

Oboists in the News

By Daniel Stolper
Lansing, Michigan

Mark Ostoich presented a recital on October 20, 1998 in the Corbett Auditorium of the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music as part of the CCM faculty artist series. Assisted by Donna Loewy, piano; Kurt Sassmannshaus, violin; Lee Fiser, cello; and Eiji Hashimoto, harpsichord, he performed the *Trio Sonata in B Minor* of CPE Bach, the Poulenc *Sonata*, and the *Sonata, Op. 13* by Gustav Schreck. William Ludwig, professor of bassoon at the Louisiana State University and principal bassoonist of the Baton Rouge Symphony (and formerly Mr. Ostoich's colleague in both these organizations) assisted in the *Serenade - Duo voor Hobo en Fagott (1949)* of Cor de Groot and in the 1994 *Trio* of Jean Francaix.

Libby Van Cleve, one of the foremost interpreters of contemporary music for the oboe, was the featured soloist last November for Opus 415, a San Francisco new music marathon. She played *Dark Waters* by Ingram Marshall, a piece for English horn, tape, and live electronics. While in California, she also presented classes for composers and oboists at San Francisco State University and at Stanford University. Later that month she played a solo recital presented by Extension Works in Boston. She performed a program of contemporary music including works for solo oboe, as well as oboe, oboe d'amore, and English horn with electronics. Ending the program was Jack Vees' *Tattooed Barbie*, which featured Van Cleve on an electronically modified oboe with Vees on 12-string electric guitar. Vees and Van Cleve are featured on a recently released CD, *Coastal Traces* on the OO Disc label. The CD has received favorable reviews in the *Village Voice*, *American Record Guide*, and *Time Out*.



Libby Van Cleve

Libby Van Cleve has performed as soloist throughout North America at venues such as New York's Merkin Hall, Guggenheim Museum, Alternative Museum, and CBGB's, Hartford's Real Art Ways, the Portland Gallery of Art, The Banff Centre, CBC Radio, WNYC's "New Sounds", and at numerous colleges and universities. Works have been commissioned for her by the National Endowment for the Arts, Connecticut Commission for the Arts,

Canada Council, and the Minnesota Composers Forum. She has been awarded residencies at the Yellow Springs Artist Colony and the Banff Centre, and she won the prestigious Yale School of Music Alumni Association Prize. Ms. Van Cleve received her DMA from the Yale School of Music, her MFA from the California Institute of the Arts, and her BA from Bowdoin College. Her teachers have included **Ronald Roseman**, **Allan Vogel**, and **Basil Reeve**.

Stephen Hammer, the distinguished oboist, is artistic director of the New York Collegium, a new period instrument and vocal ensemble that presented its debut concert on January 15, 1999 in New York's Town Hall. The program included Bach's cantatas BWV 214 and BWV 30a, as well as Rameau's suite from *Les Surprises de l'Amour*. Founding music director Gustav Leonhardt conducted. The ensemble includes some of America's most distinguished instrumental and vocal baroque specialists. Mr. Hammer can be heard as soloist on the group's debut CD of Telemann concerti in the *C Minor Concerto for Oboe and Strings* and in the *E Major Concerto for Traverso, Oboe d'Amore, Viola d'Amore and Strings*.

Mark Biggam, oboist and composer, heard his newest work *4 Pieces for Flute, Oboe, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Harpsichord* receive its world premiere in performances by the Rembrandt Chamber Players on February 14 and 15 at the Lutkin Hall in Evanston, Illinois and at DePaul University's Concert Hall in Chicago. The concerts also included Francois Couperin's *Inutile Ritratto dell'amore* for Oboe d'amore, Cello, and Harpsichord, and Ned Rorem's *Lovers: A Narrative in Ten Scenes for Harpsichord, Oboe, Cello, and Percussion*. The concerts, in a nod to St. Valentine, were titled "Music for a Little Romance". The Rembrandt Chamber Players includes some of the best musical talent in the Chicago area. Its members include Sandra Morgan, flutist; **Robert Morgan**, oboist; Sharon Polifrone, violinist; Keith Conant, violist; Barbara Haffner, cellist; and harpsichordist David Schrader. Percussionist Douglas Waddell joined the group in the Rorem work. Wynne Delacoma, music writer for the *Chicago Sun Times*, remarked that "Biggam, based in Cincinnati, and born in 1959, calls his work "neo-classical", and its clear structure and tonal grounding fit that definition. But *Four Pieces* was

definitely a late 20th century creation. The final piece is titled "Amblings" but the musicians seemed to be traveling throughout the work. Especially in the second movement, with Morgan's resonant oboe setting up a steady, loping rhythm, we had the sense of a group of friends striding along, some of them lingering to smell the roses, others bustling and in a hurry. The mood turned eerie and searching in the third movement, "Catacombs", but the atmosphere of a close group listening intently to each other, often finishing each others' thoughts as they moved along, was inescapable." Mark Biggam was born in North Carolina and has attended Ohio University. He has edited works for Barenreiter, and he is currently completing his doctoral work in oboe at the Cincinnati Conservatory.

New York Philharmonic English hornist **Thomas Stacy** is "a player who has a winning way with him", wrote *The Irish Times* after his solo appearance with the Irish Chamber Orchestra last July at the International Music Festival in Killaloe. "As well as being a virtuoso of his instrument," the review continues, "he can do a good line in deadpan humor in introducing audiences to the distinction between an oboe d'amore and a cor anglais." Mr. Stacy performed Telemann's *A Major Oboe d'amore Concerto* and Gordon Jacob's *Rhapsody for English Horn*, and included encores *Danny Boy* and *Shades of Green*, a piece he wrote especially for the occasion.



Thomas Stacy

In addition, Mr. Stacy launched his twentieth annual Thomas Stacy International English Horn Seminar last August in Carmel, California with a recital featuring three world premieres: Clark McAlister's *Last Light*, Russell Currie's *Wet on Wet*,

and Robert Silverman's *Triptych for Thomas Stacy*, all for English horn and string quartet.

Russell Bajer presented the premiere of a new work, *Elegy* for English horn and strings by Kenji Fusé. It was performed on January 17 and 18, 1999 by the Victoria Symphony, Peter McCoppin conducting, at the Royal Theatre, in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. The work was commissioned by Mr. Bajer with additional support from the British Columbia Arts Council. Kenji Fusé (son of IDRS member Lois Fusé of Toronto) is principal violist of the Victoria Symphony; his main instructors in composition were Walter Buczinski, Ka Nin Chan, Edward Laufer, and Lothar Klein. *Elegy* was written in London while the composer was playing with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. At first the work had a political meaning, being based on a string quartet the composer had written for the Jewish Holocaust Society. But in August of 1997, Kenji's grandmother passed away, and the piece took on a more personal meaning, and acquired its current title. The manuscript bears an inscription dedicating the work to Russell Bajer, and "in loving memory of my grandmother, Shirley Prochaska".

An ensemble featuring **Lois Fusé** and **Erica Rao**, oboes; **Betty MacHattie**, bassoon, and Sonomi Sakai, piano - collectively called "Windsong" - introduced the double reed family of instruments at the Newtonbrook United Church's Saturday Evening Concert Series performance on January 30, 1999 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Their program included Antonio Lotti's *Sonata in A* for oboe, oboe d'amore and piano; *Trio Sonata in Eb* by William Boyce for two oboes, bassoon and piano; and *Chaconne* by G. F. Handel for oboe, bassoon, and piano. Arrangements of other works utilizing the cor anglais completed the program. ❖