

Music with Marge



“Can’t we find anyone to teach a music course?” “Students want music classes. What can we do about that?” “Isn’t there a musician we can recruit?” Such were the questions that floated around curriculum committee meetings in the early years of CSC. So when an instructor who had previously co-taught a women’s art history class volunteered to offer a music class, her offer was immediately accepted. Thus began a long and rewarding relationship between CSC and Marge Roberts.

Marge’s educational background included studies in literature and the history of women artists. But her avocation had been music. As the mother of four children, she found great escape and enjoyment returning to the piano after years away from playing. Not only did she take piano lessons, but she also began playing the recorder and the viola da gamba. She jokes that when she was practicing, “all the doors to the kids rooms were shut.”

Prior to instructing for CSC, Marge had done extensive lecturing in art history at the Farnsworth Museum. Why the change to music? Her answer is that as a teacher she finds it “way more fun to learn something new and try something different” than to teach the same thing over and over. Not only does she teach music classes for CSC but she teaches the viola da gamba to “kids” (students in their 40’s and 50’s). She plays the viol with a group on a regular basis in addition to participating in a monthly piano group.

From the beginning of her CSC experience, Marge has focused on the baroque and romantic musical periods. In the fall of 2005 she started off with a general music appreciation class. This was followed by “Mozart – the Man and the Music.” In all, her nine courses have covered works by numerous composers including Clara Schumann, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin and Bach to name a

few. She has found that teaching a class in the afternoon presents its own challenge: keeping students awake following lunch. She does extensive research for her classes, locating numerous DVDs, as she finds that presenting visual material helps prevent the inclination to doze when listening to beautiful music. If you have never explored the world of classical music, join Marge this winter listening to the beautiful music of early romantic composers. No charge for napping.

submitted by – David Bailey, Coastal