclear power engineer), who all once played in my father’s group. We are all members of the Romanian engineers’ and physicians’ amateurs orchestras, and we are all active members of ACMP.

Through the International Directory, we have been honoured to play

with well-known ACMP members like Josie Stein, Leon Hofmann, Floryse Bel-Bennet, and Nelly Serpi.

Mostly we prefer to play at home “for the love of it, and for the love of playing with others,” as Samuel Hayes wrote about Helen Rice. But we also like to share this happiness, even with non-players, so we give free concerts for pleasure. Since 1996 we have given over 60 concerts. Our deep credo, stated in all our concert programs, is that “music brings people closer.”



**Credo Performing at the Palace Museum of Bucharest**  
with **Nelly Serpi** (Va/Vn A, Switzerland) at Right

We play for students in university auditoriums, we play for scientists at scientific conferences, we play for diplomats at their residences, or we play in churches. Mostly we play for mixed audiences in concert halls and museums.

We are privileged to have The Museum of Bucharest, a historical palace, for our regular concerts. Once we even had the unique chance to play in the beautiful mountain summer villa where the great violinist, George Enescu, had given violin lessons to his preferred pupil, Yehudi Menuhin. It is hard

to describe our emotions and satisfaction as we look at the people of all ages who come and listen to the music we perform; some of them have never heard chamber music before, but they always confess that it is an unforgettable experience.

Sadly, in later years, my father’s eyesight began to fail. He then put an unbelievable effort into learning to play everything by heart. I shall never understand how, but he really succeeded without weakening his leading role! Though he can no longer play at all now, he still participates in critiquing our rehearsals and performances. We are grateful that we can continue to benefit from his tremendous experience and knowledge.

Continuing in the wonderful tradition of playing as friends and as music partners, *Credo* is rooted in the legacy we inherited from my father and his group. In this spirit, we invite ACMP members to contact and join us. We keep doors open, music on stands, instruments well tuned and tradition alive!

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## Medicine and Music – Yet Again!

by **Michael Lasserson**, (Db C-, London, England), Secretary, European Doctors Orchestra

The Australian plastic surgeon, **Miklos Pohl** (Vn A, Westminster, England), an enthusiastic chamber-music player at summer music camps for many years, always noted the disproportionate number of doctors taking part – not only there but also in the chamber orchestra in Hobart, his home town. This led to his idea of a doctors’ orchestra, of full symphony size, with members to be drawn from the entire country; idea became reality, and he founded the Australian Doctors’ Orchestra in 1993, with its first concert being given in Melbourne Town Hall that year.

Since then the orchestra, now a fact of Australian musical life, has met yearly to rehearse intensively over a single weekend that includes a couple of social events, and finishes with a concert featuring a well-known soloist. The orchestra reflects a cross-section of the entire medical community of Australia, and there is huge enthusiasm and commitment from its players, usually numbering well over one hundred. The annual concerts are given in different cities each year, and have raised - with sponsorship – \$250,000 for medical charities. (*continued on next page*)

## Letter from the Foundation President

Every year I reflect on the value of the presence of chamber music in people's lives and how the ACMP Foundation can make a difference, in sometimes quite profound ways. The annual **Fischoff Chamber Music Competition**, held in South Bend, IN, is a good example. The Foundation funds a quarter final round, enabling teenagers from around the country to attend and enjoy the excitement of competition and performance in a first class venue. The kids also participate in ACMP sponsored master-classes sponsored by the ACMP.

Serving as an auditor of the May 1999 Competition, I observed the young people channelling their energy into the marvellous and uplifting activity of chamber music. I reflected on the stark contrast between the Columbine High School massacre, which had occurred just a few weeks earlier, and the creativity and passion of these brilliant and talented young musicians. I remember particularly the excited outburst of an 11-year old violinist whose quartet had unfortunately not progressed beyond the quarter finals. During the applause after the finals he turned to his quartet mates and with almost a gasp exclaimed "next year we'll come back and win this!" This kind of enthusiasm is priceless — it made me realize what a terrific and important impact the Foundation can have on young musicians' lives and its value in preserving the chamber music tradition that we in ACMP all treasure. Let's reinvest our energy like the 11-year old violinist and preserve the miracle of chamber music for future generations!

Tony Finley

(cont) When Miklos relocated to London as a consultant at St George's Hospital, he promptly founded the European Doctors' Orchestra on similar lines to the ADO, planning to give two annual concerts - one in the U.K. and another in a continental European city.

An ad hoc committee was established and we fortunately secured generous sponsorship for our first concert; but we lived on our nerves, our fingernails and the Internet for many months as we struggled to organize the event.

In the end we managed to recruit over ninety health professionals from eight countries. We embarked on a hectic weekend of rehearsals leading to our inaugural concert, held at Blackheath Hall in London on Sunday, November 21, 2004.

Our soloist was Elizabeth Wallfisch, playing the Beethoven *Violin Concerto*. The programme also included Rossini's overture *The Thieving Magpie*, and Brahms' *Second Symphony*. Our conductor was Rupert Bond,

who is on the staff of Trinity College of Music and is founder-conductor of the Docklands Sinfonietta. We supported the charity, "Whizz-kidz", which supplies equipment and training for disabled children to become mobile.



**Elizabeth Wallfisch**, soloist with the European Doctors Orchestra

The concert was a sell-out success. What a tribute to the sustained hard work and happiness of our rehearsals which made it possible to prepare and present a major symphonic programme on 36 hours rehearsal. These factors also enabled us to achieve a standard comparable with the very best in amateur music-making.

This was a wonderful opportunity for medical musicians to come together; to make music, to re-charge their spiritual batteries, and, in so doing, help to make the world a better place not only for them but for their patients as well.

This summer, the orchestra goes east — to give a concert in the great Atheneum in Bucharest, and returns to London for a concert in November. Interested? Then, contact us through the website at <[www.edo.uk.net](http://www.edo.uk.net)>, and plan your diaries now. We look forward to meeting you.



## Making Music Together — Thanks to ACMP Foundation Programs



### Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Yoko Wong (Vn A, Canmore, AB) held a chamber music day for her students on Dec. 29, 2004. Current students include ten young musicians, born and raised in Edmonton. They read various chamber music works, playing continuously from 3 to 11 pm.

Yoko writes: We were able to do this because we all have at least 10 years (and some much more) of instrumental training.

Shown: violin duo performed by **Leclair Miriam** and **Ryan Herbold**.

### San Jose, CA

More than 180 chamber music enthusiasts attended the Chamber Musicians of Northern California workshop, held February, 2005, at the California State University at San Jose.

Board Member, **Bill Horne** (Pf A, Mill Valley, CA), kindly shared these photos of **Mari Holcomb** (Vn B, San Jose, CA), **Joselyn Bartlett** (Vn), **Florence Aquilina** (coach), **Kathy Albrecht** (Pf A, Pescadero, CA), **Tony Miksak** (Vc A, Caspar, CA), and **Kathy Bukstein** (Va A, Hillsborough, CA) scratching their heads over the Shostakovich *Quintet*.



### Pasadena, CA

More than 70 violin, viola, and cello students participated in the Suzuki Strings recital at the **Pasadena Conservatory of Music**.

**Rosemarie Krovosa**, Chair of the Chamber Music Department, writes: Preparing for recitals provides students with musical goals and helps to build a musical community with other students and teachers as they share music with family and friends. After all, a performance is a profound form of communication between the composer, the performer, and the audience.



## Hancock, NH

Students perform at the Monadnock Area Coöperative School Holiday Concert in December, 2004.

Strings teacher **Peter Skulski's** wife, **Anita**, (left) a professional violinist, is performing with 7th graders, **Bethany Fleischer** (center) and **Latoshia Brunk** (right).



## Israel

Forty participants attended the Third Annual Musicon Music Workshop held at Kibutz Tzuba (outside of Jerusalem) July, 2004.

The Fourth Annual Workshop will be held in July, 2005.

## San Francisco, CA

Three young students practice together during the ensemble portion of a group class under the auspices of the *Inner City Young Musicians Program* at the San Francisco Community Music Center.



Stephen Shapiro



## Introducing New ACMP Board Members

**Jennifer Stirling** (Vn/Va Pro, Burlington, MA) loves to forage for food in nature, and, in a way, she foraged in music for the right musical nourishment until she discovered the viola in 1991. Jennifer was born in London, England, and grew up in a musical family. Not only was her father a piano teacher and both her brothers expert lieder singers, but extra bedrooms in their large house were rented to musicians, often opera singers, so the house resonated with practicing the way a music school does.

Jennifer herself took up the recorder at the age of nine but says “It was the beginning of a tempestuous relationship with music until I found the viola.” She attended the Guildhall School of Music in Great Britain as a violin student of David Takeno, but then made a huge career shift, stopped playing the violin, and came to the United States as an apprentice to a chef specializing in Japanese cuisine. After the apprenticeship she then went on to spend several years as a professional chef.

Her love of music won out in the end, leading her to pursue further violin studies at the New England Conservatory of Music. In 1993, she entered graduate school to study viola with Caroline Levine and Joyce Robbins at SUNY Stony Brook, New York.

Today Jennifer is very active as a chamber musician and teacher. She has appeared several times on WGBH Radio (Boston, MA), has toured Europe with the Ensemble Modern of Frankfurt, and has participated in Summer Festivals at the Yellow Barn in Vermont and the Prussia Cove International Musicians’ Seminar in the U.K., and appeared as a regular guest at the Warebrook Contemporary Music Festival in Vermont.

She performs regularly as a member of the Tryptych String Trio, the orchestra of the Boston Handel and Haydn Society, and is principal violist with the New England String Ensemble.



**Jennifer Stirling**

In addition to her playing career, Jennifer is a dedicated teacher and chamber music coach at Phillips Exeter Academy and teaches adult amateurs in her own studio. When not teaching, performing, or parenting her 3 1/2 year old daughter, Jennifer likes to speak French, her second language, and read or watch films. She also likes enjoying the fruits of nature that she finds and forages.

**Roland Wilk** (Cl/Hn A/Bsn B, Toronto, Canada) has a colorful musical history. He says, “I grew up in Worcester, a small town near Cape Town, South Africa.



**Roland Wilk**

My mom was a qualified piano teacher — our home was always full of the sounds of her playing the piano, accompanying singers and leading a family band; Mom on the piano, me on the accordion, and my siblings on trumpet, drums, guitar and harmonica.”

While studying engineering in Cape Town, Roland met his wife, Marion, an accomplished pianist. He says, “We both taught ourselves

to play the descant recorder and joined in a lunch-time recorder group. Some years later, while studying for a Masters degree in engineering in Israel, a fellow Contract Bridge enthusiast and pianist suggested that I take up an orchestral wind instrument - I chose the clarinet (I had heard it was the easiest to learn), and soon another Bridge enthusiast, this time a cellist, introduced me to chamber music.”

“Fifteen years later, needing a new challenge, I took up the French horn (this time because it was not the easiest to learn), and joined an amateur orchestra. Ten years after that I added the bassoon to my collection of heavy instruments and am now trying to learn the viola so that I can participate in the vast repertoire that string players enjoy.”

In two major moves, from South Africa to England, and then England to Canada, Roland and Marion have joined orchestras as a way to make new friends and ease the integration into a new home country. (*Ledger Lines*, June 2003) Since moving to Toronto in the summer of 2003 Roland and Marion are playing horn and percus-

sion in one orchestra and, in another, “a wind band of primarily retired professional musicians,” Roland is playing bassoon.

Besides his many musical activities, Roland enjoys flying radio-controlled model airplanes and playing Bridge. He adds, “I have learnt to sail and would like to learn to glide. The family (two boys and two girls, a grandson and granddaughter) loves nature and we dream of spending time at our game lodge in South Africa – at our last visit in October we had a full wind quintet and piano there – making music in the bush is an unforgettable experience!”

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**Nancy O’Neill Breth** (Pf Pro, Arlington, VA) is a chamber music specialist who teaches piano, pedagogy, and chamber music at the Levine School of Music in Washington, DC, and at her Arlington, Virginia studio. She studied chamber music with Joseph Gingold, Rudolf Kolisch, and Janos Starker while earning undergraduate and graduate degrees in piano from Indiana University and the University of Wisconsin.

Her students are frequent prize winners in area, state and national competitions, including the national level of MTNA competitions, the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, and National Public Radio’s *From the Top*.

Nancy is also a performer and arts presenter throughout the country. The *Washington Post* praised her “superb musicianship” and

After completing his MBA in Johannesburg and the OPM executive program at Harvard Business School, Roland co-founded a computer systems engineering business that developed software and hardware for telecommunications systems in South Africa.

He says “Since I sold my interest in the business, I have enjoyed developing my musical skills and getting involved in the world of amateur music-making. In particular as a member of the ACMP board, I hope to be able to contribute my experience in business and financial management.”

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extolled her Music Connection series in Washington DC as “brilliant,” “imaginative,” and “eloquent”.

For 13 years Nancy directed the chamber music department of the Levine School of Music in Washington DC, greatly expanding the program and initiating innovative and still-popular events such as Chamber Music Weekend. She also served as Acting Dean of the Levine School, and was on the staff at the Kinhaven Adult Piano Workshop in Vermont.

Nancy, a popular pedagogy clinician, is the author of *The Piano Student’s Guide to Effective Practicing*, published by Hal Leonard Corporation, and has written for *American Music Teacher*, *Keyboard Companion*, and *Clavier Magazine*. She developed a variety of pedagogy courses at the Levine School that are still offered.

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**Franz Marcus** (Vc A, Brussels, Belgium) began studying the cello at age 12, but at age 18 had to choose whether to embark on engineering studies, or remain in his quartet (later renowned as the Copenhagen Quartet) and become a professional cellist like his father and grandfather before him. When he won a place in the very selective Polytechnic University in Copenhagen, the decision was clear.

He managed to keep up with the cello even so, and says, “During my engineering career I served for many years as Secretary General of an official Nordic coördination committee (among the five countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), and arranged a work schedule so that I could keep at least one week per month for music.”

“At first I gave recitals with my wife, **Teresina Ortenzi**, who is a professional pianist, and then in various ensembles; first in the Antwerp Trio with a singer, then in another trio with a flutist.” He adds, “At one time I had seven cellos in strategic places, not only in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, but also in Belgium, France, and Italy. If you are giving concerts, you have to practice every day, but you cannot turn up in an official meeting carrying a cello - and how should I have transported it on the planes?”

Franz first came to the US on a summer grant at MIT, and met **Helen Rice** through his uncle, **Alfred Marcus**, who was the printer for the first ACMP Directories. Helen arranged chamber music and a recital for Teresina and Franz at her New York apartment, and later at her country house in Stockbridge, MA.

When traveling, Franz makes good use of the Directory. He usually makes copies of the pages of the countries he is going to visit, and then just calls up one of the names. He once managed to play trios in Australia with just a few days’ notice, his hosts even providing a cello for him.

Upon retiring five years ago, Franz and Teresina moved to Brussels to be nearer their grandson. As he started to look for chamber music companions, he found many disparate players who did not know of each other, and saw that something needed to be done to organise them. This led to the creation of the I CAMBRISTI Association, which just celebrated its fifth anniversary, with almost 300 active members. (*Ledger Lines*, February 2005). He concludes, “I hope this can be a model for other places where there are chamber music players in need of contacts and encouragement. This is my goal as a new ACMP Board Member.”



Franz Marcus



## Junior Moments

**Award Certificate:** Several years ago, Board Member **Doris Preucil** (Vn Pro, Iowa City, IA) initiated the ACMP Foundation program of Award Certificates for recognition of accomplishments in chamber music. A young recipient, **Karen Rempel**, writes: Thank you very much for the Award Certificate. I am now working on Dvořák's *Sonatina*, Op 100 for violin and piano. Chamber music coaching and rehearsing are some of the best parts of my week. I plan to teach after I graduate and look forward to giving my students an early introduction to the wonderful pleasure and challenge of making music together.

### Strings for Schools' Chamber Music Coaching

By **Welthie Fitzgerald** (Va/Vn A, Wayne, PA)

For three years, thanks to the ACMP Foundation, Strings for Schools, a 30-year old nonprofit music education organization in the Philadelphia area, has been successfully working with talented high school chamber music students to advance skills in playing and performing chamber music.

During coaching sessions, students focus on sound quality and articulation, intonation, pacing and pulse, and above all, good ensemble teamwork. Coaching sessions occur in five schools each year and are spaced over a four-month period, with the students working with one coach throughout. At the end of the coaching period, all five schools come together for an evening community concert.

This program allows young people of diverse backgrounds to experience high-level coaching on a regular basis. Some of these kids play an instrument despite conditions of want, whereas others come from a privileged background. For many it is the first time that they have experienced the thrill that comes from playing in a small ensemble.

The kids, across the board, are extremely enthusiastic and receptive. As one student commented, "I have always enjoyed playing and listening to chamber music, but the whole experience was brought to a higher level with the help of an experienced professional string player by my side." Another student's mother wrote her thanks, and added, "Miriam went off to school on 'quartet days' with a special joy."



Young chamber musicians from **Strings for Schools**

## From the Mailbox

### The Directory at Work

Board Member, **Roberta Goldman** (Vn A, Holyoke, MA) writes: Recently, while in California to plan the ACMP September, 2005, Board Meeting, I contacted **Bev McGahey** (Pf A, San Diego, CA) to show us several possible venues.

My husband Jerry (Vc C+), Bev, and I really hit it off and during a wonderful, chatty, relaxing lunch, Bev mentioned how much she appreciated all ACMP does to make finding chamber music players so easy. She described a wonderful evening of music-making with an excellent violinist and cellist as a result of using the ACMP Directory to check out the chamber music scene in Indianapolis. When Bev quite casually mentioned the violinist's name, **Valerie Purvin** (Vn A, Indianapolis, IN) I actually felt a chill steal up my spine. Forty years ago, when I was living in NYC, two members of my regular Thursday night quartet were Valerie's parents, **Herb and Louise Purvin**. Herb and Louise were more than just members of the first regular quartet I played in; they were my first connection to ACMP, and they were the ones who introduced me to **Helen Rice**. Thanks to them I was invited to play with Helen both in her NY apartment and her home in Stockbridge. Just for the record, just a few days before the San Diego trip I had "closed another circle" and played with **Andrea Hoffman-Simmel** (Vn B, New York, NY), the fourth member of that original quartet. After a hiatus of almost 35 years, and several moves and life changes for both of us, we "found" each other again through chamber music. What a small world this is, and how wonderful it is when circles are closed!!

### Praise for the Directory

**Lily Harvitt** (Vn B-/Va C-, Chatham, NY) writes: Thanks for providing this wonderful service.

**Nina Leovna Komiakoff** (Pf/Hpsch B+, Petaluma, CA) writes: I prefer to receive the fine Directory in the mail as I am not computer savvy.

**Ted Salz** (Dh B+, Bronxville, NY) writes: Thank you for your care in putting together the directory. I have given up the clarinet and am now playing the **digital horn**, an instrument which is capable of great expressivity, depending, of course, on who is playing it.

A digital horn is an electronic wind instrument that can transpose to any key. It is fingered like a clarinet in the Boehm system, and can play music written for any instrument, even transposing instruments like the B-flat clarinet. I can therefore play Mozart sonatas for piano and violin, Brahms sonatas for piano and clarinet, or Bach flute music, all of which I have done.

**Bill Somach** (Va/Vn B, Shaker Heights, OH) writes: ACMP has been instrumental in two of my most worthwhile enterprises. In 1998, I attended the Chamber Music Conference of the East (CMC) in Bennington, VT, with the assistance of an ACMP fellowship, and am now a veteran of seven summers there as a participant and four summers as an administrative assistant, a role I will repeat in the upcoming summer. Then in 2000, I took an ACMP tour of Europe for seven weeks, staying with ACMP members.



## The International Directory at Work

**Celia Chandler** (Vc C+, Victoria, BC) writes: Here is another Directory success-story. I am a (mature) Canadian law student with a love for playing the cello. In January 2004, I took a four-month unpaid internship at the European Commission in Brussels. My first priority before I went was to find a place to live that was cello-friendly and inexpensive. I lucked out! I E-mailed all the Brussels cellists in the ACMP directory and quickly received a response from **Bettina Palachewski** (Vc C+, Brussels, Belgium) offering me the use of the flat in her family's house at a really subsidized rent. Living with Bettina and her family made this a really lovely and musical time. The ACMP directory is truly a valuable service. Well done! And thanks again, Bettina, for many duet-filled evenings. I've never had such well-developed callouses.

**Ruth Plaut Weinreb** (Pf B+, Watertown, MA) writes: In Buenos Aires I contacted **Nicolas Behrens**, (Pf B+, Olivos, Argentina) who arranged a most enjoyable evening of Brahms *Piano Quartet*, Op. 25. We alternated movements on his Steinway B. Besides the impressive quality of the musicians, it was a marvelous entry into the non-tourist side of Argentina.



### Flute, Violin and Piano Music in Venice

From Left: **Giorgio Zavagno** (Pf B, Venice-Mestre), **Franca Zavagno** (chef A+), **Benedetto Scimemi** (Pf A, Padova), **Ambrogio Fassina** (Fl C, Padova) and **Kitty Benton** (Vn B, New York, NY) met in Venice at the Zavagno home for an evening of chamber music and delicious hospitality.

**Joan Bevan** (Vn/Va B+, Cleveland, Queensland, Australia) writes: I wonder if members of ACMP realise that amateur chamber music is alive and very well in Australia. Every January more than 100 musicians attend a three-day chamber music camp in Wollongong, New South Wales. This year I travelled over 600 miles (with seven others) to attend.

I hold chamber music mornings and regular Sunday afternoon sessions at my home and play music in many other homes throughout Brisbane (Queensland) and surrounds. I could go on and on about the joys of music and how chamber music can easily become an obsession. Thanks for the *Ledger Lines* Newsletters.

## ACMP in Paris: It Works!

by **Geraldine Van Dusen** (Vn A-, Ossining, NY)

My husband, **Matthew Rosen** (Vc A), said, "Forget about it. Quartets in Paris? We don't know a soul. We don't speak French. I won't have a cello. Are you nuts?" Not a spat, exactly, but he went on for a bit about how hard it is, even here, to get four people you know together for an evening of chamber music. And of course, you can read the ending of this piece right here at the top.

We had a week in Paris in February. The logistics were simple: Call **Dan Nimetz** at the ACMP office in New York, get the International Directory, call Dan Nimetz again for the scoop: who's a good bet, who speaks English, and we were off. Just like that. Marvels of the Internet. Musicians were eager to play; they even knew others who had cellos in their closets or studios. One of these cellos, stashed under a bed in Poland during World War II and smuggled out, was whispered to be a prize. No doubt it could play itself and render tunes of such sweet melancholy or joy that the person holding the bow would secretly smile. We didn't meet the cello, but we did meet and play with the violinist who has custody of it. We played Mozart and Beethoven quartets with her and a French mathematician. When we arrived, the music was in place on four stands that popped out of a table. The room, a chamber, in fact, had such gracious bearing, with moldings, flowers, and light, the music seemed to be playing before we started.

By E-mail we'd been invited by **Bernard Couteaux**, a cellist and the head of the rather new Paris Amateur Chamber Music Association, a branch of AMA (Association des Musiciens Amateurs) to attend his concert our first night and meet musicians. He spoke no English, no one did, but he smiled a lot. It was Bernard's brother, with some English, a flute, and a violist, who called us for Mozart Flute quartets. This was seriously critiqued by Figaro, the resident dog and guardian of musical quality, from a velvet chair. We toasted Mozart and music with stiff whiskey and smoked salmon in the gilded anteroom of the apartment. Mysterious guests came and went, as if from the wings of a theater, and Maestro Figaro, no dummy, became a real dog under the table scrounging for scraps. From Mozart's parlor to the atelier of Puccini's *La Bohème*, we found ourselves, as guests of the cellist, in an artist's garret lined with paintings of naked women and rows of stacked canned goods. Could Schubert's Cello Quintet vent its passion in a better room? What could follow this? Only that we capped the evening with wine and sharp, blue-veined cheese, sitting on folding chairs at a makeshift table, the hour now ripe for politics and stories of life and love, of course — an opera, in short, all but sung.

## Bowing Out

**Doris Foster** (Vc C+, Lenox, MA) writes: I'm sorry to have to ask you to remove me from the Directory. At 93 I still play quartets every Tuesday morning with old friends who tolerate my poor playing. I am grateful for the years of enjoyment I have derived from ACMP — friendships formed and hours of playing experiences that followed that first phone call to another member.

## Counterpoints

### Retirement Communities

**Hans Simenauer** (Vn B/ Va C, Silver Spring, MD), writes: I now live in a retirement community that has lots of amateur and professional players, and pianos, too.

Board Member **Gwendoline Thornblade** (Va Pro, Newton, MA) directs the **Lasell Chamber Ensemble** which is made up of players that she coaches at the Lasell Retirement Community and players from other chamber groups that she also coaches. At concerts, she teams the adults with children from the Suzuki School of Newton, which she founded. (*Ledger Lines*, December, 2004).



**Elly Rubin**, (Vc C), with The Lasell Chamber Ensemble immediately following her first-ever performance in any concert

### Self Grading

**Amalie Callahan** (Vn A-, Rock Island, IL) writes: I agree with Albrecht Zumbrunn's comments on self-grading levels in the December 2004 issue of *Ledger Lines*. [*The December issue, as well as other past issues, may be accessed through the publications area on our web site < www.acmp.net> — Ed*]

**Peter Marcan** (Vn A/Pf B/Rec B, London England) writes: I look forward to your articles on music resources. And I also agree with Albrecht Zumbrunn. The works you cite are excessively hard, especially the Beethoven.

**Gerhard Juette** (Va C, Munich, Germany) writes: The subject of self-grading seems to come up again and again. I want to encourage the ACMP leadership not to be affected by critiques of the system. The ACMP self-grading system is good and should be left as is. In practice, the idea of self-grading is of course very helpful, but the phantom of its perfect accuracy is neither realizable nor necessary. In fact, the musicality, competence, flexibility, amiability, sensibility, sensitivity, tone, virtuosity, rhythm, charm, enthusiasm, intelligence, communication skills, and other important qualities of a player can not be defined by a simple grade anyway. And even all of the above, in addition to the grade, may not guarantee the quality of a chamber music session in advance. Opportunities

for compatible players to meet anywhere are scarce enough, and pleasant chamber music sessions are rewarding enough without additional self-grading accuracy. Therefore, I suggest that you leave the subject at rest without further time-wasting and use-less discussion.

**Juan Krakenberger** (Va Pro [retired], Madrid, Spain) writes: It is very hard to classify non-professional chamber music buffs in any way. For instance, I have played with very good and very bad amateurs – but the pleasure derived is about the same: both ways it doesn't sound too good, and it is one's imagination that complements what is missing and completes the musical experience. Amateur playing is a lively process of "wishful thinking" and very hard to pin down. Personal contact and experience, and last but not least, the character of the player who joins in are all important. Charm can do miracles even if the playing isn't so good. As to the questions on self-grading, there are very deft amateurs who never practice – and others who practice daily but still are nightmares to play with. As for playing in tune, most amateurs think they play in tune whether this is the case or not.

Former Chair, and current Advisory Council Member, **Susan M. Lloyd** (Alto A/Va B, Tinmouth, VT) responds: I find your "wishful thinking" concept especially appealing and accurate – so long as wishful thinking does not carry a "C" level player to an "A" rating! Reviewing the prose descriptions of each level may provide a sufficient corrective to an under-rating or an over-rating resulting from a sole reliance on the questionnaire. Several self-graders besides myself have found this to be true. A synthesis of the two modes of self-rating would take care of your skillful non-practicer, just as it encompasses someone like myself whose questionnaire score comes out too high. Although some feel that the "A" level described in prose is impossibly out of reach for virtually all amateurs and some who class themselves as "Pros," I have been fortunate to know a good many "A" players who meet the standard described (as well as too many who do not – or who once did and do no longer).

Board Member **Peter Benolie** (Vn B, St Davids, PA) agrees. He writes: I can't tell you how often fellow players have exclaimed after a movement or quartet that went well "how good it sounded." I think there is confusion; it may have been immensely pleasurable, but "good it sounded," it was not!

### Do You Have News To Share?

We welcome mail from members, especially photographs. You may send photographs via E-mail – .jpeg format is best) send to <acmpnewseditor@aol.com>, or by regular mail to the office.

Please remember to tell us WHO is in the picture, WHAT the occasion was, WHEN and WHERE it was held. Include your name, instrument and grade, city and state.



## Home Coaching

**Home Coaching Inspires a Performance.** **Michi Tashjian** (Pf B, Philadelphia, PA) writes: What a difference it made when four avid and compatible chamber music players started coaching sessions to work up the Brahms *Piano Quartet* in G minor.

We chose **David Yang** (Va Pro, Philadelphia, PA), a respected teacher and violist in the area. David all but stood on his head to help us discern the emotional content of the work, the musical structure, and the technical means to portray it. He conducted, he moved about the room, and he described visual images of the meaning of the music. **Vic Spain**, the cellist, adds, "David has an amazing vocabulary for conveying musical ideas. At one point, he asked us to imitate the sound of a Fritz Kreisler recording. That sound image is something we all carry in our collective memories and we instantly knew what combination of vibrato, bow speed, and expressive slides David meant. In this way, David gives us the tools to build our own ideas and make the piece our own." Michi concludes, "David's energy and expertise raised our level of understanding and ensemble playing. Later we invited family and friends to an evening musicale and performed it for them. How satisfying it was to share our hours of work in such a way."

**Both Sides of the Music Stand:** **Paul Chalfant** (Va/Vn Pro, Sarasota, FL) speaks from "both sides of the music stand." He writes: The Home Coaching Program, featured in the February issue, is one of the finest things ACMP does. I have benefitted from it twice; once as a coach and another time as a coachee. Our quartet is hoping to do it again soon.



### Home Coaching Participants

From Left: **Chris Romaine** (Vn A, West Chester, PA)

**Veronica Jurkiewicz** (Va guest)

**Vic Spain** (Vc A, Philadelphia, PA),

**Michi Tashjian** (Pf B, Philadelphia, PA)

**A Coach Speaks:** **Kathy Greene**, after coaching the Dvořák *Viola Quintet* wrote: What a fantastic program! I love working with amateurs. I find it quite inspirational to be with people who love music so much and are so devoted that they work that hard at something that isn't their profession. It's fun! We laugh a lot. It's what music was meant to be. The program encourages groups to seek out and schedule coaching – which in turn improves their skills and pleasure in their accomplishments, The Foundation gives dignity and importance to this pursuit and is deeply valuable.

## Cadences

**Bloom, David M** (Pf-4h B+), Hartsdale, NY, January 24, 2003. His wife, **Sherri**, writes: I play little or beginner chamber music, but would still like to be a member of ACMP.

**Falkenhausen, Hasso Von** (Va B-), Bad Homburg, Germany.

**Frank, Robert Peter** (Vn/Vc B+), Cortona, Italy, December 19, 2003.

**Groman, Lillian Eisenberg** (Vn Pro), Boynton Beach, FL, and New Rochelle, NY.

**Hitch, Mr Brian** (Pf Pro), Oxford, England.

**Jones, Alberta H.** (Vc Pro) Burbank, CA.

**Komlos, Maxine**, (Vn/Va A), South Australia, Australia, November 15, 2004.

**Wood, Alice H.** (Vn B-), Pine, CO, December 25, 2004, age 91. **Harold** (Fl B) and **Joan** (Vc B) **Leinbach**, Boulder, CO, write:

We had the pleasure of playing chamber music with Alice on many occasions. Alice last played quartets about 5 weeks before her death. Chamber music was one of her great loves, and she especially loved getting people together to play.

**Weiler, Hans** (Vc C), New South Wales, Australia. **Daphne Arnold** writes: We've had wonderful and hilarious sessions with visiting ACMP members. I will carry on the role he held.

**Willig, Doris** (Pf B, Pf-4h B), Philadelphia, PA.

### Contributions in Memoriam

**The Sheena Booth Musical Trust** has been set up in memory of **Sheena Booth** (Vn/Va B), London, England, to further the musical development of children and young people. For more information visit <[www.booth-seismic.co.uk/sheena](http://www.booth-seismic.co.uk/sheena)>.

**Mrs. Joyce Carlin Levy** (Pf A), Boynton Beach, FL, in memory of **Adrian William Salinger**, whose viola is now being played by Joyce's granddaughter, **Stephanie Miller**, aged 13.

# ACMP Bulletin Board

## WANTED

BRAHMS SYMPHONIES IN PIANO (4H) VERSION. Willing to pay a fair price plus shipping. Richard Berkman 285 El Sueno Rd, Santa Barbara, CA 93110. Phone: (805) 967-4875

SEEKING PARTS FOR PROKOVIEV String Quartet #1, Op 50, and Eduard FRANCK String Sextets, Op 41 in E-flat Major and Op 50 in D major, recently published by the Edinger Quartett. Dr. Klaus Eckstein, Phone: +49-2174-4622, Email: eckstein01@web.de

PIANO TRIO SEEKS SOURCE OF LIGHT WORKS such as rags, jazz arrangements, tangos, show tunes, wedding and party music. Please contact Sally Rosoff at <sallycello@lworld.net>

## AVAILABLE

HOUSE AVAILABLE IN FRANCE. Very suitable for chamber music, nice accommodations. String players particularly welcome. James Higgins (Vn A+), 10 rue de L'Etoile, F-67160 Wissembourg, FRANCE. Tel and Fax +333-03 88 05 96 44

FAIRY QUEEN, by Henry Purcell, for String Quartet, String Quintet, or String Orchestra Score-\$9.00; Set of parts-\$25.00; Additional part books-\$5.00 each from Greenblatt & Seay, g-s@alltel.net. Our free catalog is available on request, and on our web site, <http://www.mastercall.com/g-s/>.

SPARE PARTS: I am disposing of incomplete sets of quartet music. Minimal postage and handling charges. E-mail <TrudyVln@usadatanet.net> for a list.

FOR SALE: Absolutely beautiful 1780 ENGLISH CELLO by Benjamin Banks used by professional cellist for last 20 years. Slightly small size, great for young or smaller person. Excellent condition. Deep, clear sound, easy response. Back is from two pieces of slab cut maple of narrow, irregular horizontal flames. Sides and scroll from similar maple. Top from two pieces of spruce of narrow to medium grain. Varnish has an orange brown color. D'Attili papers. Available to see and try out in New York City. Asking \$65,000. For sound sample, please see <http://www.impresarioarts.com/cello>

WEBSITE SOURCE: arrangements of famous pieces for string quartet and piano trio, suitable for informal concerts, weddings, parties, or just to be played for fun. Arrangements tested by professional groups, enjoyable for both listeners and players alike. <[www.bridgewaterpublishing.com](http://www.bridgewaterpublishing.com)>

TWO CELLO BOWS AVAILABLE, excellent condition and quality. 1) German, H.R. Pfretschner, CPHF 4500. 2) Italian, Renzo Bechini, Milan, CHF 4800. Contact H. Leisinger, CH 6900, Massagno, Switzerland. Phone: 0041-91-649.90.27, Fax: 649.81.57. E-mail: <[shleisi@bluewin.ch](mailto:shleisi@bluewin.ch)>

### Reminder to Members

**Has Your Address Changed?** Please help us to keep our records up to date. Especially E-mail, as that doesn't get forwarded! It's easy to change your personal information on our website, so do it now.

ACMP Ledger Lines published by The Amateur Chamber Music Players, Inc 1133 Broadway, Room 304 New York, NY 10010-2007 USA Tel: 212 645-7424 • Fax 212 741-2678 [www.acmp.net](http://www.acmp.net) Jan Mattson Timbers, President Daniel Nimetz, Executive Director Kitty Benton, News Editor

ACMP's Bulletin Board is a service to members wishing to make musical announcements. Publication of a notice in the newsletter signifies neither approval or disapproval by the ACMP Board of Directors.

Members are reminded that a copy of ACMP's last annual report may be obtained from the New York Office of Charities Registration, Department of State, Albany, NY 12231.

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