

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tried and True *or* Something New

by Bill Horne

Our last CMNC workshop displayed an extraordinary effort on the part of its director, Elizabeth Morrison (who dreamed up the project), as well as many other board members, to produce a day featuring women composers. I was very impressed by the positive feedback from the attendees, the great majority of whom approached these unusual assignments with an open attitude and enjoyed them.

Our board has always made an effort to provide something special in our workshops, something members *could* possibly do on their own, but which they would be unlikely to seek out themselves. This has led us to add coaching, preformed groups, master classes, coaches' concerts, and others perks with which we flavor our workshops. Major assets we use in planning workshops are both the expertise of our seasoned board in a wide variety of musical literature, and our wonderful library which has an incredible panoply of works, from standards, to relatively unknown works, for a wide variety of ensembles.

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When assigning works to workshop groups, we want to provide a balance of standard works by the master composers, which deserve a strong place in our repertoire, and works by less familiar composers. The great composers never cease to amaze me with the skill and artistry of their compositions. I can study them repeatedly and still gain new insights into them. If I have a choice in performing for an audience, I almost always revert to a favorite composer, e.g. Brahms, Beethoven, or Dvorak, because their pieces are just so delightful. There is nothing wrong with enjoying these works over and over. Even professionals are always reaching to improve their interpretation and mastery of them.

I also believe that there are benefits and enjoyment to be derived from exploring lesser known works and composers. A major factor in success in chamber music is the ability to sight-read. Our encounters with unfamiliar music enhance our sight reading ability by strengthening our rhythmic skills, familiarizing us with remote key

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to apply, go to www.cmnc.org.

CMNC is delighted to present this workshop as part of Spring Session One of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). Our workshop appears on the OLLI website as "[Chamber Music Intensive](#)."

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Under our new relationship with OLLI, each CMNC participant must register individually with OLLI, rather than registering as a group as we have done in the past. Details can be found on cmnc.org. The small amount of additional effort required is very much

worthwhile, as our association with OLLI is what allows us to have affordable access to this wonderful venue. We are most grateful to Gwen Sanderson, Director of OLLI at SFSU, Chris Hepp, Director of Development, College of Liberal & Creative Arts, and our great friends and supporters the Alexander String Quartet, for all their help in securing our ongoing relationship with OLLI.

In association with our workshop, OLLI is presenting a lecture series by Peter Susskind called "The History and Masterpieces of Chamber Music," on six Fridays beginning on January 22, 2016, from 1-3 PM, in Room CA255 on the main campus. Participants who are enrolled in the CMNC/OLLI workshop are warmly invited to attend these lectures at no additional cost, and we hope you will consider doing so. Included in the series is a special short lecture by Mr. Susskind on famous amateur chamber musicians, which will take place at our workshop following the coaches' concert.

If you are new to the CMNC workshops, please visit our website, cmnc.org, for more information. You may join the workshop as an individual or as a member of a preformed group. CMNC notifies participants of their music assignment and the players in their group at least two weeks before the workshop. We encourage you to get your hands on the music beforehand, practice it,

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signatures and accidentals and unfamiliar harmonies.

I have spent a lot of time searching for “undiscovered masterpieces,” and although I have found many delightful pieces, they are not necessarily uniformly delightful. An example of a flawed work is Chausson's Piano Quartet, op. 30, which has three superb movements. In the finale Chausson seems to have gotten stuck in Franck's concept of a cyclical work, and went round and round, throwing in every theme all mixed together. That movement deters me from wanting to perform the work, but I can enjoy the other three movements. Conversely, the Piano Trio of Arno Babadjanian is uniformly a magnificent work, with three contrasting movements, all with Armenian ethnic flavor.

Our CMNC Library has a wealth of unusual works, as well as standards. I notice, however, when I read the reports of which works were checked out for sight-reading at a workshop, that most of us revert to the standard classics. I might wish that workshop members might be a little more adventurous in freelancing. However, we all get a little tired after a long day, and perhaps do not wish to experiment further, but enjoy our old friends.

Another effort on our part has been to try to find more works for larger ensembles, so that we can offer a variety of these in workshops. In the past year or two we have added quite a few, including septets and octets for mixed wind and strings groups by Blumenfeld and Bolz, and string sextets by Edouard Franck, Suter, Glière and Dohnányi. Again, we hope that you will enjoy these works, though you may not be apt to try them on your own.

When I get to direct a workshop, I tend to get a bit adventurous in my assignments, and one might find more works by Bridge, Draeseke, Fuchs, Kiel, Novak, Onslow, Schulhoff, Turina, Walton or even Eric Zeisl on the program. The collective wisdom of the board usually reins in my adventurous bent, so that the assignments are not too far out. We do carefully review comments on the feedback forms, and try to achieve a reasonable mixture of familiar and novel music. We want most of all to please you; that is our primary job, so I hope you will keep giving us feedback on how we are doing. 🐉

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Catherine Jennings Joins CMNC Board

Welcome to New Board Member Catherine Jennings

We are happy to announce that Catherine Jennings has joined the CMNC Board of Directors. Upon joining the board, Catherine said, “I'm much honored to be part of an organization that I believe in so very strongly!”

Though Catherine originally studied drums as a child, once she picked up a flute and was able to produce a good note the first time she tried, it was clear that her future lay with the flute. Throughout her early educational career, Catherine somehow managed to avoid attending schools which had orchestras and thus discovered chamber music at a young age. She continued with her flute studies, ultimately earning a degree in flute performance from the DePaul School of Music in Chicago. More recently, Catherine has continued her flute studies with contemporary music specialist Stacey Pelinka.



Catherine Jennings

Catherine is the principal flutist with the Prometheus Symphony Orchestra in Oakland. She also performs regularly in chamber music concerts and her own solo flute recitals.

Catherine's life in music came full circle in 2004 when she became the music librarian at Oakland Public Library, where one of her responsibilities is maintaining the incredible [circulating chamber music collection](#). If you are not familiar with this collection, please take a look at this overview of it. If you are not an Oakland Public Library cardholder, you may be able to borrow music from this collection via your public library and the [Link+ interlibrary loan system](#).

We at CMNC are so lucky to have Catherine, with her deep knowledge of the chamber music repertoire, joining us on the board. With Marion Taylor's retirement as CMNC's librarian (see page 10 of this newsletter), Catherine will be assuming the role of co-librarian with Amy Apel (a former librarian colleague of Catherine's at Oakland Public Library). 🐉