

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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EASTERN EDITION

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 1977

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Chamber Ensembles Multiply as Interest In Their Music Swells [1]

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**Intimacy of Concerts Attracts
Both Rock, Classical Fans:
Krummhorns & Sackbuts**

By RAYMOND A. JOSEPH

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

It was 20 below zero in Eau Claire, Wis. last Jan. 28, the wind was blowing hard, and a lot of people thought it was a good night to stay home. But Scofield Auditorium at the University of Wisconsin was packed. The program the audience had braved the chill night to hear was a performance of chamber music by the Annapolis Brass Quintet.

That's the kind of following chamber music is attracting these days. And as interest heightens in classical concerts by small groups of musicians, professional chamber ensembles are springing up across the country. "Musical America"...lists 249 such groups this year... about 200 in 1970... and only 85 in 1965.

The ensembles charm audiences by offering classical music in a more intimate setting than an orchestra can. And many music lovers favor the clarity of a small ensemble's music, in which each part is played by just one instrument. At the same

time, young fans and musicians tiring of rock are starting to discover chamber music.

"Audiences have grown tremendously, with the number of young people ever on the increase," says Isidore Cohen, a violinist who has played for 11 years in New York Beaux Arts Trio. "Ten years ago, we were taking almost all concerts offered us. Now we can pick and choose," he says. The Annapolis Brass Quintet, the group that lured Wisconsinites that cold night, played more than 300 concerts last year.

David Cran of the Annapolis Brass Quintet says "when we first organized, we played for as little as \$50." Now their concert fee is \$1,500 and, as a full-time performing chamber ensemble, they log tens of thousands of miles a year, crisscrossing America in their van and Europe by its trains.

Small ensembles "are more realistic in our times," says Michael Tree, violist of the Guarneri Quartet. "We don't have a truckload of costumes, and we don't pay a conductor," he notes. But low fees mean tight budgets for the chamber groups themselves, and many...teach or play in orchestras.

The Syracuse Symphony, for example, divides into 10 ensembles for chamber-music concerts. Orchestra members, who earn a minimum of \$8,200 a season, make an average of \$3,000 more for playing chamber concerts.

Other ensembles are associated with a university or conservatory. The arrangement "frees one from worrying too much about finances--a good balance

of teaching and playing" says Bonnie Hampton-Schwartz, a cellist with Francesco Trio, linked with San Francisco Conservatory & Stanford University. On campus...student interest is growing. "Those who came here playing rock three years ago are suddenly turned on by Beethoven," says Larry Christopherson, of York College of the City University of New York. Harold Best, dean of Wheaton College Music Conservatory, says, "students seem to prefer more and more the intimacy that chamber music provides. There is less depersonalization."

The intimacy attracts audiences as well as performers. "People prefer being in smaller groups," says Fred Zlotkin, a cellist with the Montclair Chamber Music Society in New Jersey. "There's a rapport between performers and audiences that's lost in a large concert hall.

The blossoming of chamber music hasn't escaped notice in Washington, and help for hard-pressed ensembles may be on the way. The National Endowment for the Arts has decided to subsidize chamber music and currently is working up guidelines, according to Adrian Gnam, its assistant director of music. "Most chamber musicians are playing for the love of music, running deficits." Mr. Gnam says. "This shouldn't be so."

[1] Edited excerpt from original April 22, 1977 Wall Street Journal: Front page article--*Chamber Music Interest Swells*