
From the Editor

To Celebrate A New Journal

There are few opportunities in life to participate in a truly pioneering venture. Certainly the appearance of a new medical journal in itself is not startling news. However, a new journal that pertains to a new medical specialty with unique subject matter provides a potentially innovative and exciting experience.

The purpose of *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* is to promote interest in the medical problems of performing artists, to help in the search for and dissemination of information, and by these means to promote the well-being of this vulnerable and valuable segment of our society.

Although MPPA is intended to be a scientific journal, it also encourages the active participation of the performers whose medical problems will be addressed. Accordingly, in addition to a Medical Editorial Board composed of outstanding representatives of relevant specialties who have expertise in Performing Arts Medicine, MPPA is privileged to have engaged the help of an Artistic Advisory Board consisting of members of the performance community who are superlative in their art as well as articulate spokespersons.

The history of Performing Arts Medicine is brief. Undoubtedly some of its recent rise to prominence may be attributed to the highly visible and successful field of Sports Medicine. Although clearly there are differences, there is much to learn and apply from the care of athletes to the care of per-

forming artists. The field is also indebted to a few concerned physicians who saw a need that was not being met, to a number of performers, some notable ones, who were willing to bare their own medical problems, and to others who have long been frustrated by knowing there were special problems associated with performance but were unable to find suitable listeners.

MPPA will attempt to give "equal time" to all of the performing arts but success in this regard will depend on the material received. The contents of the inaugural issue is representative of current trends and interests, with a preponderance of papers concerning the problems of instrumentalists. Perhaps this is compensation for previous neglect!

Regrettably, little research is being undertaken in any area of Arts Medicine, in part because there has not been an appropriate forum in which to present the data. It is our hope that the very existence of MPPA will serve as a force to stimulate the research needed to provide the basis for rational rather than empirical therapy for performers.

A few years ago only a handful of people in this country were actively involved in Performing Arts Medicine. Now almost daily the lay press carries reports of a new program or center for Arts Medicine. This increased awareness is laudable to the extent that it encourages informed, empathic, and appropriate care; but with increased popularization comes the risk of participation by those whose enthusiasm is not matched by expertise.

MPPA will function as a resource for education and information for all of those actively involved in the delivery of medical care to this population. With the help of an experienced and committed Editorial Board, we expect to maintain standards for publication at a level in which we can all share pride and confidence. In an area in which there is as yet no real dogma, only through examining all sides of issues can we arrive at truths. MPPA will not shy away from controversy and will encourage the participation of its readership with commentaries and constructive criticism through correspondence.

Finally, although this is a serious subject and will be treated as such in MPPA, many of us feel impassioned about caring for performing artists because of the added dimension and joy they bring to our lives. Therefore, we look forward to presenting material that is lighter in vein but is representative of the arts and artists to whom this journal is dedicated. That is, we hope to provide stimulating and informative articles that are relevant to Performing Arts Medicine while having some entertainment along the way.

Success in any pioneering venture can never be assured, but if enthusiasm and dedication are markers for success, then MPPA's future is bright.

Alice G. Brandfonbrener, M.D.

A NOTE TO OUR READERS

Medical Problems of Performing Artists welcomes letters from its readers. Letters should be typewritten double-spaced and should not exceed 250 words of text. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for publication. Unsigned letters will not be published but names will be withheld upon request. Please your comments to: Letters to the Editor, *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, Hanley & Belfus, Inc., 210 South 13th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.