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Needed! Special Events Committee!

The Virginia ASTA Chapter has formed a committee to work on scheduling special events, and would like to be able to work with a similar committee within our MD/DC Chapter to co-host events. This would be a great help to our board, so that we can share the responsibility of getting things done with more people. **We are looking for volunteers to come up with ideas for special events, co-ordinate with VASTA, and help with scheduling and running the events.** An idea being considered is a master class with Bonnie Rideout. The committee may also be involved with running the Solo Competition next year. This would not take much time, but would be a terrific way to get involved with your ASTA chapter. Doree Huneven has already volunteered, how about giving her a hand? If interested, please contact any board member. Phone numbers and e-mails are listed on the inside front cover of this journal. We look forward to hearing from you!

September 2005: Strings-In-Our- Community Month

This September, MD/DC ASTA will be having the second annual Strings in Our Community Month. Often, it seems that string playing is done at concerts and recitals that are attended primarily by people who are already acquainted with string music. This is an opportunity to take string music to people who would not ordinarily get to hear it. Have students play string quartets in the park, the national anthem at sporting events, or Suzuki tunes at a coffee house. Get some friends together and try some new pop, jazz or fiddle tunes. Students could even perform to raise money for a local charity! The sky's the limit, but keep in mind it is always a good idea to get permission from the venue before you play. **After the performance, let us know about your experience, take some pictures, and we will publish it in the next issue of *Stringendo*.**

Just get out there and play!

From the Editor's Desk

First of all, a big thank-you to all the members who wrote in with their ideas on getting students to practice! We got some great suggestions—be sure to read the Teaching Tips article, beginning on page 14.

Next, it's not too early to start thinking about Teaching Tips for our next issue. Here are two topics: What advice do you give your students about instruments, either rental or purchase, when financial considerations are an issue for the student's family? The other topic is pizzicato. If we get a lot of tips about one of the topics, we'll save the other one for a later issue.

And—a portion of your membership dues is always returned to the chapter as a rebate. Thus, we are able to offer the Ayke Agus Master Class free to members!

Last, but certainly not least: By the time you get this issue in your mailboxes, our Chapter President, Anne Marie Patterson, will be at home with her new baby (we were told it will be a girl) and she will be a very busy lady for the next few months! Now you know why there is no President's Message on this page.

I hope everyone is having a great summer. See you again in the late fall.

Lorraine Combs

ASTA MD/DC presents a

MASTER CLASS

in the

ART OF COLLABORATION

by

AYKE AGUS

following the tradition of

Jascha Heifetz

for advanced high school and college age students

Saturday, November 5, 2005, 10:00 A.M.

Location: Taggart Chapel, McDonogh School
8600 McDonogh Road, Owings Mills, MD 21117

AYKE AGUS, both a pianist and violinist, is known worldwide as the accompanist to the renowned Russian violinist Jascha Heifetz during the last fifteen years of his life. *She will share Heifetz's musical beliefs and teachings through the art of collaboration.*

Three or four groups will be coached, selected from the applicant pool based on teacher recommendation.

The master class will address the following issues:

- What to expect from your accompanist
- How to blend the piano sound with the other instruments

The following ensembles may apply for the master class: solo instrument with piano reduction (e.g. concerto movement), string and piano sonata, piano trio, piano quartet, piano quintet.

FREE OF CHARGE to ASTA members and their students.

FREE OF CHARGE to observers.

There is a fee of \$15 per person to **non-member participants**.

The program is generously subsidized by the MD/DC Chapter.

Application deadline: October 10, 2005. See following pages for more information.

Ayke Agus Bio

A native of Indonesia with Chinese, Dutch and Javanese ancestry, Ayke Agus was acclaimed as a child prodigy, beginning her concert career on both violin and piano at the age of seven. She came to the United States on scholarship to study violin and piano in Buffalo, New York, becoming the youngest member of the Buffalo Philharmonic, and consistently winning first prize in numerous competitions on both instruments. She was recommended for a full scholarship to the Juilliard School by the famous violin pedagogue Ivan Galamian, but she auditioned for the Jascha Heifetz Master Class at the University of Southern California and was accepted to become a student of Mr. Heifetz. In addition to the Master Class, Agus earned her master's degree at USC. During the Master Class, she was asked to fill in for the regular accompanist who had left the position suddenly, subsequently being engaged as the official pianist for the class, as well as for Heifetz himself, a musical partnership that lasted until his death in 1987. Together with Heifetz and Russian cellist Gregor Piatigorsky, she often performed as pianist in piano trios and chamber music concerts. She collaborated with Heifetz, completing many of the famous Heifetz transcriptions that are now in publication.

Agus served on the piano faculty at USC for ten years. She regularly participates in chamber music festivals through the United States, as well as performing as a guest artist with internationally recognized groups such as the Ysaye String Quartet and Jacques Thibaud String Trio. Her annual tours to Europe and Asia always garner high praise for her performance in recital on both violin and piano. Agus' most recent recordings on the Protone Records label include a piano solo disc *Musical Memories of Jascha Heifetz*, and *Ayke Agus Doubles*, in which she accompanies her own violin performances of several Heifetz violin/piano transcriptions.

Agus is a member of the California Philharmonic and Pasadena Symphony. As an educator, she regularly holds master classes entitled *The Art of Collaboration: What to Expect from Your Accompanist*. Additionally, she teaches violin at Antelope Valley College.

Her memoir *Heifetz As I Know Him* was published in February 2001 by Amadeus Press in conjunction with the Heifetz Centenary Birthday Celebration in 2001. Since the publication of the book, she has been invited to give workshops and master classes at colleges and music festivals around the country.



Application Form

Ayke Agus Master Class

Saturday, November 5, 2005, 10:00 a.m.
Taggart Chapel, McDonogh School
8600 McDonogh Road, Owings Mills, MD 21117

Names of students in the ensemble	Instrument	Age
1. _____		
2. _____		
3. _____		
4. _____		
5. _____		

Piece to be performed

Title _____ Mvt. _____ Composer _____

Name of teacher/coach _____

Telephone and e-mail _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Mail this form by October 10, 2005 to:

Lya Stern
7012 Hopewood St.
Bethesda, MD 20817

Or send the information by e-mail to: Lya@asta.net

The students chosen to perform in the master class will be notified through their teacher/coach by October 20, 2005.

MD/DC Chapter

Report on String Education Workshop For High School Students, April 9, 2005 and Annual Meeting

At the 2004 National ASTA Convention, I realized that one of the most important things our ASTA chapter could do is to reach out to the next generation of teachers. My idea was to have a workshop for high school students that would introduce basic teaching techniques, and encourage students to consider a career as a string teacher. A year later, these plans were realized. On Sunday, April 9, fifteen high school students from Maryland and Virginia attended the String Education Workshop at the University of Maryland. UMD String Faculty members Dr. Gerald Fischbach and Dr. Bret Smith led the workshop.

The day began with the inspiring message that "Teaching is a Performing Art!" Drs. Fischbach and Smith explained that teaching and performing go hand in hand, from demonstrating techniques for our students, to using our voices and gestures to get our point across. Next Dr. Smith presented a session on "Beginning the Beginner." He demonstrated the use of call and response to teach rhythm basics and immerse the student in the ease of music making.

He went on to describe techniques that can be found in his method book, *Do It! Play Strings* (GIA Publications).

Dr. Fischbach discussed "The Body In Motion," the art of teaching string playing through movement. Many of these techniques are based on those of Paul Rolland, and are found in Dr. Fischbach's method book, *Artistry in Strings* (Kjos Music Company). Students were also treated to a viewing of Dr. Fischbach's video "The Art of Vibrato."

After lunch, students got to try their hand at conducting and evaluating student level orchestral pieces. The day ended with a panel discussion of four UMD String Education students. The college students shared their experiences, and had very practical advice for the high school students. Hopefully some inspiration took place, and these future teachers will enter a career in the rewarding field of string education.

Submitted by Anne Marie Patterson

Minutes of Annual Meeting, April 9, 2005

Present: Anne Marie Patterson, Cynthia Swiss, Lya Stern

The meeting opened at 5:15 P.M. at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, University of Maryland.

Lya informed us that the Certificate Program requirements for Bass will be available for the June 2006 Exams.

An observation was made that the Certificate Program Application Form was not included in the Spring 2005 issue of *Stringendo*. It was decided to send an e-mail reminder of the June exam dates. The date for the Mutchnik workshop, May 15, will also be included in the e-mail.

Collette Weichert and Robert Newkirk will share the Teacher of the Year awards this year. Certificates will be sent to them.

The next board meeting will be June 12, 2005, after the Certificate Exams at Catholic University.

The deadline for Summer *Stringendo* submissions is June 19, 2005.

A Special Events Committee will be formed to work with the Virginia chapter to organize workshops and other special events. Volunteers are needed.

The Associate Membership program will be continued.

The workshop with Ayke Agus was discussed.

The meeting ended at 7:30.

Submitted by Cynthia Swiss



Jerry Fischbach with high school students



Jerry Fischbach demonstrating bow technique



Bret Smith with high school students

Teacher of the Year Awards Spring 2005

This year's MD/DC ASTA "Teacher of the Year" award is shared by two wonderful teachers, Collette Wichert and Robert Newkirk. Although I have marveled for many years at the highly successful work of both, it is the contributions they have made to my son's development as a cellist that prompted me to seek their awards at the current time.

—Submitted by Donald Watts

Collette Wichert was a student of Paul Rolland. She also studied with Roman Totenberg, the Guarneri String Quartet, and Sinichi Suzuki. She runs a private studio near York, Pennsylvania, and serves on the faculties of Baltimore's Bryn Mawr and Garrison Forest Schools. Ms. Wichert is co-founder of the F.A.M.E. String Orchestra, a youth orchestra that appeared at the 2005 All-Eastern MENC Conference. Her students have been admitted to Eastman, Rice, New England, Indiana, and one was featured as soloist with the Baltimore Symphony. Six years ago, she formed and coached a quartet of twelve-year-olds which, in 2002, was selected for broadcast on NPR's *From the Top*. Next fall, all members of that group will enter major schools with a significant quartet repertoire and an intense love for chamber music.

Robert Newkirk was a student of Leonard Rose and Orland Cole at the Curtis Institute of Music. He made his debut as cello soloist at the age of fourteen with the Detroit Symphony and served for many years as principal cellist of the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra. He retires this year after a long and distinguished career as Professor of Cello at The Catholic University of America. He also has served on the faculties of the Meadowmount School and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Mr. Newkirk's students occupy principal or assistant principal positions in the Richmond, National, and Pittsburgh Symphonies. Others hold professorships at universities up and down the east coast. He is a musician's musician, but his work with students is marked by uncommon warmth, dedication, and generosity.

Friday Morning Music Club High School Competition for Strings in memory of Gus Johansen

November 19, 2005, 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Sumner School, 1201 17th St. NW,
Washington, D.C.

Awards:
FIRST PRIZE, \$500
SECOND PRIZE \$300
THIRD PRIZE \$200

Students currently enrolled in Grades 9–12 who play violin, viola, cello, or bass are eligible. Application deadline must be postmarked on or before Thursday, November 10, 2005. For information about application fees and repertoire requirements, call Jean Robbins, 301-469-7943, or e-mail: Jacob.Robbins@verizon.net.



Report on Certificate Program Performance Exams of 2005

*by Lya Stern
Certificate Program Chair*

In all, 150 string students representing 19 studios took the Certificate Program performance exams this year to demonstrate their progress from last year.

Each student prepared several memorized scales and arpeggios, an etude, and one to three memorized repertoire pieces depending on the level of advancement. Each student played for an examiner, who filled out an evaluation sheet, praising accomplishments and offering helpful suggestions for further improvement. Along with the evaluation, each student received a grade and an ASTA Certificate of Accomplishment for the level he completed.

The CPS exam is much like a jury exam in preparatory schools, but it is open to all students and no affiliation with any school is necessary, only the teacher's membership in ASTA. The exam is also similar to the exams run by the Royal Conservatory of Toronto or the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music, Great Britain, but it is also different. The CPS is an American program, an eleven-level graded program created in this chapter eight years ago and soon to be launched nationally. A CPS Handbook will be published by the National Office—watch for its announcement.

The Certificate Program is easy to follow, gives the teacher great flexibility in the choice of music to be played for exams, is low-cost, and is a great motivator leading to more successful and dedicated students.

The CPS exam has become part of the normal course of study for many lucky students, whose teachers recommend that they participate.

Exams were held in two locations again this year to accommodate students and teachers in different areas. The Baltimore area exams held this past February had 30 student participants representing the studios of Klara Berkovich, Mia Choi, and Cindy Swiss. The examiners were Nina Falk and Doree Huneven. The D.C. exams were held in June at the Catholic University School of Music.

The following teachers sent their students: Lynn Allen, Linping An, Patricia Braunlich, Lynne Denig, James Hutchins, Slavica Ilic, Larry Keiffer, Marissa Murphy, Anne Marie Patterson, Mark Pfannschmidt, Nayiri Poochikian, Jean Provine, Judy Shapiro, Judy Silverman, Dianna Souder, and Lya Stern. The examiners were: Lynne Denig, Doree Huneven, Marianne Perkins, and Collette Wickert.

Most of the teachers are “regulars” but this year, as every year, we saw several new teachers. Some try the program by enrolling just one or two students, others send as many as fifteen.

As expected, the largest number of students took the exams from Foundation through Level Six, but there were students in every level. The majority of grades issued were “V” for Very Good. There was a smattering of “S” for Satisfactory grades.

Most of the students were violinists, with a few violists. Cello teachers, please pay attention! You are missing out on a wonderful resource and opportunity to motivate your students. Bass teachers hang in there—the program is almost ready. You will be able to use it for next year's exam.

On behalf of the MD/DC Chapter Board, I invite teachers not yet familiar with the CPS to read up on it, talk about it with teachers who have tried it, and come and observe the exams. The CPS is designed to benefit you and your students.

For further information please go to www.asta.net and click on Certificate Program for Strings or call Lya Stern 301-320-2693.



ASTA WITH NSOA National Conference

February 2005

Report submitted by Lorraine Combs

This year's ASTA WITH NSOA National Conference, "*Strings Alive in 2005*," was held at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel & Conference Center in Reno, Nevada, from February 23–26, 2005. I was one of the people from the MD/DC Chapter in attendance, and I'm certainly thankful that I took the time and spent the money to attend! Next year, the conference will be in Kansas City, Missouri, from March 8–11, 2006. Please take a moment right now and mark these dates on your calendar! Anyone who cares about string teaching should plan now to attend, and will certainly find the time and money well spent!

The 2005 Conference consisted of a mind-boggling array of events: The Opening Ceremony; the Exhibit Hall with over 80 dealers and vendors; Silent Auction; Student Chapter Pizza Party; ASTA Bookstore; master classes for violin (with Midori as clinician!), viola, cello, bass, and guitar; daytime performances by invited performing groups of student orchestras; and about 150 sessions to pique the interest of anyone in attendance. In addition, there were four nights of evening concert performances by the 2004 National Orchestra Festival winners, violinist Rachel Barton Pine, the National High School Honors Orchestra, and the Regina Carter Quintet with ASU Symphony Orchestra.

Thursday night's concert was a recital by violinist Rachel Barton Pine, accompanied by pianist Matthew Hagle. Pine possesses a stunning technical facility with rich musicality. A native and resident of Chicago, she holds prizes from several world competitions, including a gold medal from the 1992 J. S. Bach International Violin Competition in Leipzig—the first American and youngest person ever to win this honor. She has appeared on "CBS Sunday Morning," and the "Today Show." She was named "Classical Entertainer of the Year" at the annual Chicago Music Awards in 2003 and 2004. She plays a Guarnerius del Gesù, on generous loan from her patron.

The concert on Friday night featured the 2005 National High School Honors Orchestra with

Mark Russell Smith, conductor. Three students from Maryland, all violinists, were members of the orchestra: Nicole Herrera, Arundel High School, Odenton; Christopher Hong, Gilman School, Lutherville; and Timothy Lee, Old Mill High School, Millersville. The program was: Kabalevsky: Overture to *Colas Breugnon*, Op. 24; Copland: *Billy the Kid* Ballet-Suite; Mahler: Symphony No. 5, IV: *Adagietto*; and R. Strauss: Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier*, Op. 59.

Saturday night's grand closing concert featured Regina Carter, the Arizona State University Symphony Orchestra, and the Regina Carter Quintet (violin, bass, piano, drums, and percussion).

My only regret as an attendant was that I could not divide myself into four or five different people! It was often a difficult decision to make—which session to attend at the various times of the day? What follows is a write-up of most of the sessions I was able to attend, plus a condensation of the Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony.

Grand Opening Ceremony

ASTA President Robert Gillespie officially "kicked off" the conference at this event, which included the SMART Viola Ensemble from Reno playing "The Star Spangled Banner," the Keynote Speech, a performance by the mariachi group "Mariachi Plata de Las Vegas," and brief performances by the winners of the Nagyvary Violin Solo Competition and the Linear Double Bass Competition.

The Keynote Speaker was Dr. Kim Dolgin, a psychology professor from Ohio Wesleyan University. Her speech was titled "**How Music Instruction Can Foster a Child's Development: Needed Now More Than Ever.**" She began by saying how pleased she was to be outflanked by a viola ensemble and a mariachi band, thus allaying our fears that this would be one of those "stuffy" keynote speeches! Her remarks were well received by the large audience. I hope I can do them even a little justice with the following notes:

Background:

- Today, 20% of American children live below the poverty line. One in three children will be poor between ages birth and 18 years.
- Most mothers (over 50%) work outside the home. One-third of their children go home from school to empty houses, and many have inadequate child care.
- Most children spend more time watching TV than going to school. Short attention spans are one dramatic result of this.
- Video games are worse than TV. With most games, there are rewards for violence.

Music instruction can help! Cognitive development has been researched a lot, but she wanted to focus on personality development as a result of music instruction.

- Sufficiently high self-esteem—this gives you the courage to try. The respect given by the teacher contributes to that. Self-esteem breeds success.
- Internal locus of control—a technical term. It means you believe that what you do affects what happens to you, i.e., if you practice your scales, you get better. If you don't, you won't get better. An external locus of control (i.e., luck) has no effect on controlling what you do.
- Ability to delay gratification.
- Empathy for others. You have to learn to work in a group, i.e., string quartet.
- Impulse control. You have to learn to sit quietly when it's not your turn.
- Self-reliance. We don't "raise children," we "raise adults." You have to learn what to do and how to do it.

We need to answer all our children's "why" questions. It builds initiative.

Children need to be given tasks that are just a little beyond their reach.

Multi-sensory learning is beneficial—music instruction fulfills that need.

The importance of at least one mentor in a child's life cannot be overestimated. It is probably *the* most important thing in a child's life.

All children need something at which they do *not* excel. They need to learn to cope with failure. Sometimes music instruction can be a wonderful experience for really smart children who seem to be good at everything except music.

On the other hand, children need to be allowed to *soar* if they are able to do something well. They can do this in a private studio, whereas they often are "held back" in a classroom.

Sessions

Practical Practicing: Twenty Tips for Avoiding Mindless Repetition. Presenter: Philip Baldwin, Eastern Washington University. Good practicing skills must be taught and are perhaps the single most important factor for performance success. Exercises and techniques were discussed for all levels. One quote: "The amateur practices until he gets it right; the professional practices until he *always* gets it right."

Exploring Traditional Scottish Fiddle Music. Presenter: Bonnie Rideout, Tulloch Music, Ltd. Several points from her lecture/demonstration: The fiddle music from her tradition comes from singing, not dance. The Scottish style has a lilt to it. The bow is held loosely and played lightly with small strokes. Various ornamentations include birls, drones. Scottish fiddle music is largely a *composed* body of music, rather than improvised. It uses various tunings at times. Bonnie has several violins for performance, depending on the sound she needs for various pieces.

From Student to Artist: Developing Style Consciousness. Presenter: Barbara Barber, Boulder Arts Academy. She began by playing the same piece in two ways: 1) Note-perfect, but without expression, like a computer file. 2) With expression, dynamics, vibrato, phrasing, varying tone colors, and personal involvement. Described various techniques and ways to add artistry to a student's performance. A quote from her session handout: "You cannot teach anyone anything. You can only help him discover it inside himself." —Galileo Galilei, 1564–1642.

Overcoming Anatomical Differences: Customizing Your Teaching to Your Students. Presenter: Deborah Craioveanu, Hope College. Stressed the importance of adapting our playing and our instrument to our own bodies, and not our bodies to our instruments. Discussed position of violin, viola, cello, and bows. Discussed support of each, with regard to long or short neck and to chair selection for cellists. Discussed position of left hand with regard to large versus small hands, and position of right arm with regard to long versus short arms. Encouraged use of innovative fingerings for various hand shapes, i.e., short pinky, thin versus thick fingers, short versus long fingers.

Violinmasterclass.com: An Online Tutorial for Violin Technique. Presenter: Kurt Sassmannshaus, University of Cincinnati. Prof. Sassmannshaus demonstrated his innovative new web site, www.violinmasterclass.com, which was launched in September 2004. Funding was provided by the Starling Foundation of Houston. Use of the site is completely free—no credit card needed. To allow proper use of all the video clips on the site, you must have QuickTime® installed on your computer. This application is also free. Click on the QuickTime® link to download. Be prepared to spend several hours (hopefully not all at once!) on this site to get familiar with the content, which has comprehensive instruction on violin technique, including definitions, exercises on three levels, master classes, and performances.

Developing the Potential of the Bow Hand—Right From the Start. Presenters: Sarah Hersh, State University of New York–Potsdam; Nancy Lokken, Augsburg College. Discussed the importance of *tone* as the basis for establishing an optimum bow hold. Showed how the anatomy of the shoulder, arm, wrist, hand, and fingers must be understood. Ease of movement is essential. Several “games” were introduced to clarify this concept.

How to Handle Difficult Students. Presenter: Kim Dolgin, Ohio Wesleyan University. The presenter was also the keynote speaker at the Opening Ceremony. Every teacher is sometimes faced with the

task of teaching especially difficult students. Some are restless, fidgety, and inattentive, while others are perfectionists and self-critical. Some feel the need to be disruptive, and some are uncooperative. Dr. Dolgin provided some “tricks of the trade” used by psychologists who work with pupils whose behaviors make them hard to teach, whether in the studio or orchestra rehearsal room. One example: the best way to help reduce anxiety is to make sure the student is not competing with others—rather, only with himself. You can write to kgdolgin@owu.edu and request a copy of the presentation.

Preparing for College Auditions: Tips for Students and Teachers. Panel members: Margaret Schmidt, Arizona State University; Karen Becker, University of Nevada–Lincoln; Nancy Buck, Arizona State University; Katie McLin, Arizona State University. The four college faculty members represented violin, viola, cello, and string education disciplines. Topics included: guiding students to major in music, choosing a school, a checklist for preparing in high school, what to do in the months before the audition, and what to do on the day of the audition.

Mastery for Strings: Shifting. Presenters: William Dick, Southwestern University; Laurie Scott, University of Texas at Austin. The daunting title of the handout at this session was: “A Longitudinal Approach to Accurate, Reliable, and Relaxed Shifting.” Packed into this session were: requirements for shifting to a note, shifting and positions, how to shift, the five kinds of shifts, and demonstration video descriptions.

Creativity in Studio and Classroom. Presenter: Anne Marie Patterson, Charles County Schools, Maryland. This session was presented by our very own MD/DC Chapter President! Topics included left hand development, right hand development, self-monitoring, note recognition, rhythm and ear training, vibrato, musicality, intonation, and tone. Classroom teachers—be sure to ask Anne Marie for her handout with photos showing “Wrong Way” and “Right Way” of seven basics of body positioning for students!

Overcoming Performance Anxiety. Presenter: Benjamin Whitcomb, University of Wisconsin–Whitewater. Discussed causes of anxiety, ways to decrease it, and the value of self-recording. Also discussed types of performances, preparation for performances, and miscellaneous suggestions.

Music Reading for Students with Learning Disabilities. Presenter: Judy Weigert Bossuat, University of the Pacific, Stockton, California. Discussed a dozen or so strategies for teachers to help students, both in private lessons and ensemble settings. There are many levels of disability, and each student has his or her own special problems in the area of reading. The most important thing to remember is not to hold back students' musical and technical levels because of their low level of reading ability. The presenter showed videos of her own son, who is a fine university-trained cellist, but with a disability in music reading.

Building Your String Program with Meaningful Music and Methods. Presented by Carl Fischer Music, LLC. Composer/authors Doris Gazda and Larry Clark provided materials from their years of experience that will help students achieve a high level of musical excellence. The materials and method books have lasting appeal to students, and will help teachers enhance curriculum and goals in building technical skills and musicianship.

The 21st Century Studio Teacher. Jonathan Sturm, Iowa State University. Discussed strategies for preparing private students to excel in a collegiate music degree and ways to teach them theory, music history, and career choices without using up too much lesson time.



National Philharmonic Summer String Institutes

The beautiful sounds of string playing, chamber music, and string orchestra music of the masters was heard during August 8–19, 2005, at Landon School in Bethesda. Thanks to ASTA MD/DC and other organizations and musical groups, many students were able to attend because of scholarship money contributed to the National Philharmonic.

About 100 youngsters participated in the National Philharmonic Summer String Institutes for High School and Middle School students. The NP Institutes provide intensive study and performance in both string orchestral and chamber music. Members of the National Philharmonic led a faculty of distinguished pedagogues in working with the young musicians.

Orchestral repertoire for the High School Institute (August 8–12) included works by Dvorak, Barber, Holst, and Bach. Piotr Gajewski conducted the high school orchestra. Chamber music studied and performed by the students included masterpieces by Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms, Boccherini, Shostakovich, Mendelssohn, and Haydn. Each student participating in the Institutes got two private lessons, daily coached chamber music sessions, sectionals, and twice-daily string orchestra rehearsals. Percussion workshops for the High School participants were taught by Ken Krohn.

The Middle School Institute (August 15–19) featured works by Rutter and Mendelssohn in the string orchestra sessions, conducted by ASTA member Phyllis Freeman. Chamber music included works by Mozart, Haydn, Boccherini, Glazunov, and Telemann. Middle School participants also received two private lessons, daily coached chamber music, special sight reading workshops, and movement classes with Isiah Johnson.

Each Institute session ran from Monday to Friday 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Chamber music performances were held Fridays at 1 P.M. and orchestral concerts were held at 7:30 P.M. on Fridays. Admission was free and open to the public. Contact Filbert Hong at the National Philharmonic, 301-493-9283 x115, if you are interested in next year's event.

Teaching Tips

How Do You Get Your Students to Practice?

Julianna Chitwood's Tips on Getting Students to Practice

Make a 100-day practice chart: All beginners get a 100-day practice chart that needs to be completed in at least 105 days. If they are not practicing regularly in the “honeymoon” period, then they should probably find another teacher.

Valentine's Challenge: The period from Valentine's Day to Memorial Day is always a difficult time to stay motivated, so the students are challenged to do their best, and be rewarded with a big party on Memorial Day.

Phone it in: If a student has a spot in the music that is not prepared for the lesson, they are to fix it, and present it again by phone within 3 days.

Circle Theory: A problem spot in the music gets circled the first week in pencil, the second week in pen, the third week in highlighter. If it is still unlearned the fourth week, the student has to bake brownies (not store-bought) for the teacher to show they can follow directions.

Lucia Conrad's Tips on Getting Students to Practice

Knowing my students' temperaments, likes, and dislikes has helped me immensely in teaching them as individuals. Finding out the real reason why a certain student does not practice should be the first step. Is it because she is busy with high school projects? Is it because she just turned 13 and her social life is overwhelming her? Is he too impatient to practice correctly?

Here are some ways to “practice recovery.” I introduce a new challenge, such as simple shifting or vibrato and make sure that the students have a positive experience with it at a lesson. I use Doris Gazda's *High Tech for Strings*. It has a wonderful chapter on vibrato, for instance. If they do not practice the basic scales and arpeggios, I teach them

the blues scale and the seventh chords. Everyone can master at least the first octave and it is different enough that the kids enjoy it. When we play the “A scale,” we do major, at least one minor, and then the blues scale.

Switching between classical repertoire and fiddle songs works very well. Younger kids can appreciate playing fiddle songs as a reward for practicing the Suzuki song correctly. The *Fiddlers Philharmonic* and the *Encore* are very good books to use for this purpose.

Enrollment into a good fiddle group or in a string quartet builds friendships where students encourage each other to practice and to succeed. This really works!

Listening to music at home, be it classical or fiddle or jazz violin also helps. Here are some of my favorite recordings that I recommend for those students who want to broaden their horizons. Play a little bit of it at lessons. Show the students what is possible to play on the violin!

Diary of a Fiddle by Darol Anger, violin
Heartland (An Appalachian Anthology) with
Joshua Bell, Mark O'Conner, Yo-Yo Ma,
others

Any of the TISQ (Turtle Island String Quartet)
recordings

Richard Einhorn's *Maxwell's Demon*, Mary
Rowell on electric violin (solo)—absolutely
amazing

Strung out on OK Computers, the string quartet
tribute to Radiohead, performed by The
Section—beautifully played music, even if
you are not a fan of Radiohead



Mark Pfannschmidt's Tips on Getting Students to Practice

I have students keep a practice chart that shows time, especially when they're beginning. I try not to emphasize time spent, as we all know that 30 minutes can accomplish a lot or next to nothing.

I also address practicing in my written studio policy.

In my studio language, I often ask students what they can do "to make it better." This often elicits answers that I was not expecting or had not noticed. It helps students to realize that making it better is the goal of practice. This also helps me to evaluate what they are assimilating so I can give more specific practice directions where necessary.

I avoid phrases like "the intonation was bad," ("What can we do to make that more in tune?"); "You have a terrible bow hold," ("What can you do that will give you better control of the bow?") Judgmental statements tend to hold playing excellence on some unattainable level, and do not motivate the student to improve.

Acknowledging what has been accomplished provides fuel for continued effort, especially for the student who has less natural talent. The student who does not perceive pitch well may never play reliably in tune, but he can learn to do much better. The student who is less naturally musical can learn to shape a phrase, create a mood, and make choices for musical effect.

I do not try to sell practice as fun, but I do note that it is fun to have a great bow hold, to play well in tune, to be able to make a focused tone, to play fast passages with clarity, to play reliably from memory under pressure, to be able to sight read well, etc. All of these things take practice.

I am willing to let older students fail. I had a viola student a few years ago who was very talented and very lazy. Finally after about a year, his parents agreed that he should lose the privilege of taking lessons, and they informed me of their decision. I talked with all of them, and told them that I would be happy to teach him in the future if he decided to make the investment in practice. He was gone for two months. His mother told him she would re-enroll him if he would practice at least 45 minutes per day for two weeks. He came back to me in two months!

I am quite candid with my students (and their parents) about how bad I was at practicing. I had one violin teacher, one piano teacher, and two viola teachers kick me out of their studios for not sufficiently preparing my lessons. Several others threatened. I quit playing viola for about a year and a half after I got my Bachelors degree. In the end, I could not stay away, which is the only reason I eventually became moderately successful as a professional.

I wasted many years with lack of practice, although I had a great time playing 2–4 hours per day orchestra and ensembles. I tell them that they can change, that it takes a plan, and that it is not fun—but then neither is taking a shower, brushing your teeth, etc.

I always ask them the rhetorical question: You want to play better/well, don't you? When I get the "yes" response, we talk about the imperative and specifics of practice. This takes practice out of the fog of vagueness and brings it into the light of specifics and measurability.

I have tried candy rewards, which did not work well. I either caved in and gave them something they did not deserve, or ended up giving rewards to my students who would have practiced anyway (and when I stopped, these students were disappointed).

As you can see, I do not have any great new ideas and I tend to ramble. I would be happy to hear any great ideas others have.

Jeffrey Koczela's Tips on Getting Students to Practice

As soon as I find out they have not practiced, I stop the lesson, send them home, and tell them not to come for a lesson unless they have practiced at least six hours (depending on their stage). Problem solved.

Lynn Fleming's Tips on Getting Students to Practice

For "latch-key" kids, who *say* they practice (but do not) I have them tape their practice sessions and bring them to me. Usually solves the problem.

Peggy Ward's Tips on Getting Students to Practice

One of my most successful incentives to get my kids to practice is something I call the **Century Club**. In order to become a member of the club, students must document 100 days in a row of practice.

I bought a box of 2-inch x 4-inch labels and ran them through my copier with a prototype grid that we formatted on the computer. Across the top are spaces for the dates of each day in the coming week and down the side are spaces for the numbers 1 through 8.

During each week's lesson, I paste a new label in the student's assignment book and give a number to each task I assign—usually just five or six things to do. The student is asked to write in the number of minutes they spend on each task each day. I do not set a specific number of minutes, but I do point out that even when they are traveling, have a broken arm, or are sick, there are still things they can do: e.g., clap or tap and count out the rhythm of the assignment, or bow in the air, or sing the melody while memorizing what they are singing and finger the notes on their "air violins" as they pretend to play. There are no excuses for not practicing, but I leave it completely up to the student to choose to practice or not.

I have a Century Club progress chart on the studio wall where I write the names and dates of the students as they pass 10 days in a row and then 20 and then 30, and so on. There also is a medal on a ribbon to hang around the neck of a student who accomplishes the 100 days. I award this very publicly at a student recital and it usually motivates other students to try to receive the same recognition. I have compromised slightly (in my old age) with the kids who have 30 or 40 days in a row and then miss just one day. I tell them they must start over, but as soon as they accomplish their first 100 days in a row, I will give them toward their second hundred, the number of days they had from before. I also ask the families to stage a celebration at home after 100 days. I have other incentives too, but this one seems to reap the most consistent results.



The Art of Air-Bowing

By Dottie Ladman

The scenario is an orchestra of 64 students, all beginners who have been playing for about six weeks. There is one teacher and a time allotment of 50 minutes. The teacher begins tuning the students one at a time, and as each student is tuned, he or she takes a seat and invariably begins to play. (Can you call it warming up at this stage?) Eventually, the noise level becomes so high that tuning becomes difficult for the teacher, and the students are asked to stop playing altogether and sit quietly while the teacher completes the time-consuming task of tuning the remaining players and stragglers who are coming into rehearsal late. So much for keeping students engaged for as much time as possible during the rehearsal!

Enter the concept of air-bowing. This is an idea borrowed from another teacher. I show it to my students almost as soon as they can use their bows. Violins and violas hold their instruments in regular playing position, but instead of bowing on the strings, they place their bows in the crook of their left elbows, and end up bowing beneath their instruments. They can still hold their bows properly, though some choose to hold their bows upside down so they don't get rosin on their arms. They can finger the notes and "play" their tunes without making any sound. Cellos and basses simply air-bow above the strings so the bows do not touch the strings.

There are several advantages to air-bowing. First, it allows students to be actively engaged and practicing while the teacher is tuning or working with another student. Second, their fingers and bodies are still working, building kinesthetic memory, and their brains are working on music reading. Third, the students are practicing "audiating," or hearing the music inside their heads without hearing it aurally. And fourth, the teacher is able to hear to tune, or listen to a single student play while the rest of the class air-bows, or talk to the parent who just walked in to ask a question, or do anything that needs to be done in a quieter environment.

I used this technique when I was helping tune a large all-city orchestra this past spring. As the noise level of everyone warming up got higher and higher, I simply asked students to please air-bow if they were practicing. I was delighted when most switched to air-bowing. Those who were unfamiliar with the technique observed and followed suit, and the volume decreased to a level that made tuning possible.

Dorothy Ladman is President of the Nebraska Chapter of ASTA WITH NSOA. This article appeared in the Summer 2005 issue of Stringing Along. Reprinted here with permission.



From Examiner to Examined: My Experiences with the ASTA CP Exams

by Doree Huneven

I. Examiner!

In May 2004, Lynne Denig, president of ASTA, Virginia Chapter, invited me to be an examiner for the ASTA Certificate Program Exams, which were in their fourth year. Although I had barely heard of them, I accepted immediately; extra income was welcome, and I wanted to have a new experience, especially since it involved hearing the students of my colleagues! Lynne sent me all the instructions, complete with the evaluation form. The latter consists of eight major areas (tone, intonation, posture, left and right hand technique, rhythm, musicality, and stage presence) and sixteen smaller categories within these areas. I was given to understand that the whole thrust of the exams was to be constructive and positive: the marks of V (very good) S (satisfactory) and N (needs improvement) were to be qualified with as many comments as possible. The comments were to be written to the students, but of course would go first to the teachers.

The Saturday and Sunday in May of my first CP Examiner days were incredibly frantic. Not only did I have to contend with the cramp-inducing writing of the evaluation sheets, but I also had to keep in mind the differing exam lengths and requirements of all the levels from Foundation to Level 10. A great deal of this information appeared on the evaluation sheets, but I had to remember many things during the course of each exam: the speed of the scale is quarter=72! Only six minutes for this exam—keep things moving! Write faster! Be positive! Be sure to tell the student/her teacher about that left thumb! One after another the students came—2 hours of exams, then a break; another 2 hours, lunch—on through the afternoon.

The trickiest part of the examination process for me was diplomacy: how to deliver the “bad news” in a tactful and constructive manner. I would have liked to write something like, “You are crippling your students by ignoring tension in the left hand!”

Or, “If you don’t teach your students to memorize and perform more effectively, they’ll be on a psychiatrist’s couch as soon as they can afford it.” But of course, I didn’t. I tried to be upbeat and put in as much information as possible.

The demeanor of the children entering the room ran from mildly nervous (veterans of previous exams) to deer-in-the-headlights-ashen newcomers. I tried my best to calm them down, congratulating them for undertaking this project and assuring them that this was an evaluation, not a competition. After each section of the exam, I thanked them, and after the pieces, I clapped! No use being dour, I thought.

I have to say that I adored that first experience, especially seeing and hearing the results of intense work done in local ASTA members’ studios. How often do we, as string teachers, have the chance to hear what our colleagues are doing? On the whole, the level of teaching I saw was very high and students exhibited a great deal of competence in all eight areas. In the six to ten minutes allotted to each student, I heard polished performances and snatched a tiny sliver of their personalities. It was complicated, intense, busy, pressured, demanding, and exhausting. What can I say? It suited me.

Therefore, I accepted invitations to be an examiner three more times for the MD/DC ASTA chapter. In each situation, I tried to sharpen my observation and listening skills and increase my writing speed, thus learning how to be a better examiner by doing. A fabulous and unexpected result of being an examiner was that I met and became friendly with quite a few of the participating teachers. I didn’t go back to evaluate in the Virginia exams this year because Lynne Denig, very cleverly, invited other teachers to do the honors. She hoped that by doing so, they would be convinced to become involved and help the program to grow.

II. Examined!

I became one of the Convinced. Why? When I first heard about the exams, I was skeptical and unwilling to participate because my students were doing so much already. In addition to their school ensembles, my studio provided them with sixteen group lessons and two to three recitals a year—all varied in purpose and location. Many of them regularly performed at school and for friends and family. So much preparation they needed for all this! Wasn't it enough? Not really. Never were they evaluated in scales or etudes, and very rarely in sight reading. They were infrequently seen and heard by other string players. Therefore, I became very greedy to have an examiner slave away at the evaluation sheets of my students and pour out detailed comments about tone, intonation, posture, left and right hand technique, rhythm, musicality, and stage presence. I wanted to be criticized and evaluated—through my students, of course! And of course I also thought it would be extremely valuable for them!

In December 2004, I set about preparing for the May 2005 exams, with my students and myself on the line this time. I wanted to allow plenty of time, as this was an unfamiliar activity for all of us. My first thought was that I didn't want my students to experience any surprises; they needed to be thoroughly prepared. For this purpose, I made up Student Handbooks. ASTA is now in the process of writing an official CP Exam handbook, but last December, there was only the information on the ASTA website. My handbook consisted of the following five parts: **1)** Introduction for Students. This was geared to the 10- through 12-year-old level, written in a question-and-answer format. (Example: What happens at the examination?) **2)** Performance Exam Requirements. These included the requirements from the website and the scales, which I wrote out with the help of my \$50 version of the Finale program—an excruciatingly frustrating and time-consuming process! **3)** Application Form for Records. **4)** Sample Evaluation Form. **5)** General Information for Parents. This was taken from the website. The handbooks were given out in February.

Next came the task of actually preparing my students. I made the decision to turn the four exam areas into performances. The students were to perform their scales, etudes and sight reading with

as much panache and character as they tried to do in their pieces. In doing so, I thought that they could amuse themselves as much as the examiner.

SCALES. Jascha Heifetz said that scales need to sound like “a string of pearls.” (One enterprising mother bought her daughter a faux pearl bracelet after I recommended that everyone go and take a look at a string of pearls in a jewelry store!) Before memorization, students had to become totally familiar with each scale: the key signature, the names of the notes, the placement of the half-steps, intonation, shifting, slurs and tempo. When they were memorized after two to three weeks, we began working on performing. I used the evaluation sheets to work out kinks.

ETUDES. The key element in the performance of the etudes was to make them as musical as possible. I had my students give them names (Kreutzer #11 became “The Gliding Swan,” for example!) and put in phrasing and dynamics and as much character as possible. Then, out came the evaluation sheets for detailed technical work, performing and polishing.

REPERTOIRE. This was the “easiest” area in which to prepare, as we did it all the time. But for colleagues to hear? Not quite. Actually, this was the area in which I need to improve, as I started preparing too early. The students worked steadily from February until April, when they performed at a studio recital. Then there was one more month to keep the pieces “up” until the exams in May. Other teachers have their studio recitals right before the exams and next time I will too. In any case, the evaluation sheets were very valuable for trying to get everything in order.

SIGHT READING. We practiced this at every lesson. I first taught my students the difference between sight reading and “reading.” (You only get to sight read once!) For practice exercises, I used the British Associated Board Sight Reading Examination Specimens, which I purchased over the Internet. I set a timer for one minute, and had the student mentally prepare to play an example by checking all the usual things: key and time signatures, tempo markings, dynamics, etc. Then I would ask to hear it. A critique followed, using the evaluation sheet. They were assigned one example a day, minimum.

In addition to what I mentioned above, I tried to make sure to do the following: **1)** Hear every area of the exam at each lesson; **2)** Have students perform for each other in at least one exam area at their bi-monthly group lessons; **3)** Make frequent use of a tape recorder so students could stay in touch with reality; **4)** Do constant role-playing, pretending to be the examiner; **5)** Practice the logistics of the exam: entering the room, greeting the examiner, waiting for comments to be written, etc.; **6)** Remind the students and their parents when and where the exam was to be held and why this was such a valuable experience for everyone, including the teacher!

Finally, the day of the exam arrived. Because I had students participating, I was asked to help out as a monitor. This was very valuable, because I could greet my students as they arrived, direct them to a warm-up room or to the exam itself and try to do something about their deer-in-the-headlights ashen complexions. I could also do an “exit poll” as they emerged from their first experience with an outside evaluator. Happily, most of them were unscathed and robust. They made comments like, “He (or she) was so nice!” Or, “That was fun!” Or, “That wasn’t so bad.” And very commonly, “I goofed up my sight reading.”

The aftermath of the exam came in two stages: a “survey” I took at the lesson immediately following the exam, and of course, the evaluations themselves, which were mailed to me so quickly that I could share them with the students the week after the survey.

I loved concocting and giving the survey, and most of my students relished giving the feedback. I asked the following questions, and I include some of the replies:

1. Was the CP Exam worthwhile for your own playing? How?

“It made me practice harder and focus, and it gave me something to show for my work. Plus, it was a good experience for auditions.” (Abby, viola Level 7)

“I had to keep working on the same piece much longer for details, which was good. I understand how scales work better. I got better at bow technique. Doing sight reading helped to think it through better.” (Henri, violin Level 7)

“It was fun, and I loved the pieces I was playing.” (Daniel, violin Foundation Level)

“It helped me to play out more. It convinced me I could still play well if I was nervous.” (Vadim, violin Level 4)

“We do a lot of concerts, but this was the first time we had to do this kind of thing. It’s good to have an outsider listen, and it was a good experience.” (Charlie, violin Level 6)

“It helped me practice scales more. We got really detailed, and that was good.” (Sarah, violin Level 2)

2. In the future, how would you prepare differently?

Universally: more sight reading!

3. Would you do the exam again, even without your teacher making you?

“Not enthusiastically, but yes.”

“I would, but my mom doesn’t like driving so far.”

“Yes, most definitely, but my dad hated driving.”

“Yes, because I got through a lot of work and now I have a certificate!”

“No! It was a long drive and it was overwhelming with someone staring at me.”

4. Do you have any other comments?

“Nice examiner!”

“It went well, and my examiner was very nice! She encouraged me because she was very cheerful.”

“I thought it was interesting.”

When the evaluation sheets arrived, I read them avidly—not just for specific comments, but for patterns in my teaching that needed attention. I found that I could be more exacting with intonation. I saw that because the exam is comprised of items that all of us teach anyway, *preparation is a year-long project*. Furthermore, it isn’t enough to fuss within each area of the exam and hope the larger problems get solved. Instead, it is crucial to always view students with an over-arching eye; to notice the crucial tension in the left hand, the misfit of a shoulder pad, which affects the entire stance—and do

something about it! Although I could be seen as overzealous in my students' preparation, it did pay off: the letter results of the exam were one "V+," fourteen "V's," four "V-'s" and two "V-/S+'s" in the Overall Impression category. ("V" is "very good"; "S" is "satisfactory.")

Then I shared the evaluations with each student during lesson time. We took plenty of time to discuss and enjoy the comments of the examiner. I gave the original sheets to the students and parents, and made copies for myself, which I am keeping in a binder. I will certainly need them for next year's exams! As a final curtain call to the entire process, I made a

summary of *all* the comments everyone had gotten in the eight major evaluation areas, and e-mailed them to all the parents. I did this so they could get an idea of where my studio and I stood in the opinions of our two examiners.

In conclusion, I enthusiastically recommend both sides of the CP Exams. I bow to the knowledge and adeptness of my colleagues in preparing their exceedingly fine students and I acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses in my own teaching. The most valuable lesson of all is that examining and being examined are crucial to growth.

