

Inside this issue:

- 2 President's Message
- 2 A Note from the Editor
- 3 There's No Place I'd Rather Be  
*by Dorothy Barth*
- 4 **The Certificate Program for Strings Goes National**  
*by Lya Stern, CPS chair*
- 6 Intonation, the Inner Ear, and Other Things That Come to Mind  
*by Helmut Braunlich*
- 8 How Did You Do It? An Irish Fiddling Club for Kids  
*Dorée Huneven interviews Mitch Fanning*
- 11 Pizzicato via E-mail!  
*by Lorraine Combs*
- 13 Starling-Delay Symposium on Violin Studies  
*by Catherine Stewart*
- 16 Results of 2007 FMMC High School Competition for Strings  
*submitted by Suzanne Richardson*
- 17 Two Events for Double Bass Players  
*submitted by George Vance*
- 19 Madison Summer Cello Institute
- 22 The Lighter Side
- 24 Membership Application



## President's Message



As I come to the end of my term as your President I am looking back over the wonderful things ASTA has done for me in the last four years. I have gotten to know some of you better and benefited from your knowledge and experience. I had a blast at the National Conference in Kansas City where I got so many great ideas to help my students. I also got to visit my cousin there. I facilitated the sponsorship of scholarships in two music camps and started a Certificate Exam program at McDonogh School.

Do you have any projects that you would like to see supported? It is a great honor to be able to help the string community in such concrete ways. Our elections are coming up and I hope many of you have considered serving on the board. I know Dorée is going to be a great President and the new President-Elect will enjoy working with her.

I want to congratulate any of you who were involved with the Baltimore County All-County Honors Orchestra. Two of my students participated so I went to the concert at the Meyerhoff. My students had a great time and I was very proud of them and all the other students for doing such a great job.

When I received my annual state of the chapter phone call I was able to list many wonderful programs in our state. However, I had to report that we all seem to work in our own areas and not coordinate any activities. ASTA has a lot to offer you; please consider coming to our Annual Meeting on May 25, 2008, to share your program with the rest of us.

In service to you,  
Cindy Swiss

---

## A Note from the Editor

This issue of *Stringendo* marks my last one as editor, as I am about to take over the duty as President of the MD/DC Chapter in May. I hope you enjoyed all of the articles which I was able to collect for the past six issues; to my delight, everyone I cajoled wrote wonderful pieces, and to my great pleasure, a few pro-active and energetic ASTA members wrote on their own initiative. My thanks go to all. I look forward to writing articles during my term of office, a goal being to unite string teachers in our chapters with news, events and ideas. Jaque Lyman will be our new editor. We wish her well.

Dorée Huneven



# There's No Place I'd Rather Be

by Dorothy Barth

Recently I was winding down from a rather long day of practice and happened to catch most of the PBS *American Masters* presentation entitled *Tony Bennett: The Music Never Ends*. During the program friends such as Alec Baldwin and Clint Eastwood discuss the beloved singer's talents, appeal, and longevity.

I enjoyed recognizing most of the classic American ballads and show tunes that Bennett performed on the program. Many of these nostalgic, melodic songs, such as those by Gershwin, Porter, Mercer, and Rodgers and Hart are superbly adaptable to the violin, and I have for several years made wonderful use of them for weddings and other special events.

One quality of Bennett's charisma is his exceptional ability to convey to an audience that there's no place he would rather be. It was noted repeatedly that the ability to share this energy is crucial to success in show business.

Although I never really adopted the New Age affirmation habit, this mantra seems particularly powerful and attractive. While it may appear to be something that "goes without saying," I believe, on the contrary, that it can serve as a kind of antidote to a more prevalent attitude of malaise such as embodied in another mantra: 'I'd rather be fishing' (the latter by no means my personal preference!).

It occurred to me that 'There's no place I'd rather be' might be a beneficial affirmation for teachers, students, and performers alike:

- Teachers who embrace this mantra will inspire rather than discourage. By radiating 'There's no place I'd rather be,' teachers will impress their students with the beauty of the music at hand: 'I'd rather be here with you now—teaching you to *Twinkle* with rare brilliance, guiding you to *Go Tell Aunt Rhody* and to tell her eloquently—than to be playing Razumovsky Quartets with my cronies.'
- Students who internalize this mantra will more readily recognize the beauty in an etude and will offer reciprocal inspiration to their teachers: 'I'd much rather be at this music lesson than at the movies, the mall, or on MySpace.'

- Recitalists young and old can stamp out stage fright by the enthusiastic energy and positive focus of this mantra: 'How can this scenario be frightening if there is no place I'd rather be?'
- Giggling performers can trade their apprehensions about less-than-perfect playing conditions for this mantra, whose effect cannot fail to calm a jittery bride, suffuse a performance with warmth, and delight an audience.

'There's no place I'd rather be': A thought so simple, yet so seldom invited! It is an ancient wisdom, the Zen quality of mindfulness, of living each moment to the fullest—useful anywhere, at any time, for any endeavor. What better place to try it out than in our music? 

*Editor's note: Dorothy Barth has contributed to nearly every issue of Stringendo during my period as editor. Please visit her charming website and get to know her better: [www.flutesoffancy.com](http://www.flutesoffancy.com)*



# The Certificate Program for Strings Goes National

*by Lya Stern, CPS chair*

It is my great pleasure to announce that the CPS made its official national debut on the ASTA national web site at [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com) last August. There it is, in all its glory—ready for teachers, students, and exam organizers across the country to use and benefit from. As you might know, in recent past years, several states have already started using the program through the MD/DC website and my coaching. Thanks to the national level exposure, there has been more interest and start-ups are on the way in several more states.

The national web site makes available the CPS material in the complete CPS Handbook, a sizable tome put together through months and months of work by the CPS Committee of three: Lynne Denig from Virginia, Leslie Webster from New Jersey, and yours truly. Here you can find the Curriculum and Exam Requirements, Levels, Rules of Participation, Standards for Evaluation, Grading System, and more. The CPS Handbook also gives step-by-step instructions on how to introduce the CPS and how to organize the exams. A history of the CPS is in the opening pages of the Handbook, as well as credit given to the expertise and dedication of teachers from our chapter and others who labored with me to create this program. All the material is available either to read online or to download.

Please note: the handbook includes a “Letter to Parents” a blueprint useful for teachers who wish to acquaint their students and their families with the program.

## **For new ASTA MD/DC Chapter members and others not yet acquainted with the CPS**

The CPS is a graded program for students who play string instruments. It offers an eleven-level curriculum list and annual performance evaluations, like a jury exam, for violin, viola, cello, and bass. In addition to the grade, the examiners comment favorably on a job well done and write a few helpful suggestions to guide continued progress. Teachers

benefit from the graded list of scales, etudes, and repertoire and are energized by the opportunity to prepare the students for this noncompetitive yet challenging event. Students benefit from having a well-defined goal. They are motivated to practice scales and sight reading, as well as pieces, in order to earn a Certificate of Achievement at regular intervals and complete the program. Parents love the program because successful exams demonstrate their children’s year-to-year progress, validated by ASTA, a national professional organization.

Dozens of teachers have enrolled over 1200 students in Maryland, the District of Columbia, and northern Virginia since 1998, the year our chapter pioneered this event.

## **The 2007 CPS Exams—A Brief Report**

The CPS exams in 2007 took place in February in Baltimore and in June in Washington, D.C. The total number of students was 134, and the overall level of playing has improved from previous years. A great number of students received a “V” or “V+” for fine playing.

The following were examiners:

Dana Goode, Phyllis Freeman, Susan Katsarelis, Marianne Perkins, Hilde Singer, Linda K. Smith, Judy Shapiro, Jennifer Ries, Donald Watts, and Margy Wright

Mark Pfannschmidt provided the essential data entry and scheduling.

The following teachers sent students:

Klara Berkowitz, Leonid Berkowitz, Pat Braunlich, Emily Campbell, Julianna Chitwood, Lynne Denig, Eileen Doty, Margo Guillory, Slavica Ilic, Lawrence Keiffer, Anne Marie Patterson, Mark Pfannschmidt, Jean Provine, Cathy Scarborough, Judy Shapiro, Andrew Shaud, Judy Silverman, Diana Souder, Lya Stern, Cindy Swiss, Kela Veshi, Jeane Wernly, and Fred Wilcox. The participating teachers also served as monitors.



## **The MD/DC Chapter CPS Exams in 2008**

MD/DC Chapter will offer exams on **Sunday, February 8, 2008**, at the McDonogh School in the Baltimore area. Application deadline is January 21, 2008.

Exams at Catholic University School of Music in Washington, D.C. will be held on **Sunday, June 8, 2008**. Application deadline is May 1, 2008.

Download your applications from [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net). Click on Certificate Program, then click on MD.

Before sending in your applications, please send an e-mail to: [lya@asta.net](mailto:lya@asta.net). Let her know how many students you expect to enter, and what their instruments are. No names of students or other details necessary. This will help Lya plan for examiners.

**Attention teachers: the syllabus and exam requirements for several levels have been revised, and in some cases expanded, so it is important that you are familiar with them as you prepare your students for the 2008 exams.**

**Please use *only* the national website: [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com) as your CPS reference source!**

**Do NOT use the MD/DC Chapter site, which has an older version of the levels. It will be updated later.**

**Also new: the bass program is now ready online.**

---

---

## **2008 MD/DC Chapter Annual Meeting**

The date for this year's Annual Meeting is Sunday, May 25, 2008.

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Location: TBA. Look for the announcement in the Spring 2008 issue of Stringendo. Also, watch your mailboxes in the spring for information on this event. Please set aside the time for this meeting. We will introduce our new officers: President-Elect and Secretary/Treasurer. The chapter will provide food, plus there will be an interesting event. Stay tuned!

# Intonation, the Inner Ear, and Other Things That Come to Mind

by Helmut Braunlich

String teachers expend much work and ingenuity to teach good intonation. It seems that all their methods can be grouped into two categories. Pared down to essentials, these methods conform to one or the other of the following instructions:

1. Sound the pitch on another instrument and have the student match it.
2. Appeal to the student's "inner ear" to fit the right pitch into a melodic or harmonic context.

For convenience, I want to call the first way "matching," and the second "placing." The two strategies are fundamentally different, and each one engages altogether different skills.

Matching is simple and intuitive. As in many other instances, one learns by example, and if things go well, one remembers. From a developmental viewpoint, this may also be the best, or perhaps the only way to use at an early stage.

Placing is more problematic. What kind of contexts are available to help a student place a pitch correctly? A well-known tune may come in handy. This can be used as an exercise, or as a game: play the tune, stop before the end, and let the student respond by playing the correct missing note. That would promote a sense of how a pitch is part of a convincing whole, and it does not involve matching. Chords may be used for the same purpose: instead of banging out that G<sup>#</sup> until the student gets it, play a chord which supports that note and let the student experience it as part of the harmony. Anybody can devise many variations on these procedures. They are just primitive instances from which it is easy to derive far-reaching implications.

If I observed correctly then, one can teach intonation two ways—one obvious and well-tried, the other more complicated but perhaps promising. But surely this is simplistic. Psychologists may be able to go more deeply into the matter. With today's MRI machines and sophisticated tests, they may be able to show us the brain areas where matching and placing takes place. I suspect they will. Up to then we shall have to rely on our wits as best we can.

As one might expect, players of string instruments do not develop a sense for harmony as easily as keyboard players. With chords under their fingers all the time, pianists of course soon get a feeling for such structures. Perhaps that accounts for the prominence of the pianist-composer, a type that flourished especially during the nineteenth century, when important extensions of harmonic technique came into use. On the other hand, it seems that pianists do not seem to acquire a sense for melody as naturally as string players. Teachers in both fields should make it their business to make up for inherent deficits.

In their imaginations, competent musicians can call up a great number of sound structures to which they relate a given sound or rhythm. Putting it differently—musical competence is not a vast collection of discrete items, but the acquaintance with many configurations which have been internalized. We don't need the findings of Gestalt psychology to tell us that. I am talking about the inner ear, a familiar concept in discussions of musical matters. To develop a student's inner ear (I am not talking about perfect pitch) must be an important objective for any music teacher. It is indispensable when a musician has to learn something new, without external support, when there is nothing to match.

Matching, then, is imitative; placing is assertive. We must not be surprised if a musician does not possess equal amounts of these two abilities. Normally we don't worry about that. Most students learn to play reasonably in tune if the teacher just insists on it, one way or the other. But, beyond an early stage, a strong reliance on imitative learning may lead to undesirable results.

Can we confidently expect that a beginner, learning to match pitches, then to place them into musical wholes, will naturally progress to comprehend structures so as to use his inner ear to acquire new skills? Also, is such competence necessary for success in the world of music? Strangely enough, the answer to both questions is

“no!” We have all heard of the celebrated opera singer who needs a coach to learn a new aria, not to rehearse a performance, but simply to learn the notes. Erich Leinsdorf (*The Composer's Advocate*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981, p.1) describes how a certain conductor prepared for his coming season of concerts simply by listening to recordings by other artists. I myself know of a music major in college who could not place the missing pitch when hearing three pitches of a diminished seventh chord. These three musicians, on different levels and in different specializations, are sad examples of people who have to rely on matching because placing exceeds their capacities. But not to worry! Chances are that they will get by in our strange world of music, even splendidly.

We can wish them well, but I have a hunch that there are music teachers who agree with Leinsdorf and with me: this is not satisfactory. Moreover, music teachers can make a difference. In fact, they are the only ones who can do that. Success in the world of professional music, as we know it, does not necessarily require thorough musicianship, as the above examples show. But conscientious teaching can develop skills that go beyond immediate needs and have enabling effects over a long range. A method or a book of exercises is not likely to assure the acquisition of such skills. Some that are in use may even encourage a one-sided development. Don't we all like demonstrable results? As usual, there is much need not only for individual empathy and for a willingness to aim far ahead, but for attention to how a certain result is achieved. I realize this is asking

a lot, but teachers do achieve amazing things. Our musical culture is in need of such work!

To climb a steep path, hikers may exhibit two types of behavior: one holds on to the guard rail which the park service kindly installed; another one has a sure-footed sense of balance and walks freely. Both will reach the top. Why do we wish the first would learn what the second can do? I think it has to do with how you find a pitch.



*Helmut Braunlich was born in Bruenn, Moravia. He received his formal musical education at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, where he studied violin with Christa Richter-Steiner; composition with Egon Kornauth, and music history with Eberhard Preussner. After his immigration to the U.S. in 1951, he played with various professional orchestras and became a member of the U.S. Air Force Symphony Orchestra. The Korean G.I. Bill permitted him to pursue further studies in composition with Thaddeus Jones and Leon Kirchner. The Catholic University of America conferred a PhD on Helmut in musicology, and he was appointed head of the composition department in 1990. He is now Professor Emeritus. He has appeared as concertmaster, recitalist, and first violinist of the Jefferson Quartet. His recordings are available on Educo Records, Opus One Records, and Centaur Compact Disc. Compositions by Dr. Braunlich have been commissioned by a variety of organizations, such as the Contemporary Music Forum, the Montgomery County Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Catholic University Wind Ensemble, and the Friday Morning Music Club Foundation.*

Any MD/DC ASTA member who is interested in becoming a **VASTA Affiliate Member** should send a check for \$15 made payable to VASTA with a note that this is for a one-year VASTA Affiliate Membership. Mail it to our treasurer and newsletter editor:

Teresa Maclin, VASTA treasurer  
11411 Liltling Lane  
Fairfax Station, VA 22039

An e-mail to VASTA Chapter President Helen Fall, [VAViola@aol.com](mailto:VAViola@aol.com) will get MD/DC residents signed up to receive semi-regular VASTA E-News alerts. Members can also check our website for events that may be of interest to them at [www.vastaweb.org](http://www.vastaweb.org).

# How Did You Do It?

## An Irish Fiddling Club for Kids

*Dorée Huneven interviews Mitch Fanning*

**P**ete Moss and the Bog Band is the name of Mitch Fanning's popular kids' Irish fiddling club. The group is a very big success in the Washington area and beyond. After I attended many "alternative styles" events at the ASTA National Convention in Detroit in March 2007, I became interested in finding out how Mitch created such a marvelous group. Below are his answers.

*Dorée: Please describe your kids' fiddling "club," and how it got started.*

Mitch: Three years ago a group of five students at the Washington Waldorf School approached me as their private lesson and class teacher about forming a fiddle club. These five kids were fifth graders at the time, all boys, best friends and intent on getting good enough at fiddling to earn money for their 8th grade class trip. I was intrigued by their vision, determination, and as an Irish-American, thrilled with their desire and choice to pursue traditional Irish music.

*D: What kind of work did you have to do to make it grow and keep it going?*

M: I had some traditional Irish fiddle experience, but not nearly enough. To prepare myself to lead the kids in this endeavor, I began to listen to more traditional Irish music, took lessons from Brendan Mulvihill, one of the best traditional Irish fiddlers on this side of the pond, and began participating in local traditional music sessions around town.

If this idea were going to succeed, it would also take a bit of dedicated work by the kids. I drew up contracts for each of the kids. Each of the five agreed: 1) to practice Irish repertoire each day for at least a half hour; 2) that practicing Irish repertoire was not a substitute for practicing their other violin repertoire, studies, and orchestral pieces; 3) that we would meet as a class on a weekly basis for an hour; and 4) failure to learn the pieces to performance standard would not be acceptable. The kids had to have the contracts witnessed and signed by their parents.

Very soon after getting started, we settled on "Pete Moss & The Bog Boys" as a name for the group. If you're going to have a band called the Bog Boys, someone has to be Pete Moss, and I thought adopting the alias was good fun and a good way to protect my reputation as a violinist and violin teacher—at least it's been good fun.

*D: Where do you perform?*

M: Pete & The Bog have performed at Irish ceili's around town, the Potomac Celtic Festival (for the last 2 years), The Smithsonian Institutions Discovery Theater (for the last 2 years, contracted for next year as well), and various festivals throughout Montgomery County. The group will soon be featured at Metro stations as part of the new "MetroPerforms!" initiative with Montgomery County Arts Council.

The Bog Boys have a CD entitled "Got Bog?" that features a wide range of tunes—reels, jigs and hornpipes as you'd expect, but also barn dances, mazurkas and highlands from Donegal.

Performances by Pete & The Bog as well as the CD ignited enthusiasm for traditional Irish music among other students at the school and beyond. There are currently about twenty kids, lads and lasses, who perform with the group on a regular basis. We've had to change our name to Pete Moss & The Bog Band and now have a web site at <http://www.bogband.com>.

Many in the group participate in one or two "next generation" sessions that I started and lead in the area. They take place on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month, from 5–6:30 P.M. at local pubs (McGinty's Public House in Silver Spring and The Royal Mile Pub in Wheaton). Parents and families enjoy dinner while listening to tunes being played by their kids and siblings. It's great fun—a chance to learn new tunes and celebrate the ones you already know.

*D: Tell me about your own background—in classical study/playing and then how you became interested in Irish fiddling.*

M: I studied for a time with Ralph Wade, concertmaster of the Binghamton (N.Y.) Symphony, then achieved a Bachelor of Music degree in violin performance (1982) from Catholic University's School of Music, where I studied primarily with Jody Gatwood and Robert Gerle. I performed in various chamber ensembles for a number of years and then drifted away from music in pursuit of financial security by other means.

Teaching never really occurred to me until my daughter taught me how much I love kids. I decided to teach full time about seven years ago, and began pedagogical studies through the Suzuki Institute in Washington, and private studies with Ronda Cole.

*D: What have been the reactions to this amazing venture?*

M: Most kids really enjoy the music, and parents are happy to see their kids engaged with their instruments in a new way. Whenever and wherever we perform, I'm always scanning the audience, looking at the faces of people and I always see smiles. We often collaborate with a local school of traditional Irish dance which adds another dynamic and visual component to the fun.

Parents of the kids from the Washington Waldorf School have been an enormous support for the Bog Band. They provided seed money for the CD project and helped at fundraising concerts. They're proud of the kids for their focused effort and achievement over the last three years. In addition to largely financing the 8th grade class trip this past year, Pete & The Bog were able to contribute \$3,000 to an endowment fund for the school.

*D: If ASTA teachers wanted to start their own fiddling clubs, how do you suggest they go about organizing them?*

M: As a teacher, the most important component in providing a successful fiddling experience for one's students is to have a genuine love and enthusiasm for the genre. With regard to traditional Irish music, I've found out that one does not choose it. It chooses you. I found myself progressively more engaged as I got more deeply involved in it. So beware, and get busy listening and learning as much as you're able.

*D: What materials and resources would you suggest?*

M: First and foremost, listen to as much Irish music

as you can, particularly fiddlers—Kevin Burke, James Kelly, Martin Hayes, Frankie Gavin, Paddy Glackin, Cathal Hayden, Gerry O'Connor, Brendan Mulvihill, the Kane Sisters, Paul O'Shaunessy are among my favorites.

Check out Celtic Grooves Imports—a great source of CDs and info/reviews about them:

<http://www.celticgrooves.com>

#### **Listening/Transcribing Tool:**

“The Amazing Slowdowner” is a great tool for slowing tunes down (from mp3 files or CDs) without changing the pitch.

Affordable, with trial version available for free:  
<http://www.ronimusic.com>

#### **Tune Books for the Literati:**

“The Sligo Hedge School Tune Book” compiled by Karen Ashbrook

[http://karenashbrook.com/monthly\\_session.html](http://karenashbrook.com/monthly_session.html)

“The Complete Traditional Irish Fiddle Player” by Peter Cooper

Mel Bay Publishing

“Sixty-Four Irish Fiddle Solos” by Peter Cooper

Mel Bay Publishing

“The Irish Fiddle Book” by Matt Cranitch

Ossian Publishing

Join **Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCE)**, the society for promoting traditional Irish dance and music. Consider joining the O'Neill-Malcolm Branch—our local chapter—join their listserv to find out about all kinds of events around town.  
<http://www.ccepotomac.org>

#### **Kids “Next-Generation” Sessions**

Three really good sessions for young people in the area:

- 2nd Sunday of every month, 5–6:30 P.M.  
McGinty's Public House, 911 Ellsworth Avenue, Silver Spring, MD  
<http://www.mcgintypublichouse.com>
- 4th Sunday of every month, 5–6:30 P.M.  
Royal Mile Pub, Price Street, Wheaton, MD  
<http://www.royalmilepub.com>
- 1st Tuesday of every month, 7–8:30 P.M.  
McGinty's Public House, 911 Ellsworth Avenue, Silver Spring, MD  
<http://www.karenashbrook.com>

## Adult Sessions

Any of the following adult sessions would be a great opportunity to hear and learn tunes. Players range from beginning to advanced. In most places, beginners are welcomed and encouraged. There are unwritten and unspoken protocols at most sessions. It's prudent to play the tunes you know and listen to the ones you don't. The joke is that they're all the same tune, except for the parts that are different.

Monday: Nanny O'Briens, Cleveland Park in Washington, DC., starts late, between 9 and 10 P.M.

Tuesday: McGinty's Public House in Silver Spring, MD, begins at 8 P.M.

Wednesday: Ri Ra Pub in Bethesda, starts about 7:30 P.M., with a regular group of more advanced players.

Thursday: J. Patrick's in Baltimore. It's a bit of a hike, but it's the real deal.

Sunday: late afternoon session at Ri Ra in Bethesda. Call for details.

*D: How has doing this fiddling benefited the kids' musical lives? Your own life?*

M: If you've been teaching violin for any length of time, you know that each of your students will tend to play their instruments in a way that is consistent with their being, the way they are generally. Shy children will tend to play in a shy manner; confident players with more bravado. The challenge as a teacher is to equip the student with technique and confidence to discover a bigger sense of who they are as people and as players and to help them connect more deeply with their feelings in life and in the music. I've seen more than one child have a breakthrough in self-expression while having fun with a reel or a jig. This enthusiasm is then more easily transferred to a Gigue, a Bourrée, and Gavotte.

*D: What are your plans for the future? Camps? Excursions?*

M: A small group of more advanced students is interested in producing a CD that celebrates some of the different styles of traditional tunes. The preliminary plan is to focus on Sligo, Clare and Donegal, and see if we can succeed in replicating the style of some of the better-known players from each of these regions of Ireland. We'll likely record a few sets of our own as well.

I had six kids with me this year at a Fiddle Festival in Glencolmcille, County Donegal, to study and celebrate Donegal style fiddling. The plan is to take a larger cohort over next year.

I plan to direct the third annual CCE Fiddle Week which will take place sometime in July 2008 somewhere in the metropolitan area. The week is designed for kids and adults who have a year or two of violin studies behind them. It's a great chance to learn from some great players and teachers. To be notified of details, please send me an email at [jmitchellf@yahoo.com](mailto:jmitchellf@yahoo.com). I'll be sure you get an announcement as soon as details are finalized in late December/early January. For more information about the past event, please see <http://www.ccepotomac.org>.



*In addition to leading the Bog Band, Mitch Fanning teaches classes and private lessons at the Washington Waldorf School in Bethesda, Maryland. He maintains a private violin studio in Silver Spring, Maryland.*



# Pizzicato via E-mail!

by Lorraine Combs

**A**t some time in the recent past, a friend who is an amateur violinist, playing with a community orchestra in a distant city, wrote an e-mail to me. She is a middle-aged lady who enjoys playing the violin; in recent years she has taken it up again in a more serious state of mind. She travels a fair distance to her monthly (or less frequent) lessons. Here is her e-mail, followed by my answer.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hi Lorraine,

I wonder if you will give me a quick tip about fast pizzicato—I have to be able to pizzicato a fast 16th run [in my orchestra music], and need to find out how to practice it. I would ask my teacher, but he doesn't have access to a computer right now.

I figured I should separate the left hand from the right hand and be able to bow the 16th run fast, then practice pizzing it. But I can't pizz as fast as I can bow. So I wonder if I should change the rhythm pattern and practice fast pizz in different rhythms, just the same way I do to learn to bow a fast passage?

I have a question—do you ever use more than one pizzing finger in order to pizz faster?

I appreciate any brief tips you can give me, Lorraine. I don't mean to impose on your time.

Thanks,

K\_\_\_\_\_

\* \* \* \* \*

Hi K\_\_\_\_\_,

I don't know how brief this will turn out to be. I'm not usually known for my brevity when I'm describing something.

Pizzicato basics: There are two ways to hold the bow for pizzicato:

Plan A) Nestle the bow in the palm of your hand, holding it there with the middle, ring, and pinky fingers. This leaves the thumb and index finger free. Put the thumb tip on the corner of the fingerboard to steady your hand. The index finger is free to pizzicato.

Plan B) Hold the bow in the normal way, with one exception—straighten the index finger, but do *not* raise it from the stick. Aim the tip of your index finger down onto the strings. The bow arm will be higher than you hold it for regular bowing. Pizzicato with the index finger. The thumb does not touch the violin at all. This method is a little more difficult in that your fingertip won't always find the correct string, but the advantage of this way is that you can pizzicato faster.

Actually, there is a third way to pizzicato. That's with alternating index and middle fingers. You would have to experiment with how to best hold the bow. This is potentially the way to pizzicato very rapid passages, but it's really difficult. People with classical guitar training would find this way less difficult than those who have never coped with guitar technique. This way requires lots of practice, and one should not expect immediate results!

Unless I were familiar with the particular music passage you mentioned, and how fast the tempo is, I can't really tell you the best way to play it.

I do know one thing for certain: The left hand is the *servant* of the right hand, not the other way around! This is universally true, whether bowing or pizzicato. To learn a bowing skill, practice with the open strings, whether it be long legato strokes, martelé, spiccato, collé, chords, ricochet, whatever. Then add left hand fingers and don't let a difficult fingering allow the bow technique to dissolve. Pizzicato works the same way. Break down the passage mentally into which open strings must be used to play the passage without the left hand. (This is harder for one's brain to do than one would think.) Practice the passage pizzicato on open strings with a metronome. When you have it at the tempo you need, add left hand fingers.

The left hand problem must be addressed separately. Of course you have use the bow in order to hear the pitches. Practice the notes with short bow strokes, or perhaps slur 2 or 4 notes, depending on the passage.

Be sure the contact point of the pizzicato finger (the "pizzicator," as my colleague Jerry Fischbach

once described it) is well into the black area of the fingerboard, about 3 1/2 to 4 inches away from the bridge. Most of my young students make the mistake of pizzicatoing (I know that's not a verb, but...) in the area between the bridge and fingerboard, but that area is for the bow only!—no pizzicators allowed!

Also, put some rosin on the pizzicator tip. (Wipe a little rosin dust off the fingerboard with that fingertip just before the passage in question.) You don't have to work very hard to make the sound, thus faster pizzicato is easier to accomplish.

After you have put a bit of rosin dust on your fingertip, and are trying for a fast tempo with 16th notes, be sure *not* to hook your finger under the string, and don't pull the string sideways. You really don't need to do much more than come into contact with the top of the string with your fingertip. This way, you can go pretty fast.

You didn't ask me about pizzicato chords, but I'll mention them, anyway. In the early years of violin study, students usually encounter the pizzicato chord for the first time at the end of a piece, or perhaps at the end of an etude. Whether it's your first pizzicato chord, or one in orchestra music that you have seen many times before, the technique is the same. Use the Plan B bow hold I described above. Be sure your index finger is straight, not curved. Think about the path that the right fingertip will travel during the course of the pizzicato chord. It should *not* follow or mimic the curve of the bridge, although this may seem counter-intuitive. Rather, the fingertip should travel in a straight line from left to right, or even in a banana-shaped arc, with the lowest point in the middle. Think of the soft underbelly of the finger as a brush, stroking the surface of the strings in a straight-line swoop (or banana-shaped swoop) from left to right. Be sure to stay well into the fingerboard area. If the chord is written for four strings, be sure you can hear all four strings of the chord, especially the top string. (E string, on a violin.) If the chord is only for the top three strings, be careful to avoid touching the lowest string at the start of the chord.



*Lorraine Combs, violinist, performs with the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra and with the Mid-Atlantic Symphony Orchestra. She teaches private violin and viola lessons in her home in Millersville. During her 12 years as Editor for Stringendo, she was a recipient of the ASTA MD/DC Chapter "Outstanding Service to Strings" award. She currently does layout and design for Stringendo.*



# Starling-Delay Symposium on Violin Studies

*by Catherine Stewart*

The Starling-Delay Symposium on Violin Studies was held May 29–June 2, 2007, at the Juilliard School in New York. I was fortunate to have been selected to be one of 200 violinists/violin teachers from all around the world in attendance. This 4th biennial event celebrates the teaching of the esteemed Dorothy Delay, who passed away in 2002. Brian Lewis, a former Delay student, founded the Symposium with Miss Delay and continues as artistic director. Robert Ross from the Juilliard School is the administrative director.

The symposium was titled “From Basics to Bravura”. Ten young artists, ranging in age from 13 to 22, participated in master classes and evening recitals and acted as our “guinea pigs.” Each young artist performed on two master classes and on an evening recital. Most of the students have already won competitions and performed as soloists with orchestras. Their playing level is incredibly high as is their dedication to playing the violin. The young artists were selected by audition to participate in the symposium.

There were four master class teachers. Stephen Clapp, dean of the Juilliard School; Paul Kantor, who is the Eleanor H. Biggs Memorial Distinguished Professor of violin at Cleveland Institute of Music; Donald Weilerstein, former first violinist with the Cleveland Quartet and professor of violin at New England Conservatory of Music; and Kurt Sassmannshaus, Chairman of the String Department at the University of Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. One master class was taught by each.

It was fascinating to see these young people preparing for a career in music and to see what each master teacher would choose to focus on. Each teacher had studied with Miss Delay and the common thread of making musical choices was interesting to observe. The young students were asked to explain their musical ideas verbally and asked to make immediate changes, both technically and artistically. Amazingly enough, they could make technical and musical changes instantly and sound better.

Stephen Clapp asked students to make decisions about the music, play exactly as they decided, not to depend on their whim. I especially enjoyed when he asked a student performing Mendelssohn to consider experimenting in the practice room, to exaggerate wildly and explore possibilities in the music, even if it would be in bad taste. One could see the student had never considered opening up so far, and yet was willing to try.

Paul Kantor was wonderful with the students. I particularly appreciated the respect he gave them, yet allowed no wiggle room. When there was an attempt to evade a question and see what might be the “right” answer, Mr. Kantor insisted the student think for him- or herself. He focused on having the students know exactly what was in their part—the exact rhythm, dynamics, accents, direction words, as well as what was in the accompaniment.

Donald Weilerstein emphasized filling the room with sound. He wanted students to sing through their bodies, through their arms and into their fingers. He suggested they look where they want the sound to go. He always demonstrated on the students’ violins, showing them what they and their instruments could be capable of.

Kurt Sassmannshaus has a delightful sense of humor and seemed to know exactly how each student had prepared for their performance. One of the students performed Paganini Caprice No. 24. It was fantastic and yet Mr. Sassmannshaus knew that for her to reach the next level of playing she would have to clean up her intonation. So, back to basics. He turned on a metronome to 40 and had her sing, play, rest, for each note and then told her to practice that way for at least two months! He mentioned that he wished metronomes would come with only 40 on the dial. I guess all of us have students that practice too fast!

Itzhak Perlman presented a studio class of his students. None of his students knew what they would be asked to play or even if they would be asked to play. I was so impressed that his students seemed like

“normal” kids, forgetting their rosin, trying to hide on the back row, not making eye contact when Mr. Perlman was trying to decide who would play. He seemed to understand them so completely. He was kind and funny and tried to put everyone at ease.

After each student performed, Mr. Perlman would ask the performer questions about their musical ideas. All decisions must be made about the music and the way music is played must be intentional. There must be exploration and reactions to the music. It can't be the same every time. He played games with the kids such as choreographing a performance and pretending people can only see the performance, not hear it. He had kids relate each phrase in a piece to a different family member, grandmother, aunt, uncle, cousin, etc. Once again the students made instantaneous changes, and sounded better.

Mr. Perlman reminisced about studying with Mr. Galamian and Miss Delay (and did a great imitation of them). Mr. Galamian would tell Mr. Perlman what to do, but Miss Delay would ask him “Sugar Plum, what is your concept of a D#?” It was easier for a teenage boy to “just do I,” but the questions asked by Miss Delay made him dig into himself and think about “why.”

It was quite delightful to see what it would be like to study with Mr. Perlman. Usually his master classes are at his home, where he and his wife make dinner for the students and then they perform for each other and play “violin games.”

The pedagogy classes were outstanding. Mimi Zweig detailed technique for beginning to moderately advanced students through the use of etudes. Simon Fischer told us his secrets for tone production and intonation as well as discussing many other technical and musical ideas. He wants students to learn to make each note beautiful, one at a time. Then they can make more beautiful notes. Basic work.

Robert Duke discussed expertise in teaching and the way brains work. Once again, he went back to basics. Teachers need to have a vision of students as accomplished learners. Teachers need to have students play beautifully, at their level as opposed to playing difficult pieces badly.

Brian Lewis showed us how to teach Kreisler and Sarasate show pieces, breaking them down into small segments, previewing the difficult rhythmic and technical spots, and finally, playing with an

accompanist. After watching so much playing it was delightful to actually finally get to play ourselves! Brian is a charming, energetic teacher and inspired all of us to go home and practice. He made bravura pieces seem easy and it was really fun to play in the group!

The evening recitals brought the symposium full circle from Basics to Bravura. Augustin Hadelich, the 2007 winner of the Indianapolis Competition, presented the opening recital. He performed an emotional program of Mozart, Schnittke, and Brahms. This is an artist at the beginning of his concert career. As winner of the Indianapolis Competition, Mr. Hadelich won the use of the ex-Gingold Strad, \$30,000 in prize money, a recording contract and more than 40 concert engagements.

The last recital was presented by David Chan, concertmaster of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. He was the top prize winner at the Tchaikovsky International Competition when he was only 17, and was a prize winner at the Indianapolis Competition. His recital included works by Part, Franck, Bach, Mozart, and Wieniawski. Here was a seasoned artist exploring the emotional depths of works while being technically flawless.

This fascinating symposium presented the gamut of young concert artists, pedagogy classes outlining methods of study, Augustin Hadelich launching his career, David Chan in mid-career and renowned master teachers sharing their expertise with many generations.

Violinists owe a deep debt to Dorothy Delay and her students. We are all enriched by her extraordinary legacy and through the ongoing symposiums her message will continue. I was privileged to be a participant in such an inspiring event and came away refreshed, with a renewed vision for my teaching. I am looking forward to attending the next symposium in 2009.



*Violinist Catherine Stewart performs with the National Philharmonic Orchestra. She maintains a large Suzuki studio in Olney, Maryland, and is adjunct faculty at Olney Adventist Preparatory School. In 1998 she was named “Outstanding Teacher of the Year” by the American String Teachers Association MD/DC Chapter.*



## **Just Published!**

**“Honey Bee’s Song”** by Cynthia Swiss  
with beautiful watercolor illustrations by Judy Leyshon

Do honey bees have their own special music?  
Find out how a young violinist named Karen helps her friend Honey Bee find  
happiness through music.

The book includes the sheet music to an original song by Cynthia Swiss that is  
suitable for students at the end of Suzuki Book One.

Reward a good student or buy a gift to inspire a young violinist.

Available for purchase at [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com) in the bookstore.

# Results of 2007 FMMC High School Competition for Strings

*submitted by Suzanne Richardson*

**T**wenty young string musicians competed in this year's FMMC's Johansen High School String Competition at the Summer School on November 3, 2007. The yearly competition is open to students of violin, viola, cello, or bass and requires selections from the classical, romantic and modern repertoire.

This year's panel of judges included Robert Blatt, cellist with the NSO; Claudia Chudacoff, concertmistress with the National Gallery Orchestra; and Mahoko Eguchi, violist with the NSO. Due to the high level of musicianship, the panel awarded a First, Second, and two Third Prizes as well as four Honorable Mentions.

The 2007 winners:

**First Place:** \$700

Hoorig Poochikian, violin, Grade 12  
Olga Khroulevitch, teacher

**Second Place:** \$500

Emily Owsinski, viola, Grade 11  
Rebecca Henry, teacher

**Third Place:** \$300

Nina Decesare, double bass, Grade 10  
Ali Yazdanfar, teacher

**Third Place:** \$300

Kenneth Liao, violin, Grade 9  
Jody Gatwood, teacher

**Honorable Mention:**

Julie LeDuc, violin, Grade 12  
Rebecca Henry, teacher

**Honorable Mention:**

Joshua Chik, violin, Grade 11  
Adrian Semo, teacher

**Honorable Mention:**

Lauren Song, violin, Grade 11  
Rebecca Henry, teacher

**Honorable Mention:** Andrew Yu, cello, Grade 10

Evelyn Elsing, teacher

Winners received a one-year free membership to the FMMC and may perform in FMMC student recitals. Winners were also invited to perform at Strathmore Hall on the Friday following Thanksgiving. This year's event took place on November 23, 2007, at 2:00 P.M. For further information on student winner recitals, please call Anna-Stina Ericson, FMMC Student Chairman 202-363-5937.

The committee would like to thank the competition judges and volunteers Jean Robbins and Robert Huesmann for their invaluable help during the event.

Applications for the 2008 High School Competition will be mailed to area string teachers in the summer of 2008. String teachers who would like to be on the mailing list may contact Suzanne Richardson: 202-232-4355, e-mail: torichardson@verizon.net.

Applications and other information pertaining to the event may also be downloaded from the FMMC web site: [www.fmhc.org](http://www.fmhc.org), click 'student competitions'.



# Two Events for Double Bass Players

## Workshop for Double Bass Teachers organized by George Vance

January 26, 2008, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

A day of practical playing and discussion of fundamentals of bass pedagogy with reference to *Progressive Repertoire for the Double Bass* and the Rabbath Method.

## 2008 Summer Bass Workshop

under the direction of George Vance  
in cooperation with

*Institut International François Rabbath*  
and Albert Einstein High School  
Joan Rackey, Music Director

July 7-11, 2008  
Silver Spring, Maryland

François Rabbath in Concert  
July 10, 8:00 p.m.

### Faculty

François Rabbath  
Anthony Bianco  
Etienne LaFrance  
Robert Oppelt  
Robert Peterson  
Tracy Rowell  
George Vance  
Ali Yazdanfar  
Christian Laborie, luthier

**Eligibility** The workshop is for bassists who desire an intense five days of study with master teachers. The curricula *Progressive Repertoire for Double Bass* by George Vance and *New Technique for the Double Bass* by François Rabbath are central themes of the workshop.

**Program** Participant's daily schedule will include: a master class (semi-private lesson, open to the public), a group lesson, participatory lecture/demonstrations, and an evening concert.

**Preparation** Each student should prepare one or more polished pieces for the daily master class and review the workshop repertoire list for group lessons. Bass choir music will be distributed the first day, to be prepared for the final concert.

**Parents** Parental attendance is encouraged. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent or designated adult guardian.

**Teacher Course** Participation in the teacher course taught by François Rabbath and George Vance is by invitation and is designed for those who are interested in disseminating the ideas of the Rabbath Method.

**Auditors** may observe all workshop events and free recitals.

Information ~ 301-588-9275 ~ [www.slavapub.net](http://www.slavapub.net) ~ [george@slavapub.net](mailto:george@slavapub.net)

# Madison Summer Cello Institute

## June 1–13, 2008

**W**orld-class faculty will guide participants through private lessons, master classes, pedagogy seminars, panel discussions, ensemble playing, and body awareness classes.

Two tracks are offered: performers will attend June 1–June 13; studio cello teachers may choose to attend one or two weeks (June 1–7 and/or June 7–13). Performing participants will put their learning into action in a final recital. Studio teachers perform in an ensemble concert at the end of each week.

We are pleased to have several masters sharing their expertise with participants during the 2008 workshop: Timothy Eddy (Juilliard School), Hans Jørgen Jensen (Northwestern University), Laurence Lesser (New England Conservatory), Pablo Mahave-Veglia (Grand Valley State University), and Uri Vardi (University of Wisconsin-Madison). Special sessions will feature Baroque dances taught by historical dance educator Jane Peck, and Feldenkrais classes with Practitioner Hagit Vardi.

Participants earn Continuing Education Units, or optionally, may earn academic credit. See complete information and enrollment form on our website: <http://www.dcs.wisc.edu/lisa/music/cello.htm>.

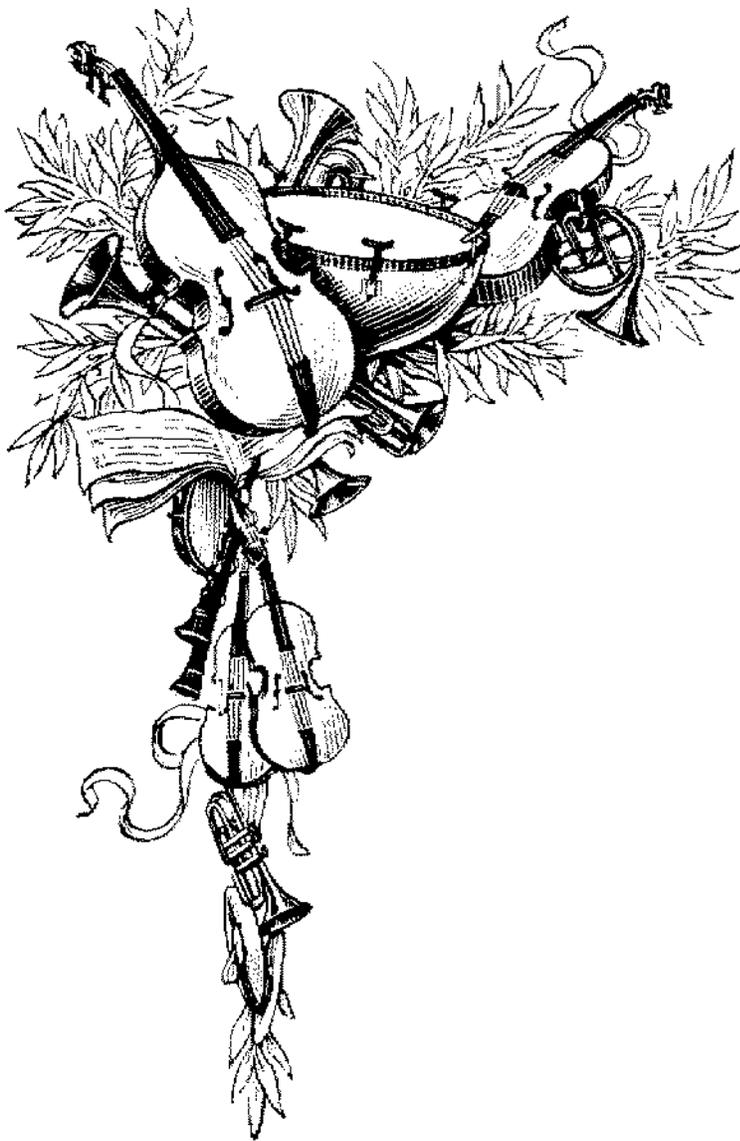
To request a brochure, e-mail [music@dcs.wisc.edu](mailto:music@dcs.wisc.edu).

Please note that enrollment for performing participants is limited to 10; studio teacher spots are unlimited.









# The Lighter Side

Why did the chicken cross the road?  
To get away from the bassoon recital.

Why is a bassoon better than an oboe?  
The bassoon burns longer.

What is a burning oboe good for?  
Setting a bassoon on fire.

What kind of microphone works best for an oboe in a live band?  
A cordless with a dead battery.

What's the difference between a soprano and a pit bull?  
Lipstick and jewelry.

What's the best thing to play on a set of bag pipes?  
A flame thrower!

If you are a stone's throw away from a bag pipe player what should you do?  
Throw stones.

Who's the patron saint of accordionists?  
Our Lady of Spain.

How many contrabass clarinetists can you fit into a phone booth?  
Both of them.

What is the dynamic range of the bass trombone?  
On or off.

How do you get a guitarist to play slower?  
Put music in front of him.

What do you throw a drowning guitar player?  
His amp.

Why did the bass player get mad at the drummer?  
He turned a tuning peg, and wouldn't tell which one.

How do you get a bass player off your doorstep?  
Pay for the pizza.

What do you get when you play New Age music backwards?  
New Age music.

What happens when you play a country song backwards?  
You get your farm back, you get your wife back, you get your dog back . . .

What do deadheads say when they run out of pot?  
Dude, what's this awful music?

The conductor repeatedly asked the trumpet section to play with more dynamics. The first trumpet player responded in frustration, "We're playing as loud as we can!"

What's the difference between the violin section and the viola section of an orchestra?  
About half a measure.

Who makes the best viola mutes?  
Smith & Wesson.

Why is the viola called "bratsche" in Germany?  
Because that's the sound it makes when you sit down on it.

What's the difference between God and a conductor?  
God knows He's not a conductor.

A conductor became very ill one evening just one hour before a concert and was unable to conduct. The orchestra suddenly had to find a substitute and the only person who was willing step in and conduct was the last chair violist. The violist conducted the concert and it was a great success. The conductor remained ill the following day and the violist conducted another concert that evening as well, getting a standing ovation. At the next rehearsal, the conductor had recovered, and the violist took his place at the back of the viola section. As he sat down, his stand partner asked him "So, where've you been for the last two nights?"

# Benefits of ASTA Membership

## **American String Teacher Journal**

An award-winning quarterly scholarly publication that keeps members informed of developments and news within the string profession, provides regular columns including Master Classes, Member2Member, Teaching Tips, as well as other important educational information.

## **National Foundation to Promote String Teaching and Playing**

Our newest initiative provides grants, awards, instrument outreach programs, and contests and competitions exclusively for ASTA members.

## **Comprehensive Website at [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com)**

Filled with information about each program ASTA administers. Whether you are looking for job openings, grants, string industry contacts, awards, competitions, or the latest news, you will find it here.

## **Online Discussion Groups**

The new eCommunities provides members with online discussion groups where you can seek assistance when posed with a specific issue. Members find this method of communication extremely useful when posed with a specific issue. It provides the broadest and fastest way to gather information and find innovative solutions to unique problems in a short time span.

## **Access to String Employment Opportunities**

Gives employers the opportunity to post available positions on the web. Provides ASTA members access to potential employment opportunities.

## **National High School Honors Orchestra**

Performing group of 150 competitively selected high school musicians who assemble biennially to perform at the national conference under the direction of world renowned conductors.

## **Cutting-Edge Publications**

Discounted members-only rates for a wealth of string publications in a growing library of new and revised resources. A variety of tools are available covering topics such as Pedagogy, Classroom and Orchestra Instruction, Private Studio, Research and Resources, Music, and Compendiums.

## **State Chapter Membership**

Offering special clinics or conferences, chapter newsletters, state websites, and opportunities for

leadership at the state level. Payment of national dues also provides membership in your state chapter of ASTA. State membership dues are already included in the price of national dues and are sent to each state unit on a quarterly basis.

## **Conferences**

Professional development avenues are available at the National Conference and the National String Forum and Festival to assist you and your students in achieving career and learning objectives. Special initiatives include: an Alternative Styles Forum, a National Studio Teachers Forum, special K-12 Focus Sessions, the Biennial National Solo Competition and the National Orchestra Festival.

## **Professional Development Documentation Program**

Members may also enroll in a professional development documentation program in which ASTA will issue professional development certificates for approved conferences and workshops. Depending on your state's requirements, this service may assist you in meeting required continuing education goals.

## **Institutional Members**

The Institutional Membership category provides members access to colleges, universities, and other educational programs. The ASTA website and the spring issue of *AST* provide a directory of institutional members and their summer programs/workshops.

## **String Industry Council**

The String Industry Council builds a bridge between string teachers and players and corporate America. The Council encourages companies to support the string community and provides specialized support for corporate-sponsored projects. The annual and online directories are valuable sources of information for members to locate a wide variety of industry partners including: instrument manufacturers, retailers and wholesalers; music publishers and dealers, instrument repairs and rentals; bows, strings and other accessories, as well as music festivals and tours.

## **Advocacy and Outreach**

ASTA has materials available to assist members in starting and growing string and orchestra programs as well as for community outreach programs. Some of the items available include *Why Strings?*, brochures, a public service announcement by Mark O'Connor, advocacy kits, posters, and more.