



NASSOON NOTES

The Newsletter of the Princeton Nassoons Alumni Association

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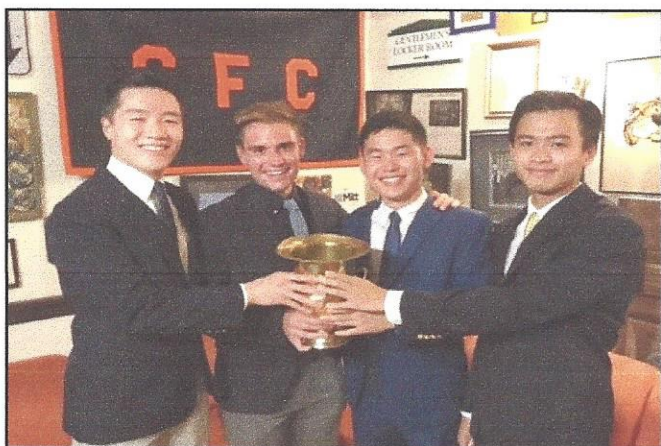
Semper Fraternitas Cantusque

NEWS FROM THE 'SOON ROOM

by Devin Kirkpatrick '19

After parting ways for the summer, the Nassoons reunited again at the Omni Mount Washington Hotel for warmup weekend! Since the demise of the Greenbrier-Nassoons relationship, we have been enjoying the amenities and hospitality of the famed Bretton Woods resort. Our warm-up weekend prepared for our recruitment performances, which included two arches, a performance in Richardson, and our open house! Before the commencement of auditions week, we had the pleasure of performing at Lowrie House for President Eisgruber and the Trustees of the university. Janet Rapleye, the Dean of Admissions, came up to us afterwards and said, "I'm glad to have admitted you!"

After a grueling set of auditions, the Nassoons are proud to welcome four new r-squad members to the group (l to r):



TJ Li, a T2 from New York City
Kevin Williams, a bari from Emmaus, PA
Sean Kim, a T1 from Ridgfield, NJ
Michael Yeung, a bari from Hong Kong

We also bonded with the Tigerlilies at our Bid Night festivities. *[We will refrain from further inquiry. Ed.]*

For our **Fall Tour**, the Nassoons will be in Austin and Dallas from **October 26th to November 4th**. We are still looking to book shows for the tour, so please reach out to us with any potential suggestions!

The Tour will coincide with the release of the group's newest album, **NASSOONS 2018**. Look for it on Spotify or iTunes, and feel free to contact me at devink@princeton.edu to order a copy through the mail on its release date.

The Homecoming football game against Yale will be on **Saturday, November 11th**. The **Homecoming Arch** will be at **4:15 pm** in **1879 Arch**, so be sure to stop by after the game! **Yale Jam** will also be held that night at **7:30 pm** in **Richardson Auditorium**. Tickets will be on sale soon, so look out for a news release.

The Nassoons will be returning to **Carnegie Hall** on **Friday, December 15th** for our Holiday Concert. If you are interested in attending, be sure to purchase tickets for friends and family in advance, as we were close to selling out our last time there in 2015.

In the **spring of 2018**, the Nassoons would like to travel to **Germany** for a tour. We are desperately seeking connections for paid shows in the country, so please contact the undergraduates with any ideas or leads!

As always, it's a great time to be a Nassoon! The year of 2017-2018 promises to be full of great singing, fun and camaraderie.

(Devin is the current President of the undergraduate group. Thanks, Devin, for this excellent report.)

Dues Reminder

It's that time again. We need and encourage your support, in part to defray costs of the newsletter you are reading. Last year, alumni participation was disappointingly low. We can and should do better! Please send your check payable to PNAA (\$50 per year suggested for classes prior to 2007 and \$30 suggested for classes of 2007–2016) to Treasurer, Marlo McGriff, at 171 Liberty Street #303, San Francisco, CA 94110. Alternatively you can pay via PayPal. Just send an e-mail to Marlo at marlo.mcgriff@gmail.com and he'll send you the PayPal link. Thanks very much, gents.

Remembering...

LEWIS A. ("PETE") CLARKE JR. '63

Pete Clarke '63 died May 4, 2017, after a 25-year struggle with Parkinson's disease. Pete was a keen fly fisherman, hunter, artist, musician, songster, tech executive and antiques dealer who enriched the lives of all who knew him. Family and friends adored Pete's courage, grace, and contagious enjoyment of life. A paragraph from the program for the memorial service noted that "Pete's courage and good humor during 25 years living with Parkinson's disease are testimony to his strength and determination to remain connected to the people, places and things he loved." He once told a fellow Nassoon, "I'm not going to let this damned disease define me."

After growing up in Greenwich, Conn., and attending Hotchkiss School, Pete was a philosophy major at Princeton, wrote a thesis on moral inquiry, ate at Cap & Gown, sang 1st tenor with the 'Soons, roomed with *Mac Mellor '63* and two others. Throughout his life he also played guitar and the harmonica, sharing his favorite songs with family and friends. Pete's business career focused on sales management for telecom companies, including Xerox, IBT, Rolm, Isoetec, and Brooktrout Technology, where he was manager of foreign sales. He later started *The Sportsman's Eye* with his wife, Diane, in Hingham, Mass., specializing in antiques, sporting art and decoys.

Tim Callard '63 and *Barry Schuman '63* attended Pete's memorial service in Weston, VT, last June. Tim wrote: "Barry and I heard story after story about how hunting and fishing and a life-long fascination with birds, hunting dogs and other 'critters' from the natural world had held a huge place in his personal life. Pete's personality made him a 'natural' for his career in sales management. Indeed, his work came so easily to him that it was never the primary focal point of his life. He

was one of those people who 'worked in order to live'."

Chuck Sethness '63 recalls that Pete was "...calm and cool, an attractor of women by charm and diffidence, and an avid outdoorsman. He was light-hearted about life, and always seemed completely comfortable in his own skin." *Jim Crawford '61* wrote: "Though we shared time together in the Soon Room, it was only decades later that I fully came to appreciate Pete's uncommon gift for making friends in a down-to-earth, thoughtful and genuine way. To me, he had a special grace. *Mac Mellor '63* offered: Pete sang first tenor and seduced every girl within earshot when he crooned the solo on 'Christopher Robin.'" *Kent Mullikin '64* added: "I hope Pete's quadrant of heaven includes fish and waterfowl."



Finally, *Crawf* added an amusing story: "Some years ago, Pete flew west to float-fish New Mexico's San Juan River with fellow 'Soons and anglers *Barry Schuman '63*, *Hugh Madden '57*, *Dick Grieves '60*, *Buzz Kelsey '62* and me. We caught and released plenty of lunker rainbows. But the most memorable moment happened ashore. Taking our breakfast orders in a roadside cafe, our waitress turned and said to Pete: 'OK, Hon, what'll it be?' 'Can you,' our friend politely asked, 'make me a pancake?' Without missing a beat, she flashed her fingers at him. 'POOF!' she announced. 'You're a pancake!' For the rest of our trip Pete was, and in our memory remains, 'The Pancake'."

Remembering...

ROXANNE SLY (W/'44)

The Nassoon community lost another link to its history when **Roxanne Twitchell Sly** died on June 4, 2017, at age 94, surrounded by her family, in Brooklin, Maine, where she had spent nearly every summer of her life.

Born to musical parents, she gravitated early in life to music. In high school chorus she met a classmate, *Richard Harmon ("Dick") Sly '44*. They became sweethearts, stayed so through her years at Smith and his at Princeton (where he became one of the original Nassoons) and were married soon after graduation in 1944. When, three years earlier, the fledgling Nassoons needed a theme song, Roxanne provided it—*Nassoon Signature*—composing the melody and lyrics in time for *Jim Lotspeich '44* to arrange it and for the original 'Soons to record it on the inaugural 1942 album.



Dick and Roxanne raised three children: Peter, Patty, and Julie—accomplished a cappella singers all. Roxanne, a genealogist, historian, inventor, master gardener, traveler, composer, and lyricist, sang in choruses and choirs much of her life and helped found two fine a cappella groups, the *Opposite Sextet* and the SATB octet *All Good Children*, for which she wrote several notably witty and inventive arrangements. At her memorial service the congregation sang a hymn she'd composed in 1965, with Julie's new lyrics, written for the occasion. The tribute to this remarkable woman could not have been more fitting.

(Contributed by honorary Nassoon, George Bassett '67. Thank you, George!)

Soon Musicology:

A TRIBUTE TO CHALMERS (“HAM”) HAMILL ‘51

(Ham Hamill '51 has been gone for 19 years now. But his Nassoos musical legacy remains. With 17 of his charts in the Black Book, Ham was the Nassoons' most prolific arranger and certainly one of its most accomplished. This tribute is intended to share a bit of Ham's story with our fellow Nassoons and reflect upon the treasure trove of arrangements he left behind. We are indebted to honorary Nassoos and former Olympic gold medalist ice-skater, Ham's daughter Dorothy Hamill, for providing the background material from which the article has been crafted. Thank you Dorothy!)

Born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1923, Chalmers (“Ham”) Hamill was one of seven children in a musical family that loved to sing together at holidays and on other family occasions. His exceptional talent and love for music were evident from an early age. As a child he learned to play the piano and the clarinet, and as a teenager he dreamed of one day being a famous band leader like Benny Goodman. One of his proudest accomplishments as a young man was teaching himself to read music. After high school, with the outset of World War II, Ham enlisted in the Army and was posted to Scotland where he was trained and served as an air traffic controller. In those years (1942-1944) awaiting the Normandy invasion, he formed a small band at his base to amuse himself and entertain the British and American troops stationed there. It was there in Scotland that he cut his teeth at arranging—for his band! He proved from the start to be a gifted arranger and a natural leader of talented musicians.

After the war ended, Ham returned home and enrolled at Exeter Academy for a year of additional college prep. Then in 1947, taking advantage of the G.I. Bill, he matriculated at Princeton. Joining the Nassoons early on, he was selected as the group's music director in his sophomore year and served in that capacity for three years. During his tenure with the ‘Soons he arranged 17 songs, spanning a wide range of styles (see inset).

While as a young man Ham dreamed of being a professional musician, his father pushed him to use his Princeton education to pursue a “proper day job.” The result was a varied and successful business career. Starting at Quaker Oats in Gary, IN, then moving on to Bethlehem Steel in Pittsburgh, PA, he finally settled in as a government contracts officer at Pitney Bowes in Stamford, CT. It was in Connecticut that he resumed singing and arranging in earnest. Ham was a founder of and arranger for *The Off-Sounders*, an a cappella group still going strong today. Dorothy recalls fondly that the group would rehearse

Sunday nights at their house and, as a very young girl, she would happily listen in. As a member of the Off-Sounders, Ham was also an early and active participant in *Spring Sing*.



Ham (at the piano) and his band circa 1944

One of Ham's particular gifts was his ability to select great songs to arrange and sing. (Indeed, it was Ham who selected all of the music to which Dorothy later skated at the Olympics!) His personal favorite Nassoos arrangement was “All the Things You Are” (c 1939, Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein). “All the Things” has been performed consistently by the Nassoons since the 1950s. Written mostly in four parts with the melody in the 1st T, Ham's arrangement brings out the beauty of both the melody and the lyric and interjects some unexpected but wonderful dissonant jazz chords (the second and climactic “some-DAY,” and the poignant “di-VINE”) to great effect. The rhythmic bass pattern in the bridge provides a subtle but wonderfully effective counterpoint to the melodic tenor solo. But the wonder of this chart is the four-bar ending, with its flowing movement, leading to a magnificent, wide spread, six-part, major 7th final chord sung pianissimo to wonderful effect. Sublime! Ham was especially proud of the fact that his arrangement was accepted by the U.S. Library of Congress.

With “Exactly Like You” (c 1930, Jimmy McHugh and Dorothy Fields) Ham added a wonderful 5-part up tune to the Nassoos repertoire. The bass line throughout conjures up a jazzy riff by an acoustical bass player. The bouncy solo captures the joy and happiness of the lyric, the essence of the song. Then, in a moment of true inspiration, Ham added an original five-part ending (“Now I'm happy...”), turning the basses loose as a rhythm section performing with utter abandon and having the

other four parts sing a moving progression of cool block chords to a lyric that superbly complements what Dorothy Fields originally wrote. Add a wild tenor tiddly (“tau-aught”) and a luscious final 13th chord and the Nassoons have perhaps their finest jazz arrangement. *continued on page 4.*

- Popular Ballads**
 - All the Things You Are*
 - Make-Believe Ballroom*
 - Night and Day*
 - September in the Rain*
 - What is This Thing Called Love*
 - When I See an Elephant Fly*
- Up Tunes and Swing Songs**
 - Charleston Rag*
 - Exactly Like You*
 - Jeepers Creepers*
 - Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat*
- Spirituals**
 - Deep River*
- Country / Folk / Novelty Songs**
 - Foggy, Foggy Dew*
 - Mountain Lullaby*
- Other**
 - The Cake Walk*
 - Fifteen Men on a Dead Man's Chest*
 - Rollin' to de Sea*
 - St. James Infirmary Blues*

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COLONIAL ESCAPADE

By Rufus Schriber '66

Seventeen Nassoons from classes of the mid-60s to the mid-70s, hailing from nine states and even Switzerland, descended on Williamsburg, VA, on a Wednesday in late April for a mini-reunion hosted by *Rufus ('66)* and *Kathy Schriber*. After settling in at the hotel, the 'Soons drifted in to a well-stocked hospitality suite to sing a few warm-up tunes, renew friendships, and share more than a few libations.



Thursday, after a morning practice to scrape off the rust, the 'Soons lunched at Two Rivers Country Club overlooking the James River, followed by a private architectural tour in Colonial Williamsburg which focused on a few of the most interesting restored homes. We returned that evening to Colonial Williamsburg's Duke of Gloucester Street for dinner at the Kings Arms Tavern, where we feasted on colonial fare and traded songs with a balladeer in period costume who performs regularly at the historic inn.

Friday, another morning rehearsal was followed by a free day to explore the many historic treasures of Williamsburg, Jamestown and Yorktown. That evening we performed a two-

set dinner concert at the Two Rivers Club where we ate with and sang to an enthusiastic crowd of almost 200 club members and their guests—folks of our vintage who truly appreciated our repertoire! Kudos to *Roger Bates '67*, with an able assist from *Dave Robinson '67*, for organizing, directing and cajoling our gang into a smooth sounding vocal group that truly made a great impression on the crowd!

Saturday morning we cleared our throats with another rehearsal and then performed at the Williamsburg Farmer's Market in the historic district. In addition to vendors offering all sorts of wares and goodies, the market was full of strolling families who were delighted to pause and give us a listen. We then took advantage of the rest of the afternoon at leisure, doing everything from sightseeing to picking strawberries to visiting local wineries.

We capped off our weekend with cocktails and dinner at the Schriber's home—a predictably fun evening of free-flowing songs, spirits and fond farewells.



Sixty-Seven's back again...into the Schriber's den.

Tribute to Ham Hamill, *continued...*

While deemed politically incorrect and inappropriate to sing today, "Rollin' to de Sea" (c 1884) is a beautiful arrangement of a song with a Stephen Foster-esque style of nostalgia for the antebellum south. One wonders why Ham was attracted to this genre of music. Speculating a bit, Dorothy recollected that her dad had mentioned there wasn't much recorded music in the Hamill home back in those early days (1920s and 1930s). But one of the few records the family possessed, and played often, was called "Songs of the South," and Ham may have been inspired listening to the record as a child.

With "Rollin'," Ham was the first Nassoon arranger to begin a song by having a quartet sing the verse and later a short phrase to set up the song's ending (devices later adopted by *Bob Morgan '56* and *Richard Peterson '60*). His arrangement has a complex structure, and hence great variety: quartet, solo, ensemble, solo, ensemble, solo, quartet, ensemble and then solo on the last note. The chart brings out all the wonderful poignancy of the lyrics.

Ham Hamill was an extraordinarily gifted musician who led the Nassoons with great leadership skill and musicality during its critical, formative post-war years. He left us in 1998 at the age of 75. We continue to honor his legacy.