

# Bassoonews

Newsletter of the Minnesota Bassoon Association  
January 2002

Minnesota Bassoon Association  
P.O. Box 721  
Northfield, MN 55057

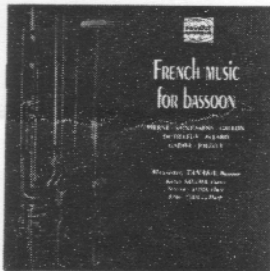
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## Masahito Tanaka to Perform - February 10, 2002

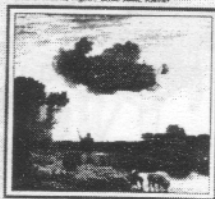
### Masahito Tanaka Recital and Master Class

Masahito Tanaka, principal bassoon of the Tokyo Royal Chamber Orchestra, will appear in a recital at 7:30 PM on Sunday, February 10, 2002. This event will take place at the Ultan Recital Hall in Ferguson Hall, U of MN School of Music, 2106 4<sup>th</sup> Street South, West Bank Campus, Minneapolis. The Master Class will be held at 3 PM, February 10<sup>th</sup> in the same building. Those who are interested in playing for Mr. Tanaka's master class should contact John Miller at (651) 227-5410. Only five bassoonists will be selected. The fee for playing in the master class is \$25.00. Anyone may attend the recital and master class at no cost. Prior to the master class there will be a short annual meeting of the Minnesota Bassoon Association. Local bassoonist, Ye Yu will have Mr. Tanaka's CDs available for purchase at the recital.



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60+ MIN. OF MUSIC

### BASSOON FANTASIA MASAHITO TANAKA PLAYS HIS FAVORITES



Gene Beckwith: *Dispelling the myth: How to make your bassoon last a lifetime.*

On October 28, 2001, retired bassoon technician Gene Beckwith of Red Wing, Minnesota gave a presentation on bassoon care and maintenance. Mr. Beckwith described five major yet simple essentials of instrument care that will enhance the life of the bassoon:

1. Swab
2. Clean
3. Check
4. Oil
5. Clean the case, (described as one of the most important aspects of a long bassoon life).

To troubleshoot, ameliorate and expand the playing life of a bassoon, Mr. Beckwith suggests the following applications:



- Always swab the instrument after any playing. Moisture is the worst culprit of deterioration.
- Frequently clean the outside of the bassoon with any or all of the following products: soft brush, soft cloth, or blown cotton (Beckwith describes blown cotton as the best medium for cleaning the wood surfaces of the instrument and is available at most jewelry stores).
- Clean the bocal using a standard bocal brush. It is extremely important to keep the bocal free of debris. For brass bocals, dezincification and deterioration caused by body chemistry can be very damaging and therefore these bocals must be cared for immediately after playing.
- Check the key mechanisms. The viscosity of the oil within the pivot devices should be just thick enough to act as a constant lubricant. Beckwith suggests using good nondetergent motor oil or a good clock oil. He suggests not using household oils like 3-1 or anything that is not synthetic.
- Vacuum out the case periodically to ensure debris does not pollute the instrument. As Beckwith stated, "A good instrument in a bad case will soon become a bad instrument."

#### Servicing the instrument

The life of the bassoon can be prolonged by regularly bringing it to a professional who can detect and correct problems. Always examine the instrument yourself and if any suspicions arise, contact a reputable bassoon repairman.

What constitutes a complete service?

First and foremost, make sure you and the technician understand the service to be rendered. A complete service should include the following:

- Repair of string or cork
- Replacement of any defective pads
- Body properly and completely oiled
- Boot sealed
- Mechanism strengths corrected
- Removing and sealing of the U2 bracket

Several modifications can be made for people with special needs. These include the addition of extra keys, the sizing of keys, addition of rollers or the addition of a professional U tube to student or amateur model bassoons.

Be sure to attend the next Minnesota Bassoon Association event, which will feature world-renowned bassoonist Masahito Tanaka on February 10, 2002.



#### New Bassoon Product: Counter-Balance Seat-Strap

Steve Marsden, Principal Bassoon of the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera was recently granted a patent for an innovative support mechanism for playing the bassoon: the Counter-Balance Seat-Strap. His device aids posture by removing the weight of the bassoon felt on the left hand. In addition to acting like an ordinary seat-strap, the apparatus has an elasticized section, which forms a connection between the bottom of the bassoon, and the front right leg of the chair. The tension can be adjusted to suit the individual player's needs. The player can move freely while the bassoon remains balanced. Marsden claims his device improves embouchure and helps to increase rates of articulation.



More information is available at [www.marsdenbassoonreeds.com](http://www.marsdenbassoonreeds.com) (The Counter-Balance Seat-Strap is available on a sale or return two-week trial basis).



### Ullery Undergoes Heart Surgery

-Ann Hagen

Anyone attending a St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO) concert this month will notice a familiar face is missing from the stage. Charles Ullery, principal bassoonist of the SPCO underwent heart surgery at the end of November and will return to the stage in February.

The surgery repaired a mitral valve prolapse, which caused no symptoms, yet was found to be severe. Chuck chose to have surgery immediately so that he would be able to participate in the SPCO's tour in March.

The successful surgery took place at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. Chuck stayed at the hospital for a week after the surgery and waited an additional two weeks before practicing the bassoon again.

Always one to put a positive spin on things, Chuck says he enjoys coming back to the bassoon after a few weeks off because it lets him reevaluate his technique and gives him a fresh approach to playing. Chuck encourages everyone who has a heart murmur to have it checked out and to learn the cause of it. Some heart problems, like the one Chuck experienced, have no symptoms beyond a murmur.

### Moses, Moses, Moses!

-Elizabeth McMillan

The February 4<sup>th</sup> MBA event held at the House of Hope Church in St. Paul proved to be a very enjoyable afternoon that reaffirmed everyone's appreciation for the bassoon. The accomplished guest bassoonist, Kenneth Moses, is currently the assistant professor of bassoon at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he must delight students with his smooth, dark, chocolaty bassoon sound, dizzying technique, and good looks.



The program started with Vivaldi's *Concerto in E-flat Major*, (P. 433), a favorite standard for many bassoonists in the audience. Moses played this technically difficult piece with an ease that made it look simple. The piano accompaniment was played brilliantly by Vincent Fuh, an accomplished professional accompanist from the Madison area. After this traditional piece, Moses played *Sonata for Bassoon and Piano*, a new

composition by Andre Previn. This piece was so enjoyable that it is bound to melt the dislike many performers and listeners have for modern bassoon compositions. Previn's piece was exciting, and played by Moses and Fuh with lots of spirit!

The second half of the program contained *Piece en forme de habanera*, composed by Maurice Ravel and transcribed by Fernand Oubradous, and *Duet-Concertino for Clarinet and Bassoon* by Richard Strauss. The clarinetist, Linda Bartley, who is also on the University of Wisconsin-Madison teaching faculty, played with great energy and style.

If you missed this MBA concert, make sure you catch the next one! This concert was delightful, even for members of the audience who were not bassoonists. But where was the cake and punch afterwards?

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### Bassoon News

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, **Anna Urang** gave her Master's recital at the Lloyd Ultan Recital Hall at the University of Minnesota. Anna presented works by Vivaldi, Malcolm Arnold, Villa-Lobos and J. N. Hummel. Featured players included Marcel Talangbayan, Greg Milliren, and the Ted Mann String Quartet. Anna Urang is currently a student of John Miller.



Craig Kirchhoff, Anna Urang, and John Miller



**Bill Oldfather**, longtime member of the Minnesota Bassoon Association, has started a business of piano tuning. Bill has been a member of the MBA since 1980 and welcomes friends and MBA members to call him for a tuning: (651) 275-0247

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