

September 3, 2006

My name is Jack Cohen. I have whistled ever since I was 7 or 8 years old. When I first opened my surgical practice and had more spare time, I decided to see if I could whistle the music I love, which is classical music (I played violin for six years when I was younger). I believe that I have become quite good at this. A few years ago when I was approached to help start a movement for classical whistling, I agreed to help start this group. It has evolved into the International Artwhistling Philharmonic Society. As can be seen from our website, it is designed to get professional musicians interested in whistling, and to promote whistling as a legitimate "instrument" with which to perform classical and other artistic music. In order to attract professional musicians, a formal music education is part of the society's preferred requirements.

We all know about whistlers events all over the world. Most are open to all whistlers, from the superb experts to novices. They are a place where whistlers can renew their friendships and compete in a friendly way. It is a place where novices can hear the experts and pick up hints on techniques, etc.

Since I am still extremely busy in my professional life (as a physician), I was recently informed that some whistling enthusiasts had found our website (which has been around for a few years) and began to write their opinions, some of which were not friendly to say the least. Others stated that by preferring members to have a formal music education background our members were elitist or snobs.

I would like to answer the criticisms. Whistling events have been around for a long time and fulfill an important function. They have a large devoted following of many whistlers who have been attending for years. Whistlers of all types of music, from classical to popular to novelty, have a chance to compete. Proper publicity can be important in promoting the cause of trying to get people to accept whistling as a legitimate instrument.

The International Artwhistling Philharmonic Society is aimed at a very specific

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segment—mainly classical with some other types of art music such as jazz. We feel that a background in music is essential if we are to bring whistling into the professional music community. Our interest is not in competing with the whistling community, nor in trying to outdo or attract members away.

After all, both whistlers and artwhistlers share a related goal. They both wish to publicize whistling and to try to get people to realise that whistling can be a legitimate and interesting medium for music. I am certain that many have had difficulties in getting engagements because most people look down on whistlers as an interesting group, but only from the novelty point of view. I hope to be able to see whistling recognized by lovers of music so that we can routinely take part in classical or pops concerts, jazz or country western festivals, etc. Right now it is still an uphill battle.

Sincerely,

Jack Cohen