

IAMA Celebrates 25 Years!

For the past quarter-century, the International Adventist Musicians Association has worked to create a more unified and collective identity among Seventh-day Adventists musicians and an increased awareness of what we have been doing as a group at all levels and in all areas. As we celebrate this significant milestone, it is important to review how we have evolved, celebrate what our organization has accomplished, and talk about the future.

Twenty-five years ago, in the spring of 1984, IAMA officially was born with the election of its first officers. That summer they met at Andrews University, where they enthusiastically planned for IAMA's future and voted to produce its first magazines. Hans Jorgen Holman, an exacting and scholarly music history professor at AU, eagerly started to prepare a professional magazine, *The IAMA Journal*, while at the same time, another group began to prepare *Newsletters*, a magazine that would share news and ideas for specific areas of music endeavor.

The release of both magazines in the spring of 1985 became the first tangible evidence that IAMA had become a reality. A quarter century, 67 issues of magazines and newsletters, and nearly 300 articles later, its magazines have served as a place for dialogue on music issues during a time of rapid cultural changes, and a record of what has been happening

in Adventist music and with its musicians.

The idea for IAMA had developed during efforts by Dan Shultz to establish an SDA band directors' association in 1981 while he was serving as music chair at Walla Walla College, now University, and directing its concert bands. His secretary, Julianne Fisher, aware of this project, remarked, "You really should be doing this for all aspects of Adventist music."

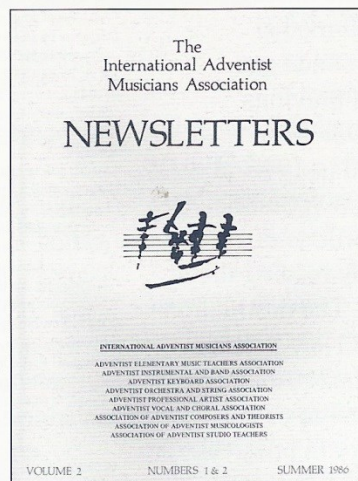
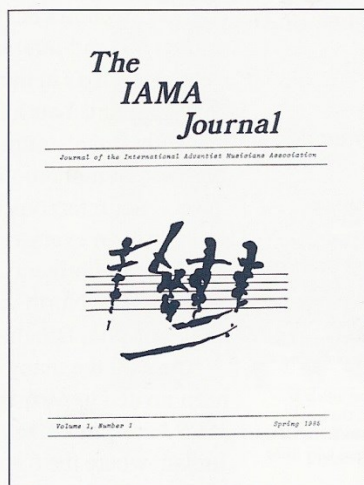
That observation led to a shift in focus from the band to the larger challenge of creating an organization for all of Adventist music and musicians. Accordingly, in the fall of 1981, a proposal for a more inclusive Adventist music organization was presented at a meeting of SDA college and university music department chairs in Dallas, Texas.

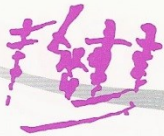
They endorsed the idea and established themselves as a consulting group and steering committee. A constitution was written, General

Conference endorsement was obtained, potential members were contacted, and, in the fall of 1982, in Seattle, Washington, an action was taken by the music chairs to establish the International Adventist Musicians Association.

The need for such a group had been felt for years and had, in fact, led to the founding of the SDA Church Musicians Guild in 1970. Since most Adventist musicians are teachers in the church's schools and others are not affiliated with the church, the name was seen as being too narrow by definition and too focused on music of the church service. Most viewed themselves as educators or performers first, and second, in some instances, as church musicians.

The formation of the guild had increased interest, however, in creating an organization that would serve the broader needs of all Adventist musicians. For years there had been a felt need for an





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organization that would help create a higher level of unity within Adventist musicians and an increased awareness about what was happening in Adventist music and with musicians not directly affiliated with the church. There was no way to share news about what was happening in Adventist musical circles and no neutral forum in which differing views about music issues could be discussed.

Although IAMA was started as an association organized into eight divisions for specialized areas of music such as choir, band, orchestra, piano, and others, each with its own set of officers, that model never really flourished. Splitting the members into small subgroups dependent on officers who, because of heavy teaching responsibilities, did not have the time to make their divisions function effectively proved to be unworkable and led to their being phased out in 1996.

A magazine seemed the best possible vehicle to accomplish the goals of the organization and hence the interest in publishing those first issues as quickly as possible. As the editors quickly discovered, however, creating a magazine from scratch can be a daunting undertaking.

Computer technology was in its infancy and not easy to use. Additionally, midway through preparation of the *IAMA Journal*, professor Holman had to withdraw because of serious health problems. Charles Hall, a teaching colleague at AU who had earlier that spring facilitated the printing of IAMA's *Newsletters*, completed production of the *Journal*. For the next six years, one professional magazine was produced annually, supplemented by a bi-monthly newsletter titled *Notes*, both produced by IAMA president Dan Shultz.

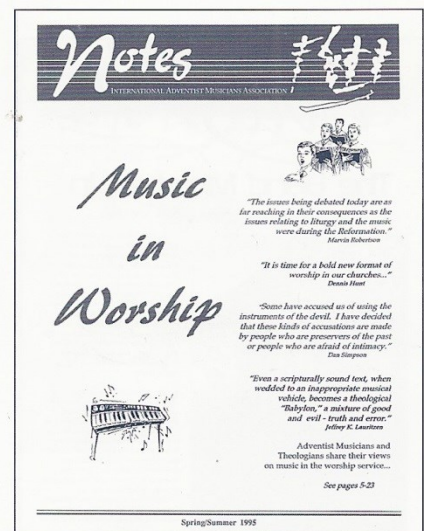
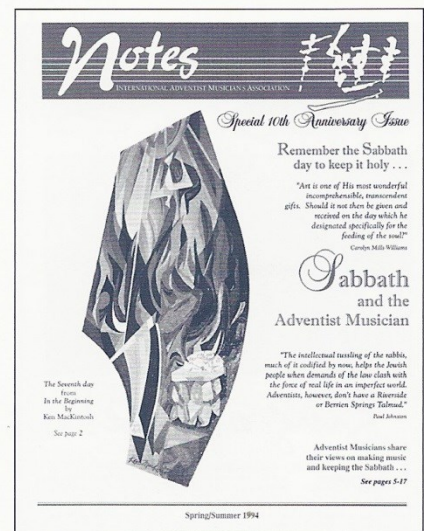
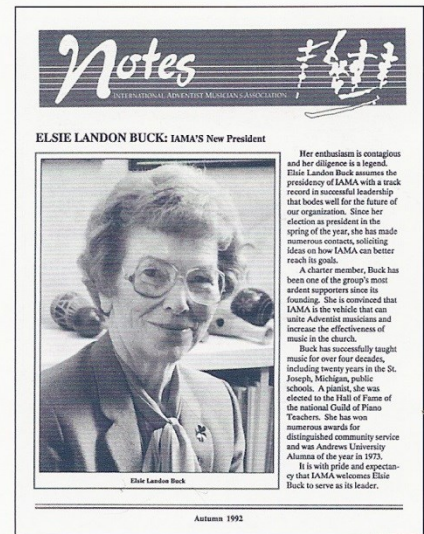
In the fall of 1991, Shultz presented a proposal for a more attractive, single publication that would combine the best features of the professional publication and the newsletters. He also asked that a new person be chosen as president of IAMA so that he would have more time to develop the new magazine. The board voted to endorse the changes.

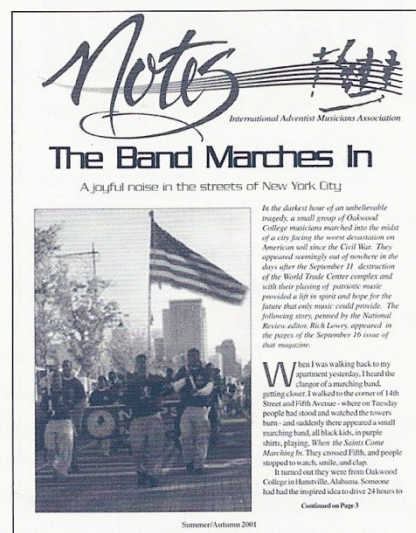
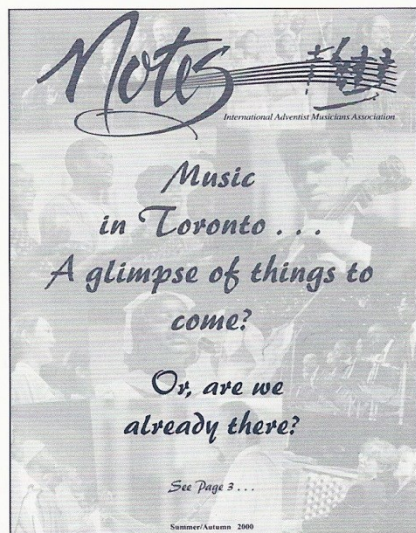
Elsie Buck, music educator, was elected president the following summer. That fall, the first issue of a newly formatted, reader-friendly magazine, *Notes*, was released. This is the 42nd issue in that new format, one that has been modified and improved as preparation and printing technologies changed.

Today's two-color magazine with its varied content and photographs is the end result of twenty-five years of experiments in format and content. In that quarter century, revolutionary advances in computer technology have dramatically affected the quality of the magazine and how it is produced.

Over the years special issues have been devoted to a number of topics. As readers might expect, the most discussed subject has been the changes happening in worship music. Beginning in 1995, a special issue that gave equal time to both conservative and liberal sides of the argument was printed, launching an ongoing discussion that has continued to the present. Over 20 articles have since appeared on the subject, including a special issue of *Notes* devoted to a lively discussion of the music used at the 2000 General Conference session in Toronto.

Other special issues have focused on SDA Music in Brazil, hymnody in the SDA church, careers in music, the challenges of being a professional musician and keeping the Sabbath,





organs in the Adventist church, and music touring. In addition to the articles, the magazine has provided readers with information about SDA music and musicians around the world, news about significant happenings in Adventist music, and how-to articles for developing special programs.

Beginning in 2003, a series of articles on how music started and evolved in each of the Adventist colleges and universities in North America was started and has now been completed. Additionally, overviews for music at Avondale College in Australia and the University of Montemorelos in Mexico were also included in this series.

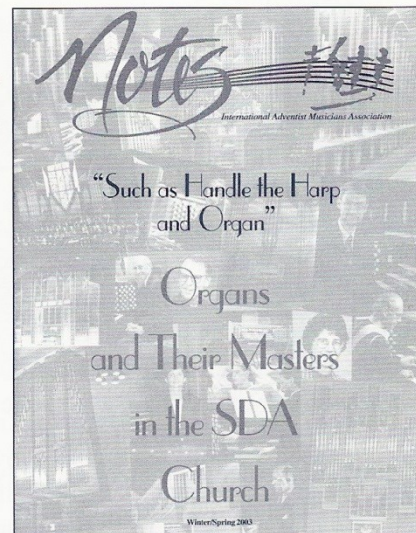
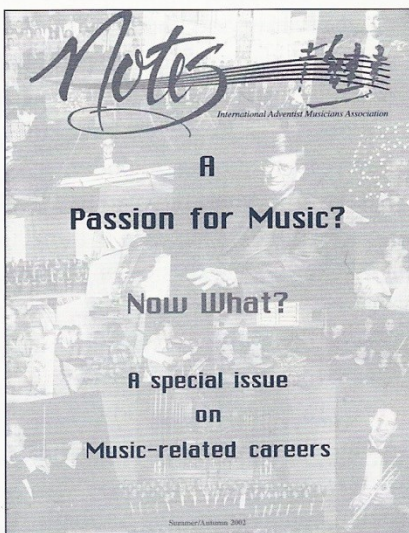
In response to rapidly evolving technologies that developed in the 1990s, the board in 2000 voted to create a website, www.iamaonline.com, and endorsed the idea of maintaining a hotline for keeping IAMA members informed. Both have been successful ventures.

In addition to becoming a repository for articles published in its magazines, the website facilitated another SDA music history project, that of creating a biographical

resource about Adventist musicians. Over 750 musicians and their biographies are now available at the site. The creation and preserving of a history of SDA music in the 20th century will likely be IAMA's most enduring legacy.

From the beginning, IAMA expenses required funds beyond the income provided by dues, even though its only costs have been the printing and mailing of its magazines. Editing and layout have been contributed, with the typical issue taking about 200 hours to prepare and special issues requiring additional time. Dues typically have covered about half of the expense and the remainder has been covered through contributions. In the past seventeen years, over \$76,000 has been contributed to IAMA, sixty percent of that by one person.

Because of the escalation in printing and mailing expenses, this issue of *Notes* will be the last magazine published by the association. While this will be the end of this defining aspect of IAMA activities, the association will continue as an online presence using its hotline as





the conduit for news and its website as a repository for its ongoing Adventist music history research.

Although IAMA's role in the future will admittedly be more limited, it will still continue as the only association devoted solely to

covering all aspects of music in the Adventist church. Hopefully, it can continue to foster a sense of community and unity among those who work to make music an effective avenue for ministry in the work of the Adventist church.

Elsie Landon Buck

International Adventist Musicians Association President

1982 - 2009

With the end of her term this autumn, President Elsie Buck will have given IAMA seventeen years of enthusiastic and effective leadership. In those years she has worked tirelessly on behalf of our association, informing church leaders about our work, promoting it at gatherings of musicians and non-musicians alike, and maintaining contact with the board. She and her husband, Edwin, have been very generous donors, providing funding for the operation of IAMA when normal sources of income were not adequate.

Elsie's concern about all things musical as they relate to the church has been evident in the over forty *President's Messages* she has penned

in *Notes* and in the articles she has contributed.

In my work as editor of IAMA publications, I have had countless encouraging and informative calls from her as I have prepared *Notes* and met with the board when she was unable to attend Annual Meetings. Along the way I have gotten to know her as a thoughtful and informed person as we have talked about not only music, but theology, world events, politics, and personal matters as well. She is a dear and trusted friend.

On behalf of all of the IAMA family, thank you, Elsie, for your outstanding leadership and work on our behalf. You will be missed!

Dan Shultz, *Editor*

