

AMONG PRIVATE music schools in America, Mannes, in New York City, is one of the oldest and best. It came into being not through a rich man's whim, like Eastman in Rochester, New York, or the Juilliard in New York City, or the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Prior to all of them, it expressed the determination, and devotion to music, of one relatively poor man—David Mannes himself.

A New Yorker by birth, Mannes was 93 when he died in 1959. The violin was his instrument, and, after a modest beginning as a back-desk man in the old New York Symphony, whose conductor was Walter Damrosch, he was appointed concertmaster in 1898. Just about that time, he married the boss's daughter, Clara Damrosch, who remained a companion for half a century.

Mannes was a tall man of distinguished mien, who performed innumerable public-spirited acts in New York. Among them was a famous series of concerts, held between 1919 and 1947, in which he conducted the New York Symphony in the Metropolitan Museum of Art eight Saturday nights in the winter. The orchestra played from the top of the museum's imposing center staircase, and as many as 16,000 music lovers were accommodated free of a January evening.

The most lasting and influential of all his acts was the school which he created in 1916. Though larger, more richly endowed institutions captured the spotlight of publicity, Mannes maintained a steady course. The student body was purposely restricted in size to stress a principle that its founder deemed essential—close contact between students and teachers.

The Mannes children could hardly be unaffected by so artistic a pair. Leopold Damrosch Mannes, the oldest (born in 1899), was an excellent musician and a composer of quality, but also a man with a scientific turn of mind. In collaboration with a crony, Leopold Godowsky (son of the famous pianist of the same name), he perfected the process of color photography known as Kodachrome.

Eventually, as his father aged, the son accepted the maintenance of the school as his primary obligation. Many musicians of ability who were uprooted by the Nazi upheavals of the Thirties sought refuge in America; more than a few of them found a place of honor and

esteem at the Mannes school.

Included was a nonpolitical victim of the war, the conductor of the Glasgow-based Scottish Orchestra, who was stranded in New York when he received a cable saying (in effect): "Don't come back. Orchestra disbanded because of military call up." Somehow Mannes found a place for him on its faculty. That was how George Szell survived in New

Mannes' planned merger was scotched when poet Marya Mannes rallied celebrated musicians and alumni against it.

York until a place for a conductor of his skills opened up at the Metropolitan Opera. From there he went on to Cleveland, to build its orchestra into one of the world's best.

As Leopold Mannes carried on his father's work, with great energy and, no doubt, some Kodachrome-derived money, it became apparent that academic credentials were essential for musicians entering the competitive musical world of the Fifties. So, with the help of his associates, he added the academic faculty through which the Mannes School became the Mannes College of Music. It was steadily expanding when Leopold Mannes suddenly died in 1964.

That not only eliminated the Mannes influence from the school, but also the Kodachrome money, resulting in more financial problems than a school of high standards could comfortably sustain. When Risë Stevens of operatic fame became president in 1975 hopes for stronger financial support, and the creation of an endowment fund, were bright. Three years later she resigned over a policy dispute: The school's trustees opposed her strong bent to an operatic curriculum.

After this point, rising costs and inadequate fund-raising brought the crunch to the point where a majority of the institution's 13 trustees concluded that the only way out was a merger with another school. A willing collaborator was the Manhattan School of Music, which, when the Juilliard moved downtown to new quarters in Lincoln Center, acquired its former buildings uptown, near Columbia University.

Manhattan's president, John Crosby

(also known for his summertime success as director of the Santa Fe Opera) had the space, and the interest, to accommodate some of Mannes' faculty and students. But he could not promise to perpetuate the student-faculty relationship which made Mannes and its surroundings on East 74th Street distinctive from the start. The school had always drawn many of its students from the children of the heavily populated neighborhood, as well as attracting non-professionals who cherished its well-structured music extension courses.

Sentiment among the faculty and students was strongly against the merger. Sentiment for the merger was strongest among 11 of the 13 trustees. A *fait accompli* was announced in February.

Here, however, another descendant of the Mannes line, and the last living member of the tribe, rose to defend what was more than family tradition. Marya Mannes, author, social critic, poet, humanist as well as feminist, applied her influence and that of one other dissident trustee to the accomplishment of an apparently impossible task.

By invoking suitable legal procedures and enlisting the aroused support of a substantial number of prominent musicians, the two turned public opinion against the merger, thus chilling the enthusiasm at Manhattan, as well as among some of the borderline trustees at Mannes. The minority, for a change, had managed to overcome the will of the majority.

This summer, a new board of trustees, determined to establish an endowment program, will have to engage in energetic fund-raising. But at least the opportunity has not been foreclosed. Nor has the proven ability of the Mannes faculty to produce such distinguished young artists as pianist Murray Parahia and mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade been dissipated.

Above all, the non-merger should encourage supporters of schools elsewhere in opposing unwise "easy way out" decisions by trustees.

As all too many examples in the past have demonstrated, where two things are merged—even in the arts—one is inevitably submerged.

The struggle to avoid submersion in this instance is a lesson of far-reaching application. It may be the best teaching Mannes will accomplish this year.

—Irving Kolodin

Nervous Time.

Spring here at Beringer, in the Napa Valley wine country, arrives in a hundred colors. But the official color is yellow—a bright, brash, everywhere, mustard weed yellow.

And, like every other adolescent, spring gives us something to worry about every day.

If the rains stay too long, the tractor has to wait. But a clear, dry, star-filled night that would send a poet into verse sends us into the fields to fiddle with the heaters and test the wind machines. On a night like that, spring can do a flawless imitation of winter, as careless as it is cruel. It's called "frost."

Up in the caves behind Beringer's Rhine House, we're tasting all our new '78 wines, and we're releasing the

'77 Napa Valley Chardonnay we bottled in February.

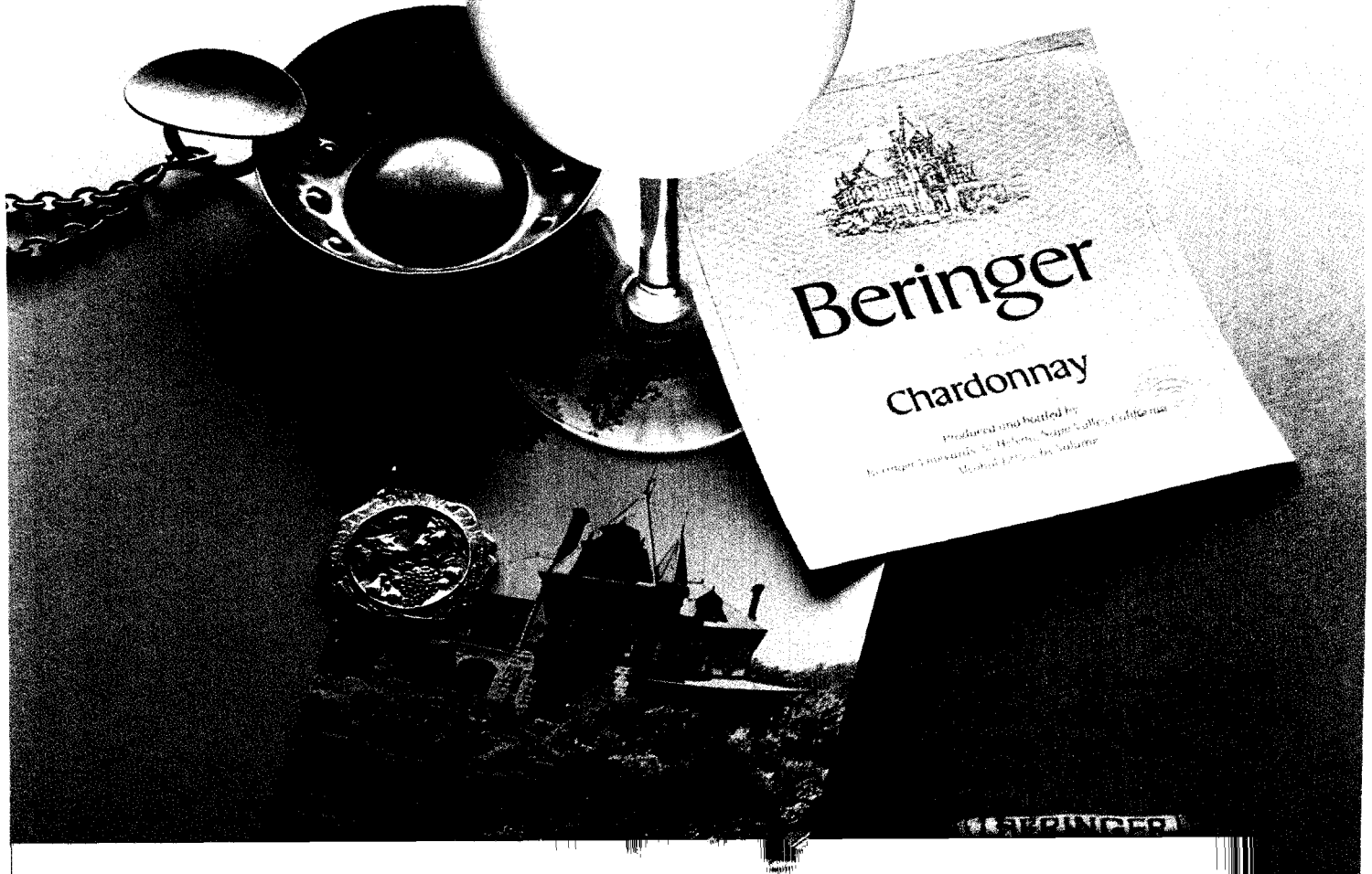
Well, we're sort of releasing it. The wine-master won't let it go. He wants it binned here to bottle age until summer. This is a big wine, and time is kind to big wines. Time brings a bouquet and a taste that blossoms in the mouth. (Some wines, like the gamays and chenin blancs, are wonderful, but never big. Others, like the chardonnays and cabernets are big, or never mind.)

Suddenly, spring speeds up. March promises April. April rehearses May. We spend a morning walking one of our vineyards below Inglenook, just above Robert Mondavi's. It looked like a cemetery on the moon a week ago, but now every vine glistens with fat, shiny new buds.

We're going down to Yountville tonight. The Western Opera Theatre is giving a special performance of *La Boheme*, and then there's a reception for the cast at Domaine Chandon.

But even before we get there the night is a success. The air is warm. We congratulate one another.

Spring has finally decided what it wants to be when it grows up. It wants to be summer.





**When you help start a Scout troop,
there's no guarantee one of the Scouts
will grow up to be an Impressionist.**

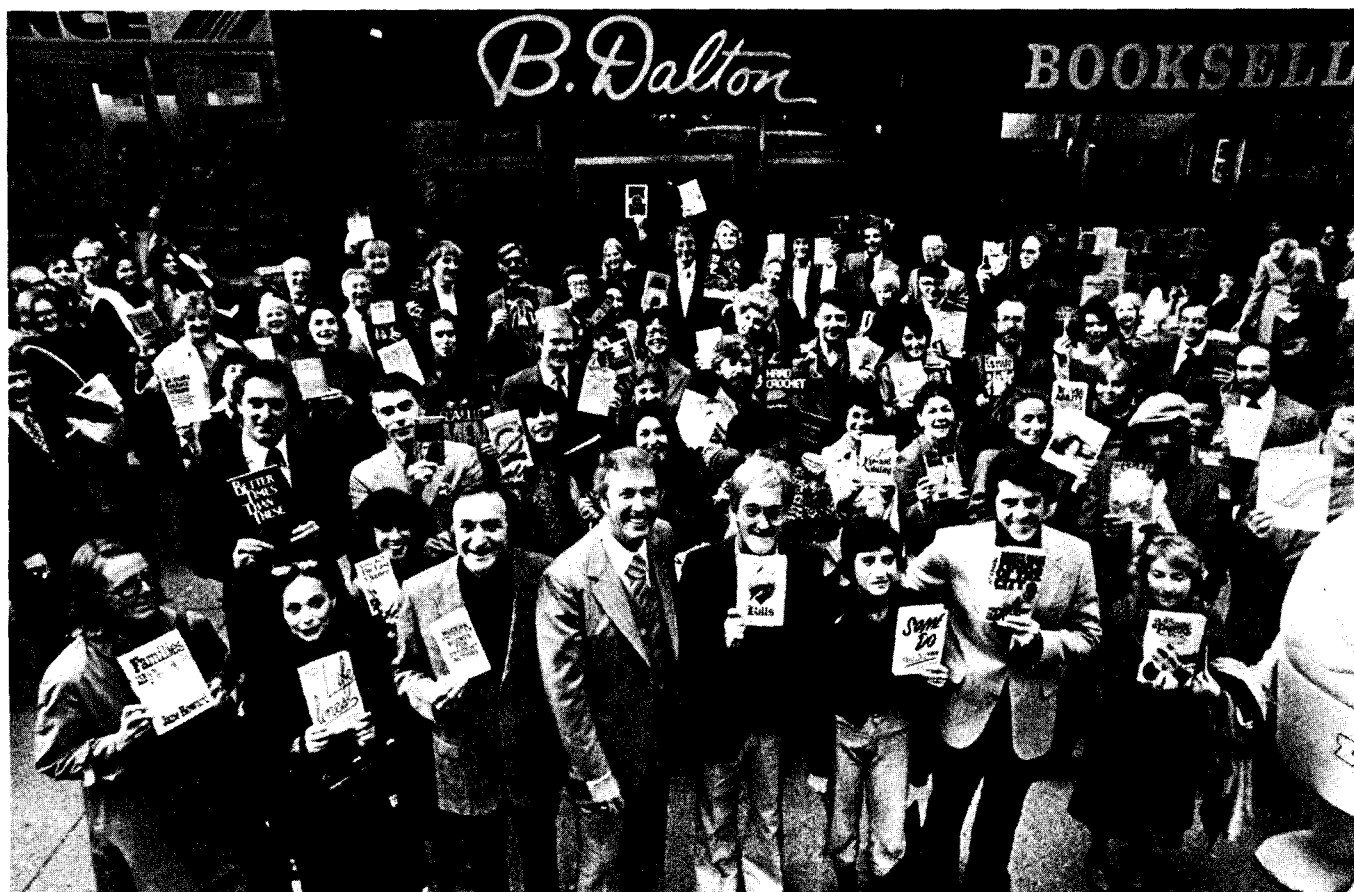
But you never know.

For all the facts on how your organization can support a Scout troop,
call Boy Scouts of America. The St. John's Anglican Church of Ottawa, Canada did,
and look what they've got to show for it.



B. Dalton: The Leader of the Chain Gang

by Bruce Porter



Authors and their books in front of the New York B. Dalton—Ability to sell, not literary merit, is what claims the bookstore's attention.

I hold with Charles Lamb, a wise bookseller does more for the community than all the lecturers, journalists and schoolmasters put together.

—John Cooper Powys

DICK FONTAINE, merchandising director of the B. Dalton bookstore chain, downshifted his burnt-umber Porsche 924 into the parking lot of the company's one-story office building south of Minneapolis and finished off a long lament on the dim commercial aspirations of book editors in New York. Wind whipped off the former prairie land, converted to office parks and housing developments.

"Everything you try to do to popular-

ize books is going to be sneered at," said Fontaine, a 37-year-old former schoolteacher from South Dakota. "Most editors still have the elitist carriage-trade mentality. They don't want to be associated with the likes of Harold Robbins and Jacqueline Susann.... But I don't give a damn what starts people reading. If it's a sexual high, voyeurism, I say 'Fine.' No one starts off by reading Proust."

Until recently, such philistinism would get about as much attention along Publishers Row in Manhattan as an unsolicited manuscript. But these days when B. Dalton says something book publishers and their editors pause to listen. A year and a half ago, the com-

pany passed Waldenbooks of Stamford, Connecticut, as the largest chain owner of bookstores in the country. As such, Dalton not only sells an awful lot of books, some 47 million, in its 364 shops, but together with the other chains, it is beginning to exert tremendous influence over what the country is reading. While the approximately 2,300 stores controlled by the different chains amount to only a fraction of the 20,000 bookshops listed in the American Book Trade Directory, they account for more than 50 percent of the stores doing at least \$100,000 worth of business a year. Dalton, which grossed \$174 million in 1978, sells about one out of every 10 hardcover books published. It is growing