



NASSOON NOTES

The Newsletter of the Princeton Nassoons Alumni Association
Volume 64, Summer 2018
Semper Fraternitas Cantusque

PNAA Dinner **Courtesy Scott Watson '74**

On April 21, twenty-seven Nassoon alumni and their guests hosted the undergraduate Nassoons for a very enjoyable dinner at the Nassau Club in Princeton. This event was beautifully organized by our never-tiring past president and board member extraordinaire, Mac McMorris '66.

During the meal, we remembered those alumni who departed from our ranks during the past year, Hud Stoddard '44, Bob McKinley '50, David Howell '55, and Scott Reynolds '78, with a few reminiscences and a heart-felt rendition of the 1905 Reunion Song, with solo by Tony Tsai.

The annual meeting of the Princeton Nassoons Alumni Association (PNAA) was held during dessert. During the meeting, we recognized eight PNAA directors who were present, and Marlo McGriff presented the treasurer's report. We thanked two departing board members, Stephen Miller '93 and Nat Piggee '96, in absentia, for their dedicated service to the PNAA. We then elected three new directors, Zach Augustine '04, Chris Brownell '13, and Andrew Helber '16, all of whom were present to accept our congratulations.

We welcomed four senior Nassoons, Colton Hess '18, Stefan Lee '18, Duncan Waldrop '18, and Calvin Wentling '18, into the PNAA, and our Tie Master, Chuck Goldberg '71, presented them with their PNAA ties. After this, the Nassoons presented an excellent half-hour show, featuring several of their newest arrangements and a couple of old chestnuts, all sung with style, precision, enthusiasm, and excellent musicality (as expected). They obviously enjoyed singing for us, and we certainly enjoyed hearing them. They ended their set by singing Old Nassau, which we dedicated to Dick Armstrong '46, who is in poor health, and this completed the formal agenda for the evening. Then the informal singing began. We sang a wide range of songs with the undergraduate group, and after awhile, there was a call to adjourn to Blair Arch for more singing.

A good time was had by all.

2018 Reunions Notice **Courtesy Scott Watson '74**

The formal Nassoon Reunion will be held at **Colonial Club** on **Friday, June 1**, beginning at **8:30 PM**. This event is hosted annually by stalwart Nassoon alumni Jerry Ford '55 and Lew Ross '58. We thank them for their continued hospitality!

During the party, alumni will gather to sing their songs, and **around 10:00, the Nassoons will present a set of their latest arrangements**. The party will last until we leave around **10:45 to sing in Blair Arch, officially from 11:00 until midnight**. (Note -- this is one hour earlier than our traditional time slot!)

Festivities will continue and move to the Nassoon Room after the arch.



The four senior Nassoons. From left to right: Colton Hess, Calvin Wentling, Stefan Lee, and Duncan Waldrop

The Seal Man Quinton Beck '14

Music major and former Nassoons Music Director Ryan McCarty '14 composed a new piece, "An Fear Róin", that premiered Saturday April 21st at the Church of the Epiphany in downtown Washington, D.C. The Choral Arts Society of Washington Chamber Choir performed the new work, with Ryan singing among them. A burgeoning audience of eager fans came to enjoy the concert, entitled "After Spring Sunset: Music Inspired by Nature" and featuring pieces by Benjamin Britten, Peter Schickele, R. Murray Schafer, and Paul Hindemith.

About a year ago, Ryan reached out to director Scott Tucker about the prospect of arranging a piece for the group. After showing some work from his portfolio, Ryan started composing in January of this year with Scott's backing. Scott gave only minimal restrictions on what kind of music to create, asking only that it be inspired by nature. Apparently, it was also suggested by a choir member that it should be about seals. Ryan decided to collaborate with his fiancé Quinton Beck '14 on the piece, asking Quinton to compose a poem to serve as the text for the composition.

Ryan and Quinton, both Nassoons from the class of 2014, were engaged at the Nassoon alumni show at reunions this past year (see page 1 of this issue for details on the upcoming reunions schedule) and will be married in July of this year. Several people have asked Quinton and Ryan what it was like to work together on a composition. "Was it difficult", they asked, "to bring music into your relationship?"

It actually wasn't as much of a collaboration as one might expect. Ryan asked Quinton to write a text that was inspired by seals. As Quinton is currently an Irish teacher in DC and will be pursuing an MA in Ireland next year in Modern Irish, it seemed natural that the text be in Irish. Besides those three constraints, it was anything goes.

The text to "An Fear Róin" ("The Seal Man") is faux

folklore, better known as "fakelore". In anapestic meter and rhyming couplets, the poem tells the story of a sorrowful Galway woman who, in loneliness at her inability to find a husband, finds herself drawn to a handsome seal. It begins with an explicit warning to young women not to go out alone to the seaside and continues with the feel of a cautionary tale. By the end of the narrative, she is overcome and throws herself off a cliff to be with him. Ultimately, it is left unclear whether the woman's demise should be blamed on the seductive seal or whether it was her own sorrow that led her to it.

Ryan's composition followed the fakelore style of the poem. The music heavily reflects and illustrates the text; it is beautiful, but dark and expressive. The piece draws on a modern style of writing, but with discernible Irish influences and even some limited Korean stylistic notes inspired by the Winter Olympics. Ryan himself could perhaps give the piece its best musical description, but hopefully that gives a taste!



Ryan McCarty '14 (center with beard) among the rest of the Choral Arts Chamber Singers at the premiere

In the weeks leading up to the debut itself, Ryan was anxious about the preparedness of the choir. In a concert that featured many more technically challenging works (particularly the highly unusual "After Spring Sunset" by Peter Schickele), the choir did not spend as much time rehearsing "An Fear Róin" as could have been expected.

More than anything, Ryan was worried that the words would not be sung correctly.

The Irish language (sometimes referred to as "Irish Gaelic") is very challenging to pronounce correctly, so phonetic guides and recordings were provided to the choir. Given the very limited number of Irish speakers remaining, particularly outside of Ireland, there was little danger that the choir would face a highly discerning audience. The presence of the poet himself at the performance, however, meant that errors would not go

unnoticed.

As is wont with these kinds of choirs, however, the performance was astonishing. The poet noticed almost no errors in pronunciation or in musicality. It appeared all of Ryan's fears and anxieties were unfounded; the quality was truly remarkable. At the reception after the performance, dozens of individuals approached Ryan, Quinton, or both and expressed their appreciation for the piece. The vast majority of those who commented agreed that it was their favorite piece of the night!

Fortunately for our readers who were unable to attend the concert (I believe this is approximately 100% of you), professional recordings were taken of the entire concert and will be made available at some point in the near future on the choir's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ChoralArts/videos>

Unfortunately for our readers, on the other hand, there are no

plans for a reprise at this years Reunions or at Quinton and Ryan's wedding in Princeton in July. Because the piece was composed for a chamber choir, it unfortunately calls for too many female voices to be performed by the Nassoons in its present state. Perhaps Ryan could work on a Nassoon arrangement version...

As for what comes next, the future is bright. Ryan's growing reputation in the D.C. choral scene is opening many doors. He recently judged one of the D.C. area's premier music composition contests, arranged by D.C.'s own 18th Street Singers. He is also working on a jazz arrangement of "Pure Imagination" for local *a cappella* group The Capital Hearings, which he joined in March.

As for Quinton, he will continue with his efforts to bring the Irish language to the masses and will of course look forward to any future collaboration with his talented fiancé!

Remembering...

Hud Stoddard '44

Our brother Hudson "Hud" Stoddard '44 passed away on October 2, 2017 at the age of 94 in New Canaan, Connecticut, where he had spent most of his post-Princeton life. Born close to his alma mater in Bronxville, NY, Hud moved across the country in his youth before arriving at Princeton as an undergraduate to study at the School of Public and International Affairs (not yet named for Woodrow Wilson). He joined the young Nassoons as a deep bass, where he contributed a sonorous tone that blended well with the rest of the group, never one to upset or offend anyone and always able to keep people enthused, even with the onset of World War II and the subsequent change and confusion that came to the University and the country during that time.

Among many anecdotes that could be shared about Hud's time during the group, a most notable one occurred in 1942 when the Nassoons sang at the Plaza hotel in New York City. The group didn't yet often travel beyond the locale of New Jersey and New York, and at the Plaza they were joined by



Hud Stoddard (center) with the 2016 Nassoons in New Canaan, CT

Hud Stoddard cont.

the Whiffenpoofs in a friendly competition. Both groups gave their all to establish themselves as the premier group of the night. Ella Fitzgerald was in attendance and declared the Nassoons the victor!

After graduating in '44, Hud served as a diplomatic courier for the U.S. State Department before moving into a career in media and civic service that he would pursue for the rest of his life. He first moved on to work at Time Inc. and LIFE magazine. In 1965 he left to go to public broadcasting, serving as the Vice President for Development and Secretary of the Educational Broadcasting Corporation for New York's public Channel 13 (WNET). General lack of funding brought him to use unorthodox measures to raise money for the channel; Hud himself would speak during public broadcasts, and in the process he coined a new cultural phrase by asking for assistance from "viewers like you".

Hud retired from WNET after 22 years, but during those years and afterward he gave his time to the arts and in public service to his community. He served for eight years on the Board of Education in New Canaan, two of them as chairman. In 1989, he was elected to the New Canaan Town Council. He was also a board member of the Coalition for Nuclear Arms Control and the New Canaan U.N. Committee. As an advocate for peace and social justice, and a longtime member and former Elder of the New Canaan First Presbyterian Church, he was proud to have attended the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington. In his

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retirement, he served in the most local way possible, writing a history of his family.

Music and the Nassoons was a common thread throughout Hud's life. Everyone who visited and knew Hud also ended up knowing the words and songs to the Nassoon repertoire of his era. Later during the onset of dementia, Hud stayed upbeat, often through the help of music, which never left him and helped sustain him. Two years ago, the current group went to visit Hud. Joined by his classmate and fellow Nassoon Alex Forger '45, Nassoons young and old sang together again, ending with "Perfidia".

Years after his graduation, Hud continued to influence the experiences of the group, including my own. Hud was an instrumental part of the successful campaign to raise 150 million dollars to build the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, backed by John D. Rockefeller, 3rd. In 2011, on a night not quite unlike the one where Hud sang with his brothers in friendly rivalry with the Whiffenpoofs, the Nassoons sang with their brethren from Yale on the Lincoln Center stage, another product among many of Hud's efforts in the community. In a most fitting way, both groups were joined on stage during the end of the performance by Hud's granddaughter, Alison Williams.

In addition to his granddaughter, Hud is survived by his wife of 63 years, Patricia, three children, and three grandchildren. He was a great man and a great Nassoon, and he will be missed by all.

Thank you to Alex Forger '45 for his assistance and time in writing this remembrance