



## *The Cobbett Association for Chamber Music Research*

6827 Roxbury Dr. Sarasota, Fl. 34231 Tel. 813-922-6986

# BERGONZI Quartet Has Promising Future

Among new musical ensembles on the American scene is the very promising Bergonzi String Quartet in residence at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida. Each of its members had a distinguished career in solo and quartet work before joining together in September, 1992, at the university where they are professors of music.

The group was named after the famous violin maker of Cremona, Italy, Carlo Bergonzi (1685-1747) who was considered the best pupil of Stradivari. First violinist Thomas Moore actually plays a Bergonzi violin. Quartet members are as follows:

**Thomas Moore**, 1st violinist, taught and performed world-wide in the venerable Pro Arte Quartet which is in residence at the University of Wisconsin.

**Glenn Basham**, 2nd violinist, founded and performed extensively with the Freimann Quartet as well as the Chester Quartet. He was also artistic director of the Northeast Indiana Chamber Music Festival.

**Pamela McConnell**, violist, toured internationally with the Rowe Quartet which performed the complete Beethoven, Bartok, and Brahms cycles. She also played in the Slee Quartet-in-Residence at SUNY, Buffalo.

**Ross Harbaugh**, cellist, founded the internationally acclaimed New World String Quartet (Naumburg Prize, 1977, Quartet-in-Residence at Harvard University, 1985-90, 13 recordings, Grand Prix du Disque.)



Pictured above (left to right): Ross Harbaugh, cellist; Pamela McConnell, violist; Glenn Basham, 2nd violinist; Thomas Moore, 1st violinist

Each quartet member is dedicated to teaching as well as touring, and brings to the ensemble's performance a depth of understanding and caring that first class teaching and performing require.

In May the group performed and gave master classes in Hilversum at the Amsterdam School of the Arts, and presented other concerts in that city. This September and October, the quartet will be performing in Festival Miami, an annual musical event. Planned for the 1993-94 season are concerts in Salzburg, Vienna, Sardinia, and Trento, Italy.

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## Adventures in String Quintets

Our listing and evaluations of non-standard string quintets for 2 violins, 2 violas, and cello is enclosed with this newsletter.

Members of our Palm Strings Quartet have played most of these over the years, either at chamber music workshops or when visiting musicians were available. We are also indebted to Raymond Silvertrust, of our Advisory Council, and our member, Alan West of England, for sharing their experiences with string quintets.

Evaluations of string quintets for 2 violins, viola, and 2 cellos will be sent to members with our next newsletter in October, 1993.

Great composers were attracted to the string quintet combination because of the additional depth and sonority that is achieved by adding an extra viola and cello to the traditional string quartet.

Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Dvorak, and Mendelssohn all composed very successful quintets that have stood the test of time and are still popular today in the home and on the concert stage. As indicated in our report, there are many valuable non-standard quintets that are neglected and deserve to be played. Collecting this music is certainly desirable because it offers an opportunity for a quartet to accommodate visiting viola and cello players.

Alan West, a very ardent collector and player of string quintets, wrote the following about his group's experiences with quintets:

"... to our surprise, when we did some sums recently, we realized that we have found approximately 150 quintets and have played most of these at least once. Counting those in the local libraries, we have a choice of about 80 to play at our regular sessions, and we own over 50 ourselves. Surely we have not yet exhausted the possibilities. . . What other treasures are perhaps lying unplayed and collecting dust somewhere in libraries or private collections all over this country and perhaps in other parts of the world?"

## The Lark Quartet Completes Its 8th Ambitious Season

The Lark Quartet, one of the first professional ensembles to join the Cobbett Association, has completed its 8th season.

Their recent bulletin lists the highlights of the 1993-94 season which will include the following: extensive tours of Germany with more than 20 concerts; return trip to Russia for performances in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Nijhni Novgorod; appointment as Quartet-in-Residence at Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH; participation in the Lyon Festival, France, at the invitation of Bruno Giurana; concert tours of Italy and New Zealand; and a full season of extensive U.S. touring, including seven concerts in the Hawaiian Islands.

## Congratulations, Felicity!



Felicity Coltman, founder and Executive Director of the Austin, Texas, Chamber Music Center, received the prestigious 1993 Gruber Award for excellence in chamber music teaching. The award was presented to her by Chamber Music America in April. The Cobbett Association is proud to have Felicity as a member.

She holds a degree in music from the University of Kansas at Lawrence and diplomas from the Royal Schools of Music and Trinity College in London. She has performed and taught extensively in the United States and abroad.

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# WILLIAM ALWYN -- Versatile English Composer



WILLIAM ALWYN (1905-1985) deserves more attention than he has received, due to his fine talents and creativity. He exhibited these unusual talents as a composer, teacher, flutist, painter, poet, writer, pianist, and conductor.

He was a pupil of J. B. McEwen, Scottish composer and principal of the Royal Academy of Music, who schooled him in modern music. In 1927, Alwyn was appointed professor of composition at the academy. He became famous when his 5 symphonies were recorded. He also composed three concerto grosso, other orchestral works, and piano pieces, and was praised for his 60 film scores during the war years.

Not satisfied with his early works, he began a serious study of the music of his favorite composers -- Liszt, Elgar, Puccini, Debussy, Scriabin, Stravinsky, and Wagner. This resulted in his developing a more advanced neo-classic style and technique without abandoning melody.

The works reviewed here are his most successful contributions to chamber music and should not be forgotten. They are well suited to performance by professional groups, and advanced amateurs who are willing to study the parts will find them very rewarding. All the following compositions are rated difficult to play and of excellent musical value.

## String Quartets

**No. 1 in D Minor (1955).** In this very successful quartet, one feels shades of Schubert, Ravel, and late Beethoven, but Alwyn adds his own originality and late romantic outlook. It begins with a moderato, followed by a spritely scherzo. Next is an adagio which features a serene and introspective melody. The finale allegro is in a vigorous mood and recalls the first subject of the opening movement.

## No. 2 -- "Spring Waters" (1975).

In spite of the program title, this quartet is an abstract work with considerable romantic and emotional impact and much use of

chromatics. Each movement expresses the composer's moods as he reflects on life's changes from youth to old age. Moderato-Lento; Allegro scherzando; Adagio-allegro moderato.

**No. 3 (1984).** This quartet of only two movements is more advanced in harmony. The allegro molto opens with dissonant and rhythmic chords followed by a brooding theme which is developed. The adagio-allegro-adagio movement is elegiac in nature with a dance-like middle section, then back to the serious atmosphere and ending in a quiet mood. This is the most difficult and complex of all Alwyn's quartets.

## String Trio

**String Trio (1962).** This work belongs to the period when Alwyn was experimenting with short scale groups. The 1st movement, allegro molto-meno mosso-tempo primo-adagio, is built on a 12-tone row which alternates between vigorous passages and tranquil themes. It is developed in canon form by each instrument. The next, molto vivace, is a scherzo with a strong tonal center of C major with a trio and coda. The 3rd movement is a cavatina (andante) in a reflective mood. The 4th, allegro ma non troppo-andante espressivo, alternates between a fast tempo and a slow lyric mood and ends with a brief coda. There are pungent harmonies and impressionistic effects throughout the trio.

## Piano Quartet

**Rhapsody for Piano Quartet (1938).** This short 10 minute work begins, moderato e deciso, and has a strong rhythmic theme which dominates the work. It is in rhapsodic form with a big build-up, then fading away to a tranquil middle section. Following is a build-up to a climax with a repeat of the original theme.

If the opportunity to play the above works is not available, one should at least hear them because of their unusual interest. They were published by Alfred Lengnick and Company. Lyrita and other English record companies have recorded many of Alwyn's works. Those listed above are now available as CD's on the Chandos label.

## Sweden Excels in Chamber Music

Our member, David William-Olssen of Stockholm, Sweden, who also serves on the International Advisory Council of the Amateur Chamber Music Players, Inc., recently wrote about his chamber music activities in the Stockholm area.

He is a member of the Mazer Quartet Society which was founded in 1849. The society now has 350 members with many professionals playing along with amateurs.

Last March, the group honored Helen Rice, a founder and leader of the Amateur Chamber Music Players for almost forty years. On this occasion they played 87 pieces of chamber music which involved 53 people, starting at 10 a.m. and finishing at 11 p.m. They played in eight rooms in a mansion west of Stockholm, taking time out for meals and changing combinations of players.

Shortly after this "marathon" event, they had an Onslow night and played four of the best Onslow quartets.

On Feb. 19, the society celebrated the 250th birthday anniversary of Luigi Boccherini by playing 14 of his string quintets.

### Coming Soon . . .

Profile on English Composers -- Frank Bridge and His Chamber Music

Evaluations for String Quintets with Two Cellos

The String Quartets of Nikolai Miaskovsky  
Evaluations of Piano Quartets (Jan, 1994)

### BERGONZI (Cont. from Page 1)

The Bergonzi Quartet is the newest ensemble to join the Cobbett Association and has indicated an interest in playing non-standard chamber works as well as the great classics.

For further information and booking details, contact Ross Harbaugh, Bergonzi Quartet, University of Miami, School of Music, P.O. Box 248165, Coral Gables, Fl. 33124-7710. Phone: 305-667-8013 or 305-284-5813 Fax: 305-284-2290.

## Elkin Music International -- New Source for Chamber Music

A new source of music in print was opened early this year in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida -- Elkin Music International Inc. -- "For All The World's Great Music"

In their advertising the company states, "Elkin is a one-stop source for all foreign and domestic music."

The company offers discounts, and orders can be placed by calling its toll free number -- 1-800-FOR-ELKIN. FAX: 305-522-3609. Address: 16 Northeast 4th St., Suite 140, Ft Lauderdale, FL 33301.


## Coordinator's Corner

As I worked night and day on this July newsletter, I was often distracted by the discouraging news -- terrible floods, earthquakes, unemployment, and the Bosnia situation to name only a few. And then we add the relentless heat and resulting lethargy and fatigue. What really keeps us going under such circumstances, and how do we meet schedules? Well, I like to count my blessings, and one of these is music.

There is nothing like the inspiration of good music to divert our minds from the gloom and keep us on the target. What better therapy!

Bach kept going for 65 years, and look what he produced! And let's not forget that he inscribed the following on the first page of every composition: "To the glory of God!" And I hasten to add ". . . from whom all blessings flow."

Robert Maas

 The purpose of this organization is to study, evaluate, and preserve rare and neglected chamber music of special merit, and to share information and encourage the performance of such music.