



NASSOON NOTES

The Newsletter of the Princeton Nassoons Alumni Association
Volume 65, Fall 2018
Semper Fraternitas Cantusque

News from the 'Soon Room Tynan Gardner '20

2018 has been a particularly exciting year for The Nassoons, filled with music, travels, and SFC! Upon returning to campus after Intersession, the group started preparing for a tour to Munich over spring break. While in Germany, we had the pleasure of performing for audiences in international schools, the homes of several Princeton alumni, and at the famed Gasteig cultural center, not to mention various Biergartens across the city. Back on campus, we continued the tradition of performing in the annual Man Show alongside the other all-male groups: the Footnotes, the Tigertones, and for the first time in the show's history, Old Nassoul. We capped off the spring semester with several successful performances at Reunions, including a show at Pascack Valley High School in Northern New Jersey. Of course, our favorite and most anticipated performances by far were the Nassoons Colonial show and the subsequent Arch Sing alongside our beloved alumni.

The Nassoons were particularly well-traveled this summer, with two members studying abroad in Germany, two in Russia, and several more in Austria, Guatemala, and California. We soon gathered on campus for our yearly warm-up at the Omni Mount Washington Resort in New



The new Nassoons: Sean Crites, Tim Amarell, David Timm, and Alan Lin

Hampshire, along with a stop in Brattleboro, VT for a mini-reunion of Nassoon alumni from the 1970s [see page 4 for more]. We extend a hearty thank you to everyone involved in planning such a delightful event, especially Buzz Schmidt for so generously hosting nine rowdy singers.

At long last we returned to campus, fully prepared for another round of auditions and excited to welcome new freshmen into the brotherhood of SFC. We listened to 35 auditions by members of the Class of 2022, followed by an extensive period of callbacks and discussions. We are proud to welcome four new members: Alan Lin (Bari, continued on page 2

2018 Dues Notice Courtesy Marlo McGriff '04

Once each year we ask you to support your Nassoon alumni association with dues. Through your support the association is able to preserve the history of the group (including the arrangements and recordings made by the undergraduate groups through time), foster communication among the 'Soon alumni and the undergraduate group, and keep everyone informed of the activities of alumni members and the current group.

- Venmo - send to pnaadues@gmail.com
- PayPal - send to pnaadues@gmail.com
- Check - make payable to "PNAA" and mail to:

Marlo McGriff,
171 Liberty Street #303,
San Francisco, CA 94110

As a reminder, the suggested annual dues are \$50 for classes graduating prior to 2009 and \$30 for 'Soons graduating in the last ten years.

Let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

News from the 'Soon Room cont.

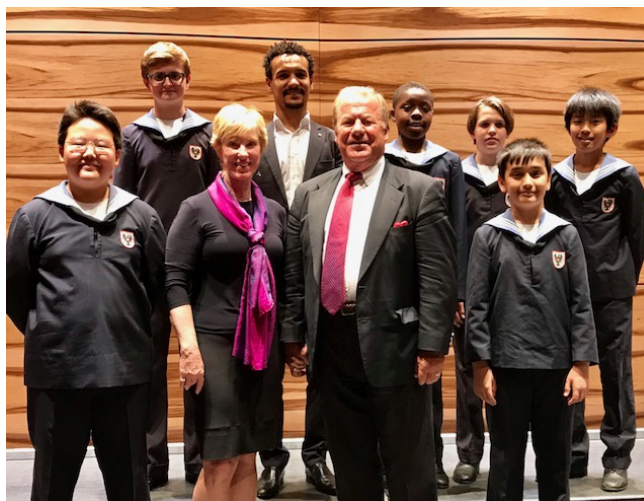
North Potomac, MD), David Timm (TB, West Saint Paul, MN), Tim Amarell (T2, Simsbury, CT), and Sean Crites (T1, Buckhannon, WV). The rest of 2018 has a lot in store for the Nassoons, including a fall tour to Southern California and a birthday performance for Nassoon Peter Espenshade '90. This year's Yale Jam with the Whiffenpoofs will take place in New Haven, and planning for our Holiday Concert at St. Mark's Church in Philadelphia is wrapping up. Come mid-

November, a new officer corps will take the reins from Tynan Gardner as President, Kevin Williams as Business Manager, and Charlie Hemler as Music Director. We are always looking for more performances, especially for Nassoon alumni, so please feel free to contact us any time at nassoons@princeton.edu. Thank you to all our alumni and the PNAA for your continued support of our musical tradition

"Bee's" Travel Tip: Vienna Boys' Choir
Bill Kaspers '70

Everything in life is relative (or is it relatives, my Nassoon brothers?). I thought that Princeton, founded in 1746, and the Nassoons, founded in 1941, were steeped in tradition. However, during a recent trip to Vienna, Austria, where 1746 seems like only yesterday, my lovely spouse Candy and I attended a concert given by the Vienna Boys' Choir, founded in 1498—520 years ago! The choir's alumni include Haydn and Schubert—equals, in their day, of more contemporary composers such as Hamill '51, Morgan '56, Peterson '60, Mellor '63, Mullikin '64, Urquhart '74, and MacGilvray '93.

The Vienna Boys' Choir has 10 to 14-year olds from Europe, Asia, and South America (no one from the States) who attend boarding school at the Palais Augarten in Vienna. Virtually every Sunday they sing at mass in one church or another, and almost every Friday evening they can be heard at a 400-seat theater built particularly for them close to the Palais itself. Merely five "VIP" tickets are sold for each
continued on page 4



Bill Kaspers and wife Candy (center) with a handful of the talented and diverse singers

The Nassoons and Senator John McCain
Courtesy Roger Bates '67

(Our country was saddened by the death of Senator John McCain earlier this year. The link between the Nassoons and McCain's return from Vietnam captivity in 1973 was addressed in an issue of Nassoon Notes many years ago. But with McCain's passing, we felt it was worthy of being shared again. It involves, of course, the late legendary Jay Coupe '62, perhaps the 'Soons' greatest ever 1st Tenor. What follows below is an edited version of an obituary in the Washington Post written by staff writer Patricia Sullivan back in 2006. Thanks to Jim Crawford '61 for sharing the obituary and reminding us of this little bit of Nassoon history, Coupe's legendary encounter with the world renowned tenor, Luciano Pavarotti.)

Jay Coupe Jr. '65, who died September 13, 2006, of liver cancer, never hesitated when presented with an opportunity to squeeze a little enjoyment out of life. He had a serious

job as a Navy Captain in the 1980s, he was a spokesman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and most remarkably, in 1973, he escorted U.S. prisoners of war home from North Vietnam — including a young Lieutenant Commander, John McCain.

But the Navy officer firmly believed in winking at pomposity, even if it required chutzpah. Perhaps his greatest act of bravado came after winning an \$800 Washington Opera auction to have dinner with renowned tenor Luciano Pavarotti. Capt. Coupe entertained the opera star at Romeo Salta, one of New York's best Italian restaurants. He arranged for a friend to dine separately in the restaurant, greet him with feigned surprise and urge the amateur lyric tenor to favor the house with a song. With Pavarotti's smiling encouragement ("Certo!"), Capt. Coupe launched into "Na Sera 'e Maggio" from a Neapolitan

continued on page 3

Coupe & McCain cont.



Lt. Jay Coupe Jr., left, escorts Lt. Cmdr. John McCain at Hanoi's Gia Lam airport

an intention to enjoy life as much as possible in a war zone. Based at Can Tho in the Mekong Delta through the Tet Offensive, the young public affairs officer cooked Italian meals for visiting reporters and military brass on stove or Sterno, usually capped with an operatic digestivo. He returned to Vietnam in 1973, a

songbook. "I felt like a choir boy going up in front of the Pope," Capt. Coupe told The Washington Post hours later. But the scheme worked: about 50 patrons in the room applauded wildly, as did Pavarotti.

It wasn't the first time the outgoing entertainer had burst into song in public, said his wife, Patrisha Davis. "His voice was like silk," she said. "He would stand up in the middle of any restaurant in Washington and start to sing. I would cringe, but...he had a big, boffo finish, and the whole restaurant would erupt in applause. People sent big bottles of champagne to our table. This happened all the time."

Capt. Coupe had no fear of audiences. A Philadelphia native, he was recruited at age 10 to join the Columbus Boychoir in Princeton, N.J. He traveled with his boarding school classmates to concerts around the world until his voice changed two years later. The allure of travel had settled in him, however, and he began collecting languages the way others pick up souvenirs. "His opinion was because he had an ear for music, he had an ear for languages," his wife said. He spoke eight languages fluently: English, Spanish, French, German, Vietnamese, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Tagalog.

He graduated from Princeton University where he sang for four years with the school's all-male group, The Nassoons. Commissioned an ensign in the Navy in 1962, he spent much of his service abroad, in Germany, China and eight years at NATO's Southern Command in Italy. Falling in love with the food as well as the music, this American son of English and Irish ancestry joked that if he could, he would have applied for political asylum in Naples. His friends nicknamed him Il Comandante Cativo — the Naughty Commander.

A man of tremendous self-confidence, then-Lt. Coupe arrived in Vietnam in 1967 with a set of Gucci luggage and

year after he received a master's degree in communications from Boston University. His job then was to escort home the U.S. military troops who had been held captive in North Vietnam.

Didi Klein, wife of the late Blair Klein '61 remembers "... all of you who were on the roster in and around 1960 ... That's when I got to know Jay Coupe and became so fond of him." She recalls, "After Blair graduated, we moved back to St. Paul, MN for about ten years, before heading to Wyoming. One year in the early 60s, I believe, the Minnesota Twins were in the World Series. Low and behold, who do you think turned up on our doorstep? None other than Coupe looking handsome and polished in his navy uniform, but with the same sweet smile and twinkling eyes. If my memory serves me, he had three tickets to a game, and we went together to watch the Twins — lose. In any case, we had a grand time together. Jay was so happy in his profession, and of course, we loved him 'to the moon,' as Blair's and my grandchildren would say." She adds, "There are certain people who pass through our lives, no matter how lightly, and leave us forever changed for the better. Coupe was one of these for me and for so many others, even such as John McCain!"

In addition, Jim Crawford received a note from Dee Rinker, wife of the late Dave Rinker '60, who remains one of his generation's loyal friends from the 1960s. Following Dave's graduation in 1960, he and Dee remained in the Princeton area for several years and befriended many of the Nassoons of that era. She appreciated hearing the story about Jay Coupe and Senator McCain and reminded us that "Jay was the tenor soloist at our wedding on the 22nd of August 59 years ago!"

"Bee's" Travel Tip cont.

Friday concert at the "MuTh" (short for "music theater"). The performance includes champagne during intermission, sitting in a booth similar to the one that the grumpy ol' men on The Muppets sit in, and an after-concert visit backstage with a half dozen of the boys and the choirmaster.

The boys Candy and I met backstage were from North and South Korea, Japan, Austria, France and Northern Ireland. When asked what they thought they might do when they grew up, one said, "a composer," others said "music," "a dentist," and the oldest and obviously most mature member present said, "I don't know." When asked whether any of them were considering going to university in the States, the boy from Northern Ireland said that he thought that would be too expensive. I responded that he obviously had not heard the MacGilvray Nassoon arrangement of "Princeton is Free!"

**'70s Reunion
Courtesy Bobby Vuyosevich '76**

Nassoons of the 1970's have turned out in large numbers for the 5-year 'Soon Reunions in Princeton, and so it was this summer when 22 'Soons gathered at the Vermont farm of Betsy and Buzz Schmidt. The following attended: ('74) Peter Urquhart, Scott Watson, Buzz Schmidt, ('75) Billy Kehlenbeck, Bob Fleming, Dan Dempsey, ('76) Ben Indig, Bob Vuyosevich, Dave Villa, Jim Porterfield, Bancroft O'Quinn, ('77) Craig Hardy, Bill Hammond, ('78) David Dieck, Jack Serabian, Bob Peskin, Steve Cousins, ('79) Rick Bond, Kevin Massey, ('80) Craig Bushong, Joel Rood, and ('81) Jim Cavanaugh. It would be remiss not to mention the Nassoon spouses, significant others, and children who add so much to our gatherings. To top it off, we were very fortunate to be joined by the current Nassoons (about to begin their "warm-up week" at nearby Bretton Woods, NH).

NASSOON NOTES

**c/o John Whelchel '15
1840 California St. NW, 6A
Washington, D.C. 20009**

Those who arrived on Thursday were treated to a "Food Truck Round-Up" at the Retreat Farm in Brattleboro. Retreat Farm was founded in 2016 to restore and preserve Brattleboro's historic 500-acre farm to serve people, nature, and the community. President Buzz Schmidt '74 and Board Chair Dan Dempsey '75 work with experts and community stakeholders to establish the Farm as a natural and cultural commons, connecting Vermonters and visitors alike to the land and one another. Sampling food from around the world, over 1,500 attended the Round-Up. An even spicier sampling came from the current Nassoon group, singing everything from "Biebl to Beyonce," or as we said in the '70s, "Bach to the Beatles!" Afterwards, Nassoons young and old met back at the Schmidt Farm for songs and s'mores around the campfire.

On Friday, more 'Soons arrived. Our meals were delicious and leisurely, providing time to catch up with one another. At noon, we were off to lunch at Whetstone, followed by singing at the Brattleboro Museum. The current Nassoons sang like angels from heaven ("Ave Maria", "Somewhere Over The Rainbow"), while our group gave 'em hell ("Get Around", "With A Little Help From My Friends"). Following a salmon and chicken dinner at the Schmidts', Bill Hammond and Bobby V. presented a slide show of '70s Nassoons, cavorting about on road trips and spring break while doing their fair share of mooning ("scatological humor" as Bill Bennett '74 used to say).

On Saturday morning, we assembled at the Brattleboro Farmers Market, sampling more international food (Brattleboro may soon be known as NYC North) and singing for passersby. The afternoon provided more catching up, hiking, swimming, kayaking, and touring the Retreat Farm. Later that day, the Schmidts invited local friends for a barbecue which featured brisket, pulled pork, and of course, more singing by the '70s Nassoons. What an outstanding weekend and what an outstanding group of friends! Thank you, Buzz and Betsy! Please have us back!