

FALL 2006



RMANite XIII

Bill Reichenbach

Saturday, October 21st was the date of the 13th annual RMA NITE. These events have always been a little experimental. We have tried many venues over the years and the beautiful Riviera Country Club was quite ideally suited to our needs.

At first, I was a bit wary about going to a golf club considering that I've never been able to get the golf ball past the Windmill on the courses I've played and I don't have any plaid pants. But these issues vanished as I entered the club and heard the sounds of the excellent Bevan Manson Trio. I liked the idea of being greeted by the music; I think it put a certain sparkle on the whole event.

Opposite the trio, there was a table at which one could buy raffle tickets for a 10 inch astronomical telescope. 250 tickets were sold and the winner was Chris Ermacoff. Congratulations to Chris – stargazing only.

In the next area was a bar and what would later in the evening be the food service area.

The silent auction was on display a few steps further and down into the large terrace room. This year we contracted to have our auction managed by a professional company, Sporthings, who did an admirable job. They auctioned our items as well as theirs.

For dinner, various pastas were served along with a large assortment of appetizers and raw veggies. The dining rooms were spacious and comfortable with plenty of easy seating.

This 13th RMA NITE was an outstanding way to raise funds, to highlight awareness of our organization, introduce us to new people, interact with many others in our field with whom we might not often see, and invite our friends to attend and have a great time.

As I left the party, I heard good music, good conversation, and laughter.

Many thanks go to Tony Cooke and the members of the Fundraising Committee for all their hard work to make this event such a success!



MY FRIEND TOMMY JOHNSON

Malcolm McNab

Tommy was like a father and a big brother to me as he was to many young L.A. brass players. Many times we relied on his wisdom on all matters ranging from career advice to how to use our computers. He was a true friend to all of us.

His importance in the music world cannot be overstated. He brought the level of tuba playing to an entirely new plateau. Starting with his first movie score in the early 1960s, he went on to become the most recorded tuba player in history. Students have strived to emulate his beautiful, rich and lyrical sound and style of playing. They are sprinkled throughout the world playing with major orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the New York Philharmonic.

1957 I was a fourteen - year - old trumpet student playing with a symphony orchestra for the very first time. That orchestra was rehearsing for a concert at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. It was the Pasadena Symphony Orchestra conducted by Richard Lert. Tommy Johnson was the tuba player in the orchestra. To a scared to death teenager, everyone seemed so professional and so much bigger than life. I was especially awestruck about that fantastic tuba player. I had never heard a tuba sound so musical and beautiful and rich. Later I learned that Tommy was fast becoming one of the busiest tuba players in town.

I think that Tommy and Pat were probably newlyweds in 1957. They were among the many musician couples in the Pasadena Symphony at that time. There were also the Garsides, the Nowlins, the Obers as well as the Schoenfeld sisters.

It was around the same time that that the L.A. Brass Society was formed by Lester Remsen. It was a large brass ensemble consisting of 6 trumpets, 6 horns, 6 trombones, 2 tubas, percussion and Dorothy Remsen on harp. This was formed around the nucleus of the Los Angeles Brass Quintet. This was a professional brass ensemble playing concerts mostly around the Los Angeles area during the 1960s. Alumni from that group include Tom Stevens, Don Green, Ron Romm,

Chuck Brady, Chase Craig, Tony Plog, Dennis Smith, Byron Peebles, and Jeff Reynolds. There were 2 tubas – Tommy and Clive Acker. What an awesome sound they made!

We had so much fun! So many laughs over the years. The time on one of the "Die Hard" scores where we had been working at Fox for many hours when, after midnight and we were half asleep, Michael Kamen said that we have to record "Finlandia" as source music. We forgot about it until the movie came out. During that sequence all you could hear was 1st trumpet and tuba accompanied by a few other players. We had no idea how loud it was. It was ridiculous! Oh, how we laughed about that one.

Another time with Michael Kamen it was about the tenth hour on "The 3 Musketeers". Tommy had created an elaborate "payback" for a practical joke I played on him recently. That time he just said, "When you least expect it, I'll get you!" Sure enough, in the vicinity of midnight or 1am, a copyist brought me an unbelievable and unplayable part. Immediately I sensed that it was too ridiculous to not be a joke. I was wrong! When Michael (who was totally in on the bit) called that cue up, he asked me personally to tacet the first read through. I was horrified to realize that all of the meter changes and all of the key changes seemed to line up with what I had on my part. When Michael said, "Malcolm, are you ready?" I replied, "I've gotta go to the restroom!" Tommy had talked the copyist into making



up a part that was so extreme but looked like it should fit with the other parts. When I saw shakes on high Es at the same time that the oboe was playing a soft lyrical solo, I knew finally that something was up.

Also, I don't ever remember anyone in the brass section ever cooking a hot dog – complete with bun – during a take – except once. Tommy had brought his hot dog cooker machine to Fox and set it up next to his chair. It was unbelievable trying to take a breath during that take.

One of the best, though, is when he was working with Bernard Hermann on one of his very first sessions. The tuba was supposed to be muted. Tuba mutes were expensive for a young man just out of school. Tommy's father heard about him needing a mute, so he made him one out of some linoleum, which caught the attention of the composer. "What is that"? Hermann barked. "That's my mute," replied Tommy. "That's no good!" he roared. "You have to use a metal mute!" Tommy went home and told his father, who went quickly to the garage and got a can of silver spray paint. He sprayed the mute silver. At the next session, Hermann, after hearing the new "metal" mute, screamed, "That's what I meant!"

I miss him so much. He left such an incredible legacy. He was a great human being. He was a wonderful husband, father and grandfather. He was a master teacher with more successful students than anyone else I know. He was always there for me and many others for advise on music, life and of course, his passion - sports. I just know that he is up in heaven with Johnny Audino having it out about some World Series game. One of the good ones with that pair was when Audino wanted to talk about the Lakers game that had already been played. Tommy stopped him with, "Don't tell me who won. I don't want to know. I am taping the game to watch when I get home!" John let a couple of beats go by and replied with that impish smile, "OK" a pause and then, "But you are not going to be happy!"

Tommy loved to tell the story about the session with John Scott Trotter. That was the time he was feeling pretty confident about doubling on string bass. Marion Klein had called Tommy about doubling on bass on this session and she assured him that there wasn't very much string bass in the score. When he arrived at the session he found out that ALL of the music was for string bass. Then he noticed that a lot of the notes were up above the staff and he didn't know how to finger them. He faked it by softly thumping his way through a take. Nobody said anything about it, so he felt that he had gotten away with it. Just then, the mixer came out and placed the mike right up close next to the strings. One more take and then he went into the booth for the playback. All you could hear was bass with not quite all of the correct notes. Tommy felt embarrassed and asked John Scott Trotter if he would like to hear it played on tuba. Excited, Trotter asked, "Do you play tuba?" "Yes!" Tommy. So another session was successfully completed.

All of us will miss his presence but the legacy he left will live on for many, many years.

RMALA Members - Great discounts on new Musical Instrument Insurance from Clarion!

RMALA Directory Advertiser Clarion Musical Instrument Insurance is now offering all RMALA members a substantial **30% discount** on all on new musical instrument and equipment Insurance! Check out their web site, clarionins.com, give them a call, and look for the post card coming your way in the mail. Be sure to mention you are a member of RMALA!

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This Newsletter was produced, designed and printed in-house by RMALA

Our community depends on Local 47 - good leadership at the Local is our best protection!

VOTE!

Professional Musicians, Local 47, AFM
GENERAL ELECTION - Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2006

Request for Absentee Ballot

Your Absentee Ballot Request will only be honored by completing and sending this form to the California Elections Company.

COMPLETE FORM AND MAIL/FAX TO:

California Elections Company
P.O. Box 302021
Escondido, CA 92030-2021
Fax: (760) 751-9901

Please send me an Absentee Ballot at the address below for the Dec. 12, 2006 General Election so that I may vote by mail.

(Please Print Legibly)

NAME (FIRST AND LAST) _____ aka _____

STREET ADDRESS _____ APT. # _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

I understand that my vote will not count unless I am a member in good standing by the close of business on Monday, Dec. 11, 2006 (*Article IX, Section 9*).

SIGNATURE _____ SOCIAL SECURITY # _____

***PLEASE NOTE:** Absentee ballots received after 9 a.m. on the Election day shall be null and void per Article IX, Section 10 of the Local 47 Bylaws.*

Please fill out and fax this form to receive your absentee ballot, then

VOTE!