

Twin Cities Bass Club
Wednesday, July 11, 2007

Kathryn Dressler called the meeting to order at 7:15pm

Kathryn's husband is being transferred to Chicago so somebody else will have to be chosen to run meetings (or at least the next meeting)

Attending:

- Michael Watson (private lessons, public orchestra in Coon Rapid)
- Michael Bromer (has played bass for a long, long time since being the tallest in his 7th grade class)
- Jim Clute (has played bass for over 55 years)
- Bob Anderson (used to sit next to Jim in Minnesota Orchestra)
- Kathryn Dressler (was a string teacher here, moving to Chicago)
- Tyler Rusco (John Casey's student, has been playing bass for 2 years, will be going to U of Colorado in the fall and majoring in bass under Paul Erhard)
- Ian Sinclair (John's student, has been playing for 6 years and has just been accepted to Perpich)
- Louis Sinclair (Ian's father, plays electric bass)
- Marian Casey (John's wife, Jim's student, has played bass since 12th grade)
- John Casey (private teacher, South Dakota Symphony, Bloomington Symphony co-principals)
- Jennifer Rubin (playing since high school – they did not have an orchestra, studied with Homer Mensch in college, teaches privately, freelances, was principal of Long Beach Symphony, played in lots of East Coast orchestras and freelanced in Boston, believes in school programs and supports them however she can)
- Vladimir Zabezhinsky (owner of All Strings Attached, played bass in Honolulu Symphony, trained in playing at St. Petersburg Conservatory, learned repair from Steve Bennefeld)
- Libby Voigt – dropped off cookies/bars and left because she's sick (principal bass in Allegro Sinfonia, former Indianapolis Symphony)

Free discussion of how we can help school programs, get school orchestra teachers more familiar with how to actually play bass, body mechanics, etc. Encourage the schools to get good instruments, keep them in good adjustment. Students need to be allowed to bring their stools to all rehearsals.

Vladimir shared a picture of Steve Bennefeld with the largest bass ever made in this country (5-string WITH an extension).

Educational function of bass club is very important. Vladimir has been talking with Barry Green and Virginia Dixon. Virginia will be doing a workshop over Memorial Day weekend 2008. Emphasis on educational, performances, master classes, including jazz (Terry Burns is interested).

Recap of previous meeting:

Jim Clute talked about history of former bass club – started it because Gary Karr asked him to. Open discussion that bass club should get involved with the jazz scene.

Covering excerpts that come up in audition lists – for auditioning professionals and aspiring students preparing for college auditions. Would like to see an ISB convention here in the Twin Cities. Educational scene in general – how could this bass club be involved in and support bass playing in the Twin Cities area? Lots of string teachers are “uppers”, and teaching of “lowers” for them is a challenge. John and Marian will set up a web account.

Jeanne Gaudette was the president of the Wayzata Orchestra Parents for 17 years, thoroughly understands finance of a non-profit organization. We haven't talked about dues or fundraising yet so Jeanne hasn't been invited yet.

Open discussion:

How structured would we like the club to be? Officers? Committees? Telephone tree? Need a point person that people can go to with ideas. Someone who is committed to being at all the meetings and will bring ideas to the meetings. Whether we need anything more structured than that – concerned about being over-structured. Maybe consider more structure in the future if we get enough more people involved. Do we want to incorporate as 501(c)3? Each one bring one or two more, group will grow, lots of bass players in the area. Was Abe Luboff's bass club in LA incorporated? There are some very active clubs...

Mission statement – is it too early to have one? Fundraising and dues? Offer scholarships? If we have finances then we need a treasurer (could be combined with secretary). If we have expenses for mailings, etc. at a certain point we need accountability/structure. If we were a non-profit organization then people could give us gifts.

Scheduling? Once a month? Irregular once in a while? Regular meetings will help us to be more stable. Monthly? Every other month?

Gary Karr called Jim yesterday – Jim's birthday is coming up – is delighted to hear that we're starting a bass club again. Karr Camp is going on right now in Victoria.

There is information out there that we can share with each other – websites, summer programs, networking, carpooling to rehearsals and ISB conventions, communications of all kinds. Central clearinghouse of information. Hooking up with MN-SOTA – Faith Farr – to get the information out to string teachers. Michael Watson runs the MN-SOTA website and knows that they publish a wonderful list of camps that they put on the website, discussion about scholarships, would be a logical organization for us to collaborate with. Michael also runs website for Suzuki Association of the Americas.

Most important function of bass club is educating teachers about bass – both teachers who play bass and teachers who don't. MN All-State bass clinic. Ways that we can be a resource. Bringing our bass players into...

We need to be committed members. We need to be flexible enough that a school district can ask us for somebody to come play bass for recruiting events, etc.

Students need a place where they can talk to other bass players besides just who they're in orchestra with (especially since many schools only have one or two bass players).

Some schools have 1/8 and 1/10 size basses to get younger kids going on bass.

- Action item: Michael Watson will communicate with MN-SOTA (Faith Farr, Connie Aitken, Sarah Chelgren) that Twin Cities Bass Club is forming. We could communicate about our upcoming meetings via MN-SOTA weekly email newsletters.

We can do mailings at some point. Right now the important thing is to have information available for students. Website with bulletin board, mailing list signup ability. Marian and Michael W to consider how to handle domain name, hosting, etc. Work with Tom Pieper – bass columnist for MN-SOTA newsletter – about mentioning TC Bass Club in MN-SOTA newsletter.

Dues or fundraising – Vladimir to make start-up donation, but the money needs to go somewhere, some account. Is the group interested in fundraising, scholarship awarding?

If we can avoid it at this point, not get involved in money at this point and make it a chance for people to come and play and get feedback, come and hear other people play, informal, social, networking, etc.

Vladimir can provide duplication services as needed for mailing lists, newsletters.

Best days of the week for meetings? Minnesota Orchestra usually busy Thurs/Fri/Sat evenings. How about Mondays? When do the youth orchestras rehearse? Move it to different nights of the week on different months so that we don't shut anybody out? Rotate between two weekdays – one that is on M/W/F and one T/Th?

Set the August meeting date for now, table the long-term meeting schedule policy discussion until later.

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 15, 7pm, All Strings Attached.

Next meeting's point person: John Casey backed up by Vladimir Zabezhinsky.

Next meeting's programming: Jennifer Rubin. Mix of students from different teachers.

Long-term point person – Libby? Discuss with her.

Sara Thompson has collected a lot of bass player emails to send out recital announcements, etc. Michael W will send the next meeting's announcement to her.

Vladimir invites suggestions from bass teachers for sheet music methods and solos that All Strings Attached will order and stock.

Program: Marian/John/Jennifer played a trio – Michael Norris, Bass Motives mvmt. 1 (Yorke), Marian/John played a duet – Handel arr. Sankey, Adagio and Allegro (International)

Coffee, lemonade, cookies and bars.

Notes taken by Marian Casey