



**THE CHAMBER MUSIC  
SOCIETY OF UTICA**

**1941–2016**





# THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF UTICA

## 1941-2016

### CELEBRATING 75 STELLAR YEARS



## HISTORY

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**T**he announcement of The Chamber Music Society of Utica's 1955-56 season was front page news in the Clinton NY *Courier*, September 22, 1955, and listed four "world famous quartets" engaged for what the Society hoped would prove to be "a highly entertaining and worthwhile season for area music lovers." In this instance "world famous" was not hyperbole—the season featured the Amadeus Quartet from London, the Loewenguth Quartet of France, New York's own Juilliard Quartet, and the Hungarian Quartet—originally of Budapest, but United States-based after 1950—all-stars in the international chamber music playing field. The article continued with a brief history of the organization:

*The Chamber Music Society of Utica had its beginning in 1938 in a series of concerts held in private homes of Utica, the audiences numbering about 50. These were followed by a series of similar events at Hamilton College, sponsored by the Musical Art Society of Clinton.*

*Dr. A. P. Saunders stimulated the group to organization and became its first president in 1941 and served in that capacity until 1945 when he was appointed President Emeritus. The group was then meeting at Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute.*

*In 1943 the first concert was held in the Grace Church Auditorium and a new plan for two series of concerts a year, one in the fall and one in the spring, was instituted.*

*In 1952 the constitution was adopted and a membership basis established. Professor Berrian Shute has served as president from 1945 to 1950 and Mrs. Earl B. Worden has recently completed her five-year term in that office.*

*Present Clinton officers and members of the executive committee include: Miss Silvia Saunders, treasurer; Mr. John L. Baldwin, Mrs. William C. Palmer, Mr. Edward W. Root and Professor Berrian R. Shute.*

This story in five column-inches delivers the essence of the Chamber Music Society—to present world-class chamber music for the community. Moreover, it acknowledges the dynamic initiator—Dr. A. P. Saunders—and, equally important, the institutions that provided

essential support for the Society—Hamilton College and the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, as it was known at that time.

Two years later, in the Society's own "Chamber Music News" of February, 1957, two early members of the Society's Executive Committee were honored—Abigail Camp Dimon and Edward W. Root—in another brief history of the Society. Here all the members of the organization's "motivating committee" are introduced:

*In 1939 a small group of enthusiasts met together with the idea of bringing good chamber music to Utica. Mrs. Gilbert Butler's home was the scene of the first concerts, with the motivating committee, led by Dr. A. P. Saunders, made up of Mrs. Butler, Mr. Francis Gilbert and Mr. Root. In 1941, the concerts were given in the Exhibition Room of the School of Art of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute. By this time, Miss Dimon, Mr. Berrian Shute, and Mr. Charles K. Hudson had joined the committee. After the war, the membership was enlarged substantially, and the concerts were given, as they still are [in 1957], in the Auditorium of Grace Church. The growth of the Society from a handful of supporters to our present membership of well over 200, was due, not only to the gratifying demand of the music-loving public, but to the endless, complicated planning and hard work of the Executive Committee.*

*Miss Dimon became Secretary of the Committee in 1945 and performed this duty until two weeks prior to her death in October, 1955. She gave unstintingly of her time, in every field of work that keeps our program running smoothly. She drew into our group many lovers of chamber music, and her interest was unflagging from the beginning to the end of her long association with us.*

*Mr. Root, as has been pointed out, was one of the originators of the chamber music concerts in Utica. By his never failing interest, and quiet, very real generous support, he was, until his death in December, 1956, an important and valued force on the Executive Committee.*

*We are fortunate indeed, to have had working for us, and with us, these two much missed members. In memory, we salute them.*

Although the news stories of the 1950s reported that Dr. Saunders led the group of CMSU founders—Mrs. Gilbert Butler, Mr. Francis Gilbert, and Edward W. Root—Dr. Saunders’ own recollection of the Society’s beginnings appeared in print in June 1943, at the final concert of the Society’s third season: “Uticans interested in chamber music talked the matter over for many months before the organization became an actuality. It was largely due to the efforts of Mrs. Gilbert Butler that the society was started.”<sup>1</sup>

While the public organizational meetings of the Society commenced in March 1941, and the initial CMSU performances took place in May, 1941, the origins of the Utica Chamber Music Society are closely tied to Hamilton College’s Musical Art Society—active from 1927 into the 1950s. Both societies had a similar mission—at Hamilton College “to bring good music to the Hill and so make it available to our students and to the community,” and in Utica “to bring string quartets or other chamber-music organizations for concerts open to a larger audience”—and both societies were financed at the outset through subscriptions.

Members of Hamilton’s arts faculty who helped administer the Hamilton campus concerts were among the founding directors of The Chamber Music Society of Utica, beginning with Edward W. Root, who, after World War I, played a pivotal role in promoting art in the education of Hamilton undergraduates, and the pianist-conductor Berrian Shute, founding member of Hamilton’s Music Department, which was created in 1925. In the ensuing years, Hamilton faculty continued to join the Society’s Board of Trustees—including choral director and organist John L. Baldwin, pianist Bruce Barbour, Professor of Music Emeritus Steven Bonta, and currently Rand Carter, Professor of Art History, and mezzo-soprano JoElyn Wakefield-Wright, Music Department.

However, the powerful connection between the Hamilton College concert series and the Utica Chamber Music Society is clearly Dr. A. P. Saunders, faculty member at Hamilton College from 1900 to 1939. Both societies resulted and benefited from his astute leadership.

Arthur Percy Saunders was one of five brothers who all enjoyed music and led illustrious careers in science. While A. P. Saunders’ education was in chemistry, he was also known as an extraordinary hybridizer of peonies, figure skater, accomplished violinist and violist, astronomer, geneticist, and breeder of show dogs.

In 1914 Saunders enlarged his house on the Hamilton campus, adding a room designed specifically for chamber music performance. The family guest book—now held in the collection *The Saunders Family Papers*, housed in the Hamilton College Archives at Burke Library—lists the stream of houseguests from 1915 to 1925 that included musicians invited for chamber music sessions, with notes on the works performed. Members of the Olive Mead String Quartet—usually cellist Lillian Littlehales and violist Gladys North—regularly traveled from NYC to Clinton for chamber music sessions at the Saunders’ home.



**Olive Mead String Quartet, early 1900s**  
*The Saunders Family Papers, Hamilton College Archives*

Dr. Saunders lobbied successfully in the mid-1920s for a music department at Hamilton College, and, in 1927, launched the formal concert series at Hamilton, presenting local talent and professional groups, with the performances usually in the Hamilton Chapel. Dr. Saunders announced the first season:<sup>2</sup>

*An association has been formed at Hamilton College under the name The Musical Art Society of Hamilton College. Its purpose is to foster the cause of music among the students, encourage those who are working in that field, and supply a few good concerts during the year.*

*The program for the year has not yet been definitely made up, but we expect to have six or seven concerts including a two-piano recital by Mr. and Mrs. Shute, a quartet concert by the Musical Art Quartet of New York, and a trio concert giving the Brahms trio for piano, violin and French horn.*

<i>Officers of the Society</i>	
<i>Berrian A. Shute</i>	<i>President</i>
<i>A. P. Saunders</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
<i>F. A. Fancher</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>

The Musical Art Quartet did perform at Hamilton that first season, and was a perennial ensemble on the Hamilton Society concerts, and not only as a quartet.

<sup>1</sup>Utica *Observer Dispatch*, June 6, 1943

<sup>2</sup>*The Saunders Family Papers, Hamilton College Archives*

The first violinist, Sascha Jacobsen, and the cellist, Marie Roemat-Rosanoff, performed several solo recitals at Hamilton. According to the advertisements in the local press, the Musical Art Quartet performed at Hamilton College from 1928 to at least 1940, and, not unexpectedly, was engaged for The Chamber Music Society of Utica as well, performing in April, 1942 and October, 1943.



**Musical Art String Quartet, 1928**

Dr. Saunders' extensive "network" of musicians and chamber music aficionados extended into Utica. In addition to presenting concerts in Utica with his musician house guests, Saunders invited Maria Williams Proctor—the last of the most generous Munson-Williams-Proctor philanthropists of Utica—to join Hamilton's Musical Art Society in 1927. She politely declined:<sup>3</sup>

*Oct. 21, 1927*

*My dear Professor Saunders,*

*I thank the Musical Art Society of Hamilton College for asking me to become one of its members and I should be very glad to be one if Clinton and Utica were nearer each other, but as it is, I know that I could not well attend any of the performances.*

*With best wishes to you all,*

*Very sincerely yours,  
Maria W. Proctor*

Although Maria Proctor considered Utica far removed from Clinton, we know that Dr. Saunders' wife, Louise Sheffield Brownell Saunders, travelled between Utica and Clinton regularly—probably daily—from 1900 to 1905 in her position as head of the Balliol School, a highly regarded college-preparatory school for young ladies. When the news of her appointment at the Balliol School was reported, Dr. Louise Brownell was endorsed as "one of the best-known educators in the state" by virtue of her commitment to women's education, her skillful teaching, compelling writing and speaking, and her contributions to educational associations in the Northeast. Dr. Brownell was described as "one of the

most prominent alumnae of Bryn Mawr" in the *New York Tribune*, November 26, 1899.

Louise Brownell Saunders' own "network" included another Bryn Mawr graduate, Abigail Camp Dimon—first cousin once removed of Maria Williams Proctor—whose teaching appointment at the Balliol School in Utica from 1904-1908 overlapped with Mrs. Saunders.' In 1937, just after the Munson Williams Proctor Institute began operations, Miss Dimon was appointed secretary to the MWPI Board of Trustees, and was granted \$5,000 to present evening entertainment featuring local musicians in the Thomas R. Proctor home, 312 Genesee Street—the inception of Performing Arts at MWPI.<sup>4</sup>

In the early years of the Institute, a number of Utica-area musical organizations held their meetings and programs in the buildings of the MWPI—the B# Club, the Utica chapter of the American Guild of Organists, the Civic Music Association—along with the Institute's own cultural programs. It's reasonable to deduce that Abigail Camp Dimon's Bryn Mawr and Balliol School associations with Louise Saunders, as well as Miss Dimon's connections with the Proctors and her work with the MWPI, had a great deal to do with the decision to use the MWPI for CMSU's organizational meetings and initial performances. And it's not surprising that Miss Dimon joined CMSU's Executive Committee in 1945.



**Dr. and Mrs. Saunders in their garden in the 1940s  
Henri Cartier-Bresson**

*The Saunders Family Papers, Hamilton College Archives*

<sup>3</sup>*The Saunders Family Papers, Hamilton College Archives*

<sup>4</sup>[www.mwpai.org/about/history/performing-arts/](http://www.mwpai.org/about/history/performing-arts/)

The mid-1950s accounts of CMSU history began with the private concerts in 1938 or 1939, with some performances taking place at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Butler. There are two copies extant of a private concert program dated 1939, with the performance in the Butler home at 2 Rutger Park in Utica. It's highly probable that Dr. Saunders was present for the concert, as one copy of this program is found in the Saunders collection housed in the Hamilton College Archives. Most interesting is the fact that the ensemble performing—the Phil-Sym String Quartet of the New York Philharmonic—was also engaged in May 1941 for the opening series of the newly-organized Chamber Music Society of Utica.

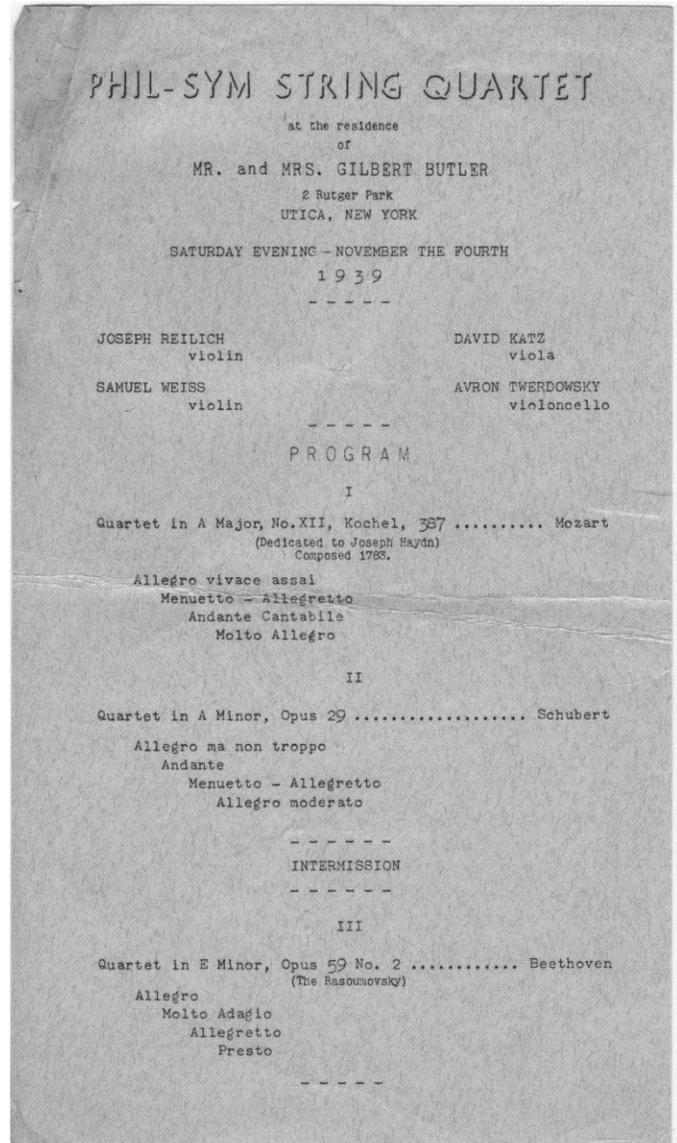
Since 1960, the concerts presented by The Chamber Music Society of Utica have been delivered in the auditorium of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, an intimate hall of 271 comfortable seats, each with an uninterrupted sight line to the stage—a perfect place for chamber music. However, the ties between CMSU and MWPAI date from the late 1930s, beginning with the organizational meetings held at the Institute, which were followed by the first three seasons of CMSU performances in the old School of Art Auditorium and Exhibition Room.

The Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute is named for three generations of one Utica, NY family. Chartered in 1919 as "an artistic, musical and social center," the Institute was designed to begin operations after the estates of the founders were settled. Thus, a few months after Maria Williams Proctor's death in May, 1936, the Institute opened to the public. In addition to expanding its collections of visual and decorative arts, the Institute developed its own Performing Arts and Arts Education programs, all components of sustaining the founders' belief in the prominent role all the arts play in cultivating a vibrant community.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the income from ticket sales, CMSU concerts were made possible, at various times through the years, with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, and the County of Oneida. In its early years, the Society received subvention funds from the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute—which helped keep ticket prices within a reasonable range—and from the United Arts Fund of the Mohawk Valley. In recent years, the Society has benefitted from various grants from the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, including long-standing annual gifts from the donor-advised Menotti Family Fund.

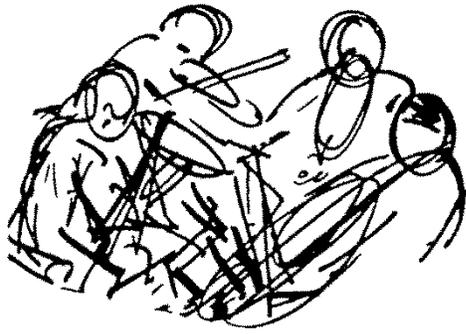
<sup>5</sup> www.mwpai.org/about

For over 15 years, the John Winter Family Fund has enabled the Society to present educational outreach programs to local secondary schools. Since 1997, the generous support of the Gilbert and Ildiko Butler Family Foundation, Inc. has sponsored an annual concert given in memory of Mary Kernan Butler—the Mrs. Gilbert Butler of the Society's "motivating committee"—and her daughter Martha Gilbert Butler, also a long-time member of the Society's Board of Trustees.



**Phil-Sym Quartet Performance—Butler Home—1939**  
*The Saunders Family Papers, Hamilton College Archives*

Furthermore, CMSU has benefitted generously from collaborations with fine visual artists, commencing in 1971, when the Society received the fluid pen-and-ink string quartet logo from James Penney, appearing on the CMSU brochures and concert programs, as well as on note cards sold to benefit the Society. Penney was a landscape painter and muralist, and Professor of Art at Hamilton College from 1948 to 1976.



“String Quartet” by James Penney

To help celebrate the Society’s 75th Anniversary, Clinton artists Mary Gaylord Loy and John Loy provided the exuberant design for this booklet cover and the anniversary CD case, with their daughter Jessica Loy facilitating the graphic design. In addition, Mary Loy produced splendid sketches of musicians and audience for the 75th Anniversary collection of CMSU note cards.

CMSU’s partnership with WCNY, Central New York’s member-supported public broadcasting entity, and specifically WCNY-FM, “Classic FM,” dates from 1985, when CMSU concerts were first recorded by James La Ronde and later broadcast. WCNY’s support of Central New York’s musical performing arts, including their

pre-concert interviews with CMSU artists and with Board member Dotty Deimel, has played a major role in getting the word out to the listening public.

The success and longevity of The Chamber Music Society of Utica must certainly in part be attributed to the Society’s relationships with the founders and early supporting organizations. CMSU continues its partnership with Hamilton College, now with Hamilton’s Performing Arts program, which offers CMSU subscribers free admission to a chamber music concert on the Hill. The Society’s association with the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute provides an acoustically superb “home” for CMSU performances, as well as a partnership with the considerate and assiduous MWPAI administrators and staff. The familial connections with the founders of the Society—the legacy members of the Society’s Board of Trustees—began when Silvia Saunders returned to Clinton in 1951 to care for her aging parents, Percy and Louise Saunders, and help her father with the peony business. Miss Saunders served CMSU as treasurer and ticket manager through the 1960s, and remained a Board member into the 1970s. Today several members of the Board of Trustees are following in their parents’ footsteps, with the second generation providing their own valuable contributions.



## ARTISTS AND PERFORMANCES

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*It has been the purpose of the society since its inception  
to bring to Uticans interested in chamber music  
the very best obtainable talent in this field.*

Dr. A. P. Saunders  
*Utica Observer-Dispatch*, June 6, 1943

**T**he glorious cavalcade of CMSU performances from world-class musicians is not a serendipitous development, as verified above in Dr. Saunders’ quote. Through the first 25 years, CMSU audiences heard the Budapest Quartet, the Hungarian Quartet, the Amadeus Quartet, Quartetto Italiano, the Juilliard Quartet, the cellist Janos Starker, Noah Greenberg and the New York Pro Musica, and the flutist Jean Pierre Rampal and his long-time keyboard collaborator, Robert Veyron-Lacroix.

From the mid-1960s, CMSU presented the Guarneri Quartet, the Beaux Arts Trio, David Munrow and the Early Music Consort of London, the double bass

virtuoso Gary Karr with pianist Harmon Lewis, Tashi, the Tokyo Quartet, the Cleveland Quartet, Trio di Milano, clarinetist Richard Stolzman with violist Walter Trampler and pianist Lee Luvisi, as well as the first CMSU appearances of the American String Quartet and the Boston Chamber Music Society.

The succession of CMSU performances over the last 25 years is equally impressive: the Lark Quartet, the St. Petersburg Quartet, the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio, the Ying Quartet, the Colorado Quartet, the Vienna Piano Trio, Trio Solisti, the Pacifica Quartet, the Concertante Chamber Players, the Spanish Brass Quintet, and the St. Lawrence String Quartet.

Shining brightly in the Society's roster of recent performers are four preeminent young piano trios, each of whom received the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson International Trio Award (KLRITA): the Claremont Trio of New York, Trio con Brio Copenhagen, the ATOS Trio of Berlin, and the German Morgengestern Trio.



**Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio**  
CMSU Performances in 1997, 2012



**Trio con Brio Copenhagen**  
CMSU Performances in 2008, 2013

The KLRITA derived its impetus from the desire to honor the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio—Joseph Kalichstein, piano, Jaime Laredo, violin, Sharon Robinson, cello—but equally important was the ambition to encourage the careers of accomplished and extraordinarily promising young "rising" piano trios, which were chosen every other year while the Award was in operation.

Generous financial contributions from the estate of long-time CMSU Board member Franklin Ely enabled the Society to join a group of 20 distinguished chamber music presenters across the country—including Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center Fortas Chamber Music Series—all of whom guaranteed a performance to each winner.

Modeled after Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award, the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson International Trio Award was to have been supported in perpetuity by a combination of funds from the 20 participating presenters and additional endowment funds raised by the Chamber Music Society of Detroit. Unfortunately, Detroit's economic downturn prevented the development of this sustainable funding plan, and the Award was permanently suspended in 2012—a loss to CMSU and the presenters, not to mention upcoming piano trios.

Across its 75-year history, CMSU has offered more than 400 performances featuring over 230 ensembles, many of whom were—and continue to be—welcomed for return appearances. In the beginning, two ensembles were invited each year—one in the autumn, the other in the spring—to present two or three concerts over several days. This was an economical model that provided the subscribers a concentrated string quartet "immersion" while holding the artists' travelling costs to the minimum. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Society's season and roster of ensembles grew slowly, settling into the pattern of four to six concerts presented each season.

The Society's broad reading of "chamber music" is notable. From 1941 to the 2015-2016 season, the majority of string quartets and piano trios has been offset with woodwind and brass ensembles. The size of the ensembles has ranged from the deeply appreciated solo piano recital performed by John O'Connor, who quickly replaced the cancelled Takacs Quartet in February, 1991, to the Chamber Orchestra Kremlin, which brought 20 musicians—orchestra, conductor and solo violinist—to the MWPAI auditorium stage in March, 2015.

The diversity of literature and performing instruments has grown through the years, and now ranges far beyond those found in "Western European Classical Music of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries." CMSU has presented a string of extraordinary Early Music groups, from the Pro Musica Antiqua, presented in 1949, to REBEL Ensemble for Baroque Music, heard in 2015.



**REBEL Ensemble for Baroque Music**  
CMSU Performances in 2005, 2015

CMSU performances have ventured into “world music” and a wider interpretation of “classical.” Recent programs have included the music of Astor Piazzolla, the Argentine composer who revolutionized and legitimized the music of the tango. In 2009, Cuarteto Latinoamericano introduced the Society’s audience to the *bandoneon*—a small accordion that’s an essential instrument in tango ensembles. The Carpe Diem String Quartet concert in 2014 included a work for string quartet and the Chinese *pipa*, a four-stringed plucked instrument, sometimes called the Chinese lute, which is one of the most popular and ancient of Chinese instruments.

New music has been an important part of the Society’s programming, with composers ranging from Thomas Adès to Frank Zappa. The Musical Art Quartet performed Piston’s Quartet No 1 (1933) in CMSU’s second season, and the Budapest Quartet included Hindemith’s Op. 22—“a modern work” from 1921—in their 1943 CMSU series. The Curtis Quartet performed Samuel Barber’s quartet—with its famous slow movement which was orchestrated as the Adagio for Strings—in 1949, when the piece was described as a “new American work.” CMSU audiences have heard all six of the Bartok quartets—several times—as well as most of the fifteen Shostakovich quartets. Each concert of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season included a contemporary American work, with several commissioned for the performing ensembles.

In the beginning of CMSU programming, the string quartet reigned supreme, with the piano trio a close second. For many, these remain the epitome of chamber ensembles. American quartets, based in the northeast US, were booked for the initial seasons—the Phil-Sym Quartet, the Curtis Quartet, the Musical Art Quartet. European groups

followed quickly—the Amadeus Quartet, the Budapest Quartet, the Hungarian Quartet, Quartetto Italiano, the Pasquier Trio—as well as west-coast American groups: the Hollywood Quartet and the Alma Trio. More recently the Society has hosted ensembles from Latin America and Asia—the Shanghai Quartet, Cuarteto Latinoamericano, La Catrina String Quartet.



**Beaux Arts Trio**  
CMSU Performances in 1968, 1984

The piano trio was included from the earliest seasons—the Kraeuter Trio in 1945 was the first, followed by the Beaux Arts Trio, the Trio Di Milano, the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio, and of course the KLRITA winners. A variety of duos also appeared, with and without piano: Jacqueline Blanchard, violin, with Andre DeRibaudierre, piano; Paul Doktor, viola, with Beveridge Webster, piano; Paul Makanowitzky, violin, with Noel Lee, piano; and most recently, Duo Sonidos, with Will Knuth, violin, and Adam Levin, guitar.

CMSU audience tastes have diversified, mirrored in the types of ensembles presented—woodwind and brass quintets, the Italian Saxophone Quartet, and a number of notable Early Music groups. Pro Musica Antiqua, in 1949, and the violin-harpsichord duo of Robert Brink and Daniel Pinkham, in 1953, were the earliest, followed by the Deller Consort, the Aulos Ensemble, the Western Wind, the Waverly Consort, the Baltimore Consort, the Scholars of London, and Charivari Agréable.

# A GLORIOUS CAVALCADE...



**Curtis Quartet**  
11 CMSU Performances—1941-1946



**Amadeus Quartet**  
6 CMSU Performances—1953-1976



**Budapest Quartet**  
8 CMSU Performances—1943-1960



**Juilliard Quartet**  
7 CMSU Performances—1955-1986



**Hungarian Quartet**  
11 CMSU Performances—1948-1970



**Guarneri Quartet**  
7 CMSU Performances—1967-1987



**Quartetto Italiano**  
7 CMSU Performances—1952-1967



**Trio di Milano**  
CMSU Performances in 1976, 1981

# ...1941-2016



**Aulos Ensemble**  
4 CMSU Performances—1981-2009



**Vienna Piano Trio**  
CMSU Performance in 2001



**Colorado Quartet**  
4 CMSU Performances—1985-2008



**Pacifica Quartet**  
CMSU Performances in 2002, 2004



**Boston Chamber Music Society**  
3 CMSU Performances—1988-2006



**Cuarteto Latinoamericano**  
CMSU Performance in 2009



**Ying Quartet**  
4 CMSU Performances—1999-2011



**ATOS Trio**  
CMSU Performance in 2010

In 1960, the Society returned to the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, following 17 years of performing at the Grace Church Parish House auditorium. The Society was honored to present the Juilliard Quartet on October 19, 1960, a Standing-Room-Only event that “christened” the MWPI auditorium, and was part of the week-long celebration of the opening of the Institute’s new multi-million dollar edifice, designed by Philip Johnson.

In the review of that first performance—from the *Utica Daily Press*, October 20, 1960—Adolph Heller remarked on “the overflow crowd, which found seats on the stage” and closed the review with this paragraph:

*A word must be said about the resonance and beauty of the auditorium, its acoustics are perfect and is a perfect ambiance for listening to chamber music. Not a note of the Berg [Lyric Suite] or the other quartets [Mozart, K. 428, and Debussy] was lost either to extraneous noises or because of architectural defects. This starts a new era for the Chamber Music Society of Utica.*

In addition to the critics and CMSU audience members who enjoy listening in the MWPAI auditorium, over the years the musicians have consistently remarked about the wonderful acoustics of the hall.

There have been a few near-disasters or crises—a number of bad weather and transportation-related predicaments, and the not-unexpected cancellations and replacements, necessitated by artists’ illness. Thanks to quick action by sharp-witted Board members, coupled with accommodating and resourceful artists’ managers, plus artists with flexible schedules, most of these straits were navigated quite successfully. The latest emergency—losing electrical power in the neighborhood surrounding and including the MWPAI, just prior to a 2:30 pm curtain, on a Sunday in early October, 2014, with the audience queuing in the halls—did result in a cancelled concert and reception, but was resolved with a replacement concert taking place in January, 2015.

For this 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary retrospective, CMSU Board members—former and current—were invited to submit CMSU memories. Dotty Deimel, currently a member of the Board and Past-President, and Nigel Bolland, now an Honorary Trustee, sent notably telling responses.

Mr. Bolland, who was responsible for bringing ensembles and managing programs, remembers especially a performance by the string ensemble Concertante of Schoenberg’s *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured Night), an intense and ultra-expressive late romantic work that could melt a stone. In the intermission, immediately following the Schoenberg,

Bolland met a very distinguished and internationally renowned poet in the men’s room, trying to staunch the tears that were flowing down his cheeks. Clearly, he was no stone! He told Bolland he had found the music overwhelmingly passionate.



**Concertante Chamber Players**  
3 CMSU Performances—2004-2012

In his transmittal note, Bolland continues:

*Responses such as this, while not unique to chamber music, are certainly quite characteristic and not uncommon, so memories such as this exemplify what is so special about it, particularly in the intimate setting of the MWPAI auditorium.*

Mrs. Deimel recalls: “A faithful member of our audience—a student of Haydn’s work—had been seriously ill and had not been able to attend for some time. She appeared at a concert, which included a work by the composer, and I greeted her, telling her how happy I was to see her, well enough to be there. She replied ‘My friends brought me to this concert. I didn’t need my medications nearly as much today as I needed to hear this Haydn.’”

Mrs. Deimel’s and Mr. Bolland’s recollections are surely 21<sup>st</sup>-century echoes of Goethe’s 1829 description of the chamber music experience:<sup>6</sup>

*“You listen to four sensible persons conversing,  
you profit from their discourse,  
and you get to know the individual character  
of the instruments.”*

<sup>6</sup>The Goethe Institute.  
[www.goethe.de/en/kul/mus/gen/kla/str/6471826.html](http://www.goethe.de/en/kul/mus/gen/kla/str/6471826.html)

# 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON • 2015-2016



**American Quartet**  
7 CMSU Performances—1980-2016



**Duo Sonidos**  
CMSU Performance in 2016



**Claremont Trio**  
CMSU Performances in 2006, 2015



**St. Lawrence Quartet**  
CMSU Performances in 2007, 2016



**Walden Chamber Players**  
3 CMSU Performances—2007-2015



**Hyperion Quartet**  
CMSU Performance in 2016

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Unlike Athena, no organization emerges fully grown and clothed at its outset. The Chamber Music Society of Utica—now one of the strong fibers in the cultural fabric that bolsters Utica and the Mohawk Valley—is grateful for the familial and social networks that helped spawn the Society, and which continue important support. We're also indebted to the far-sighted community institutions that fostered performing groups and presenting organizations, and helped encourage and develop a community culture that recognizes the importance of the musical arts. We thank our avid and eloquent founders—who loved chamber music—and the succeeding members of the Society's Board of Trustees. While this Diamond Jubilee provides the opportunity to celebrate the Society's artists and their exhilarating and edifying performances, equally important are the commitment and unflagging energy of CMSU Board members. For over 75 years now, the Society's Board of Trustees has managed all aspects of the organization without paid staff or office space. And of course, the success of the entire enterprise rests on our audience—CMSU subscribers and friends, who year after year enthusiastically attend concerts, introduce their family and friends to the series, and with their generous donations contribute support of a most concrete sort.

## 2015-2016

### OFFICERS AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Nigel Bolland, Stephen Bonta, Vera Brindisi, Gilbert Butler

### PAST PRESIDENTS

1941-1946	Dr. A. P. Saunders	1970-1973	Dr. John Stern
1946-1950	Berrian R. Shute	1973-1978	Mrs. George Hopkinson
1950-1955	Mrs. Earl B. Worden	1978-1981	Dr. Jon Karl Magendanz
1955-1960	Dr. John Stern	1981-1983	Stephen Bonta
1960-1965	John L. Baldwin, Jr.	1983-1987	Mrs. Raymond Zoeckler
1965-1967	Cornelia M. Griffin	1987-1989	Stephen Bonta
1967-1968	Bruce Barbour	1989-2001	Dorothy Einsiedel Deimel
1968-1970	David Walker	2001-	Marietta von Bernuth

### 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

Heidi Jost von Bergen, Chairman  
Joan Huntington Gorton, Anita B. Humer, Jan Moore, Robert Verkuyl, JoElyn Wakefield-Wright, Susanna Watling

75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Text compiled and composed by Susanna Watling

*assisted by*

Katherine Collett, Archivist, Hamilton College Archives, Burke Library, Hamilton College

Frank Tomaino and the Oneida County Historical Society

Mary Gaylord Loy, John Loy and Jessica Loy

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## A LOOK BACK



The name of Mary Kernan Butler (Mrs. Gilbert Butler) has been a leitmotif through the history of The Chamber Music Society of Utica, as seen in the earlier pages of this booklet. Here she is, above right, pictured in the *Utica Daily Press* of March 24, 1941, with Miss Sarah Titus and Mrs. LeRoy Harding, listening to selections on a Victrola, at the initial organization meeting of the Society.

Mary Kernan was born in 1904 in Utica, NY, the daughter of Francis K. Kernan, of Utica, and Mary Spratt Kernan, of Ogdensburg. The Kernan family has included prominent lawyers and successful business owners, as well as highly-regarded politicians *cum* public servants since 1839, when Francis Kernan, later a United States Senator, arrived in Utica to study law. Mary Kernan's father, Francis, was a member of the Kernan & Kernan Law Firm, and president of the Bossert Corporation, Inc.

Known as an accomplished pianist, Mary attended Utica schools and graduated from Ethel Walker School, a college-preparatory school for young ladies in Simsbury, CT. In 1936 she married Gilbert Butler of Utica, a widower with three children, who was then vice president and treasurer at Bossert Corporation.

Mary Kernan Butler's social affiliations in Utica included The Fort Schuyler Club and Sadaquada Golf Club—as a ladies associate—and she belonged to The River Club of New York City. But her obituary of 1997 gives precedence to her devotion to The Chamber Music Society of Utica, and enumerates her roles as founder, trustee for many years, and, subsequently, honorary trustee.

Gilbert and Mary Kernan Butler had four children—Gilbert, Martha Gilbert, Thomas Spratt Kernan, and Frederick Joseph Cox—two of whom emulated their mother's enthusiasm and commitment to The Chamber Music Society of Utica. Daughter Martha served on the Society's board of trustees. Eldest son Gilbert remembers sitting on the staircase in his home as a youngster, listening to string quartet performances. As mentioned previously, Gilbert and his wife Ildiko have given the Society a grant to honor his mother and sister, through the Gilbert and Ildiko Butler Foundation, Inc., to be used for that which these two ladies long held dear—a fine concert to be held each year as part of the Society's season.