

A Symposium for Living the Bassoon

By **Arlene McCallum**
Alexandria, Virginia

Symposium: 1. Any meeting or social gathering at which ideas are freely exchanged. 2. A conference organized for the discussion of some particular subject.

The 15th Annual John Miller Bassoon Symposium was just what its title suggests. A symposium where ideas about the bassoon were freely exchanged. It was a period in which bassoonists came together at the College of Wooster to eat, sleep and live the bassoon. There was plenty of bassoon fun for the participants of all ages. Everyone came to learn, share ideas and participate.

The morning started early with both the high school and the adult divisions together. Whether it was learning the techniques of circular breathing and double tonguing, or discussing different trill fingerings for the Mozart concerto, both divisions participated in the learning experience. Playing participants in the adult division received critiques and suggestions from John Miller and Per Hannevold on either Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, *Symphony #3*, the Mozart *Concerto* or Etinne Ozi's *Forgotten Bassoon World*, while the other participants took notes to apply to their own playing. During this session, the high school division broke off and participated in Bassoon Band with **Renee Dee** and **Keith Bowen**. Within the bassoon band, the participants worked on sharpening practicing skills and playing together in a group. Later in the day, the two divisions came together again for classes discussing reed making, and care of the bassoon and equipment. The symposium had something for every skill level. Mrs. Dee was available for private reed lessons, Mr. Brown provided bassoon checkups and everyone was willing to help with a smiling face.

In the evenings came the concerts. Wonderful music was performed by **John Miller**, **Per Hannevold**, **Renee Dee**, and **Keith Bowen**. We had the excitement of witnessing a world premiere as well as hearing the bassoon accompanied by the College of Wooster band. The week ended with the Finale concert where all were invited to play. The silly side of the bassoon came out with bassoon quartets and the bassoon band as well as a more serious side through solos. The week demonstrated the versatility of the instrument that we all so much enjoy to play.



L to r: Per Hannevold, John Miller and symposium director, Gene Griswold.

Whether it was at the dinner table or under the stars, there was always time to discuss bassoon. The entire week of practicing, playing, performing

Per Hannevold works with a student.



and partying with togas was an enjoyable experience. The talent within the group was amazing and inspiring. All left fulfilled and fueled to continue learning about and playing the bassoon. It was definitely a symposium where all shared the love of the bassoon. ❖

About the author ...

Arlene McCallum is a senior at Mount Vernon High School (VA). In the fall, she will be attending the University of Wisconsin - Madison. She is planning a double major in Communication Disorders and Bassoon Performance studying under the direction of Mr. Kenneth Moses. Arlene currently studies bassoon with Dr. Arnold Irchai.