

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

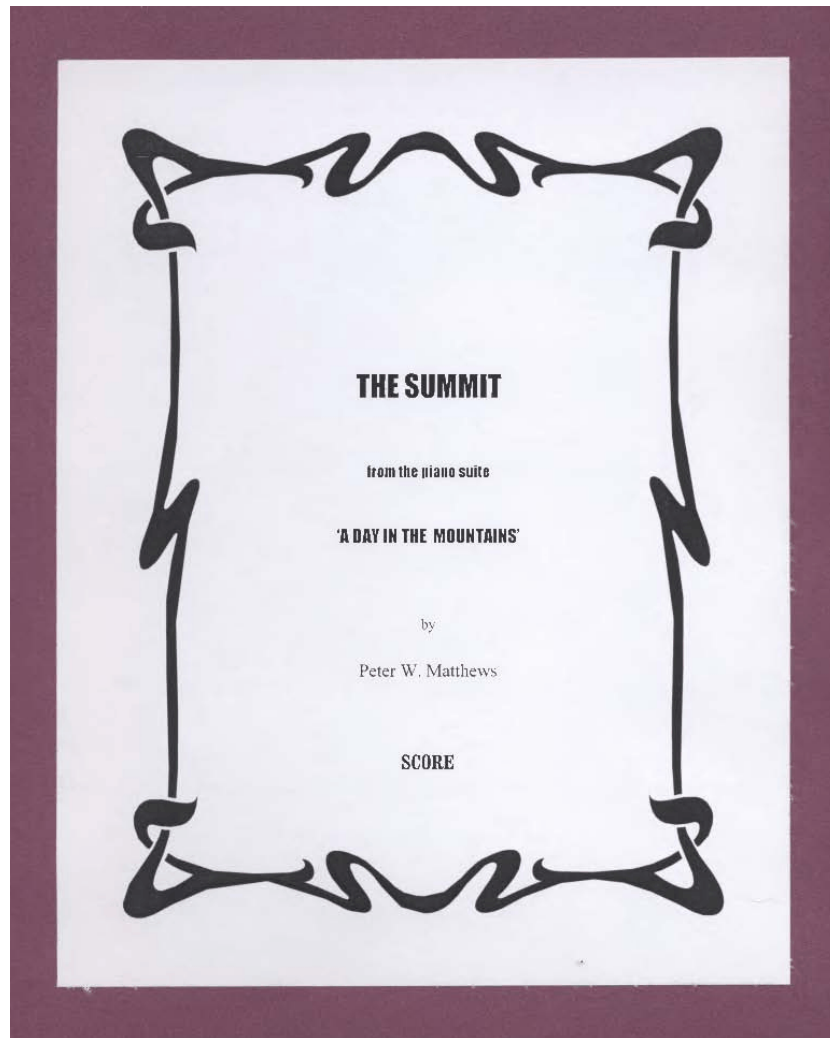


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A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC:

A LIFELONG-LEARNING MODEL FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

It was very much a beginning orchestra and players of any age and ability were encouraged to join. There were no auditions and that policy continues to the present day. One of his ideas that he loved strongly was that the orchestra needed to be open-ended to encourage all adults who were interested to join. In those early days Derek was the treasurer (he collected the fees for the VSB), he was the librarian, he had the music in cardboard boxes in the basement of his house, he arranged for the concerts, he set up the chairs and the music stands and he acted as a stage manager.¹

Adult Music Education: ...activities and experiences that can give direct personal satisfaction to laymen and that can be supportive of lifelong interests in music.²

The fastest-growing part of our population is above the age of fifty, and most of them are looking forward to many years of good health and the opportunity to become involved in new and rewarding activities. Music is an ideal activity for senior adults. The aesthetic, intellectual, physical, and social aspects of performing music—especially in groups—can improve health and quality of life.³

I: A LITTLE BACKGROUND



Quietly and without fanfare, a pioneering model of community involvement which brings together adult education, music performance, public education and lifelong learning has emerged in Vancouver over the past 40 years. I'm referring to a unique community orchestra with the rather unusual name of "A Little Night Music."⁴ And, no—the name isn't the English translation of Mozart's most popular String Serenade. It derives from a much more pedestrian source: a course offering in the Vancouver School Board's night school program.

1972 was a good year for visionaries in Canada's music education circles. In Halifax, the Music Department, under the leadership of Chalmers Doane, introduced a major adult education component to the community in co-operation with the School Board's Continuing Education Department. Subsequent interest was so high that by 1975 there was an adult orchestra, concert band, jazz band, a touring ukulele ensemble and over 1,000 adult students in a range of classes and programs. Doane's philosophy was clear:

If the program is any good at all, it's got to continue. There's no point in working at something if it's going to die....In several years these groups will be good enough that the kids who stay in Halifax can go right in from our system. They will be better than the adults, but they will be adults themselves and they will raise the standards of the adult groups.⁵

A continent away in Vancouver, the situation was quite different. Here, it was an individual teacher initiative that put theories about lifelong education and involvement in music performance into practice. It originated with Kitsilano Secondary School music specialist Derek MacDermot, who pioneered a new opportunity for musical engagement. It was directed to anyone interested in playing an instrument and making music with others. For the next 30 years, MacDermot nurtured and conducted a growing ensemble that functioned outside of Vancouver's public school-based music programs. Two music educators working at opposite ends of the country were building lifelong learning models that answered that continuing criticism of music education: as soon as most music students leave school, the instruments are laid aside to gather their yearly layer upon layer of dust.

So it was, that here on the west coast in September of 1972, 17 adults interested in music making signed up for 20 workshop/rehearsal sessions which were to be held at the school in which MacDermot taught. As in Halifax, the initiative had come from a visionary, only this time, it was a single, inspirational teacher working entirely on his own without the departmental resources and support characteristic of the Halifax venture. A current long-term member of the orchestra recalled:

He was absolutely dedicated to the orchestra. He gave it everything that he had in terms of making it work and in terms of making it a really positive environment. He loved music and he encouraged a love for music in other people and brought them in without auditions. He was just a warm, cheerful, giving person. He put everything into it and he was very tolerant; never said anything bad about anyone.⁶

An overview of the ALNM's history is available at the orchestra's website, www.alnm.ca, but mentioning a few of the highlights here will help set the context for its ongoing development during the first decade of the new millennium.

In 1989, in order to broaden the scope of the orchestra and allow for year-round rehearsals, MacDermot had to separate from the school board, a school venue being no longer a possibility since janitorial staff were on day shift during the summer months. In the transformation of his night school ensemble into a community orchestra, it would continue to take all comers, would be completely volunteer, would fund itself, and would, of necessity, find alternative venues for rehearsals.

It had already grown to chamber orchestra size and, when instruments were unavailable, Derek either rewrote parts for what was missing or his wife was conveniently available for piano fill-ins. Since sheet

music was a core essential, MacDermot collected a substantial repertoire of parts over the years, this becoming the basis for what is now known as the Derek MacDermot Library. Therein lies a story, told by a former librarian of the orchestra, volunteer, of course:

I took it over when it became too hard for him to manage. I moved it to my house. He had it in his apartment in Marpole. It was all in liquor store boxes and he knew where everything was but it was massive. When we moved it and were able to get hold of some used file cabinets there was a lot of music and it needed work. It wasn't all in score order and there were some parts missing but he had done an incredible job. He had been living with it in his apartment somehow....It was amazing. Our basement wasn't the best place...[but] another woman and I spent a lot of time going through it, trying to organize it....I have a very clear image of our dining room table covered with music as we go round and round. [So you brought your expertise?] Our commitment anyway.⁷

The orchestra, now with a major expansion in its rehearsal season, continued to take on all comers without undue concern about such matters as a balanced instrumentation; and while open rehearsals were scheduled several times during the year for anyone interested in listening, the group's main public appearance was a special concert held each July in Robson Square.

After three decades of devotion to the idea of a musical organization where "...players of all ages and abilities would be welcome, and it wouldn't matter if there were three flutes and seven trombones," where there would be "no hard words and no pressure" [and where] "the main goals of A Little Night Music were to be fun, improvement and playing for others in the community,"⁸ MacDermot's failing health led to auditions for a new music director and conductor. In 2002, one of BC's most experienced and best known music educators, Peter Stigings, was chosen to carry on the *pro-bono* work of building the orchestra.

After attending several of the group's concerts over the past year, I was intrigued by what I saw and heard, particularly in relation to the continuing music education problem of discontinuity—discontinuity, that is, in terms of students simply dropping their instruments after years of involvement in school music programs and an all-too-prevalent professional view of "music education" which is focused primarily on the elementary and secondary schools of public education systems, often to the exclusion of the wider community.

What I heard was a wide range of repertoire ranging from complete classical symphonies to such popular genres as movie scores played in a first-rate combination theatre and concert hall in Magee Secondary School, a venue that, when the government turned thumbs down on including such a facility in rebuilding the school, owed its existence entirely to a major fund-raising effort in the community serviced by the school.

What I saw was a full instrumentation symphony orchestra which appeared to include players of every age. I wanted more information about what was going on so I asked the Conductor and Music Director for an interview to talk about why he took on the job in the first place, the orchestra's organization, and the ongoing development process which has taken place since he took over the responsibilities of leadership.



II: THE MUSICAL DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR ¹



A Central Question

Why does a veteran music educator with 35 years of professional experience, a provincial reputation, and a supervisory position at UBC's Faculty of Education, volunteer to take on the myriad responsibilities of Conductor and Musical Director for an adult community orchestra? Here's why:

When I was given the opportunity of auditioning for the orchestra I made it clear I was more than happy to continue as Derek had. Derek didn't receive any honorarium for his 30 years that he put in, so the thought went through my mind at the time, back in 2002,

¹ Excerpted from recorded interviews with Peter Stigings, Music Director and Conductor of ALNM on August 1st and 15th, 2011.

that I'd like to continue in a similar vein of volunteering my time. I reflected back on my early upbringing and I recalled very vividly Mom and Dad providing violin lessons for both my brother and myself back in the late forties. Things were pretty rough, we'd just come out of World War II, jobs were scarce, there was a shortage of money but I can still remember my mother digging into her change purse and digging out quarters, nickels and dimes, coming up with enough to pay the \$2.50 for my lesson. I was born and raised in Vancouver and I would truck off down to my lessons eight blocks from our home.

It became very obvious as I grew up that my parents had made quite a sacrifice to provide those lessons for my brother and myself. Also—over the years of my teaching in the Vancouver, Saanich and Coquitlam school districts, I've been blessed to have many outstanding teachers, mentors, colleagues and friends who have given so much of themselves: who've propped me up when I fell down and who've supported me and encouraged me. I agreed to take on the orchestra because I wanted to give something back to the community—the community that had been so good to me: family, friends, and colleagues over the years—I thought that now it's time for me not to be the taker but to be the giver and give something back. I had seen in my brief conversations with Derek before he passed away that he had a similar philosophy and it had stood him well for 30 years.

I should mention that I'm not a professional conductor. I'm a music educator and I still consider myself to be a student, a lifelong learner of music, and I want to continue my musical growth and become more familiar with the orchestral repertoire. So I felt the orchestra would give me this opportunity since I really wasn't all that familiar with a lot of the literature.

When I was in my youth, I was able to play in a number of orchestras, the Vancouver Junior Symphony and the King Edward Orchestra (the high school I went to), so in a way I'm going back to my roots by wanting to explore more about this vast world of orchestra music: the repertoire, the genres, and the history. The ALNM musicians have given me that opportunity to continue being a student, to continue exploring music. In turn, I want to share my love and passion for music and attempt to be a conduit to the musicians in ALNM. I'm quite happy to accept musicians in the orchestra that have rather limited experience—some of them have come in taking up a 2nd or a 3rd instrument or an instrument that they hadn't played before and wanting to make meaningful music in an ensemble.

I've encouraged some of them to form chamber ensembles within the orchestra and perform in conjunction with our concerts. Our concerts have always been free concerts, with the philosophy that anyone from babes-in-arms to seniors on fixed income can feel free to attend and hopefully we can continue to share our music with the community for many years to come.

- CT Okay. Given that both Derek and yourself wanted to give something back to the community, describe the kinds of satisfaction you get from working with the orchestra.
- PS There's the opportunity of trying to bring a group of individuals together who have a common interest, namely music, to play a few chords in tune and to experience the joy and love of music; the enjoyment of working with individuals; to work with a collective ensemble. They've come from all different walks of life and a variety of ages—some of them respond very well and with some of them it takes a great deal of patience to encourage them to participate and pull their weight in the musical ensemble.
- CT How does this compare with the kind of stimulation you experienced when you were teaching at the secondary school level?

- PS In some respects it's similar, a continuation, but there are irregularities which happen much more so with an adult community group: health problems when someone has to take time off for a needed operation or players deciding it's not convenient to take their holidays in July and August, but go to Maui in January, or Honolulu in November. So there is 10 to 15 percent of the orchestra which will be absent in any given week because of a variety of circumstances that are happening in their life. It took me a while to become accepting of this. It isn't like the school system where attendance is compulsory unless one is sick but there are many more reasons for adults missing: some are caregivers for parents and on very short notice have to take time off to be supportive.
- CT This is a different reality from teaching, isn't it?
- PS It's definitely the reality, so one has to take that into consideration when rehearsing and realize that you may have gone over that material in section C last week but there might have been a core of musicians for a variety of reasons who did not get that information so you have to be very patient and repeat. I have a lot more patience now than when I was in the school system.
- CT But you've come to be able to encompass that and deal with frustration because of other positives that come along with it?
- PS Yes: musicians who are able to tolerate me—musicians who are willing to dig in and work on the music between rehearsals—but I've also found out that adult musicians, similar to student musicians, can have nervous moments in performance and some of the best laid plans of mice and men don't always materialize at the concert. You have to be able to deal with it because they need just as much positive encouragement and stroking at times as younger students do.
- CT Did you know that Peter Matthews was working on the composition you're going to premiere next season?
- PS I became privy to the information about nine months ago when I threw out the idea to the orchestra that if any of them had compositions of their own they'd like to bring to me, we might be able to explore some opportunities down the road for performing some original compositions, written or arranged by people in the orchestra. Unknown to me, Peter Matthews had already been doing some writing for the piano and *The Summit* is actually a movement from a piano suite that he composed and has now orchestrated with the instrumentation of our particular orchestra in mind.
- CT You introduced a lot of ideas when you were teaching secondary school and the same thing is happening with the orchestra. Tell me about ones that are working well.
- PS Encouragement of chamber ensembles within the orchestra—players that get together on their own initiative and decide on a time and place to work on chamber music—then providing them with the opportunity of performing either pre-concert or during concert. And I like to encourage members to reach a level where they're able to handle a piece as the soloist with the orchestra accompaniment. For the past couple of years, I have replaced some of our full orchestra rehearsals with sectionals. This has involved many musicians and colleague music educators. Initially, the orchestra was not receptive to the sectionals, but the attitude has changed and the members look forward to the detailed work that can be accomplished.
- CT One of the things that has been accomplished over your time with the orchestra is some real linkage between the public system and a completely independent organization but you're also linking to UBC. Do you see both of those linkages as something which in the future would be a growth area for the whole music education enterprise?

- PS Very definitely. I guess one of the things which concerns me about the public system right now is that there is still a large number of students who are actively participating in their school music program and then when they graduate they forget about their instruments. For some, it's a case of them going on to higher education and they get involved with their studies at the university or college level. But it's a pity there's such a small percentage of them actually continuing to perform in an ensemble or choir where they can continue their musical growth. Hence, I'm doing everything I can to let the students at Magee and other schools that I visit, know of the opportunities to actually continue their music making with our community orchestra.
- CT Was this a component in your thinking in agreeing to take on a community orchestra?
- PS Definitely, but I was also trying to get a better linkage with UBC, especially with any students who might be considering going into music education—giving them the opportunity of coming in and taking some leadership roles in our orchestra as section leaders—giving them the opportunity of doing some student conducting when I'm away, because if any of those students decide to take a job in a smaller community they could very easily find themselves being called on to be a community orchestra or band leader in addition to what they might be doing in the school system.
- CT Do you have any ideas about what role a music department like UBC's should be playing in the whole area of community music development?
- PS Personally, I would like to see a better linkage between the school music programs and the university music schools by having ensembles from the university available for performances in the schools, encouraging some of those students at UBC to assist in teaching and perhaps doing volunteer tutoring in the school programs.
- CT Would this be problematic for the BCTF?
- PS No problem there as far as I know because the volunteers would not be paid and would not be taking a full-time teaching job away from a BCTF member. It would be supplementing in much the same way as parents signing up their child for tutoring in math or science. There has been a UBC summer music institute that's been running for a number of years now that operates in July for a couple of weeks that has provided an opportunity for high school students; but, like everything else it is costly, so, while there are many students who might like to participate, they just can't afford it. It would be great if government funding was available to UBC so that the tuition costs of that program could be reduced to make it affordable for any students who might like to go and perhaps even have a government program that would partially pay for transportation for those coming from the interior of the province.
- CT You mentioned that ALNM is at a certain level of community orchestra development. Is it reasonable to think that in the future there would be some kind of an association of community orchestras so that individual members, once they had reached a certain point, would be able to move to another level?
- PS I think that's a reasonable goal to work towards. I am encouraging members in our orchestra who feel they need a challenge to by all means audition and move on to other orchestras. In fact, many of our orchestra members also play in other ensembles, such as community bands.
- CT Any other ways you encourage the musical and technical growth of your musicians?
- PS Yes—encouraging them to take private lessons and attend concerts of amateur and professional ensembles. I would also like to see more of our players attending VSO rehearsals and concerts. We've had that opportunity and a limited number of our players have taken advantage of it.

Through our email 'list' of members, we have suggested 'YouTube' and recommended recordings of the repertoire we are working on.

CT Turning now to specifics: you conducted the July concert at Chambers United Church Hall in 2002 and were appointed Musical Director and Conductor the following September. Given your work load at the time, how were you able to manage organizational components of the orchestra?

PS I realized that when I assumed the role there were many things I didn't have time to do and so I took it upon myself to form a committee of half a dozen orchestra members that would start the process of legitimizing the orchestra in terms of a proper board of directors, getting it registered with the BC government, and maybe eventually with the federal government as a non-profit society. The board would then assume some of the responsibilities such as making certain that the bills were paid, rehearsal halls were booked and music was maintained in a catalogued library.

CT How long did it take you to get all of these organizational components in place?

PS It was a lengthy process; it took the better part of four or five years because we were working with a lawyer to set up our constitution and by-laws so they would not only satisfy the BC government but if and when we decided to apply to Ottawa for a charitable tax number we would not have to rewrite the constitution.

CT Were you able to get volunteer legal services?

PS No. We paid for a lawyer who had a lot of experience with a number of similar community music organizations.

CT Where was your funding coming from?

PS Completely from the membership.

CT So everybody paid to be part of the orchestra?

PS Yes. The membership dues basically are paying for the rental of the rehearsal hall and the purchase of music.

CT What were you doing at the time you accepted these responsibilities?

PS I had retired from the public system in 1999. I had just completed 24 years at Magee Secondary School as Chairman of the Fine Arts Department. In September 1999, I made a commitment to assist at UBC's Faculty of Education as a sessional lecturer and supervise student teachers doing their professional year practice. I was basically "semi-retired".

CT So over the next four to five year period you built an administrative structure for the orchestra so you could have access to provincial funding?

PS We've never applied to the provincial government for funding. We have never received any government grants.

CT Was there a reason for that?

PS The board didn't want the hassle of dealing with the paper work. What I wanted was to get a board in place that would look after the administrative side of the orchestra.

CT Music storage is a huge problem. How did you handle that?

- PS With the co-operation of Chris Haas, current Head of the Magee Fine Arts Department, we have six four-drawer legal size filing cabinets in the balcony of the Magee band room.
- CT This suggests that you've managed to maintain contact with the school.
- PS Yes—with quite a few of the staff members and the office staff. I am so happy to be able to work in a space that I dreamed about, but during my teaching years I was in a drab basement room in the old school. The new Magee opened in September of 1999 and the Fine Arts Wing and Theatre were opened a year later.
- CT Were you involved in the building of the theatre?
- PS I was involved for approximately ten years on a planning committee sitting with the school department heads on a regular monthly basis, making recommendations about the school and how it was going to be organized and designed. So one of my objectives was to try and consolidate the fine arts department into one area. In the old school, we were so scattered it was very difficult to have any sort of inter-communication. We had a very difficult battle with the provincial government. The architectural plans went back and forth to Victoria at least three or four times because the government took the stand they were not prepared to pay for a theatre to be part of the new Magee school: they don't have theatres in Fort St. John or Prince Rupert attached to the schools so why do we need one in Vancouver at Magee. So I threw out an idea to the Magee Music Society and school administration when I was working on the plans with the architectural firm: "Why don't we figure out a way that we could reach out to the community and raise the money to build the theatre?"
- CT Was this a society you had built when you were there?
- PS Yes—another project which I started when I commenced work at Magee in 1975.
- CT So the Magee Music Society had been going for the duration of your time there. Its function?
- PS To support the Magee Music Department; to be the financial supporter for the Department; to assist the Department in planning for retreats, culture exchanges, trips; and to look after the fund raising so we could purchase additional instruments and music beyond what the VSB was able to supply us with, especially when times were tough and funding was being cut at the local level.
- CT Now these were parents?
- PS Yes.
- CT And they asked you to become involved in the planning process for the new school?
- PS No. The administration asked me to represent the Fine Arts Department staff on the planning committee with my colleague department heads. However, the administration on my suggestion decided that a community planning committee be struck, separate from the Magee Music Society, that would involve local businesses, media and philanthropic graduates of Magee to raise the necessary funds for building a theatre that could be used by the music and drama departments as well as the community.
- CT Did you organize this?
- PS No. I was available in an advisory role and, for example, I recommended that the theatre seats be sold to the public with a suitable brass plaque attached to identify the donor.



CT So this has stood you in very good stead now because you have rehearsal space and space for your filing cabinets and the music which must be increasing by the year—that's a problem isn't it? —space.

PS Yes, because we've almost outgrown the band room at Magee. As much as we might want to add additional orchestra members beyond the 60 to 65 we have, there really isn't room for them in that room. I had originally conceived that room as being somewhat larger but with the government cuts from Victoria, the square footage allocation for all classrooms and related spaces were reduced over the 10 years we were in the planning stages.

CT You must have the support of the Magee administration.

PS Yes. Very much so, as well as the current Music Department staff at Magee.

CT I gathered from the last concert that you do things together—it doesn't fall into the standard kind of organization.

PS The ALNM Orchestra shares its concert programs with the Magee ensembles. We have set it up so that the December concert is with the Magee Chorus⁹; the March concert traditionally has been shared with the Wind Ensemble; and the Spring concert is with the Magee String Orchestra. Where possible, we try and combine the two groups at the end of the program for the finale. We like to have the young musicians on stage with the lifelong learners at the same time. This also gives the orchestra members the opportunity of being inspired by the young people in the Magee music program. Fortunately for the ALNM, this has resulted in a number of Magee students joining our ranks and becoming lifelong learners.

CT Now that's important!

PS Well, we want to establish a link there. Let me back up. When I took over the orchestra in 2002, it was an orchestra of senior citizens with lots of grey hair and I realized if we didn't do something about recruiting younger players this orchestra was going to die eventually. Hence, one of my objectives when I first became involved was to encourage some of my former students who I knew could play fairly well to dig those instruments out, dust them off and get the chops back up and continue with their music education as an adult. So now we have a much better balance. We have players ranging from 15 to 85 and we're drawing players from all over the Lower Mainland, including Point Roberts, WA.

CT So they're getting a lot out of the experience.

- PS Because we're what we can call an intermediate level community orchestra; we're not trying to compete with the Vancouver Philharmonic Orchestra or other groups at that level. We're filling a niche for players who aren't at that level and aren't able to handle the audition requirements—so—rather than playing complete symphonies sometimes we work on a single movement.
- CT But you also do complete symphonies.
- PS Yes, which we have done. We did Haydn's London Symphony #104 and the Mozart 25 in their entirety.
- CT When you first started bringing in players who had gone through your programs, how did the original members react?
- PS They were very happy—very receptive and welcoming—fresh young blood—some of them came in playing instruments that the orchestra never had: bass clarinet and bassoon, for example. We'd never had a full trombone section, so with the addition of a couple of my players we were able to fill out the sections.
- CT You've also brought people in from UBC.
- PS That's right—students wanting more experience. We've also given some of those students from UBC a chance to do some conducting. For example, this past June there were three sight reading sessions of the new music for next year and all of it was introduced by four UBC students who were members of the orchestra who wanted conducting experience.
- CT Take me through all of the orchestra's activities in the course of a season. Start at the beginning and give me an idea of everything that goes on.
- PS Well, our season begins in September and we have a couple of weeks of read-throughs of the music we're preparing for the year.
- CT So everybody knows right at the start what's ahead?
- PS All the music that we'll be working on for the year is in the folder from the first rehearsal. Some of it will be used for sight reading purposes but a large portion will be programmed for concerts over the course of the year. We now do four concerts during the season between September and June: one in December, one in March, and two in June. We're also the only orchestra to participate in the Ladner Bandfest which is organized each year by the Delta Music Makers, an adult community band. During the course of the year, we have full orchestra rehearsals two hours in length each Monday night as well as sectionals.
- CT For each concert I was at, there was a small chamber group performing while the audience was coming in. Is that also a part of your usual programming?
- PS I've made a point of encouraging chamber ensembles. They rehearse on their own when it's convenient for members of the ensemble and we give them a chance to perform in the pre-concert either in the atrium or on the forestage of the Magee Theatre. We've had a number of string quartets, woodwind quintets and brass ensembles perform in the pre-concerts.
- CT Is there a fair amount of socializing in the orchestra—you know—at Christmas and on special occasions and after concerts?

- PS We haven't done a lot of socializing but we do have a seniors' tea at our June concert where we've extended an invitation to senior citizen homes, seniors' groups, churches and community centres to come and enjoy an hour and a half of our music and then have a little social time with the orchestra members. This has graciously been organized by the Magee Music Society. The orchestra members are encouraged to stay and mix with our guests.
- CT How did that get started?
- PS When I was teaching music at Magee, I introduced a seniors' tea as part of our community outreach after our December and June concerts, hosted by Home Economics and Music. Now we carry on the tradition with the ALNM orchestra.
- CT Let me go back to the demands of orchestral logistics.
- PS I'm very fortunate in that I've several orchestra members who have taken on the responsibility of such matters as librarianship and stage managing. We have one cellist who comes in every Monday at least an hour and a half before the rehearsal commences and sets up all the chairs and music stands. Then we have another group of folks who reset the chairs for the ensemble class at Magee.
- CT This has to be the result of organization and diplomacy because if they didn't want to do it, it wouldn't get done.
- PS I've continually tried to stress to them that it's not my orchestra—it's their orchestra—it's a community orchestra. We're all buying into it and there will be responsibilities beyond being a performer in the orchestra; there are responsibilities that will have to be picked up by various members of the orchestra at different times.
- CT In other words, you don't just arrive, open your instrument case, take it out and then go sit down to play?
- PS Right.
- CT Do you still have to do any re-scoring?
- PS Some. For example, I have a very enthusiastic alto saxophonist so I assign him parts so that he isn't sitting without music to play. I'm also aware that some scores leave the brasses silent for long periods and that's a problem for our orchestra. So I also do some re-scoring to make sure I keep them involved.
- CT Tell me about the work backgrounds of your players.
- PS We have people ranging from professional doctors, dentists, lawyers, accountants, teachers, through to homemakers, students both at the high school and university level, and retirees. Quite a range.
- CT And their musical experience?
- PS Again, quite a range—from a couple of years on an instrument to 40 plus years. Some, at one time, played professionally in orchestras and then in their retirement years they've decided to come and help us out.
- CT Do you have former members who phone up and say can I come in and play for a while?

PS Yes.

CT You've already talked about the linkage of this orchestra with the public system but what we haven't talked about are problems. What's your most unresolvable problem?

PS Trying to find percussionists that are willing to make a commitment and stay with the orchestra.

CT How so?

PS They start playing professionally and don't have time.

CT But there must also be musical difficulties.

PS There's a problem with balance with some of the brass players who don't understand the art of playing their instrument in a symphony orchestra as opposed to playing a brass instrument in a concert band.

CT To what extent are they open enough to learn that there is a difference?

PS They're gradually learning.

CT You can make inroads?

PS We're slowly learning and improving. We're working very hard to have a balance between all sections.

CT For that you need lots of strings.

PS We haven't always had a full string section. When I came in 2002, we were definitely on the short end of string players; we had just a half dozen first violins, half a dozen seconds, one viola, and a couple of cellos and one bass, so one of the things I've been trying to do over the years is to build up the size and quality of the string section.

CT It's certainly coming along very nicely. I enjoyed watching your first stand in the firsts. They certainly seemed to enjoy what they're doing. Are they kids from UBC?

PS One is graduating from UBC and one is finishing her professional year in Education and will be going out into the school system this fall.

CT Hopefully, they'll stay in the orchestra.

PS I hope so too.

CT Are there jobs?

PS There are jobs as "Teachers on Call" (TOC) in the Lower Mainland and many job opportunities in the hinterland of our province.

CT We talked briefly about funding earlier but without specifics. How is the orchestra funded?

PS The orchestra is completely funded by the membership fee (currently \$110.00) each member pays for the season, September through June. Our biggest expense is the rental of space at Magee for rehearsals.

- CT Do you get a reasonable rate from the VSB?
- PS Yes, it is reasonable and we do have the cooperation of the Magee Music Department in terms of allowing us to use their Wenger chairs, Manhasset music stands and large percussion instruments. We don't own any of that equipment.
- CT It's just as well you don't own it because there would be a substantial space problem for storage.
- PS That's one of the reasons we moved from a church hall to Magee because in the church hall there was absolutely no storage space. Even if we'd wanted to borrow timpani there was no place for us to store them on site so we had to take them away immediately after the rehearsal. We're also very fortunate that we have a fine concert hall/theatre to perform in and a stage big enough to accommodate an orchestra of our size along with good lighting and comfortable chairs for the audience.
- CT Are you interested in a larger orchestra than you have now?
- PS Yes, if we had the rehearsal space, because of the number of enquiries that we get from people who are eager to play in a community orchestra and ask to be placed on our waiting list.
- CT Tell me about the waiting lists.
- PS A number of enquiries have come from people who have found us on our web site, some who played in an orchestra previously, and some are people who have moved into the city recently because of jobs from other parts of Canada and overseas who would like to continue playing in a community ensemble. The problem is that the overall size has to be balanced with the number of string players, given the additional forces that could readily be added in the woodwind and brass sections. Right now, for example, there are openings for first violins, string basses and percussion.
- CT Any other problems you have to deal with on an ongoing basis?
- PS Nothing comes to mind that's of major consequence. You know you've always got to be doing a checkup to make sure the programs are ready for the concert, that volunteers are recruited to look after the ushering, that people at the school are available to look after the lighting and the sound; but we're very fortunate because we've had excellent cooperation from the Magee school and staff, be it janitorial and secretarial as well as teaching staff.

III: THE MUSICIANS



Andante e risoluto, $J = 90$ from the suite 'A Day in the Mountains' Peter W. Matthews

* Players with a fifth string play the lower note where applicable!

For the coming season which will celebrate the orchestra's 40th anniversary, there's something entirely new on the books. It's a premiere: the first composition by a member of the orchestra. First chair violist and physicist, Peter Matthews, has completed *The Summit*, a work written originally for piano and now arranged specifically for the orchestral resources of A Little Night Music. All parts are ready and will be in the folders for the first rehearsal in September 2011.

Given this calibre of interest and involvement from orchestra members, just what *is* the perspective of the musicians who form A Little Night Music? What kind of musical and educational background do they come from? What triggered their love of performing instrumental music? What's the nature of the satisfaction they get from the small ensembles, the weekly rehearsals, the sectionals and the public concerts? I put these and other questions to three members of the orchestra

ON BACKGROUNDS ²

Educational backgrounds vary. The common component in the orchestra members I spoke to was university graduation. As for family background, as everyone knows, the role of music ranges from being a central loved and ever-present component to absolute zero. Influence varies. The son of an acquaintance of mine who grew up surrounded by classical music has rejected the genre so completely and absolutely that one never can tell what the response will be. The musicians recalled:

On my mother's side they had more means so the children had music lessons. My mother played cello in high school. She and her brother were amateur musicians all their lives, so there was a really strong reinforcement from that side. We were immersed in it all the time. I was surrounded with it.

I had a radio. That was the most musical thing in my family. My Dad liked singing pop tunes but my Mom was tone deaf. She couldn't sing at all but she liked buying audio cassettes.

I have no music courses from College...it never occurred to me to do that. I had piano lessons for nine years as a child and I played clarinet in grades seven and eight and again in grades 11 and 12. When high school was over I closed the clarinet case and never thought about it again. I was never thrilled with it. I just worked hard enough to be first chair because of the ego thing but it was never my instrument. I was never in love with it. I played clarinet because my mother played clarinet— when I was old enough she handed me her clarinet. [Then a gap?] 37 years.

ON "TRIGGERS"

A 12 year old is bussed to her first community orchestra concert. *Peter and the Wolf* is on the program. There is an epiphany: the beginning of a lifelong love for one of the instruments. On retirement 55 years later, after teaching remedial reading and mathematics, performing stand-up comedy, and a career in the theatre, a dream is realized. Lessons begin on that instrument which had such impact 43 years ago, taught by a retired first chair from the New York Philharmonic. This leads to anywhere from one to three hours of practice every day, formation of an ensemble to perform in community venues like seniors' residences and schools, and what can best be described as a new career as local impressario.

I'd been playing for about a year. It occurred to me I needed a lot more music and a lot more playing opportunities to push myself....I needed the instrument in my hands to sound like the one in my head so I started a wind ensemble. It's been going on for five years. We practice once a week....We perform all the time....We play for art gallery openings and community centre things, play at the church and do benefits, play at rest homes and retirement centres, do Christmas concerts all over the place.

The "tone-deaf" mother of a two year old for reasons unknown brings home a set of the complete Beethoven Symphonies on audio cassette. The child is allowed to open the tapes, learns how to insert them and starts listening to Beethoven. At school, the first instrument is the violin and the teacher quickly learns that here is a student with an ear for tuning the class instruments. After secondary school and university: a career in music. An unfortunate arm injury from too much practicing interferes with an intensive professional performance career but there's wide-ranging experience in choir, strings, brass and conducting and a professional involvement in both performance and teaching.

² All comments and observations are taken from recorded conversations with three musicians of the ALNM Orchestra on August 15th, 25th and 26th respectively.

I decided to study music when I was in grade three. I really liked music from when I was very little. I started on violin in grade three. It was an orchestra. I said I wanted to play flute but they said we have all kinds of flute players but we're running out of violins so I should play violin.

There wasn't money for private lessons but instrumental music was available at school. After university graduation and a stint in the concert band, the chosen instrument is put aside until Derek MacDermot starts ALNM. The instrument is dusted off and what turns out to be a long-term association with the orchestra gets off the ground as an integral component of a professional academic career. Three years ago, in retirement, private lessons begin with regular daily practicing.

I had school music lessons. There wasn't the money for private lessons. When I was a child there were four of us. In school there was one teacher who taught all the instruments but there were very few interested in [mine] so I actually had private lessons with him....I formed a number of bad habits that I'm just now trying to get away from .

ON SATISFACTION

After graduation from secondary school and university, why do adults who are not pursuing a professional career in music decide to join a community orchestra at any point along the age spectrum?

There's another reason I do it and this may seem really off the wall: there are children on the planet who need to hear and see music being played; it's not so much just a pair of ears—children have all these senses—they need to see it and hear it and experience it. We can't just leave them with the gadget stuck in their ear. It's not the same.

It's the high point of my week to go. It's just exhilarating to be with other musicians and to play good music. I don't like all the music that we play but I like enough of it that it's just exhilarating, you know, to be surrounded by 60 to 70 other musicians with a full range of instruments and the balance in the orchestra is quite remarkable. To be part of that commitment is very, very special. It would take a lot to make me give it up. I will make a lot of adjustments in my schedule to make sure I miss as little as possible. Sometimes there are things like visiting grandchildren that can't be helped but I do everything possible to be there.

To be able to sing through your instrument: you have a lot of pride in that.

I've learned a lot about the Magee music program through that involvement and I guess it's good for them to see that ancient looking people like me can play and enjoy it—to know that people like their grandparents or whatever are out there playing....I imagine the oldest member of the orchestra could be around 80.

It's really cool to hang out with people who aren't music majors, studying music. A lot of people there have another day job but they just love music; they're passionate about it. They may have played an instrument in elementary or high school or later on in their life they decide they want to learn cello so they pick up a cello and join the orchestra. I find it's really cool to hang out with people like that—not just musicians but amateur musicians as well. I really like that.

[You loved the sound of the instrument right from the beginning?] Right from the beginning and here's someone like that playing it and it was a life-changing moment.

When the doors are opened and you pay attention, and when the big door opens you go through the door even if you're 55. I wasn't dead yet; I still love the [instrument]...I'm still crazy about it.

ON COMMITMENT

I think one very important aspect of the orchestra is that it's a very serious commitment. The atmosphere is one of dedication. You're expected to participate fully. It's not for fooling around, it's not for showing you're better than somebody else, it's about being a hard-working member of the group and achieving as best we can. When you're there for a two hour rehearsal, it's a two hour rehearsal and it's good. You learn a lot. Yes. It's very stimulating.

I think the orchestra really is a significant phenomenon. You know, Derek deserves an enormous amount of recognition for starting it and seeing it through as far as he did. He did it as long as he could. He did it until he could no longer stand and conduct. I remember very well the last rehearsal he did when he just couldn't carry on any more and he waved cheerfully as he left.

I should emphasize more the incredible commitment of Derek in building the music library: just getting hold of it, borrowing from other orchestras, copying, returning. He had a lot of feelers out to groups like the Vancouver Junior Symphony to borrow music but managing a music library the way he did without the facility of space and the file cabinets and making it readily accessible must have been incredibly time-consuming. But he did it.

When I travel the [instrument] goes with me. I play every day. I'll be taking it to France. We'll be gone for two weeks and the [instrument] will go with me.

ON LEARNING MUSIC

I believe everyone can learn music. It doesn't matter the age. I started in Suzuki but what I believe is that anyone can learn at any age. It's a passion. With passion, anything is possible.

I started [teaching] when I was 19 or 20. I started helping kids practice if I was babysitting and then eventually they said, "Why don't you give lessons?" I thought, "I'll give it a shot," when I was thinking about other things I could do. More and more I'm realizing I'm helping kids learn about music.

I'm still so new to performing orchestra music I pretty much find all of it interesting. I don't get thrilled when I open the music in the new folder and see four sharps, but it's always a challenge so I technically take apart any classical work. It's a huge job. One of the worst things that's happened to me is that my ears have developed. I'm in an awkward stage of my career as an amateur when I practically hate everything I'm doing because I've learned what I want it to sound like. You have to be able to hear it. We've worked on my ears.

ON CONDUCTORS, CONDUCTING & REPERTOIRE

Curt Jansen—my hat is off to him—he's a very brave man. He stood in front of the band with baton and grinned and bore it (however the expression goes) while a new person age 55 sat in the front row of his band—nerves of steel.

When we did the Pirates of the Caribbean, I learned a lot. It was really cool to see how Peter conducts and how Chris [Haas] conducts the music and then how the Japanese

conductor conducts. So for me it's beneficial to see so many different ways. It's just one song but I get to see three different conductors.

Sometimes Ken Hsieh, former Assistant Conductor, VSO, would bring in some of his conducting students and these are all music graduates who are busy teaching their own orchestras and wind ensembles and he will take them through a class using our orchestra as the group to work with. It's amazing what he can show them to do because it's all in the baton to draw the music out of the musicians so the challenge then for them is to draw that kind of music out of high school students or old people like myself.

I learn about balance and Chris Haas is very keen about pitch, how to get a whole orchestra in tune—not just one person but the whole orchestra—he will use really simple chords, then he'll tune them. It's really useful to me to see how he does the whole section. [just the brass?] No: brass, winds and percussion.

I prefer the more classical music. I don't mind the show tunes but some of the more popular music I'd just as soon not play. I'd be happy playing all classical music. Some of the popular pieces are excerpted and the transitions are very abrupt: you get selections from a musical and you jump quickly from one number to another. I don't care for that particularly—I find it quite disjointed.

The music Peter chooses is a learning process for me. Each concert he chooses different styles of music. In June, he will choose a lot of pop music because we're doing benefits, but in most pieces we don't play the original. Sometimes I say, "Why am I playing this?" because I know the original score but I also get to see about arranging music. It's always interesting to see how Peter chooses the music and says, "Let's have a shot at this."

Peter has put in a lot of more difficult repertoire; he's pushing us. I like how he brought in younger musicians—not a lot—just a few like me, but still being able to hang out with the older folks. I like that. And he brought in several conductors to do rehearsals. I liked that a lot. I get to see how a piece can be delivered in different ways and how tempos are different.

Peter Stigings should have a badge of honour. The conductor of any community group must [surely] take a bottle of valium and a lot of prayer. In a professional group, you audition to get in. You audition to keep your place. People move up and down. In community music from what I've seen, and I'm still rather new at it, your seat is determined by how long your butt has been in that chair—nothing to do with how well you play.

It's a tricky situation; I wouldn't want to be the music director for a group like that. You don't want to hurt people's feelings. On the other hand, you don't want to disappoint everybody else in the orchestra, so it's a fine balance.

ON SELF-SELECTION

One of them realized he shouldn't be in an orchestra quite yet. He was too new and he was right about that. One of them was young and she got married and started having children. One lady got to the point where her arthritis was so bad and her eye sight—she had to give up.

ON PRIVATE LESSONS

I'm aware of a lot of the problems but I've corrected a lot of mistakes and my tone is better. The lessons are making a big difference and I have them with the player who sits next to

me. We do duet work and it really helps to be playing with someone else in the lesson because we hear each other's mistakes and just playing off against someone else is really valuable. More often than not she'll do us together—which is kind of different—and it works. We're both mature players and at about the same level so it works well. We work a lot on intonation and rhythm but intonation particularly, trying to improve our ear.

I'd never written a fan letter and I had to weasel my way into lessons. I wrote my first fan letter and he emailed me back and I said, "If you're ever playing in this area please let me know." He wrote back and said, "As a matter of fact I'm playing this week." So I said, "We will be there." After the concert was over I just trotted right on stage and said, "Hello. I need lessons." [and he said] Yes, he would be willing to give me a lesson and smiled patiently. Well—he is willing to teach everything he knows to anyone who wants to learn. He's very patient and not scary.

I think adults should only take lessons if they're interested in improving, and I'm serious about the adults with the lessons: if you want to improve, you take lessons. If you don't care about it then don't do the lessons

ON PERSONALITY INTERACTION

She's a very good leader in an extremely tactful way. If there's something we're not doing right, she'll tell us but in a very appropriate and kind way and I really appreciate that. I've known her for a long time. She was in the orchestra a long time ago but got busy but now she's come back which I'm very grateful for.

ON SECTIONALS AND PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEERS

I think they're really valuable. It's an opportunity to work with the Magee teachers. It's really useful and I really appreciate their willingness to spend their time since they've already been there since 7:00 o'clock in the morning teaching and still they will stay on. It's good, it's intensive and they have high expectations. We really learn from it. I think it's a very good move and it doesn't detract from what we normally do.

ON JOINT CONCERTS WITH MAGEE PERFORMANCE GROUPS

It's really exciting and I understand that some of the students may be playing with us in one particularly challenging piece we're going to be playing for the 40th anniversary concert. It's a contemporary wild crazy piece and it needs a lot of percussion that we don't have. We have had trouble getting percussion players

ON NERVES

If it means playing for an audience, I get filled with terror but it's probably good for me anyway .

I sat there the first year terrified. Not from the playing but from counting 60 measures and getting lost. It was just very scary because in band music you're playing constantly; you go to a concert but you don't think about how it all fits together— it's just one thing coming at you that you enjoy. But to have to be tiny pieces of the jig-saw puzzle is frightening, I found.

For some people when you say the word audition they're going to freak out and do 50% of what they're capable—so playing the solo in a rehearsal they're so immersed in the music they're playing their best—whereas, if you say, "Play the solo and we're all going to listen"

it's a different situation. But you've got to give people a chance to show what they're capable of.

ON PRACTICING

I practice every day 45 minutes to an hour—not always, because I was [away] for a week with grandchildren—but as much as possible.

When I'm lazy I'll practice an hour but on a good day I'll practice two and on an excellent day I'll practice three.

I couldn't practice at home so I had to use the park but that wasn't possible in winter so I had to stop during the winter months.

ON OTHER MUSICAL ACTIVITY

Our tiny little church (and there's only one in town) is over 100 years old and the church decided to turn itself into an emergency shelter for the town so that meant bringing in an emergency generator and cots and have that all on hand in case we had trouble when we needed to use the building because there aren't many large buildings, so the church council trotted off, got an emergency generator, got it installed and that was \$13,000. They didn't have \$13,000 so I said, "Okay. I'll bring in some musicians and do some concerts and we'll ask for donations and see if we can't get that paid off." That was 37 concerts ago. The generator got paid off pretty quickly. The people in town appreciated what the church had done and in the meantime we were having a lot of fun with these concerts

I found out that Jonathan played organ and I said, "Oh come and sub at the church because Sylvia needs a break occasionally." So we got him right away to play organ at the church. Then I said, "Please bring a group to play a concert for us." Well—he's the assistant conductor of the Delta Youth Orchestra and he has a string ensemble that he teaches in particular, so he said, "Can I bring the students down?" and I said, "Love it, love it!" I'd never gotten a whole string group for just a string concert.

I didn't consider myself a piano teacher [although there was a background of piano lessons for nine years] because I had no training in teaching music and I had no music classes in college—just a couple of students. It's interesting because I approached it from a teacher's point of view rather than a musician's. For the tiny ones, I think that's likely a good approach because if you're explaining something to a child and it doesn't make sense to them I consider it my fault—I'm not explaining it so it makes sense to them. So I try another approach because they will learn if I say it in the right words and the right order. It's been pretty much my experience that if a teacher approaches it from point A to point B and point C and finds a direction that makes sense to the child, the child will get it. There are kids who are tone deaf or the piano is not their instrument but even today, I still teach beginners because when the piano came into this house a neighbour saw it and asked if I could teach piano so I explained that I'm a teacher, not a musician but I can try and we'll see how it goes. I explain that to every parent. I have 22 students this year. I don't advertise. They have to know someone who knows someone.

There are three or four adults in my beginners orchestra which I conduct at the church; the senior orchestra in the church is mostly adults. There are 25 in the beginners group and between 30 and 40 in the senior orchestra in which I play. It's really interesting. We play hymns of course and our conductor, who's retired, does arrangements. We did a Bach arrangement last year in my orchestra and last year we did an arrangement of Dvorak's New World and a movement of the Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto. Many of the violin

players had it when they were young and then dropped it and now they're picking it up again; they practiced hard and then they auditioned and got in.

ON PAYING TO PLAY

He was aghast at the thought people had to pay money to play. That was not the way it worked for him. They paid him to show up. I found a way to explain it to him: "You play golf, you pay greens fees, they're never going to put you in the master's tour, no-one's ever going to watch you play on tv and you love it and do it every week because you enjoy it." There are musicians all over the planet playing every week because they love it. We're not going to see them on television, we're not going to pay them to do it, but we're not going to deny them the opportunity to experience the joy of music when they're doing it themselves.

If you can do what you love and get people to pay you: great. But even if I were 30 years younger, I don't know if I would want the stress of having to be perfect. The professional musicians—if they miss a note a year they're upset about it.

It costs less than bowling.

ON PERFORMANCE

I have two rules for performing and I tell this to all my students when they do anything to perform. One: "You're there for the audience. If you're not going to make them comfortable and entertained, you're doing it wrong." Two: "You need to be enjoying the music. They go hand in hand. If you throw yourself into the music, experience the moments and listen to the singing that comes out of your instrument, then you're going to help accomplish rule number one much more quickly. But it's not about you; it's about the music."

ON THE COMMUNITY ROLE OF AMATEUR MUSICIANS

Amateur musicians cover the planet—I'm pretty sure about that. Now we don't know what influence that has on children, but I know what it did to me when I was young and that was not a professional orchestra. It was the orchestra for our town but it really impacted me. So anytime anyone's playing, they have no idea who it's going to impact, now or 40 years later. I think we all have to just keep on doing it because there's a new generation of people on the planet and they have to take over and move music forward. I encourage all my piano kids to write music. There's a running joke. Some of our friends in the orchestra, 15 or 20 years ago, were in the orchestra and didn't belong because they were new on their instruments—and they also began on instruments in their fifties and they ended up in A Little Night Music.

ON THE COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA & BAND SCENE

I've never seen so many community groups as there are in the Vancouver area. It's huge. When we do the BandFest, we sponsor 20 groups. A Little Night Music is the only orchestra invited to play in that, which is a fabulous honour and we take advantage of it. The people love hearing an orchestra right there in the gazebo in Memorial Park.

ON PROBLEMS

I think we really have to think about ways of getting the word out that we exist and that we offer opportunities for musicians. There's always the risk, especially if Peter wasn't there with his contacts, we'd start diminishing and losing members so I think we need to think about publicity as much as possible. It's really challenging to get the publicity out—how to

get ourselves better known. I know that the player that sits next to me did a lot about putting notices in various places but we didn't get that much response. I know there was a concert aimed particularly at seniors but it seemed that despite all the efforts that were made not that many heard about it.

One of the problems with this many groups and musicians at all levels and it's all amateur musicians: you have to make sure you get the right person plugged into the right group.

IV: THE MODEL

In 1931, MENC appointed a committee on Community Music to give "formal recognition to the obligation the public schools assume in furthering those activities which are most likely to carry over into adult life."¹⁰ Music educators have, until recently, only intermittently questioned their responsibilities for more than teaching programs in the elementary and secondary schools, occasionally wondering why their students drop their instruments on graduation.¹¹ Over the past 40 years, however, there has been a growing awareness of a possible and ultimately crucial role for music educators, not only when those students graduate, but in answering a need of adults who, somewhere along the age curve, want to explore music performance, with or without previous experience. The International Society for Music Education, for example, has devoted two conferences to the issue: "Music as a Dimension of Lifelong Education"¹² and "The Education of Amateur Musicians."¹³ More recently, with the tidal wave of baby-boomers moving into retirement, theoretical papers have been appearing in such major field publications as the *MENC Journal*, the *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, and the *International Music Education Journal*.

According to Theodore Normann, one of the grand old men of American music education, if there is a functioning music program in the schools, this should, "if conditions are ripe, provide for a great florescence in the performance of music in the home, neighborhood and community. But....somewhere along the line there must be provided a directing force and initiative which will insure the fruition of the musical forces so carefully nurtured in the elementary and secondary schools."¹⁴ The problem, of course, is finding that "directing force" and "initiative".

There are certainly initiatives underway. In 1992, Ernst and Emmons reported on a new ensemble program for senior adults at the Eastman School of Music. "Adults ranging in age from fifty to eighty-three are fulfilling their dreams of learning to play an instrument, read music, and play in a band." The New Horizons Band program is diverse with "a broad spectrum of professional backgrounds...along with various physical qualities....[but] The common element among all members is the desire to achieve on a musical instrument."¹⁵ Most of the literature, however, is still theoretical and hortatory. There is little available in the way of working models. Fortunately, we have a successful model based entirely on individual "initiative" (with the requisite "directing force") right here in Vancouver. It's called A Little Night Music.

Now might be a good time for Lower Mainland music teachers to check out one or more of their concerts and, along with their colleagues across the country, consider how a community musical institution has emerged without outside funding from government agencies and established links to both a large urban public school system and a provincial university. And—in the process of thinking about what has been accomplished—consider how this BC model has resolved the core logistics, musical, technical, and diplomatic problems associated with a 65 member community symphony orchestra. Interested, anyone?

Let me conclude this excursion into the relatively unfamiliar world of lifelong music involvement in amateur performance ensembles with this comment from the most famous amateur violinist of our time:

"If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music....I get most joy in life out of music....I do know that I get most joy in life out of my violin."¹⁶

Just in case you're wondering—the physicist is Albert Einstein.

[Author: Dr. Cam Trowsdale is a former editor of the *B.C. Music Educator* (1978-1988), Professor Emeritus, Dept. Of Visual and Performing Arts, UBC, and Concertmaster Emeritus of two orchestras: the Vancouver Opera Association Orchestra and the former CBC Radio Orchestra.]

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1. Interview 110730.

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9. This year, Magee's Chamber Choir, one of six in the Music Department, became the BC Provincial Champions.

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