

---

**Inside this issue:**

- 2 From the Editor's Desk
- 3 President's Message  
*by Jeffrey Aaron*
- 4 **MD/DC Chapter Inaugurates Certificate Program**
- 6 New Officers—ASTA MD/DC Chapter
- 7 Student Orchestras and Festivals  
*compiled by Glenn Angus*
- 10 Expressive Playing Grows in the Garden of Joyful Process  
*by Ronda Cole*
- 15 ASTA on the Internet—Drill vs. Discovery
- 19 ASTA on the Internet—College Advice
- 20 ASTA on the Internet—Student Chapters
- 21 ASTA Student Chapters—Registration Form Response Summary  
*compiled by Alan Ball*
- 23 Executive Board Meeting—ASTA MD/DC Chapter
- 24 The Friday Morning Music Club Competition
- 24 Gretchen Hood String Competition



## From the Editor's Desk

Members of other ASTA state chapters are welcome to become Associate Members of the MD/DC Chapter. To join, send a check for \$10 payable to ASTA MD/DC to Jeffrey Aaron, 819 Islington St., Silver Spring, MD 20910. Enclose a note explaining why you are sending the check. Your \$10 fee will allow you to receive 4 issues of *Stringendo* plus any special mailings announcing workshops. You may join at any time during the year and you will be on the honor system to remember to send in another \$10 for dues the following year. No reminder notices will be sent. However, if you forget when you sent in your previous dues, you are welcome to contact me. I will look in my database to find your renewal date.

Associate members will be admitted to MD/DC events such as workshops at the reduced fees available to MD/DC members, if the event has a tier structure for payment.

Associate members are welcome to send in articles of any kind.

As you look through this issue you will notice we are now including pictures! (Pictures appeared in the previous issue as well.) The pictures are not high quality, but this is due to a cost factor. When I send the issue to the printer, our chapter does not request that the pictures be half tones, which would increase the publication cost to our chapter by quite a large amount.

I would like to publicly offer personal thanks to Glenn Angus, who made all the phone calls to update the Student Orchestras and Festivals article. Another special thank-you to Julianna

Chitwood, who solicited Ronda Cole's inspiring article. Julianna also contacted Dr. Carolyn Barrett, whose article, "New Brain Research and the Suzuki Method," will appear in the Autumn 1998 *Stringendo*.

If you happen to glance through the report of our Executive Board Meeting on page 23, you will see that we discussed the infamous Adult Orchestras in MD and DC List, which has been missing from *Stringendo* for several years. The problem is the same as it has always been—no one wants to take the time to update it. We still need someone to volunteer to make all the phone calls and get the job done. Anyone willing to step forward to accomplish this task should call me or Jeff Aaron.

Chapter members who listed "Violin" or "Viola" on their membership data with the National Office should have received in August a postcard about Ronald Mutchnik's "Posture and Balance" workshop. This takes place (or took place, depending on when you read this) on Monday, September 14, 1998, at 10:00 A.M. If you did not get one of these cards and are reading this issue before that date, and if you would like to attend the workshop, please call Ronald at 410-461-0618 for directions to his house. ♪

Lorraine Combs  
Editor, *Stringendo*  
8241 Chalet Ct.  
Millersville, MD 21108  
410-987-2707  
gcombs@erols.com

*Music do I hear?  
Ha, ha! Keep time. How sour sweet music is  
When time is broke and no proportion kept!*  
*King Richard The Second,  
Act five, Scene five, 41-43*

# President's Message

by Jeffrey Aaron  
ASTA MD/DC President



**H**ERE WE ARE in the new academic year! A hearty welcome to all new members and new chapter officers. I enjoy working with Ann-Marie and Bill as the new members of the board, and I am very grateful for the continued involvement of Lya and Lorraine.

***A change of great magnitude has occurred in our organization!*** Because of this change, ASTA even has a new name. We merged with the National String Orchestra Association and are now called **ASTA WITH NSOA**. The National Office informed me that we picked up over thirty members as a result of this merge. To everyone in that group—it is an honor to have you included among the members of the MD/DC Chapter. Welcome aboard!

Among the chapter activities this spring and summer was the election, which was chaired by Peggy Ward. This was no small job! My thanks to her and her husband Paul for their efforts in preparing the slate, addressing and mailing the ballots, then counting them. Her hospitality during the “addressing-and-mailing” party is greatly appreciated.

This issue of *Stringendo* contains a report of the first annual Certificate Program for Strings. Let me add that additional kudos arrive weekly regarding the success of this program. Congratulations again, Lya.

Have you logged on to our web page yet? The address is **www.asta.net**. Thank you, Larry Stern, for sending us on our adventure along the information highway. I will greatly enjoy following this project through. Are there any other web masters among us who would like to be involved?

Note the updated Student Orchestras and Festivals list in this issue. Our members always consider this to be an important inclusion at this time of year. Glenn Angus came forth and devoted much effort into its completion. Thank you, Glenn.

As we are all aware, our organization is run by volunteers. Thank you to all who have given so much to ASTA.

- The next solo competition will be held in the fall of 1999. We need volunteers to schedule a time, select a venue, and select judges.
- Do you have a pet project in which you would like to be involved?
- Would you like to be a forum editor?
- Please contact me or attend our next board meeting if you have any ideas.
- Board meetings are open to all. The next meeting will be held on **Sunday, September 27, 7:30 P.M. at my home at 819 Islington Street, Silver Spring**. Contact me and let me know that you are planning to attend. Phone: 301-949-1266. E-mail: DrJefAaron@aol.com



# MD/DC Chapter Inaugurates Certificate Program

**A**STAMD/DC Chapter conducted its first annual Certificate Program on Sunday, June 7, 1998, at the Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, Catholic University, Washington, D.C. Over seventy students of chapter members participated in the assessment auditions.



*Lya Stern*

Examination day began at 9:00 A.M. in the lower level of the music building at Catholic University. A registration room was set up, in addition to several warm-up rooms and private studios for each of the three judges. This year Ronald Mutchnick, David Salness, and Linda K. Smith served as judges. In order to keep the entire operation running smoothly, several chapter members volunteered to serve at the registration table, to render assistance to incoming students, and to serve as monitors for the judges. Students and their parents arrived at a steady pace throughout the day. The final examinations were heard at about 3:30 P.M. The judges' evaluation forms and certificates for each student were sent later to the students' respective teachers, who distributed to each student his form and certificate after discussing the evaluation comments.

The program is receiving an enthusiastic response by teachers and students. It was interesting to observe that numerous adult students as well as school-age students took part this year.

The program was conceived by MD/DC Past-President Lya Stern. She undertook this project while President during the past two years with the assistance of a Standards Committee and an Administration Subcommittee. Members of the Standards Committee are: Margaret Wright (chair), Elsa Brandt, Lisa Cole, Judith Shapiro, and Ronald Mutchnick. Members of the Administration

Subcommittee are: Eleanor Woods (chair), Grace Boeringer, Pat Braunlich, Judy Silverman, and Cathy Stewart. Additional review and editing was provided by Peggy Ward and Lorraine Combs.

The purpose of the program is to recognize students' progress and to provide incentives for additional achievement. It is modeled after similar programs by the Royal Conservatory of Music and the Piano Guild Examinations.

Both technical and musical progress are assessed in the program. Achievement on four levels for violin was recognized this year. (The final program will consist of ten levels each for violin, viola, cello, and bass.) Each level contains scales, arpeggios, etudes, solo repertoire, and sight-reading materials.

The violin and viola committee, chaired by Margaret Wright, is about to complete the syllabus and requirements for Levels 5–10.

The cello committee, chaired by Cecilia Barczyk, and the bass committee, co-chaired by Bill Hawthorne and Paul Johnson, are each working on their respective Levels 1–4.

The new material will be mailed to all teachers. Look for the special envelope in early October 1998 from ASTA Certificate Program for Strings.

***Questions or comments about the Certificate Program should be addressed to Lya Stern at 301-320-2693.***



*From left to right: Bill Hawthorne, Jeffrey Aaron, David Salness, Lorraine Combs, Peggy Ward, Lya Stern.*



*Left, top to bottom:*

- 1. Bill Hawthorne, Peggy Ward, Jeffrey Aaron.*
- 2. Bill Hawthorne and Peggy Ward at registration desk with two students.*
- 3. Peggy Ward and Lorraine Combs.*
- 4. Students waiting in hallway for their turns to play.*

*Right, top to bottom:*

- 1. Lya Stern and Judy Shapiro.*
- 2. Pat Braunlich, David Salness, and Judy Shapiro.*



# New Officers—ASTA MD/DC Chapter



**ASTA MD/DC President-Elect Bill Hawthorne** spent twenty years as principal bassist in the U.S. Air Force String Orchestra and Symphony. He has appeared as a soloist with the Air Force String Orches-

tra on numerous occasions, and performed as a soloist with the D.C. Youth Orchestra in China and Taiwan. He received his bachelor's degree in Music Education from Ball State University and his Master of Performance in Double Bass degree from the Catholic University of America. He taught bass for the D.C. Youth Orchestra Program for fourteen years, teaching students from ages 5 through 18. He has served as an instructor of double bass at American University and at Ball State University, and is currently teaching at the Catholic University of America.

For the past eleven years, Mr. Hawthorne has been teaching and building string programs in schools in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. He has maintained a private teaching studio in his home since 1968, and has had one or more of his students in the Maryland All-State Orchestra every year since 1969. Many of his past private students are currently playing in major symphony orchestras.

**ASTA MD/DC Secretary/Treasurer Anne Marie Shaw** earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Washington and Lee University and a Master of Music Degree in Music Education and Violin Performance from Florida State University. While earning her



degrees, Ms. Shaw was a member of the Roanoke Symphony, the Tallahassee Symphony, and the Camellia String Quartet, which competed in the final round of the 1994 Carmel Competition. She has performed as a soloist with the Shenandoah Symphony Orchestra. She has taught in the Motter Ward Studios, the Montgomery County Youth Orchestra, her own private studio, in Suzuki classes, Kindermusik classes, summer music camps, and youth orchestras in Virginia, Michigan, and Florida.

She is a member of the Arlington Symphony and the Maryland Symphony and has performed with the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, the Virginia Symphony, and other local groups. Last summer she participated in the National Orchestra Institute at the University of Maryland. This summer she will take part in the American Institute of Musical Studies Festival in Graz, Austria.



# Student Orchestras and Festivals

*compiled by Glenn Angus*

## All-State Orchestras and Festivals

Contact: Mary Ellen Cohn, 410-437-6991

### All-State Senior Orchestra

Date: February 19–21, 1999

Auditions: November 21, 1998 at Long Reach High School in Howard County

Application deadline: October 10, 1998

### All-State Junior Orchestra (Grades 7-9)

Date: February 18–20, 1999

Auditions: November 14, 1998, at Long Reach High School in Howard County

Application deadline: October 3, 1998

### Strings Solo and Ensemble Festival

Date: April 17, 1999

Location: Western Tech. High School in Baltimore County

Application deadline: March 13, 1998

### State Orchestra Festival

Dates: May 3–4, 1999

Location: Northern High School in Calvert County

Application deadline: April 15, 1999

### MODA Orchestra Festival (Middle and Senior)

Date: May 3–4, 1999

Location: Northern High School, Calvert County

Application deadline: April 15, 1999

\* \* \* \* \*

## All-County Orchestras and Festivals

### Anne Arundel County

Contact: Mary Ellen Cohn, 410-437-6991

### All-County Orchestra Concert (Middle/Junior and Senior)

Location: North County High School

Date: December 11, 1998

Weekend Rehearsals: December 9–11, 1998

### Middle/Junior Orchestra

Audition: October 13, 1998, Lindale/Brooklyn Park Middle

Application deadline: September 30, 1998

### Senior Orchestra

Audition: October 15, 1998, North County High School

Application deadline: October 2, 1998

### Solo and Ensemble Festival

Location: SevernRiver/Magothy Complex

Date: March 6, 1999

Application deadline: January 22, 1999

## Baltimore County

Contact: Gary Carr or Clinton Marshall, 410-887-4024

### Middle School Honors Orchestra

Auditions: October 17, 1998

Location: Pikesville Middle School

Rehearsals: December 3–5, 1998 (location TBA)

Concert: December 5, 1998, 7:30 P.M. (location TBA)

### High School Honors Orchestra

Auditions: October 17, 1998

Location: Pikesville Middle School

Rehearsals: November 12–14, 1998, Meyerhoff Symphony Hall

Concert: November 12, 1998, 7:00 P.M. (Meyerhoff)

### Solo and Ensemble Festival

Date: February 27, 1999

Location: Dumbarton Middle School

Application deadline: See school directors

### High School Band, Chorus, and Orchestra Assessments

Location: TBA

Dates: March 18–20, 1999

Application deadline: See school directors

### Middle School Band, Chorus, and Orchestra Assessments

Location: Dumbarton Middle School

Dates: April 27–28, 1999

Application deadline: See school directors

## Carroll County

Contact: Glenn Patterson, 410-751-3055

### All-County Middle and Senior High Orchestra

Rehearsals: March 11–13, 1999

Concert: March 13, 1999, 7:30 P.M.

Location: Francis Scott Key High School

### Solo and Ensemble Festival

Location: West Middle School

Date: March 6, 1999

Application deadline: February 5, 1999

## Frederick County

Contact: Gary Rupert, 301-694-1341

### All-County High School Orchestra

Concert Date: January 23, 1999

Rehearsals: January 12–13 and January 21–23, 1999

### All-County Middle School Orchestra

Concert Date: February 6, 1999

Rehearsals: January 26 and February 4–6, 1999

### Solo and Ensemble Festival

Date: February 13, 1999

## Harford County

Contact: Harford County Music Office for details,  
410-588-5277

Events schedule not available at date of publication.

## Howard County

Contact: Barbara King, 410-313-6626/6622

### Elementary Enrichment Orchestra and Middle School Gifted and Talented Orchestras

#### Concert #1

Location: River Hill High School

Dress Rehearsal: Thursday, December 3, 1998

Concert: Friday, December 4, 1998

#### Concert #2

Location: River Hill High School

Dress Rehearsal: Thursday, May 6, 1999

Concert: Friday, May 7, 1999

### High School Gifted and Talented Orchestra

Location: River Hill High School

Rehearsals: January 28–30, 1999

Concert: January 30, 1999

### Solo and Ensemble Festivals

#### Grades 6–12

Location: Mt. Hebron High School

Date: February 6, 1999

Snow date: February 13, 1999

#### Grades 3–5

Location: Burleigh Manor Elementary School

Date: March 20, 1999

### Orchestra Festival

Location: Hammond High School

Dates: Wednesday, March 24 and Thursday, March 25, 1999

## Montgomery County

Contact: Dr. Charles Caputo, 301-279-3836

### All-County Senior Honors Orchestra

Auditions: November 17, 1998

Consult local school directors for audition and concert information

### All-County Junior Honors Orchestra

Auditions: November 10, 1998

Consult local school directors for audition and concert information

### Solo and Ensemble Festival

Date: March 5–6, 1999

Application deadline: February 4, 1999

### All-County Honors Gala Concert

Date: February 6, 1999

Snow date: February 9, 1999

### District Orchestra Festival

Date: February 16–18, 1999

Applications: in-person registration during December 1998

## Prince George's County

Contact: Kathy Rodeffer, 301-749-4525

### Elementary and Junior High School Orchestra

Auditions: South County—September 22, 1998, at Largo High School

Auditions: North County—September 28, 1998, at Roosevelt High School

See individual school directors for detailed audition information

Rehearsals: Monday evenings. Elementary at Largo High, Junior at Roosevelt High

Concert #1: December 21, 1998, at Roosevelt High

Concert #2: May 10, 1999, at Roosevelt High

### Secondary School Solo and Ensemble Festival (Grades 7–12)

Date: January 30, 1999

Location: Largo High School

Application deadline: December 10, 1998

### Orchestra Festival

Date: March 23, 1999

Location: Harmony Hall Arts Center

### High School All-County Orchestra, Kennedy Center

Date: March 25, 1999

Rehearsals: TBA

### Elementary Solo and Ensemble Festival

Date: May 24, 1999

Location: Largo High School

Application deadline: March 25, 1999 (tentative)

\* \* \* \* \*

## Youth Orchestras

### Calvert Youth Orchestras

Conductors: Lori Whitford, 410-535-7400 or Cheryl Blockland, 410-535-7865

Junior Orchestra (Grades 6–7)

Symphony Orchestra (Grades 8–12)

Rehearsals: Wednesday nights throughout the year  
Each orchestra gives two formal concerts per year.

Contact: Rick Penix (Calvert County Public School Music Coordinator), 301-535-7204

### Chamber Orchestra of Southern Maryland In Concert (COSMIC)

Contact: Sally Carter, 410-373-4863

### Charles County Youth Orchestra

Contact: Roy Jenkins, 301-645-7805

**Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra****Chesapeake Repertory Orchestra****Chesapeake String Orchestra**

Chamber Groups will be forming  
 Open to players ages 8–18  
 Rehearsals: Thursdays at Heritage Baptist Church in Annapolis  
 Auditions: August 24–25, 27–29, September 1, 1998  
 \$10 audition fee: play solo, scales, and excerpt sent after registration  
 Symphony and Repertory Orchestra fee: \$160 per year  
 String Orchestra fee: \$110 per year (financial aid available on basis of need)  
 Contact for auditions and other information: Candy Morford 410-849-2837

**Frederick Youth Orchestra**

Conductor: Philip Hale, 410-288-0052  
 Rehearsals: Monday evenings at Church of the Brethren, Rosemont and 2nd Street in Frederick

**Greater Baltimore Youth Orchestra****Greater Baltimore Youth Concert Orchestra****Greater Baltimore Youth String Orchestra**

Contact: Ms. Frances Belcher, Manager, 410-780-6914 (Essex Community College Music Office) for audition information package  
 Tours planned for each orchestra this year  
 Rehearsals: Sundays at Essex Community College, Fall and Spring  
 Fall auditions: August 21–23, 28–30, 1998, at Essex Community College (Spring auditions TBA)  
 Fee: \$125 per semester

**Maryland Youth Symphony Orchestra**

Conductor: Angelo Gatto  
 Open to students ages 12–21  
 Rehearsals: Saturdays, 1:00–4:00 P.M.  
 Catonsville Community College  
 Auditions: Saturdays only, August 29–September 12, 1998  
 Contact: Margaret Gatto, 410-442-5645 to make audition appointment

**Maryland Youth Symphonette**

Conductor: Humberto Ayestes  
 Rehearsals: Saturdays, 10:00 A.M.–12:00 M.  
 Catonsville Community College  
 Auditions: Saturdays only, August 29–September 12, 1998  
 Contact: Margaret Gatto, 410-442-5645 to make audition appointment

**Montgomery County Youth Orchestras****String Ensemble** (Grades 4–6)**Preparatory Orchestra** (Grades 5–8)**Junior Orchestra** (Grades 6–9)**Senior Orchestra** (Grades 9–12)

Auditions: Early September (\$10 fee)  
 Rehearsals: Wednesday Evenings at Rockville High School and Meadow Hall Elementary school  
 Membership fee: \$180 per year  
 Folder fee: \$13  
 Need-based scholarships available to help with lessons or membership fees  
 Participants must take private lessons  
 Contact: 301-654-2018

**Potomac Valley Youth Orchestras**

Auditions: September 10, 1998, 6:00–9:00 P.M.  
 September 12, 1998, 9:00 A.M.–12:00 M. and 1:00 P.M.–4:00 P.M.  
 September 14, 1998, 5:00 P.M.–9:00 P.M.  
 Rehearsals for Symphony and Concert Orchestras held at Quince Orchard High School in Gaithersburg; Prep Orch at Ridgeview Middle School in Gaithersburg  
 Contacts:  
 Symphony Orchestra (Grades 9–college freshman) Mary Allen, 301-948-1024  
 Concert Orchestra (Grades 7–8) Pshpa Jagannath, 301-948-3025  
 Prep Orchestra (Grades 4–6) Divya Dhokai, 301-926-1764

**St. Mary's College Chamber Orchestra**

Conductor: Jeffrey Silberschlag  
 Contact: jbsilberschlag@osprey.smcm.edu, or call St. Mary's College Music Dept.

**St. Mary's County Youth Orchestra**

Contact person not available at press time. Contact Music Office of St. Mary's County Public Schools for any available information.

**Washington Pro Musica Youth Orchestra**

Modeled after the Washington Pro Musica Orchestra.  
 Four concerts during the season.  
 Open to players ages 13–21  
 Auditions: Early September 1998; make appointment  
 Yearly tuition: \$300 (Scholarships available based on need)  
 Contact: Philip Momchilovich, 202-722-4881 or 301-565-0867 

# Expressive Playing Grows in the Garden of Joyful Process

*by Ronda Cole*

Adding musicality is certainly not at the heart of the process in my teaching. To “add musicality” to a piece after the technique is worked out is like putting sugar on rather than *in* a baked cake. My joy in teaching is in helping my students grow to a place in their development where expression and vital communication in performance are their primary values. I want them to realize that the reason they are amassing technique and easy skill is not just to have it, but to use it for greater purpose. The ideal is to develop technique so that the instrument can disappear from concern. When we speak, little notice is directed to the technique of the tongue and teeth and vocal chords. We are just expressing ourselves. Perhaps the analogy of someone speaking with intention to enunciate clearly relates to the level of technical awareness that should be present in musical performance. Within that limit, the performance can be one of self-expression, communication, and love of sound. I can remember my early adult years with many practice hours in a day. At one particularly exhausted and impoverished moment, I realized the absurdity of what I was doing. I was spending countless hours perfecting the art of pulling horsehair over cat gut strung on an empty, as-old-as-possible wooden box! Ridiculous! But I realized that I was not just pouring my life energy into playing the instrument and the notes. I was also working to minimize the interference of my own thought process and the violin to the main event: the expression and creation of heart and humanity—my own! It is tragic to see people whose heart draws them to music, but in response to criticism, they spend their practice careers pursuing mainly the perfection of technique. Delayed musical gratification often becomes forgotten purpose.

Even parents who are not musicians instinctively know that something profound is possible. As teachers we have all heard it. They say it oddly: they want to “expose” their children to music.

As teachers, we have the opportunity to help our students create their attitudes and priorities. I listen with my feelings first—judgement and problem solving analysis come second. In feedback to a student, I speak first of feelings they nurtured in me and second of what happened—what they did well and what they can improve. When children have been listened to this way, they learn to listen in the same manner. First they listen for what they feel and like, and second to what would be helpful. They are going to enjoy listening more this way. And if they grow in an environment where they know they are being listened to through these priorities, they will become performers who perceive the audience to be listeners who are there to feel and enjoy what they hear, rather than discover what was not well done. This makes secure and joyful performers. The opposite is the attitude, “When I play in front of people, mistakes happen.” So, in teaching children technique and repertory, we must also use the opportunity to pass the primary values on to them.

## Primary Values:

- To feel and to express.
- To be clear and to articulate.
- To be giving and to communicate.

## Secondary Values:

Everything that supports the primary values including:

- Tone
- Intonation
- Rhythm
- Dynamics
- Period-appropriate style
- Posture
- Technique

We need to teach these elements of instrumental playing. In fact, as we teach them, we must also teach character, sensitivity, humility, focus, and

integrity—items that need daily nurturing. We will always have a long way to go.

But the errors we make in this category show in our faces as teachers all the time. An alert teacher will listen to a child play a Bach Minuet and notice fifty things that could be focused upon. A wise teacher will decide which of these fifty things are the most basic and limit the lesson accordingly.

I worked with a graduate student who trained in Taiwan as a child. Perfect intonation was the primary value. He was so afraid of playing out of tune, that he could not make real music. He could not play with any volume or produce a beautiful tone. Yet he played all the major concertos! The pursuit of perfect intonation is an infinite quest. Keep going that way if you will, but only with the understanding that no one, including yourself, can ever arrive. Then forgive yourself for being human.

An analogy: It is necessary to deal with brush fires because they can burn down the forest—but there will always be another brush fire. We need also to grow the forest.

## Balance

I think balancing it all is one of the things that makes teaching an art. Keeping expression and communication as the primary values, we are also responsible for teaching the skills for playing the instrument and the notes that carry the message.

I keep a little something on my desk that I often read to remind myself of priorities: “A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove, (and mentally I add, or whether the laundry got folded, or my desk is a mess) but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.”

## Things that can interfere with expressive communication

**1. The violin.** No matter how famous the maker, an instrument can contribute its own limitations to expression. I once had a student who was the fifth child of six in a family. They had automatically inherited from a relative the violin she was using.

It was a sorry excuse for a musical instrument. I realized that as I taught this child, I could not ask for her to reach for something that was not possible on her instrument. The family was reluctant to buy a better instrument. Finally, I asked them to suspend lessons, save the money they would have paid me, and resume lessons when they had procured a useable instrument. They returned with a better violin the next week. I felt I could teach again.

**2. The difficulty in playing the instrument and music.** Left brain thinking holds a lot of valuable information about how to play and how to train the player. The left brain knows little about expressive communication. So, if the lessons and practice have been predominantly left brain work, then the performer comes to the stage with a lot of things to do on his mind—shift, vibrate, play forte, play in tune. He is busy doing it right. But since it can never really *all* be right, he can never finish that work and get on to expressive communication. All along the priority has not been expression and communication, so the *real* music does not happen.

**3. Not a clue.** Sometimes I have worked with students who have not yet begun to connect feelings with sound. Perhaps you can empathize with this situation: I am awed by a beauty or thrilled by a passion that my student did not notice. He merely yawns and looks at his watch. This is a recipe for great frustration. I have to remind myself that I am not responsible for how my student *plays* the violin, but only for how I *teach* him and help to enrich his environment.

As a new teacher I assumed everyone had passion waiting to be expressed and simply needed help with the technique in order for the expression to pour out. Assume your students can *feel* but don't assume they can *express*. Help your students develop verbal language to think, to describe, and to express what they feel. Ask about their feelings regularly. Our teaching should foster the discovery of feelings and the expectation of expressing them.

**4. Parents.** In the Suzuki approach, the parents are our greatest strength. They can also be a weakness. Letting go requires faith. The parent's job is

to *be* what is needed. Sometimes the hard part for them is *seeing* what is needed.

There is a story about a mother and her young son attending a play group for children. The son had cerebral palsy. At one point the children were all dressing themselves. Her son was having great difficulty pulling on his pants. He was screaming and fussing in his struggle as he saw the other children go on to play. The mother just sat and watched him, encouraging him to continue his efforts. The other mothers saw her lack of lending a helping hand as unkind. They asked her why she did not help her son. She stayed on the bench, seated on her hands and replied, “I *am* helping my son.” Sometimes the parents should stop “helping.”

Parents need:

- A support group, perhaps during group classes. Parents should not feel isolated. They need to be encouraged and nurtured.
- To feel listened to. They need others to hear their problems, criticisms, and concerns.
- Honest feedback. If they feel heard, then they can let in completely honest feedback. Parents have come to you because of a deep love for their child. They would like to hear the truth as you see it if it supports their child. Compassionately speak the truth as you see it. Parents cannot see from your perspective their interactions with their child. One of the most important gifts you can give a family is to speak when you see and understand a problem. Speak as a loving observer. You can say what you see without intruding on their domain of how to raise their children. They will draw their own conclusions.

**5. Fear.** Expectations of self and identity can be barriers to musical expression. If you were to pick up a clarinet and explore playing it for a while, you would probably have some fun. If there were people listening, you could even share your amusement. You have little in the way of expectation of yourself playing a clarinet. But when you pick up your violin and play, you find a bit of your identity comes with it. You are more determined to

play well and beautifully on the violin than on the clarinet. Perhaps not just for the sake of playing beautifully, but also to protect your identity and reputation. Were you to squawk a few notes on a clarinet, you would not be personally offended when people respond with amusement. Were your listeners to laugh at your violin playing you would likely feel differently.

I think that when children have played for a while by age 8 or 9, their violin playing becomes a part of who they *are* and not just what they *do*. It becomes their voice. So, when their *playing* is criticized, they may painfully hear themselves *personally* criticized.

The creation of a safe environment is critical. The environment must be one where it is understood that mistakes are necessary to the process and that teachers can welcome mistakes. Both teacher and parent become enthused by the breakthroughs and the child realizes the excitement is in the stretching of himself. “Playing it safe” to avoid errors is the antithesis of expressive playing. Students feel safe when they can say to a teacher, “I think you are neat because of how you respond to the world, not because of how perfectly you do things.” One of my long time students attending the Curtis Institute of Music returned home for a lesson. She said, “It feels so good to play for you. I know that even if I blow the passage, you will hear what I *meant* to say.”

Mistakes are teachers. When a passage is unclear I ask, “What don’t you know about that passage?” When they answer me they know the answer! I ask my students to notice when they are uneasy about a passage. That is the spot containing an unknown. It means opportunity: slow down, turn on the working lights, listen between the notes, notice what you feel. Hear. Learn.

“Nurtured by Love” must not become “Nurtured by Force.” Suzuki tells us, “All is in the process.” This process applies to life outside of music. Suzuki tells us, “Every child can be educated. It is up to the teacher to find the way.” Perhaps teachers and parents need to remember that music isn’t the only way to a beautiful heart. Children who are forced will resist and will eventually force back. This is not where their life energy should be

directed. *All is in the process.*

I consistently “invite” students to come out of themselves. “Be” rather than “do.” The process is not necessarily comfortable, since it involves children going beyond their self-defined parameters and upsetting their technical control. I find that children who are accustomed to going past their self-defined limits on a regular basis discover a vitality in the process. They often become artists. The energy released is exciting and they become increasingly willing to do it again and again. They come to a lesson or group class expecting to confront and pass that boundary. The metamorphosis of sleepy, grumpy teenagers arriving for group class on Saturday morning, changed into expressive artists, is an inspiring change to see! Sadly, children who do not learn to let go of their old boundaries play protectively, with their focus on avoiding error.

**6. Practice.** I have noticed that my students like to practice. (No kidding!) I think they like to practice because they are listening for the unexpected. The purpose of practice is to *make easy*. Repetition is not possible. Monotony kills musicality. Every time is different. They know their purpose is to move themselves and others as they play. They know I listen and say, “I did not feel that. I am listening for your feelings. Please tell me again.”

**7. Focus.** We must teach our youngest students to have a direct focus. Our littlest ones can forget they have a violin under their chin and walk off with the violin clattering to the floor. Asking young children to maintain a focus beyond their interested attention may create tension. Beware—many children focus by putting on mental blinders. They play nothing save the item they have asked themselves to concentrate on. (Fortunately, the heart will continue to beat, even though it is not included in the instruction.) Perhaps a different choice of words will help—“notice” instead of “focus.”

I have worked with children who have been taught to look at their left hands far beyond the beginning stages. They look so hard, it seems their eyes might pop out. They do not move, breathe, or sing inside. They are tense and very far from a musically expressive or sensitive state. What they

do communicate is rigidity, fear, and suffocation. Perhaps they could look at a fixed object on the wall or close their eyes, except when there is a specific verification needed by checking in on the bow or left hand.

Advanced students need to learn a more oblique focus. Images that they create, or at least take on as their own, make the music meaningful to them. Then they can impart this meaning to their listeners.

I think part of our human condition is that we do not really trust ourselves to concentrate or even to care enough. Then we “help” by trying with the body. This determination to try harder or concentrate harder is delivered to the muscles, which become more and more tense.

**8. Unintentional teacher interference.** Expect nothing so that you can expect everything. Here comes Micah. He usually does this and usually doesn’t do that. He doesn’t concentrate or care as much as most of my other students. His posture is...well...he just seems to be put together that way. Micah has trained me to expect less of him.

In workshop teaching, I have no expectations. Each child is new to me so I have no expectation based upon history. The observing teachers are amazed to see what their students can do and are willing to do (move, shout, jump, sing). But then I have not been educated by these students *not* to ask for those things.

One of Suzuki’s most important lessons to me was to “live in the question.” Sometimes as teachers, our answers are too rapidly dispensed. There is great value in the student seeing the teacher *not have* the answer, then seeing the teacher study and *find* an answer. The moments I have the most exciting breakthroughs are those in which I do not know what I am doing. I ask the student to play it again, and again, and again while I study how they are playing. When I sit there empty of the needed answer, probably looking a bit foolish, a solution comes. Just like that. Be assured, I do attend to that which needs doing. But I also clear a pathway to the goal that I do not yet know. There must be more! Suzuki’s example to us as teachers was to study and learn. Not to *know*. He would say, “Please teach me, I am eager to learn. Try my new

idea.” He used to say that he would have to live to be 120 years old in order to learn all he needed to know.

## Joyful Process

In pursuit of expressive playing, I think in terms of uncovering and developing character, eliciting demonstrative behavior with gestures, outspoken enunciations, rhythmic vitality, breathing, movement, singing, imagination, imagery, and humor.

I ask for expressive behavior and enunciation in all conversation: “Hello, good morning!” (We have “good morning” contests in Saturday group tuning.) “Thank you!” “I *liked* that!” “Wow, how do *you* feel?” I ask that my students speak distinctly and in full sentences (or at least more than one word answers) and make eye contact as they speak or are spoken to.

Experiential rather than passive learning teaches the right brain. It invites *being* over *doing*.

Things to do that invite *being*:

- Teach with humor—chuckle at errors. Allow yourself to express your amusement at the antics and responses of students.
- To a piece of music you can: dance, gesture, sing, scat sing, laugh the notes, sing ho ho ho, shake hands, march everything, step on notes, breathe throughout, breathe phrases while someone plays the piece, float, and smile the piece.
- Create images: individually wrapped notes, spill overs, taste each note, listen to the spaces, splash that note, stomp on that sfz, play the piece on an imaginary keyboard with one finger or with your nose (a great cure for rushing!)
- Throw pencils or marshmallows to remind David to stay on Kreisler highway.
- Fear smashing: yell, smile, laugh while playing.
- Invent descriptors: sparcato, pluckato.
- If you are feeling it big enough it will splash onto me too.
- Give feedback: you’re at 50%, now 60%, etc.

- To promote internal singing in beginners, play a few notes from the middle of an unnamed piece and have the children finish singing the song.

## Coda

A potter opens a vase from the inside, shaping both inside and outside. Teachers and parents do not have this much influence over children. There is probably eternal wisdom at work in that. As teachers and parents we have the opportunity to be with our children joyfully.

We have the responsibility to teach them to find their *own* power, to lead them to treasure the beauty and miracle of their lives, and to help them to find their very own special path.

As for me, the more I learn, the more I see there is to learn. I need to be able to forgive myself for what I do not know yet. It helps me to remember that I am a work in progress. God hasn’t finished with me yet. 



# ASTA on the Internet

## Subject: Drill vs. Discovery

**Mon 22 Jun 1998**

From: Helen M. <xxxxxxx@bellsouth.net>

Correct me if I am mistaken, but the consensus that seems to be coming across on ASTA-L is that drill supported by intensive parental back-up (more drill) is what really works. This would seem to make violin study very different from learning almost anything else. It would also seem that we still are at the parallel point—in relation to the study of mathematics—of asking children to chant tables without ensuring that they understand quantity.

Obviously, I lean towards a discovery approach, even though it is easier to exploit parental participation with the black and white of drill.

I also feel that dominant use of repetition often means that the child has not reached the appropriate readiness. Learning occurs through problem-solving on the part of the student, not the parent. Art is a celebration of the individual and how the individual differs from all others, including one's parents.

Am I the only person subscribing to ASTA-L who feels this way?

**Mon 22 Jun 1998**

From: Tiffany H. <xxxxxxx@prodigy.com>

You are not alone! I also favor a discovery approach. As a child, I was well drilled and did the whole Suzuki thing with full parental involvement. I liked it very much, and it worked, and I can play the violin. However, now that I'm older (17) I'm starting to solve my own problems and discover things on my own. It is so rewarding! I feel much more confident during a performance because I believe in myself. I had a few bad teachers (I was taught to hold my violin incorrectly and now have carpal tunnel syndrome). Now I've discovered that I can figure things out for myself. If it hurts, I don't do it. People are built differently, and I don't stress out any more because my bow hold isn't an absolute copy of whoever I'm studying with at the time. And my shifts are smoother and cleaner.

I never realized how wonderful playing the violin is! It's become all about artistic discovery, and that has affected other things I do as well. Being a violinist has made me a better dancer and an ice skater, and life has just generally improved. I wish someone had told me how to do this when I was younger! Now I'm a teacher too, and I pass on what I've learned to my students, and they are doing great and most importantly, having fun.

**Tue 23 Jun 1998**

From: Helen M. <xxxxxxx@bellsouth.net>

Thanks, Tiffany, for your reply. Can you give examples of how you use artistic discovery in your teaching? What about the relationship between readiness and repetition?

**Wed 24 Jun 1998**

From: Tiffany H. <xxxxxxx@prodigy.com>

I like to tape record the students and play it back several times, then ask them what they would like to change. I also like to play a CD of Perlman or Heifetz and have the students notice what different things they do, i.e., this on the G string, a ritard starting here instead of there, a special accent on one note. Then I ask if they liked these particular musical choices. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. I'm always a little hesitant to do this with little children because I'm afraid they will unconsciously copy and not make their own choices. But I've got some interesting results, even as early as the Twinkle variations. Some students ask me, "Can I play this louder, and this softer?" I tell them, "Yes!" and let them do what they want. If something sounds bad, they usually pick it up on the recording and try other things. They are so cute. But I'd like some suggestions on younger students and artistic discovery because it seems much easier to explain things to older students.

I think repetition can have different meanings. I don't like to have students play things over and over for technical reasons unless they are really concentrating. I think readiness and repetition can be blended together. I have the students play scales—stopping at each mistake and starting the scale anew, because I want them to remember the correct placement of the scale *as a whole*, not just each note. Sometimes it takes a few tries to get past even the first two notes. That's repetition, but they are listening very carefully and trying for precision. I ask them to sing the note in their heads before they play the next note of the scale. That seems to work really well, so in that case I think repetition is okay. I do not have students work like that technically on their pieces. I consider that to be in the realm of readiness—they learned it in scales, now they can apply it in the music. (Except in very, very difficult passages like octaves or broken thirds, or artificial harmonics. I'm thinking of Sarasate's *Zapateado*. In that piece, different sections become etudes of their own and the scale especially emphasized in a lesson corresponds with the key the piece is in. Normally, it would be a different scale every day for more advanced students. Now it's a different scale *plus* the one the difficult piece is in.)

Were you referring to technical readiness and repetition

or artistic? I answered referring to technical readiness and repetition, but I consider artistic readiness and repetition to be a whole different thing, although related. I hope I have expressed my ideas clearly, and I would like to hear some more opinions about this. Please help out a relatively unexperienced teacher, or wise ASTA-L subscribers!

**Mon 22 Jun 1998**

From: Dee M. <xxxxxxx@uwsp.edu>

Drill vs. discovery. Why are we even considering an “either/or” choice? I don’t think that either “drill” or “discovery” works. My commitment is to a combination of both, which is initiated very early on in training. It takes a great deal of drill to train muscles to do the things we ask of them as string players. It also takes an understanding of the long-term goals to know what kind of drill may work. Discovering how to do something is only the very beginning of making it part of your playing. In order for the discovery process to work the student has to have enough background to make technical choices that will work in multiple situations, enough breadth of experience to make musical choices that are appropriate to the situation, and enough practice in listening to what is coming out of the instrument to be able to tell whether what is being imagined is actually happening.

I agree that discovery is a very important part of learning—a part that gains in importance as we become more independent in our thinking and learning. As teachers, we have to carefully direct the balance between exploration and demonstration as well as the balance between discovery and drill. In my opinion, the balance chosen needs to be age- and experience-appropriate. The teacher needs to consider the natural learning style of the student.

My goal as a teacher is to train a student to be able to learn independently, to literally work my way out of a job. This certainly requires me to provide for each student vast experiences in manipulating materials to discover (or uncover) the desired results. Over time, my expectation is that my role will change from that of a very demanding “do it this way” teacher to one who guides the discovery process and cheers the results.

Deciding how to manage this long transition for each student is part of what makes teaching so challenging and so exciting for me.

**Mon 22 Jun 1998**

From: Charleen M. <xxxxxxx@moa.net>

I agree with what Dee has so eloquently stated. Discovery learning—setting up well-planned lessons so students can *discover* what they need to know, instead of being *told*—is for me one of the great rewards of teaching. But, for students of any age to be able to do what they need to do, well, that’s where the drill comes in.

Depending on the age of the student, the necessary rep-

etition can be as simple as, “Do this 50 times,” or as creative as, “Do this in each room of your house with a different hat on each time.” For a 4-year-old, that might be a lot of fun. And that’s where the parents need to help out.

**Tue 23 Jun 1998**

From: Helen M. <xxxxxxx@bellsouth.net>

But I meet young adults who, as 4-year-olds, took this “fun” fork in the road—never to have found *other* pleasures in music.

**Tue 23 Jun 1998**

From: Doris G. <xxxxxxx@aol.com>

This would be a good time to study the philosophy of Kato Havas and to try to understand more fully her concepts of “freedom to play.” The freedom, to be complete, must be physical, intellectual, and emotional. The listening that she encourages involves feeling the meaning of the music rather than imitating the sounds. If we think back to the lives of the great composers and performing musicians, we observe that freedom in playing and improvising made up a tremendous part of their growth and ultimate contribution to the world of music.

When observing babies, toddlers, and young school-aged children playing freely, the level of improvisation and creativity seems to be endless. This is the time of “no fear” and then we, the adults, spend as much effort as possible in killing all of these joyous moments by socializing, organizing, and stereotyping their lives. By the time they get to high school they know how to take standardized tests, how to hide their creativity, and how to conform to a rigid society.

Should we copy this in our wonderfully creative area of music instruction? Why don’t we encourage improvisation from the beginning? Why don’t we rejoice when they find ways to change the sounds, the notes, the rhythm, and the melody? When they improvise alone, they cannot make a mistake. Isn’t that wonderful? And never having to do the same thing twice is definitely not boring.

As the child wants to be able to play more varied literature and play with others, the need for repeated practice becomes obvious. The growth through encouraging creativity inspires the desire to be able to repeat melodies and to play these melodies well. Children learn to read easily when the printed page is introduced as a part of both reading and writing music. Children read and play the sounds because they are beautiful. They can get in touch with the world of music through a vast assortment of literature. As they progress, selecting appropriate materials for them to work on becomes the critical factor. They should move easily into what ever repetition is needed to play individually selected literature. When the literature is correct, repetition can be held to a minimum, but whatever is needed is worked on out of the student’s desire for producing the best possible result.

Perhaps we need to study the reasons why we teach the way we teach. Or are we so unknowingly programmed that we have forgotten to even consider the possibilities, the processes, and the outcomes?

**Tue 23 Jun 1998**

From: Liliás G. <xxxxxxx@vcnet.com>

I've been following the many interesting and informative comments in the "drill vs. discovery" discussion with great interest. Many excellent points have been already made.

Perhaps one that might help clarify the issue might be a definition of "drill" (I prefer the term "practice"). Most of us have, I think, encouraged students to repeat whatever material we assign them a certain number of times when they practice. And most of us have seen the student at the follow-up lesson who says, "Yes, I practiced X number of times," but it is obvious that he practiced the wrong things. Habits are formed by repetition, and just as often they can be a hindrance to playing, rather than furthering the student's technical facility.

That's why I think it is so important that we teach students how to practice. This is a skill requiring analytical thinking that may not be fully developed in younger children. Hence the need for parent-supervised practice. I like it very much when my parents always come to the lessons and assist their child's practice. Essential for the very young, but even the 8 and 9 year olds make much slower and less steady progress without parental help. Unlike many Suzuki teachers I know, I don't insist on it, although I am thinking that perhaps it would save both me and the student much heartache.

It would be interesting to add a dimension to this discussion regarding teaching students how to practice. To start it off, I might suggest that efficient practice involves intent listening, or hearing. This, too, needs to be trained, and all too few students have enough exposure to the kind of music most of us teach.

Hoping to learn more from all the fine teachers out there...

**Wed 24 Jun 1998**

From: Charleen M. <xxxxxxx@moa.net>

*Helen Martin wrote: "But I meet young adults who, as 4-year-olds, took this "fun" fork in the road—never to have found other pleasures in music."* I don't understand what she is trying to say here. To continue with the metaphor, it is a poor, or at least uninteresting road that only has one fork. Why didn't the teacher show that young adult some of the other forks in the road? The violin (or *any* instrument) is not learned by drill alone, but I can't imagine not doing *some* drill work. Maybe there is another name for it. Repetition—is that the same? And, of course, you've got to set it up right so the student doesn't practice something wrong lots of times.

Tiffany said that she was a skater. I can't believe that she didn't have to spend lots of time practicing figure eights. (Tiffany, did you?)

This is an interesting thread. Gives us lots to think about.

**Wed 24 Jun 1998**

From: Tiffany H. <xxxxxxx@prodigy.com>

*"Why does the skater do figure eights?"*

Hooray! I get to talk about skating. Yes, compulsory figures are on their way out in competitive skating, but a similar exercise would be "pumping on the circle" and "crossovers", so I'll answer thinking of those exercises. Why are they done? Mostly to get rid of that darn wobbling ankle thing, but also for speed, strength in the pushing outward motion, and arm position. I did have to practice these things a lot. But it was not exactly drill. In figure skating, mistakes stand out more than on violin (you crash and go boom!). I would see these exercises as drill if they were just to get people skating in general. But they have specific, obvious reasons like not wobbling or digging your toe pick into the ice. This is all stuff for serious skaters, though. A recreational skater probably would just concentrate on not falling down.

*"What is the function of compulsory figures? How many are required?"*

I discovered the function of these exercises when I first stepped on the ice, because I wobbled around. So the number required was how ever many it took to stop wobbling and get speed, strength, and a nice arm position. They can just be done over and over, or you can stop and *think* after each exercise, and improve faster. The coach helps by telling the skater what went wrong, but the skater has to fix it himself, however young. I see that as being more towards discovery and not drill.

*"How do compulsory figures contribute to other areas of skating?"*

These are basic foundations of competitive skating, like scales in music. When I am asked to do a crossover in a routine I am already perfect because I learned it thoughtfully and quickly when I was just beginning.

*"Can their function be realized through another means?"*

Well, not in this case. But there are times in which certain exercises for beginning skaters are actually better than drill—just skating around the rink until they can stay upright. Exercises that are leaning towards discovery work much better.

*"How much does their value depend on the above questions?"*

The above definitions are basically the definition of Olympic training exercises, so the above questions are very, very important and relevant to the value.

—Tiffany H., Olympic hopeful in ladies' figure skating and dedicated violinist!

**Thu 25 Jun 1998**

From: Carol V. <xxxxxxx@hotmail.com>

Well, good luck, Tiffany! Regarding the artistic vs. the drill problem: Just substitute “wobbling ankle” with “wobbling bow!”

There have always been many people in the medical profession who are also string players (just go to the adult chamber music workshops in California). I have been waiting for a new generation of string players to arise who are also fine *athletes*—like Tiffany. I believe string playing is a sport. With any sport there is the entertainment level where you simply “play,” and the deeper levels where you develop whatever natural ability you may have. If one does not have natural ability—can’t throw (bow), can’t run—(co-ordinate hands), can’t bat, can’t kick—one *can* systematically take an aspect of the game and really hone his developmental skills in that area. He will not become an olympic star or concert player, but he will still have a wonderful time, develop an appreciation for his own efforts and those of other players...

**Wed 24 Jun 1998**

From: George B. <xxxxxxx@tenet.edu>

Without sufficient drill, an athlete cannot possibly achieve a very high level of competency. Of course, without sufficient insight, an athlete won’t achieve a very high level of competency, either. Creativity, discovery, and drill go hand in hand.

**Fri 26 Jun 1998**

From: Sally W. <xxxxxxx@juno.com>

Thanks to all who have given such thoughtful comments on this thread. I have a situation with a 7 year old student who is very talented—she’s working on the Bach Double already. Her parents are quite intense, and she practices—drills—at least two hours each day. Her father downloaded MIDI files of the Bach from the Internet and slowed down the speed so she is practicing with a harpsichord accompaniment and the first part (she is on the second). This was all on his own initiative. She plays well, but there is no joy in her playing of this piece right now, and her father won’t give it up! I keep suggesting a change of pace, but he seems afraid that if she misses a day on the Bach, she will lose her momentum, and if they add anything else, her practicing time will be prohibitive. Since she began playing, a little over two years ago, any fiddle tunes or “childish” songs that I have given her to play have not been practiced. Her parents seem to only place value on “serious” music. One of my older students babysits this girl, and reports that they also have her memorizing Shakespeare. (She is home educated.) I am an experienced teacher—have been teaching privately for fifteen years—and have never run into parents this forceful or a child this prodigious. I would appreciate any suggestions. I am tempted at times to send her to another teacher just so I won’t have to deal with the situation!

**Fri 26 Jun 1998**

From: Carolyn M. <xxxxxxx@mci2000.com>

The situation Sally describes with the 7-year old Bach “Doubler” reminds me of a family I worked with briefly 18 or 19 years ago. Those parents were determined to make a genius of their child. I met the girl when she was a toddler—I began giving the mother violin lessons. The toddler had no toys—just “Teach Your Baby to Read” word cards and items like that. If she screamed during her mother’s lessons, her father took her out to the car to listen to Shakespeare tapes. I dropped the mother from my studio because she would not accept my leadership as her teacher. But I heard about the little girl for a few more years—a friend of mine became one of her babysitters. The mother ran ads in the paper saying, “Babysitters needed for child genius.” They hired my friend as the Spanish-speaking sitter. The girl spoke French with her mother, English with her father, Spanish with my friend, and something else with another sitter. She still had no toys but knew all the parts of her model nuclear submarine. She had a lot of trouble with toilet-training. That’s the last I heard of her—but I’ve often wondered what became of her. I finally decided that what worried me the most was the absence of *joy* in all the girl did. Having an interesting environment is one thing—having such a controlled environment is another. How can we approach parents like that when we worry about their children?

**Fri 26 Jun 1998**

From: Annie W. <xxxxxxx@dibbs.net>

Regarding the “pushy parents”—they are undermining your expertise by not practicing your assigned material. It sounds as though they want to teach her violin themselves. If you are dreading the lesson, why not let them? ♪



# ASTA on the Internet

## Subject: College Advice

**Thu 28 May 1998**

From: Kristen H. <xxxxxxx@aol.com>

I am leaving...to study at [XYZ] University as an incoming freshman viola performance major. Since many of you have been to music school, I have a few questions. What are things I should make sure not to forget? What advice do you have for a freshman, especially one in the summer? What do you wish you had done differently in college? Was it hard to motivate yourself to do all of the practicing required? How did you keep your focus? How many hours a day did you practice? What did you do to keep your focus? What repertoire did you learn your freshman year? Anything else a freshman should know? Thank you very much in advance! ...very excited but still a little nervous.

**Thu 28 May 1998**

From: John H. <xxxxxxx@vt.edu>

The one thing about which you should be aggressive is in choosing your teacher. If there's someone you really want to study with, and you haven't done it already, go to that teacher, sit, talk, play if asked, and make it clear that you came to [XYZ] largely for the chance to work with that person. If you leave the selection to "the system," you might not have much choice. I was studying violin until the opportunity opened up to study viola with Mr. Primrose, and believe me, I grabbed that opportunity *fast!* The top teachers have been known to have young students study with their graduate assistants until they are ready for them, or until there are openings in their studios. That's perfectly legitimate—even highly recommended. But personal contact is *important!*

Also, start networking with people right away and looking for opportunities to play outside the required places. Lots of graduate choral conducting concerts use orchestras, and someone who establishes a good reputation as being musical and reliable can have chances to do lots of music he wouldn't otherwise do.

Being a little nervous goes with the territory! The best thing about being a Freshman is that you get over it! You will be challenged and you will be surrounded by beautiful music and you will do *great! Best of luck.*

**Thu 28 May 1998**

From: Tracey R. <xxxxxxx@prodigy.com>

Don't marry the first guy you meet. Wait and marry your best friend. As for the viola stuff—it'll come. Go with the flow. Love life.

**Thu 28 May 1998**

From: Dee M. <xxxxxxx@uwsp.edu>

I love the advice you have already gotten. [XYZ] is a great place; I hope that you love it.

I agree particularly with the "select a teacher" and "don't marry the first guy" comments. As far as practicing is concerned I suggest that you schedule hours in the day specifically for practicing. I scheduled six hours a day and then grabbed whatever else I needed. For me, writing the practice hours in my schedule gave me less opportunity to negotiate with myself hour after hour.

Go to a lot of concerts and master classes.

Don't let the "practice room show offs" destroy your self esteem. The faculty admitted you so you already have developed a lot of skill and musicianship. Now work hard and keep getting better. No one can expect more than that.

Play a lot of chamber music with friends and colleagues. It inspires the soul.

If you can set goals in a way that you enjoy the practicing everything will be fine.

**Thu 28 May 1998**

From: Cindy M. <xxxxxxx@axe.humboldt.edu>

There are a few summer activities that can help make your life easier once you get into your Music Major coursework.

1) Practice the piano. If you've never played, find a teacher this summer and practice lots—you'll save yourself at least a semester of piano class, and you'll have an easier time in theory classes. If you have already had some piano, be sure that you are prepared to play a polished piece and that you know all the scale fingerings. I must confess, that I *didn't* practice the piano before my senior year, mainly because my mother had told me that I should. (I'm afraid that at that point in my life, the fact that my mother had said to do something was still the perfect reason *not* to do something!) She was right, of course, and I ended up in remedial piano classes, just because I hadn't bothered to review material that I could play.

2) Learn or review fundamentals of music theory. There will probably be a theory placement test when you get to school. You will make your life much easier if you arrive knowing scales, key signatures, intervals, triads, seventh chords, and figured bass. You might also want to work on ear training fundamentals including sight singing, melodic dictation, and recognition of intervals and triads. The best way to do this is to work with a partner (a friend who is also headed off to school), but there are some computer programs

which can also help. You can work on melodic dictation by writing out a melody you know (Happy Birthday for example) and then playing what you wrote to see if you got it right.

Good luck. You should get a wonderful education at [XYZ].

**Fri 29 May 1998**

From: Charleen M. <xxxxxxx@moa.net>

You have gotten some really good advice here from the pros! Here are three things I have always regretted about my college experience:

1) I didn't take the time to go to some cultural events outside music. There must have been some wonderful plays, lectures, etc. that I missed.

2) I didn't swim/exercise enough.

3) It was hard to separate my worth as a person from what chair I got in the orchestra.

You'll have a wonderful time—enjoy every minute.

**Sat 30 May 1998**

From: Robert B. <xxxxxxx@fuse.net>

Good luck with your studies. A few thoughts come to mind. Get a dayplanner and make sure you know how to use it and do so faithfully. It will let you see if you are wasting valuable time.

Study and practice harder over the next 4 years than you have at any time in your life. Consider taking a double major (performance/education) so you can make a living when you graduate. Two courses which have proved invaluable to me over my teaching career have been strings methods and orchestration. You may wind up writing more for your orchestra than you had planned.

Attend as many performances by excellent musicians

(regardless of instrument) as you can. Dance and opera productions will round out your understanding and appreciation of music.

Take time to be with your friends and enjoy yourself. But really limit this your freshman year. Next year will set the tone for the following three or four. You are preparing for the rest of your life. Don't cheat yourself.

One other thing may be of value. In grad school, I sometimes took a course simply because the professor was so outstanding. You might try applying this in undergrad school whenever possible. Best wishes for a truly successful year.

**Fri 5 Jun 1998**

From: GINA <xxxxxxx@oakland.edu>

Someone wrote: "Consider taking a double major (performance/education) so you can make a living when you graduate."

Do *not* become an education major unless this is where your heart is. We have enough people already doing that. If you want to perform, then go for it and don't clutter the education field with people who don't really want to be there and give the rest of us a bad name. Just my two cents.

**Sat 13 Jun 1998**

From: Myrna B. <xxxxxxx@aol.com>

Never date a musician.

**Mon 15 Jun 1998**

From: John H. <xxxxxxx@vt.edu>

Au contraire! *Only* date musicians; nobody else will understand what it is you do! 

---

## ASTA on the Internet

### Subject: ASTA Student Chapters

**Wed 3 Jun 1998**

From: Bethany C. <xxxxxxx@sprintmail.com>

I am currently the vice president of the University of XYZ's ASTA branch. Our group is having trouble figuring out just exactly what we're supposed to be doing. We would like to be more visible in our school and in our community, as well as increase our numbers. We also need to do fund raising next year and we have no clue what will work. We basically need ideas as to what our purpose is and what we should be doing.

**Thu 4 Jun 1998**

From: Laura R. <xxxxxxx@aol.com>

Alan Ball, ASTA's Student Chapter Liaison, would be a great person to contact about ideas for your student chapter. He surveyed all ASTA student chapters and compiled a list of activities that different chapters have initiated in the last couple of years. He also sends out the Student Chapter newsletter. If you aren't receiving that, please let him know. Alan's e-mail address is: xxxxxx@aol.com.

# ASTA Student Chapters Registration Form Response Summary

*compiled by Alan Ball, ASTA Student Chapter Liaison*

Each ASTA Student Chapter was asked to complete a registration form in the fall of 1997. Included in that registration form were several questions designed to encourage each chapter to set goals for the year, as well as to elicit information that could be shared with other chapters. The following is a summary of the responses received from student chapter members.

## What are the goals that your chapter hopes to achieve this year?

- support young players in the community and their ensembles
- aid and enhance the developing string education program at the University
- increase membership
- become more involved with community string programs
- become more involved with University affiliated activities
- increased communication between student chapters
- initiate more events to benefit our members
- start a community outreach program: getting our members out to public school strings programs to assist in the classroom
- start a school instrument repair project: an apprentice repair program where ASTA members repair school instruments under a local luthier's supervision
- host activities with the student MENC chapter
- more participation by student members
- host workshops that will educate our members to be more well-rounded musicians
- raise money for scholarships
- increase productivity in fund raising, recruitment, exposure
- bring more pedagogy and uses of string players in music therapy into our chapter activities
- assist middle school string students
- play chamber music together in an informal setting
- host guest speakers to discuss topics related to performance and education
- attend concerts as a chapter activity
- assist public school string programs as mentors and role models

- make available low cost lessons to beginning students
- become aware of new methods and concepts in string education
- become an established organization at the school of music
- involve as many string players as possible
- use fund raisers to bring in guest artists
- provide music performances throughout the community
- mentor younger students
- raise scholarship money
- hold a chamber music marathon
- produce children's concerts
- assist with the youth orchestra as section leaders
- student music education tours
- provide private string instruction in local schools.

## What topics would you like to see discussed in the ASTA Student Chapter Newsletter?

- technique
- recruiting
- tips for starting a private studio
- ideas for ASTA Student Chapter activities
- tips for students who play quartet gigs
- Alexander Technique
- available string pedagogy graduate programs
- fund raising topics
- topics on improvisation from classical standpoint
- how jazz training can help classically trained musicians
- how to take auditions
- guide to good music schools
- guide to classes to take in college to help your career
- comparison of different teaching techniques
- teaching alternative/popular styles of music
- disciplining an orchestra that takes having "fun" out of context by wanting to socialize
- ideas for how to arrange and make lower string beginning orchestra parts more interesting to advanced students
- tips for reducing stage fright
- repertoire reviews
- repair tips
- a list of resource people in the national ASTA organization
- developing teaching philosophies, classroom management

- review/comparison of method books
- motivating string students
- buying good instruments on a small budget
- electronic string music and instruments
- incorporating technology and music in the classroom
- what to look for when buying a bow
- teaching rhythm
- bowing techniques
- ideas for community involvement
- jobs after graduation
- warm-up techniques
- compare and contrast traditional teaching methods with current educational research
- music review: rated for difficulty and balance between sections
- health issues: overuse injuries, wrist straining, etc.
- careers in music
- adjudication systems
- classroom discipline
- fingerings for harmonic minor scales
- building self-esteem in students
- music therapy
- outreach program to elementary schools, demonstrating the string instruments
- organize and perform in master classes
- sponsor chamber music recitals
- host annual pizza party for the All-State orchestra, to help recruit music students to the university
- jazz improvisation workshop with Turtle Island String Quartet
- invite guest speakers to cover such topics as: Alexander Technique, classical vs. improvisation, etc.
- hosting the annual live string auditions for the All-State Orchestra
- facilitating the acquisition of instrumental accessories and music for young students in the string project and in the community music program
- fund raising to repair and replace the university owned string instruments
- assist in planning a string teacher clinic in spring of 1998
- have a recital each semester for our students to play
- invite area teachers to discuss their teaching strategies
- provide service and assistance to the music department and faculty

#### What is your chapter's greatest strength?

- dedication, motivation and enthusiasm
- open to many new ideas
- great leadership skills in our officers
- working relationship with students from two high schools
- performance, especially in the community
- a great faculty advisor

- students who are dedicated, hardworking, fine musicians who are focused on becoming fine string teachers
- organization
- strong school of music education
- working together to get projects completed
- creativity in planning fundraisers
- diversity of members in background, nationalities, and musical styles
- we get along great and all realize how much we have to learn, so we are open to trying new things

#### What aspect of your chapter would you most like to see improve?

- more members!
- improved membership attendance and participation in meetings and activities
- think we can do more to help the area music teachers
- getting the whole group together at the same time
- be more enthusiastic about events planned
- we are in a somewhat isolated rural area, and need to be exposed to high caliber string playing on all levels
- fundraising
- recruitment (including guitarists, secondary string players, etc.)
- provide a greater variety and amount of services and opportunity for our members
- move involvement with the community string programs 

---



---

## Music Industry Award

During the annual awards banquet on May 17, 1998, ASTA MD/DC Chapter presented the Music Industry Award to **Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center, 11151 Veirs Mill Road, Wheaton, MD. Phone: 301-946-8808.** We appreciate all they have done to support string teaching in our area.

Please patronize our supporters! Visit the Washington Music Center for a good selection of quality student instruments and supplies.

# Executive Board Meeting—ASTA MD/DC

June 19, 1998, 10:30 A.M. Members present: Jeffrey Aaron, Lya Stern, Lorraine Combs, and Anne Marie Shaw.

Meeting called to order by President Jeffrey Aaron.

Lya Stern was congratulated for her outstanding organization of the recent Certificate Program. Jeff has written an article on the program and will submit it to the national office.

The duties of the officers was discussed, and Lya will provide a printout of duties at the next meeting. The Past-President's duty is to serve as an active advisor, and the President-Elect is to solicit advertising for *Stringendo* and to update the editor as to which ads to place. The Secretary/Treasurer needs to make sure the books are audited and are up-to-date.

The board anticipates that all current Forum Editors will continue their positions with the possible exceptions of the Viola and Bass Editors. All recommendations and/or volunteers should be made known to Jeff ASAP. In the future, all Forum Editors will be invited to attend board meetings. Jeff also intends to begin a new Community Forum, which will list all community (adult) orchestras and serve as a local news column.

In response to a survey from National President Louis Bergonzi, Jeff will reply that he has received the files from the outgoing president; that we are planning a 1999 solo competition but currently we do not have a chair for the committee; update the list of local officers; and that we would appreciate a call from the national board about our plans for summer or fall.

Past-President's report: The Prince George's Philharmonic has submitted an application for a grant for outreach from the national office.

Jeff will contact Brian Johnson at the national office to get an updated membership list.

Lya noted that Doris Gazda (author of *Spotlight on Strings*) will be available in February 1999 to give a workshop. This may be a good opportunity to reach many public school teachers, so an invitation will be extended to all Maryland MENC members. Anyone wishing to receive a free copy of Ms. Gazda's book may call David Paul at 1-800-854-1592.

## Treasurer's Report (updated to 6/30/98)

### Checking Account

Total Deposits: 1,803.00  
Total Withdrawals: 1,374.45  
Current Balance: 710.53

### Savings Account

Total Interest/Deposits: 11.71  
Total Withdrawals: 0.00  
Current Balance: 2,133.53

Next meeting TBA. Meeting adjourned at 1:00 P.M.  
Minutes submitted by Anne-Marie Shaw.



# The Friday Morning Music Club High School Stu- dent Competition for Strings

*in memory of  
Neva G. Greenwood*

Saturday, November 14, 1998, 9:00 A.M.  
University of Maryland, Ulrich Recital Hall.

First Prize \$400  
Second Prize \$200  
Third Prize \$100

The winner will participate in a concert on Friday, November 27, 1998, at 2:00 P.M. at Strathmore Hall Arts Center. Other prize winners will be programmed later. Winners will receive one year's membership in the Student Division of the Friday Morning Music Club.

Students currently enrolled in grades 9–12 who play violin, viola, cello, or bass are eligible.

Requirements: Choose three works, each from a different period.

1. A fast movement from a concerto.
2. A 20th-century composition which must be impressionistic or contemporary.
3. One other composition from a different period.

Only one sonata movement with piano may be included in your program. All selections, except sonatas with piano, must be performed from memory. Contestant must provide own accompanist. Any selection written to be accompanied must be performed with an accompanist. Repertoire must be approved by the competition chairman.

Application fee is \$20. Make check payable to Friday Morning Music Club. Applications must be postmarked by October 16, 1998. For information and applications, call Jean Robbins: 301-569-7943 or Dorothy Jarvinen: 301-933-5149.

# Gretchen Hood String Competition

The Gretchen Hood Competition for Junior and Senior High String Players, sponsored by the Washington Music Teachers' Association, was held Sunday, April 26, 1998, at American University.

Ten students (eight violinists and two cellists) competed at the Senior High School level (Grades 10–12) for the \$200 first prize and \$100 second prize. Nine students (seven violinists, one violist, and two cellists) competed at the Junior High level (Grades 7–9) for the \$100 first prize and \$50 second prize.

The judges were Robert Battey (cellist), Pat Braunlich (violinist), and Helmut Braunlich (violinist and composer).

Senior High prizes were awarded to: First place tied between **Jean Lee, violinist**, student of Jody Gatwood, and **Julie Liu, cellist**, student of Duck Hee O'Donnell. Second place tied between **Michael Tobin, cellist**, student of Duck Hee O'Donnell, and **Shelley Mathews, violinist**, student of Catherine Stewart.

Junior High prizes were awarded to: First prize: **Rachael Cooper, violist**, student of Phyllis Freeman. Second prize: **Sonie Kamata, violinist**, student of Phyllis Freeman. The participating teachers also helped with monitoring and with providing food. They were: Ronda Cole, Phyllis Freeman, Jody Gatwood, Duck Hee O'Donnell, Judy Silverman, and Catherine Stewart.

Submitted by Eleanor Woods, Chairman.