

The Chamber Musician

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From the Editor

My usual column in this space is 400 words and fits neatly on half a page. Not this one. For CMNC's 20th anniversary issue I've expanded my narrative to the whole issue. We're going to wander through twenty years of CMNC history, starting with our Founder's Myth. A myth, of course, is not a mere made-up story, but a resonant tale, told many times, expressing the qualities we value most in ourselves. Our Founder's Myth shows that CMNC was born from love of music, certainly, but also from love of chamber music workshops, those joyful celebrations we have placed so near the center of our lives.

The story of CMNC is the story of people who cared about community, and for that I would like to especially remember the founding president, Alex Zuckerman. I interviewed Alex in one of my first issues as editor and I have never forgotten talking to him about his amazing 12 years as the leader of CMNC. He told me that his experience as a bicycle activist had given him many lessons about getting things done. Today his bicycle work is remembered in the Alex Zuckerman Bike Path on the Bay Bridge. He was a music activist too, and CMNC is also a memorial. I hope he would be proud of it, and of us.

So now let's have Dave Gortner take us back to that iconic car trip in 1988...



—Elizabeth Morrison

Upcoming CMNC Workshops

The Fall 2009 workshop will be held at San Francisco State University, October 24–25, 2009. This is our second workshop at SFSU, and we are looking forward to seeing you there. CMNC will be celebrating its 20th anniversary at this workshop, and there will be a party both days, as well as delightful surprises for everyone.

This workshop will have two days of coaching for all participants. On Saturday, there will be master classes after the coaching session, followed by a concert by the Alexander Quartet (who will be coaching both days), then dinner. Freelancing (forming your own groups using your own music or music from our enormous library) will be available Saturday evening, as well as at lunchtime both days.

On Sunday there will be coaching but no performance. We hope this will give us a chance to focus on broader musical issues rather than simply preparing for a five-minute performance. Preformed groups are welcome at this workshop for one day only. If you come preformed one day, please join us on the second day to play with other CMNC community members. In addition there will be instrument storage available during all meals and the coaches' concert.

The entire workshop will be held within the music building, with all meals in the Cesar Chavez Center. This means we will only have room for 20 groups instead of our usual 24 or 28. We apologize in advance for not being able to accept everyone; this change was necessary for financial reasons. We plan to reduce the various instrument groups proportionately: five pianists instead of seven, and so on. On the good side, we will all be within one building, and will not have to walk to the cafeteria as we did at the first workshop at SFSU.

The Winter 2010 workshop will be held in February 2010. We have not completely finalized the arrangements, but we believe it will also be held at San Francisco State.

The Spring 2010 workshop will be at College of Marin, our tried-and-true venue of many years, June 5–6, 2010. ✂

CMNC was born from love of chamber music workshops, those joyful celebrations we have placed so near the center of our lives.

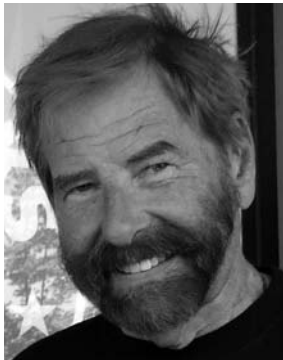
Special Anniversary Edition



Founding CMNC

by David Gortner

I humbly reflect on our modest beginnings, which germinated in Alex Zuckerman's ancient Plymouth sedan on our way back from Humboldt Week Three in 1988. We were both lamenting the fact that these wonderful workshops only took place in the summer. Although we could find players during the year to play in homes and could play every week (or whatever), there was no formal group getting together on a grand scale during the year, with all the fun and sharing and mixing and playing that go with the "workshop scene."



So, in a fit of craziness, I said to Alex, "My wife Lennie is a prominent faculty member at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park. With her connections we might get our foot in the door. Admittedly Rohnert Park would be a trek for southern Bay Area folks, but hey, it could be a start." As we drove, Adrienne Casco, who was with us in the back seat, gave us plenty of pointers and ideas about launching a mid-year workshop.

Sure enough, it happened. Early in 1989 we had our first workshop. The only down side (actually a big one) was that Sonoma State's chamber music library was paltry indeed! But Alex and I had a ton of music (we thought) and we augmented our string parts with wind music from some from other folks. Alex and I stayed up almost the whole night before the workshop, preparing for it. We thought we were ready days before, but you know how that goes.

Assignments were my job and I used the proverbial 3x5 cards, with names of players and chamber works on separate cards. What a job!!! I look back with amazement that we survived that first workshop. We did, with of course some mishaps (a violinist got lost and showed up three hours late.)

As we moved forward we found better equipped facilities with better libraries: San Jose City College, Hayward State, and College of Marin. We focused on having three workshops a year. A wonderful group of people, Rheta Goldberg, Bob Nesbet, and others helped us form a board

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so the work could be shared by many. Al Kaufman especially deserves mention. He was a big help from the beginning. And we started acquiring our own music through the efforts of many people, especially Bill Horne, our first librarian. Ivan Stern helped us out with our first computer program for the PC, and later Al Kaufman and Bob Nesbet invented a really

excellent program for the Mac. A version of this program is still in use today.

Lennie and I moved to the Sierra foothills in late 1990. Although I was a three and a half hour drive away, I did stay connected to CMNC and directed more workshops, but finally I dropped off the map while Alex and the board kept things humming. I am just amazed at how that initial undertaking has grown and blossomed into such a marvelous organization. ☞

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CMNC's Real Anniversary

I like this re-telling, especially the appearance, for the first time, of Adrienne Casco. When Al Kaufman recounted the story for CMNC's tenth anniversary, she was not in the car, and it's good to have her there now. I also like David's statement of the founders' goal as re-creating "the fun and sharing and mixing and playing that go with the 'workshop scene.'" That's a mission statement for you!

However, I do need to point out something. Close perusal of the newsletter archive reveals that the first CMNC workshop was actually held, not in early 1989, but on October 22–23, 1988, which would make this our 21st anniversary. In anointing 2009 as our 20th I relied on previous tradition and my 10th anniversary coffee mug, which says "1989–99: 10 Years of Chamber Music." Not wanting to put my mug in the wrong, and having in any case missed the true 20th in 2008, we are retaining 2009 as our 20th, but plan to make up the year by celebrating our 25th in 2013. Historians take note! ☞

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Board Stats

As David says, a board was formed and the work shared by many. The first CMNC board was introduced in an early issue of *The Chamber Musician*, dated Summer 1989. There was an executive committee of president Alex Zuckerman, violin; vice president David Gortner, viola; secretary Quentin Griffith, bassoon; treasurer Diane Hie, piano; and membership director Al Kaufman, violin/viola. The others on first board were Eleanor Agol, piano; Joan Bricker, bassoon; Helen Dole, cello; Debra Fenzel-Alexander, cello; Edwin Kartman, horn; Robert Nesbet, cello; Ron Panton, oboe; Runa Schlaffer, viola; and Kristy Venstrom, viola.

Now for some statistics. If you compare this list with today's board, you can see that one member, Bob Nesbet, has been there for the entire twenty years. The next year he was joined by Bill Horne, the second-longest serving board member with 19 years. Then comes Sue Fowle with

15, Bob Goldstein and Susan Kates with 12 years, me with 10, and Miriam Blatt with nine. Never let it be said that we don't stick around.

CMNC has had 49 board members so far, and the average time served comes out to be 8.4 years. The current board's average

is nine years. The newest members, Susan Wilson (two) and Frank Lahorgue (still in his first year) seem to be settled in for the long haul, and Carolyn Lowenthal (six), Sheri Schultz (five), Marion Taylor (four) and Ted Rust (three), don't show any signs of leaving. Here's the secret. Being on the CMNC board is fun. Really! The actual duties (meeting ten times each year, discussing music and people, choosing groups, finding coaches) are intrinsically interesting; the management tasks are increasingly automated; and our end product is a big music party for all our friends. What's not to like!

Gary Friedman, who joined in 1991 and served for seven years, told me some stories about the long-standing early board, which came together in the first few years and stayed for most of Alex Zuckerman's 12-year tenure as president. He said that his finest hour on the board came when CMNC experienced an epidemic of short-term illness after the October 1994 workshop that he, as an epi-

demiologist, was able to trace to the chicken salad. With all due respect for Gary's medical sleuthing, I thought his newsletter article "What Ever Happened to Whistling?" was even better.

...no one was more predominant than Rheta Goldberg. Rheta had complete history of every player in her head, along with an almost psychic sense of what each person would like to play at every workshop.

There were many outstanding personalities on that board, notably Al Kaufman, Rheta Goldberg, and Merlyn Doleman. These three stayed for 16 years; Joan Bricker for ten, Runa Schlaffer for nine, and Helen Dole and Kristy Venstrom for seven. Katherine Bukstein came on in 1992 and served for eight years. Muriel Haupt, John Sonquist, and Pat Maximoff were all long-serving members of the first board.

Debra Fenzel-Alexander remained on the board for four years and first suggested the Performance Sampler.

This board was still somewhat in place when I joined in 2001, but had already partly changed to the Bob Goldstein board. I have strong memories of Merlyn, who was a dedicated printer of music (he had a complete print shop in his house) and took care of the growing CMNC library. For many years he carted many boxes of music to each workshop in his van. He was an outstanding presence, but no one was more predominant than Rheta Goldberg. Rheta had a complete history of every player in her head, along with an almost psychic sense of what each person would like to play at every workshop. Susan Kates, Miriam Blatt, and I have all confided that we wish we could be the next Rheta; I'm sure others feel the same. That none of us will ever reach this goal goes without saying.

The first board put CMNC on a solid footing. They established a regular calendar of workshops throughout the year and throughout the Bay Area. They nourished a library that has grown to nearly 2,000 pieces. They introduced coaching, the coaches' concert, and master classes. They created a web site, commissioned a quartet by Gwyneth Walker, and even inspired a spinoff, the Santa Barbara weekend workshop. Alex said when he retired, "There are three workshops a year, and people count on them and enjoy them. CMNC is successful." And so it was. 🌀

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Growing the Library

by Bill Horne

CMNC used the music library at Sonoma State for the first workshop, and then the college library at Hayward State for several subsequent workshops, but it was obvious that we needed our own library, as school officials are very protective of their materials and grudging about sharing them.

Dave Gortner found out that one of his chamber music mentors, Henry James, then 87, was no longer able to play chamber music, and had reluctantly decided to sell his collection (mostly string music) to CMNC. He lived in Santa Rosa and an intermediary picked it up and delivered it to me. I found all the music wrapped up in stacks, bound with brown paper and package twine. All was perfectly organized. As I was going through the music and cataloging it, I found a note on a blue-lined scrap of paper, written in a very small, shaky hand. "It is so painful to think I will not be playing any of this beautiful music again." I was so touched by this communication to a fellow chamber musician that I found myself crying quietly.

Another similar, but less touching story is about an elderly retired chemical engineer from Concord, whose name I no longer recall, who was willing to sell works from his library collection. I drove over to Concord, and looked over and bought a number of works. He had carefully attached yellow lined papers within the covers of the music, itemizing the dates he played the works, with whom he played, and comments, like "pleasant, but boring," or "needs cuts." When I asked him the cost of a piece, he would look at the prices marked on the music, which must have been purchased 40 years before, and up them a bit, giving us great bargains. I had selected a dozen pieces, until his wife came home, discovered what a meager price he was charging for these works, and put an end to the proceedings! ☺

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Coaching and More Coaching

The first CMNC workshops had four sessions, two Saturday and two Sunday. All four were uncoached or, as they preferred to call it, self-coached. There is much discussion of this in the newsletters. This is from a story

about evaluations of the third workshop, held at San Jose City College in June 1989. "Many participants—62 percent—do not consider coaching necessarily appropriate in a short two-day workshop, or don't care either way. Respondents also felt coaching would be too costly. One person said, 'Use only if it is superior.' Another was more blunt: 'I hate coaches. What do they know?'"

Nevertheless, the October 1992 Hayward workshop tried the experiment of offering one day of coaching on Saturday. Katherine Bukstein reports that she and Bill Horne had been to the San Diego workshop and enjoyed the coaching with master class format used there. They soon got the board to agree to give it a try. Katherine took on the task of hiring coaches and found a stellar initial lineup: Terrie Baune, Alan Clarke, Colin Hampton,

Katherine Bukstein took up the task of hiring coaches and found a stellar initial line up: Terry Baune, Alan Clarke, Colin Hampton, Edward Harris, Rae Ann Goldberg, Carol Kutsch, Roxanne Michaelian, and Deborah Pittman.

Edward Harris, Rae Ann Goldberg, Carol Kutsch, Roxanne Michaelian, and Deborah Pittman. Here are some comments from that workshop: "Coaching helped set a mood of thinking, listening, and cooperation that added to the fun of playing together, and that carried over into the next day. Coaches were helpful and un-intimidating. It was good to be coached on a difficult piece without the stress of performance. It would have been helpful to know the assignments ahead of time so as

to be better prepared." These have a familiar ring, as do the criticisms: "Coaches were spread too thin. There wasn't enough time to be effective. One coach said the group didn't need much help. Another coached only the piano player."

At the next coached workshop, February 1993 at College of Marin, a second innovation appears, the Coaches' Concert. The first performing group was the San Francisco Conservatory Quartet. Over the years there have been many wonderful groups at our workshops. Katherine's careful records show that the Alexander Quartet played in 1994, the Stanford Woodwind Quintet in 1995, and Burke Schuchmann and Bill Horne in 1995. In 1996 Terrie Baune led a quartet in a performance of a Gwyneth Walker piece commissioned by CMNC, and Walker herself was present at the workshop. The Anacapa

CMNC has kept relationships with many coaches and groups over the years. Burke Schuchmann probably holds the record; he has coached at almost every CMNC workshop.

Quartet played in 1997, the Del Sol Quartet in 1998, the Felici Trio in 2001, the Sun Quartet in 2002, the Cypress Quartet in 2003. CMNC has kept relationships with so many of these coaches and groups over the years. Roxanne Michaelian was at our first coached workshop and also at the most recent one, College of Marin May 2009!

In 2001 we added the option of coming as a preformed group

on the coached day. Some members enjoy this, but preformed groups have not taken over the workshop by any means. Most CMNC members seem to like the opportunity to meet new people and play new music. Another innovation came in October 2006, when we tried offering coaching on both days. The evaluations show that while a majority enjoys two days of coaching, a substantial minority misses the old uncoached Sundays. We have settled for now on having two days of coaching for all at one workshop a year, and one self-coached day for all but preformed groups at the other workshops.

While coaching was evolving, CMNC was growing in another way, by developing an Internet presence for our members' use. Here to tell us about that is Sue Fowle. ☞

CMNC on the Internet

by Sue Fowle

John Sonquist, who was on the board 1995–99, taught computers at the college level. I was new to the board when John proposed that we start a web site, the need and the expense for which he carefully justified. It felt like a forward-looking thing to do at that time, so in 1997 cmnc.org made its debut on the web. The cost of hosting, as I remember, was only \$35 for the year. We looked for web site sponsors. The music products company Shar contributed \$100.

At that time, I had done some computer programming (BASIC and embedded systems), simple word processing, and music sequencing, but knew nothing about web sites, so I could only appreciate and admire John's knowledge and ability. He chose west.net as the web host. He wrote a Contact CMNC web form and asked us board

members to test it. After John left the board Peggy George became the webmaster.

Even as late as 2005, CMNC's workshop and membership forms all relied on pen and paper (although they could be printed out from downloadable pdf files.) I dislike filling out forms by hand, and wanted to create an easier way to apply to the workshops. I had gained some web site experience in the meantime; Internet Service Providers often offer personal web space, and I had learned to write and maintain a simple one. Right after the Humboldt workshop, in July 2005, I started reading about creating forms. Through a bit of research, I learned how forms could be processed on west.net. The board gave me permission to try, but first I had to update the web site.

I had about six weeks until the fall workshop application period to write the workshop application form. I also had to write control files to make west.net process the forms into individual pages for the workshop director and spreadsheet entries. Everything had to work reliably. I had John Sonquist's Contact form processing as a working example, but had to learn how to make the web host create spreadsheets. I was very lucky, because it seems west.net is one of the few web hosts that offers this sort of processing. It was an incredibly busy six weeks. Elizabeth Morrison as workshop director and Bob Goldstein as president both provided much needed advice and support. I was prepared to have to revert to the paper method, but it proved unnecessary. CMNC now had online applications!

Several board members were computer experts and did a great deal to help CMNC use the Internet successfully. Carolyn Lowenthal saved us from disaster by manipulating the spreadsheet data in ways our other software demanded. Art Ungar created scripts to enter computerized applications. Ted Rust is now database manager.

In the years since, I've refined much about the forms, and learned how to offer payments through PayPal. It's perhaps appropriate, as we celebrate CMNC's 20th anniversary, that this system is being superseded by an online database system written by a professional. The October 2009 workshop will probably be the last one to use the west.net processing. Most of you have already logged in to the new database to renew and to update your information. CMNC will continue to move forward to make everyone's life easier (we hope!) through technology. ☞

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The Chamber Musician

I was recruited to the board by Rheta Goldberg in 2000, when I was still living in Eureka, I believe because I had written a note after my first CMNC workshop saying how much I enjoyed it. I couldn't do much from that distance, but they were looking for a new editor for the newsletter and I like writing, so I volunteered. Rheta gave me a notebook with most of the past issues (I am missing Volume 1 Number 1; if anyone has a copy I would love to see it.) I've kept up the notebook, so the archive is mostly complete, and it has been an invaluable source for this anniversary issue.

The first editor I believe was Alex Zuckerman, although he does not credit himself. The first credited editor was Adrienne Casco, beginning in 1991. The next editor was Bob Barton, who served from 1993 to 1998. Both he and Adrienne produced many wonderful issues. The job then passed to Pat Maximoff and Bob Nesbet (1998–99), Pat Maximoff and Susan Kates (1999–2000) and finally Sue Fowle, Bob Nesbet, and Susan Kates for one issue, until I took it on in 2001. Tina Kun gave me a break by editing three issues in 2007–08.

The format settled in quite early: issues announce upcoming workshops, report on past ones, and feature articles of interest to chamber music nuts like us. Contributors write about music ("Playing Late Beethoven Quartets" by David Gorter, "Mozart and the Flute" by Bob Barton, numerous erudite articles on repertoire by Bill Horne). Musical pun articles are a staple ("Adagio from-maggio: to play in a slow and cheesy manner," etc.) There are reports on other workshops and articles by coaches explaining how we can do better. New board members are welcomed, retiring ones are thanked. Discussions about balance in workshop groups and whether people should ever be expected to play with those less skillful than themselves, never go away. Almost every issue remembers a beloved CMNC member who has died. After we lost Rheta Goldberg in 2006 the entire issue was dedicated to her. This was also our first color issue as I wanted to include some beautiful color photos of Rheta.

Chamber music, and the challenges of playing it, do not change much from year to year, and I could easily publish an issue from the 90s as today's. You'd never know! Until its 2008 redesign by Susan Wilson, they even looked the same, with a masthead sporting the logo designed by Maria Reeves. To prove my point here is a quotation from

Winter 1990. "The first violinist (string quartet), clarinetist (clarinet quintet), flutist (woodwind quintet), or the pianist (piano trio, etc.) should be the primus inter pares and make most decisions democratically it is hoped, because he/she is the best musician in the group There is no room for ego psychosis for those of us who feel the need to be soloists. We play music for the love of it. For that reason alone, it would be gracious that you let the leader lead and not lecture everybody on how to do it, simply because you may play the cello and think you are better than everybody else." That could have been written yesterday—at my house!

I love editing *The Chamber Musician* and plan to continue as long as you'll keep reading, but there may be a change coming in the way you receive it. The board is considering going over to online publication, to save money, paper, and the environment. I personally like getting paper in the mail, but this newsletter may have to go the way of so many publications today. We do want to know what you think about this, so watch for a question on the subject soon.

This is the last From the Editor section; if you've stayed with me this far, I hope you've enjoyed our history tour. Next we have a couple of CMNC stories for you: memories of a workshop long ago, and of a special trip that resulted from CMNC workshop. We finish with two regular features: the Workshop Director's Report from the COM June 2009 workshop, and President's Corner by Bob Goldstein. ☞

"Congratulations to CMNC from ACMP (Amateur Chamber Music Players). Now 42 years old, we are the first and farthest-flung of the United States' open-armed chamber music associations. We delight in the vigor of your regional association and wish you good growing."

This letter came to CMNC from Susan McIntosh Lloyd, then chair of ACMP, and was printed in the Summer 1989 issue of *The Chamber Musician*. ACMP has been like a kind older sibling to CMNC and has made many generous contributions over the years, helping us stay both affordable and solvent.

CMNC is among ACMP's largest grant recipients, and also one of the smallest on a per-person basis, because an ACMP grant to us benefits so many people. We are almost unique in the way we function: we have an annual budget of almost \$100,000 but remain an all-volunteer group with no paid director. It's an unusual organization and it's all ours!

My First CMNC

by Tina Kun

Twenty years ago my pianist friend Eleanor Agol and I signed up for the San Jose CMNC workshop. Was it the first one? I am not sure, (Ed. note: it was the third), but I was quite new to chamber music, and not very far along with the cello. In fact, I had little idea of what it takes to play chamber music. I have two clear memories of that weekend. The first day Bob Goldstein offered to go

We had no idea that we could sound so good and play so happily and congenially. It was heaven.

through the Brahms clarinet trio with Eleanor and me. He patiently played it with us, phrase by phrase, showing us exactly how everything fits. It was an amazing experience.

The next day, Sunday, I was assigned to a string quartet with two other “primitives” and...Sue Fowle. Without a word or any sign at all of teacher status, she led us through some Mozart as though it were the most natural thing in the world. We had no idea that we could sound so good and play so happily and congenially. It was heaven. ☺

The Power of Music—A German Experience

by Ralph Morrison

Chamber music workshops have a way of bringing people together. Elizabeth and I can thank CMNC for introducing us to Friederike Kendel, which led to our visit to Berlin last May. Friederike is a psychologist from Berlin who is also a fine cellist. When she found out she was selected to work in the Bay Area on a teaching grant she sent emails to musicians listed in the ACMF. Steve Surtshin responded and offered to arrange music during her visit.

In October 2008 Steve called Elizabeth who was doing the planning for the CMNC workshop at Holy Names. He wanted to bring Friederike to the workshop in a preformed group. It was late in the planning process so Elizabeth had to find a way to honor his request without starting over. Her solution was to add Steve and Friederike to an existing quartet to form a sextet.

We were lucky to attend two performances by the Berlin Philharmonic, including Mendelssohn's oratorio Elijah conducted by Seiji Ozawa. The performance was memorable with Ozawa conducting from memory and without the use of a baton.

Friederike's group played a movement of the Brahms Sextet Opus

18 in the same master class that I was assigned to. When I heard the group, it was obvious she was a wonderful player. At the lunch break I went up to her and introduced myself. I then brought her over to our table to make sure she would meet Elizabeth. On the spot we made a plan to have her come to our house. We arranged to play cello quintets with our friends Lisa and Ryan Lai. It was a pleasurable evening of dinner, music, and conversation. I had a chance to show Friederike picture albums of my war experiences where I had visited

Continues next page.



Ralph Morrison in Berlin with cellist Friederike Kendel, her husband Justus Schmidt-Ott, and her daughters, Tabea and Cora.

A CMNC STORY *Continued from previous page.*

Berlin in 1945. Our meeting was so enjoyable that plans were made for a second chamber music session.

Berliners play chamber music with zeal, just like we do. I hope that music will bring us together again.

Our second meeting was sextets, so Steve Surtshin could be part of the group. The players were Sue Fowle, Alison Corson, Steve, Elizabeth, Friederike, and myself, and Steve's wife Betsy also came. Steve expressed his delight many times. It was obvious that this musical exchange

meant a great deal to him. At the end of the evening Friederike suggested that we all visit her in Berlin. She said they had a large house and we could easily be accommodated. It all sounded intriguing. Friederike returned to Germany that next week.


About two weeks later Friederike called us from Berlin. She wanted to know if we had heard the sad news. Steve Surtshin had suffered a fatal heart attack during a Hannukah party. That was a real shock. It added a new meaning to the chamber music we had all just experienced. Elizabeth and I attended the funeral and paid our respects to his family.

After the New Year, we talked about a visit to Berlin. We contacted Friederike to confirm that the invitation was still open. It was. Our departure date was set for May 5 and as it always happens, the date finally arrived. Friederike met us at Tegel and within minutes we were at her home.

Our new surroundings unfolded very quickly. Berlin in the spring is full of flowers and trees in bloom. The city is big and vibrant and full of tourists. Friederike's house is in the southwest part of the city near the Rathaus Steglitz U-Bahn station. We met Friederike's husband Justus Schmidt-Ott and their two lovely daughters, Cora and Tabea. Justus is an attorney who works for the American law firm Hogan and Hartson in Berlin. We learned that their house had been built by Justus' grandfather, an advisor to Emperor Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia. The family name Schmidt-Ott was also the name of the nearest cross street.

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Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah* conducted by Seiji Ozawa. The performance was memorable with Ozawa conducting from memory and without the use of a baton. To our delight we played chamber music with Friederike's friends three times. At the end of our visit we rehearsed the Schubert cello quintet with two of her friends, then performed the first movement at a party at her home. After the performance there was a lovely dinner which we ate outdoors on their patio. It was warm, the first sign of summer. It was an unforgettable evening in Berlin.

The trip made an impression on us that will last for a long time. We found that Germans are very sensitive to their past. Even though Germany is small compared to the U.S. there are strong feelings relating to place of birth. They speak of people in terms of being Prussian, Bavarian, or Berliners. The division of Germany for more than a generation will also affect their thinking for a long time. They all recognize the significant role the U.S. played in bringing about unification. The Holocaust is still very much on their mind. They feel the economic pressure just like we do. It is obvious they are hard working and very creative. They play chamber music with zeal, just like we do. I hope that music will bring us together again. 



Current board members at the wrap up meeting after the College of Marin workshop. Seated, front to back Susan Kates, Bob Goldstein, Bob Nesbet, Sheri Schultz. Standing: Elizabeth Morrison, Bill Horne, Miriam Blatt, Sue Fowle, Frank Lahorgue, Carolyn Lowenthal, Susan Wilson, Ted Rust. Marion Taylor was taking the picture.

College of Marin Workshop Director's Report

by Robert Nesbet

The workshop was held Saturday and Sunday May 30–31, 2009 at the College of Marin (COM) in Kentfield, CA. We used facilities of the Music Department in the Fine Arts Center plus additional rooms in the Harlan Center and Dickson Hall. There were 99 participants on Saturday and 75 on Sunday, with 11 and three coaches on the respective days. All 22 groups on Saturday had a coached assignment for the full day, followed by informal recitals. On Sunday, there were 18 groups in the morning and 18 in the afternoon included five preformed groups with all-day coaching. There were three preformed groups on Saturday.

Three of our wind coaches (Laura Reynolds, oboe, Patricia Shands, clarinet, and David Granger, bassoon) presented a concert to all participants at the end of Saturday afternoon, choosing works from the early 20th century by Tansman, Jolivet, Stravinsky, and Schulhoff. For many string players this was a revelation of the rich wind ensemble literature of this period.

Major contributions to organizing the workshop were made by many members of the CMNC board. Associate director Carolyn Lowenthal helped with recruiting string players as well as fielding snail-mail applications and attendance updates. Elizabeth Morrison recruited and supervised our remarkable coaching faculty. We are very fortunate in the Bay Area to have so many excellent teaching and performing musicians willing to take on a day's coaching of our broad spectrum of participants. Miriam Blatt interacted with pianist applicants, arranging suitable assignments. Susan Kates performed the same service for wind players.

The CMNC Library of chamber music parts and scores is now under the care of Marion Taylor, a retired professional librarian. The library continues to grow and to be maintained in usable condition by replacing well-worn parts. Susan Wilson performed the major task of arranging facilities at College of Marin. The meals and caterer deserve high marks. We were helped greatly by Joanna Pinckney, of COM, who served as on-site coordinator. Finances were handled by CMNC treasurer Sheri Schultz. We are learning to manage a system of on-line payments, less troublesome with every successive workshop. The COM tuition fees were handled with minimal stress.

Our online application system continues to evolve. Ted Rust is supervising a revised web interface, working with an external consultant. Incoming email applications were processed first by Susan Fowle, then adapted for our current database and Workshop Planner software by Ted Rust. A revised Planner, converted to portable software from the original Macintosh Hypercard by Carolyn Lowenthal, was tested successfully in this workshop. Except for minor, easily correctable problems, this appears to be ready for future use.

Feedback reports and on-the-spot impressions indicate that, with a few imperfections, we managed to organize interesting, challenging, but playable assignments and compatible groups. The goal, as always, is to provide a weekend of dedication to the great cultural and esthetic value of chamber music as a performing experience. We look forward to ever more successful workshops in the future. ☺



Founding president Alex Zuckerman plays violin in this 1992 piano quartet. Bill Horne turns pages.



This photo and the one above are among the very few to be found in the early newsletters. This one is also from 1992 and shows Muriel Haupt, Morrie Goldberg and Carl Baum.

Board Members through the Ages

Eleanor Agol, 1989
 Bob Barton, 1992–98
 Joe Beck, 2000–08
 Miriam Blatt, 2001–present
 Joan Bricker, 1989–98
 Katherine Bukstein, 1992–99
 Alison Corson, 2004
 Asher Davison, 2001–08
 Helen Dole, 1989–95
 Merlyn Doleman, 1993–2008
 Debra Fenzel-Alexander, 1989–92
 Sue Fowle, 1995–present
 Gary Friedman, 1991–97
 Larry George, 2005
 Rheta Goldberg, 1990–2006
 Bob Goldstein, 1998–present
 David Gortner, 1989–91
 Quentin Griffith, 1989–91
 Muriel Haupt, 1994–99
 James Hermsted, 1990–91
 Diane Hie, 1989–91
 Bill Horne, 1990–present
 Pat Isham, 1997–99
 Susan Kates, 1998–present
 Al Kaufmann, 1989–2004
 Edwin Kentman, 1989
 Susan Kinlock, 1998
 Tina Kun, 2003–08
 Frank Lahorgue, 2009–present
 Carolyn Lowenthal, 2004–present
 Pat Maximoff, 1995–2001
 Brick Menz, 1990–95
 Elizabeth Morrison, 2000–present
 Robert Nesbet, 1989–present
 Ron Pantan 1989–91
 Marjorie Prindle, 1991–93
 Nancy Rude, 1991–93
 Ted Rust, 2007–present
 Runa Schlaffer, 1989–97
 Sheri Schultz, 2005–present
 Nancy Solomon, 1990–91
 John Sonquist, 1995–99
 Marion Taylor, 2006–present
 Margaret Thornton, 2005–06
 Art Ungar, 2006–08
 Kristy Venstrom, 1989–95
 Joffria Whitfield, 2008–09
 Susan Wilson, 2008–present
 Alex Zuckerman, 1989–2001

Many volunteers have worked very hard to make CMNC workshops run so smoothly. Over the years volunteers have served as webmaster, handled registration duties, organized meals and snacks, prepared CMNC's taxes, made nametags, and much much more. Our heartfelt thanks to all of you. We need you and you are there.

President's Corner

by Bob Goldstein

I have been your president for what seems a long time, since 2001 to my recollection, the year I retired from “work.” Here are some thoughts I have when trying to remember old scenes and people. Please excuse my omission of people that were important to CMNC in the years gone by, as I could not hope to include or even remember all the people who have added to my memories. But I am trying to summon up some stories, not a complete history.

Susan and I were recruited to the board in a phone call from Merlyn Doleman in 1999. It must have been important to me, because I answered the phone, and still remember standing where I was and talking to Merlyn. To me, he was a very fine horn player and all-around gentleman-and-scholar, and I was very gratified to be told that the CMNC board needed some more representation from the wind side of things. How could I say no to this chance to be in a monthly conversation about chamber music with a glittering group of important people? Susan was simply glad to be asked and glad to help out. We started attending the monthly board meetings at Alex Zuckerman's house in Oakland.

From that moment on, Merlyn became a mainstay in the small coterie of people I felt could help me understand what was going on, and who was who. He is a supremely courtly man, a retired banker, and a horn player. He couldn't be more different from myself. It is typical of CMNC (I hope and believe) that people who are greatly different from one another can become friends through music, as did Merlyn and I. He was then the music librarian, an avid computer user, and a great uncle to all who would listen.

Alex Zuckerman was president, Rheta Goldberg the treasurer, and we had a covey of workshop directors including Bill Horne, Bob Nesbet, Al Kaufmann, and Rheta. They took great responsibility for the workings of the workshops, and were accorded a lot of individual latitude in how they ran them. Alex ran our monthly meetings with a mixture of friendliness and stubbornness that reflected the young nature of our organization. I have often thought about CMNC as a startup business, going through stages of development from the very ad hoc to a more structured environment. Back in those days, CMNC was still inventing itself, very dependent upon the commitment of its early board members. It was necessary to rein in the wildly divergent views of prima donna entrepreneurs, to get anything done. Alex's passive and sweet aggressiveness did just that. Our meetings were often

dannybrooks, from which we left exhausted and amazed at the extent of our unruly arguments.

Progress was made. I remember that we started allowing preformed groups, after agonizing sincerely about their effect on our inclusive atmosphere. And based upon the experience of some at the San Diego workshops, we started having master classes on our coached days, instead of the performance sampler. When Elizabeth Morrison and Ralph moved to the Bay Area from Humboldt County, Elizabeth joined the board and brought a great deal of fresh air and creativity to our deliberations. One of her ongoing themes and beliefs is that CMNC should provide what our players want, no matter what the board thought our players should have! Well, people seem to want more and more coaching and that has happened over the years, from the additional coaching in the master class to having coaching on both days of the workshop, now once a year.

One development I remember vividly from my pre-president days on the board is the effort CMNC made to recruit “young” people to our workshops and to the board. Joe Beck spearheaded that effort, and we started by finding two board members who qualified as young: Asher Davison and Miriam Blatt. Then they went ahead with Joe to devise ways of attracting younger players to our workshop ranks. What can I say? We are still largely grey-headed at our workshops, but we are attracting younger players, through word of mouth and the Internet. Younger? Well, under 60. I jest. We have numerous youthful players whom I enjoy seeing and hearing every time.

When the time came for Alex to resign from being president, I was selected and protested weakly. Susan tells me that at one time I was out of the meeting room and Bill Horne said “I think it is going to have to be Bob Goldstein.” When I returned the deed was done, though I thought the honor should go to one of the older guard, who were experienced and wise. Of course I was still an amateur at the lore and traditions of CMNC, I didn’t know how to avoid stepping on people’s tender toes regarding their *idé fixés*, and I couldn’t tell which string players were Heifetz and Casals, and which weren’t. But I yielded to the temptations of pontification—and a sense that CMNC was ready to move forward in several directions. I thought it was time for us to start using the Internet for our “mission-critical” activities such as workshop applications and collecting payments. And I thought we should begin to worry more about holding onto our workshop venues and broadening our choice of sites.

Rheta Goldberg was often the power behind the

throne, and none of us dared doubt her intelligence and her energy. She was formidable! And during her lifetime, I never made a decision as president without trying it out first on Rheta. She also, along with Merlyn, was one of those figures that I could discuss anything with, and who could always ward off failure. Another such figure was John Sonquist, pianist and database guy. John had developed the first version of CMNC’s web site, and managed to convert our database from various tools to Filemaker, which became a valuable tool over the next decade. Can you imagine someone coming from Santa Barbara to Oakland every month to attend our fractious board meetings? John was that dedicated, not to mention very determined and persuasive about computer topics.

CMNC developed a fine computer program which allows workshop directors to take a group of applicants, form them into groups, match the groups with our music library, and ultimately come up with the assignments, coaches, and rooms for a workshop. It is called the Workshop Planner and was written originally by Al Kaufman and by Bob Nesbet, who is still on our board and one of the original founders of CMNC. The original Planner still serves as a model and touchstone for future versions, but it has two problems: it is written in a dead language called Hypercard that runs only on Macintosh computers, and it is disconnected from the data that feeds it: the list of applicants and their personal data such as instrument, phone number, and whether they have paid for the workshop(!). So over the past several years, CMNC has struggled to correct these problems. Two women have taken the lead in that, Sue Fowle and Carolyn Lowenthal. They are both very modest and retiring, so it my pleasure to shine a little light on their work. This goes on into the future. Ted Rust joined the board to our great satisfaction and now coordinates our web site development. Working with these three and with Bob Nesbet has been the final act in my career as a computer-nerd, which started in 1962!

Our CMNC board of directors has evolved into a very affectionate and loyal group, which places a value upon staying civil and warm toward each other even as we deal with big issues. We made it to twenty, and we will make the it rest of the way, with our love of music and of the chamber music community overcoming every obstacle. ♪

We made it to twenty ... with our love of music and of the chamber music community overcoming every obstacle.



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Chamber Musicians of
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