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# Message from the President

There is much news to impart to you, Esteemed Membership. In the last issue of *Stringendo*, I wrote that our chapter had gotten very big. Now I can report that we have become a vitally important ASTA chapter in the United States. That is because of the extremely high-quality events we will offer in 2010. Please go to [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net) under “Events” and “Other Programs” for details:

- O’Connor Violin Method Teacher Training Seminar, January 16–18, 2010.
- Brian Lewis Workshop, March 6–7, 2010.
- Mark Wood Workshop, June 5–6, 2010.

I am also very happy and excited to introduce our three newest Chapter board members. Please go to [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net) under “Officers and Board of Directors” to read their bios:

- Marion Spahn, Public Schools Representative
- Marissa Murphy, Competitions Chair
- Bruce Molsky, Alternative Styles Rep.

Our Studio Teachers Meetings have expanded in number of attendees, as we have presented some outstanding colloquiums. Please go to [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net) under “Studio Teachers” for details:

- Dr. Jeffrey Howard of Towson University presented an engrossing exploration of shifting.
- A Youth Orchestra Committee was formed as a result of having conductors from MCYO come to discuss what ASTA MD/DC needs from the youth orchestra community and vice versa.
- A representative from SharMusic came to Rockville with a “Road Show” to discuss products and services, again showing how the string industry can work with our state chapter to improve the quality of string teaching and playing in Maryland and D.C.

**In 2010, we will have two locations of our ASTACAP exams.** Please go to [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net) under “Certificate Advancement Program” for more information and online registration. Go ASTACAP!

- Sunday, February 28, 2010, at the Lutheran Church of St. Andrew in Silver Spring.
- Saturday, May 22, 2010, at Catholic University.

I encourage all of you to take advantage of the “Solo Strings Festival” occurring on May 23, 2010. It was a huge success last May, and with our new location at Howard Community College, with its excellent facilities, it should be just as successful this year. Please go to [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net) under “Events” and “Other Programs” for details. Also, there is information and an application form for this event on pages 3 and 4 in this issue.

On September 12, 2009, we had our first-ever “Fiddle Day” at Anne Arundel Community College. Thanks to Jaque Lyman and Kim McCollum’s organization, a group of teachers learned a great deal about fiddle playing and teaching from clinicians Ellen Jacobs and Andrea Hoag. Please go to [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net) under “Other Programs” for details of this event in the News bar.

On October 16, 2009, Marion Spahn and I sat at a table at the MMEA In-Service Day, handing out ASTA materials and telling public school teachers about our chapter. We gave two new ASTA memberships as prizes that day and made many contacts. All of you who are public school teachers: please ask Marion Spahn how you can help. Please go to [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net) under “Contact Us,” find her name, and send her an email.

Brian Kim, student of ASTA member Matt Horwitz-Lee, won a place in the National High School Honors Orchestra, which will rehearse and perform at the 2010 ASTA National Conference in February in Santa Clara, California. We congratulate them both!

**Save the following Dates!** You will all want to attend:

- The ASTA National Conference in Santa Clara, California, from February 17–20, 2010. Please go to the ASTA National website, [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com) for registration materials. *Hurry!*
- The MD/DC Chapter Annual Membership Meeting on June 6, 2010. Check our website for more information: [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net) under “Events.”

Does this message look like an advertisement for our website? I hope so! It is an excellent news source

for all of you. Lorraine Combs is a superb website coordinator, providing our Chapter with this vital service. Please visit it often. You can find out so much more than I can write to you here.

As in all of my previous messages, I encourage all of you to become involved in our wonderful and

lively chapter. Now more than ever, your active participation is needed. You won't regret it: the fun you'll have and the service you'll provide string teaching in our Chapter will pay you many times over.

All the best to all of you,

Dorée Huneven

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## 2010 Spring Festival – Solo String Instruments

presented by MSMTA and ASTA MD/DC Chapter

CECYLIA BARCZYK, co-chair, 410-704-2838, cbarczyk@towson.edu  
SARAH COTTERILL, co-chair 301-588-8983, pscotterill@verizon.net  
JEAN PROVINE, co-chair, 301-927-5312, jean.provine@gmail.com

**Date:** Sunday, May 23, 2010

**Application deadline:** Monday, April 12, 2010 (*Application Form is printed on the next page.*)

**Location:** Horowitz Visual and Performing Arts Center, Howard Community College, Hickory Ridge Road, Columbia MD

**Fee:** \$20 per entry

*Entering teacher should send one check for all entries, made payable to MSMTA, to:*  
**JEAN PROVINE, 4611 Beechwood Road, College Park MD 20740**

**Eligibility:** Students through 12th grade, age 6 and above, as of May 23, 2010.  
*First Place winners from last year may enter competitively.*

**Time Limits:**

Ages 6–8	4 minutes
Ages 9–10	6 minutes
Ages 11–12	7 minutes
Ages 13 and up	10 minutes

**Procedure:** The following rules apply to this festival:

- Teachers are not allowed to accompany their own students. (Parents may accompany.)
- Competitive students must perform from memory and have an original part for the judge.
- Non-competing students may play from music and provide the judge with an original part if possible.
- In competitive events, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Honorable Mention may be awarded. The judge's decisions are final and not open to discussion.
- The judge's comments of each performance will be sent to the teacher.
- Teachers must be members of either MSMTA or ASTA and be available to help on the day of the event.

*The general rules governing MSMTA events also apply.  
Please read them carefully: [http://www.msmta.org/sa/SA-general\\_rules.pdf](http://www.msmta.org/sa/SA-general_rules.pdf)*

## 2010 Spring Festival: Solo String Instruments

### Application Form *(Please duplicate as many as you need.)*

This application should be filled out by an MSMTA or ASTA member teacher. Each teacher should send only **one check** for all entries, made payable to MSMTA, **postmarked by Monday April 12, 2010**, to:  
**JEAN PROVINE, 4611 Beechwood Road, College Park MD 20740**

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE. Be sure to complete all information.

Instrument:     Violin         Viola         Cello         Bass         Guitar         Harp  
 Competitive                       Noncompetitive (Last year's winner may enter competitively)

Name of student \_\_\_\_\_ Grade in school \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Accompanist's name \_\_\_\_\_

Accompanist's phone \_\_\_\_\_ Accompanist's Email \_\_\_\_\_

For scheduling purposes: Please list any time restrictions affecting you or your accompanist. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*(If you need an accompanist, the Festival has several who are available for hire.  
 Contact Jean Provine for details.)*

#### Compositions (either 1 or 2) to be performed

*Please list all information such as opus, key, movement, etc.*

*If the piece is from a collection, please identify the name of the collection.*

*You may not change the program after the application deadline. Be sure to include all teacher information.*

Composer	Title	Movement	Performance time
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1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the rules governing this event and agree to abide by them. My students and/or parents have also been apprised of the rules. **I understand that I must be available to assist with the event, either on the day or before or after.** If I fail to fulfill my work obligation, I understand and agree that my students may be declared ineligible to participate.

I am a member of     MSMTA                       ASTA                       Both

Teacher's signature \_\_\_\_\_

# Celebrating Violinist Josef Gingold on the 100th Anniversary of his Birth

by Dr. Jeffrey Howard

**T**he legacy is well known. Famed violinist Josef Gingold's career as a concertmaster, chamber musician, pedagogue, and author is, well, legendary! For those of us who had the pleasure and privilege of studying with him, we will forever be reminded on a daily basis of his kindness, wisdom and, most of all, his innate ability to inspire others. As we celebrate what would have been his 100th birthday this year, I wanted to share with you some thoughts on how Mr. Gingold has influenced me.

Born on October 28, 1909, in Brest-Litovsk, Poland, Josef Gingold's career touched the lives of literally millions of music lovers around the world. His orchestral career includes leadership positions with Toscanini in the NBC Symphony, Szell in the Cleveland Orchestra, and with the Detroit Symphony. He played in the Primrose Quartet and edited many famous, and not-so-famous, pieces of music from his orchestral excerpt books to the Kayser Etudes. His career as a performer was of the highest quality. And in 1960 he joined the faculty of the Indiana University School of Music where he would become a Distinguished Professor.

I have a very personal view of Mr. Gingold. He was my teacher, and as such, my memories are of his sound, his style, his chair, and his voice. He was a continuously inspiring teacher for me, creating an atmosphere of personal and artistic exploration that will last a lifetime. Let me share some examples.

I worked with Mr. Gingold from 1992–1994. At the time, I was his only doctoral student. We regularly discussed the history of the violin, as he had lived much of what I was reading about. (And he loved to reminisce!) After I wrote a paper about Joachim and Ysaÿe for a project, he recommended I send it to *theStrad* magazine and have it published. He had shared many thoughts on Ysaÿe's collaboration with Chausson on the Poème with me (as well as showing me Ysaÿe's own markings in the piece as well as a new version Ysaÿe wrote for solo violin, piano and portable organ).

The article was published in November 1994, and came out as we were celebrating Mr. Gingold's

birthday at his home. Even though guests were arriving for the party at the time, he still sat down in his favorite chair and read the article, showing it to guests as they came in. I remember the pride I had in completing this project, but I was even more inspired by how Mr. Gingold enjoyed reading it.

At other times, we would consider the teaching style of Ševčík, and Mr. Gingold would share Ševčík's own practice preparation for the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto. It is published as Ševčík's op. 21 and was printed in 1931 in Brno by Universal Edition. It is a fascinating study. Imagine Ševčík's op. 8 shifting exercises set up to prepare every shift in the Mendelssohn Concerto! It takes 67 pages! I have a similar example of the Wieniawski Scherzo Tarantella.

One fascinating lesson I had with Mr. Gingold included a summary of teaching ideas throughout all the Kreutzer etudes—techniques like playing all the same fingerings on the right hand as on the left hand for Etude No. 8! He even improvised second violin parts for these etudes, from what I'm told. Just fantastic things!

On another occasion I was playing Paganini Caprice No. 17 for him. When we got to the famous section in fingered octaves, he pulled out his Stradivarius and said in that famous, rather husky voice, "I have always preferred the fingered octaves here," and proceeded to play everything just beautifully. But then he continued, "My friend Mr. Heifetz preferred the regular 1-4 octaves and he played them like this." And it was flawless—at age 85!

One would ask him about the rather large painting of Toscanini that hung on his office wall. When asked about its significance, he would say that he would look at the picture, and Toscanini would remind him not to do any "stupidities."

And while one could hear the stories as just stories, I always thought they had a purpose. The Toscanini reference would always remind me to be an honest musician, as my first teacher had often said, for example. The numerous references to violinists past

always remind me that we have a distinguished and significant past in the history of music and that this past will help us be better artists in the future if we can learn about them.

Mr. Gingold always reminded me that music is a high calling and that we have to work significantly every day to seek out our own special artistic voice. He would sometimes say, “every note needs to have grandparents—they all deserve an equal amount of love.” And with these anecdotes and stories, he would share both his love of music and his sincere hope that we as young musicians would strive to achieve this greatness. This is the example I try to keep with me every day as I teach and learn and share

new experiences with other aspiring young artists. We can only hope, as Isaac Stern has said, that we can all learn from this example and try to continue sharing the honest artistry with the next generation of young artists.



*Dr. Jeffrey Howard is Assistant Professor of Violin at Towson University. He performs with his wife, pianist Anna Soukiassian, in the Kassian-Howard Duo, with the Baltimore Trio, and with numerous orchestral ensembles in the Baltimore area. He is the University Representative for MD/DC Chapter. Read his bio on our website: <http://www.asta.net/officers.php>*



# The First Position Cello Extension

*by Jeffrey Schoyen*

The “extension” is a technique that presents itself early in a cellist’s development. It can be problematic and tension-causing. Variations can exist due to musical context, position on the fingerboard, speed of events, and the size of the cellist’s hand. I will explain what works for me and seems to work for many of the cellists I have come into contact with over the years. And specifically, I’ll focus on the first position extension and the role of the thumb.

Some years ago I was trying to come up with simple language concerning extensions. I wanted to find something that students could remember. I had come to believe that it was very important to release the thumb after the extension was executed, and I had spoken with other cellists about the issue. Some called this action “releasing the thumb.” At lessons I began using the words “walking the thumb,” and upon a bit more observation of my own playing and what seemed to be the most tension-free way of executing extensions, I began to make the general statement: The thumb goes with the first finger. I’ll explain.

The hand closes most naturally along lines that are like spokes in a wheel. In the non-extended hand the thumb rests under first and second fingers. Photos 1–3 show the logic of having the thumb rest here.



**Photo 1**



**Photo 2**



**Photo 3**

To execute an extension in the lower positions (below 5th position) a whole step is played between fingers 1 and 2. This is where the actual physical extension is (see Photo 4).



**Photo 4**

Let’s say for reference we’re playing E and F# on the D string. The E is played first and the second finger then stretches out to play F#. For a split second both fingers are down (see Photo 5).



**Photo 5**

This is why it is an extension and not a shift. It's really quite a lot like the difference between walking and running! Now, this position is a tensed position. It's no fun being here a long time. Besides, if one had to play a fourth finger next, it would be even more tensed.

So this is where I believe the hand needs to relax by "walking the thumb" as the first finger closes back to the non-extended position (thumb goes with the first finger). Note that the thumb has traveled up the fingerboard a half step (see Photo 6).



**Photo 6**

This is the only reason that I can see to explain why some teachers may shy away from releasing the thumb. The student loses that "place" on the fingerboard. But

is it really worth the tension? And sooner or later the student is going to have to give up that secure place anyway in order to move around to different positions.

Let's look at the extension in reverse. Imagine we've played a G# on the D string. Then let's play an F# with the second finger. Our thumb now sits a half step further down on the fingerboard than it would in non-extended first position (see Photo 7).



**Photo 7**

Now we stretch back the first finger to play E and at the same time let the thumb go back (thumb goes with the first finger) (see Photo 8).

**Photo 8**



Now we close the second finger. I once saw a young cellist demonstrate to a friend what she called a "backward extension." She just pointed her first finger back and played the following note, never releasing the thumb. My wrist cried out in pain. Oh, these "backward" extensions! Whether you're playing first finger and then extend to a second finger, or the reverse, your thumb goes with the first finger.

In the photos above I've inserted a reference point (white tape). Please remember that there may be times when pitches happen so quickly the thumb cannot clearly be seen to "walk" up or down. In these cases I say that the thumb is "floating."

Last of all, I sometimes like to show my students the effects of a lifetime of extensions (Photo 9).



**Photo 9**



*Jeffrey Schoyen is one of the Eastern Shore Representatives for ASTA MD/DC Chapter. Read his bio online at: <http://www.asta.net/officers.php>*

# With a Violin Maker in Beijing

*by Dorée Huneven*

In December of 2007, I went to Beijing for three weeks to stay at the home of Shan Jiang and his family. Shan Jiang is a master violin maker and two-time winner of the Silver Medal of the Violin Society of America's biennial competition, among many other honors. I first met him at the ASTA National Conference in Detroit in 2006 in the Exhibitors' Hall. He and his brother Feng, another master violin maker based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, were selling Jiang violins, and I passed by their booth frequently—to practice my Chinese! Rather, I insisted on inflicting my beginner Chinese on them. Shan was very friendly, and we soon got into some hushed English conversations about freedom of speech and assembly in China. We exchanged cards, and that was that.

That was that until the following spring, when I was looking for a place to stay somewhere in China for my winter break. I took out Shan's card, emailed him, and asked if he had any friends I could stay with as a "paying guest." Quite a long while went by, and then I got a reply that he and his wife would be very happy to host me. Jubilantly, I began to prepare for my trip by upping my Chinese lesson study and shopping for gifts. This was a very difficult task, as everything I found had a label, "Made in China." Although I knew that there was a good chance no one except the factory employees ever glimpsed the product, the label seemed to give the message that I was somehow not serious enough in my quest to really honor my hosts. I finally found suitable items in an American craft store: a clock in a curl of carved maple, a pewter picture frame, and various other items.

My flight to Beijing was scheduled to leave from BWI on Saturday, December 15, 2007, at 9:00 A.M. Early that morning, at 4:30 A.M., I was awakened from my sleep by the telephone. It was Shan at Beijing International Airport. "Where are you? I have been here for two hours. I can't find you." I was overwhelmed with the special deep humiliation that only a person who has had contact with Asian people for over forty years can have: I had severely inconvenienced my host—by not knowing something so utterly basic as that today is tomorrow in China!

I told him that I would make my own way to his house when I arrived "tomorrow," and apologized an uncountable number of times.

When I did finally arrive at Shan's house via a very convoluted taxi ride, I met his wife Hai Hua, his eighteen-month-old baby Pan, and a distant relative of his wife, a seventeen-year-old girl named Jing Jing, there to help with the baby. All presents were opened, the wrappings were being chewed by Pan, and we could relax and drink tea.

Shan and his family live in a large flat in a high rise apartment building. It consists of a spacious open plan living room, dining area and office space, with hardwood floors and wooden cabinets filled with his violins, violin parts and precious items such as porcelain pieces and later on—my presents! Visitors could sit on white leather sofas to talk, watch television, or listen to violins. The bedrooms and two bathrooms were all off the main living room area. Altogether the flat was about 2000 square feet.

The violin making atelier was in another flat two stories down. I learned toward the end of my stay that Shan, Feng, and his parents own a total of four flats—some purchased when they went on the market for bargain basement prices. All of the Jiangs are shrewd investors. Shan has a young man as his assistant; they have been working together for nine years. There is a small dog too—black and white, a bit yappy, but companionable. Shan and his assistant work together along a spacious bench, with light from a southern exposure pouring through the windows. This flat is on the ground floor, so there is a bit of soil for a garden of sorts during the season. This flat is smaller than the one upstairs, but contains largish storage rooms for woods and tools. There is another room set up as a photo studio with austere black drapery backdrops to document the instruments Shan makes. The violins and violas are made from aged European woods, bought via suppliers and his brother Feng; he has an ample supply.

The atelier hours are very consistent: work from 8:30 A.M. until 12:30 P.M., break for lunch exactly one hour, and then back to work from 1:30 to 6:00. Shan has dinner, relaxes, and goes to the computer to

assess the day's requests, orders, queries, and other business. Hai Hua helps him with this, using her excellent English and business skills.

I was also able to take advantage of the excellent technological set-up of the house—mainly through making international calls back home. I actually purchased a phone card, which lasted quite a long time. However, I was more interested in everything else that was going on. My bed was of great interest to me, as it consisted of a hard board with a sheet on it, and a duvet and pillow. At first I thought that there was some mistake—no mattress! But no, no one else had a mattress. The first few days were painful, but I was so tired at night that I just went right into an extremely deep sleep. If I woke in the middle of the night, shoulders aching, I marveled at the plasticity of the brain that can block all the sensation of hardness and let sleep take over. A year and a half later, Shan called from a workshop he was giving in Ohio, asking me if I had thought my Beijing bed had been too hard, as he found that all American beds seemed very soft and cushiony. I told him that I had been able to increase my Chinese vocabulary with words like “board,” and “rock,” and tell a few good stories as a result of my bed, so it had been a good experience to sleep on it.

The second evening I was there, and many after that, I tested Shan's violins and violas for him as he listened intently, pacing about. I would comment that “the D and A strings sound fuzzy.” He looked up “fuzzy” in the dictionary, agreed, and went to carving places on the bridge with a tiny tool until the tone became clear, then ringing. Pan walked about pulling objects off tables and instruments out of cabinets, and tried to get his fingers into light sockets. His mother put on “Baby Einstein” DVDs for him, but he was not amused. We kept trying out the same instrument until all four strings were balanced.

On some days, when Shan wasn't in the workshop, he would drive to large hotels in Central Beijing where members of touring orchestras were staying. Violinists set up appointments to try his violins, and he would go to them in a violin-laden taxi. Sometimes he would make a sale, and pack up the violin for England or Australia the next day. Sometimes there would be no sale, and he would return, nonplussed, and go back to work. There were in-country requests for his instruments coming in as well, so I could see that there was a comfortable flow

of buyers. He told me that on average, he sold two instruments a month.

I myself tried to be a “good guest” by staying out of everyone's hair. I did this by taking daily excursions. My first was in the neighborhood. Shan doesn't live in Central Beijing; he lives in a satellite city outside “Ring Five.” Imagine Washington, D.C. and the Beltway. Then imagine, five miles out, another beltway. Then three more! That's where we were, in a real “city” called Tong Zhou. (Though in the official address, it is listed as “Tong Zhou District, Beijing.”) The surrounding land of Tong Zhou originally belonged to a village. This land used to be farms; today it consists of more than a hundred high rises, main streets, secondary roads, shops, restaurants, alleys, and infrastructure. But it is all less than fifteen years old! The original village is where I went on my first outing. It is about the size of a small Maryland town, like Washington Grove or Sandy Springs, but very compact. I entered via a main street two blocks from Shan's high rise complex, and promptly entered a time warp fifty or a hundred years in the past. I saw mud houses, dirt roads, a few animals, scarcely any cars, round blocks of coal for fuel, outside vegetable markets. I got lost, and then, before panicking, found the original main road. But the village continued in a wandering maze-like way in between the high rises, morphing into long blocks of illegal markets selling fruits, vegetables, house wares, clothing. I made many trips into this maze during the month of my visit. According to Shan, the village sold its outlying lands to the developers for what were hoped would be unimaginable profits, felt itself cheated, and then refused to sell crucial acres, blocking main roads so that they ended abruptly in the middle of a dusty barren field. I followed one such road out of town, accompanied by huge magpies, and felt in such a Felliniesque and otherworldly atmosphere that I had to return.

I did a lot of sightseeing on my own—to the Imperial Palace, Tiananmen Square, the Summer Palace, art museums—as well as to the quickly disappearing *hutong* alleys that characterized ancient Beijing; these were the usual tourist-type excursions. I mastered the bus, subway and train systems, as they are all very well organized. Shan helped me find Chinese calligraphy classes with a master painter and his equally talented wife. These took place in an apartment in an old Beijing *hutong* scheduled for

demolition; I went there every morning from 10:30 until noon.

But my best outings were with Shan. He would leave the sunny focus of his workshop on weekends to roam, looking for interesting and valuable things to invest in, such as modern art. So one day we went to Dashanzi Art District, another example of a village selling off plots of land, but this time for artists' studios. A hundred warehouse-size studios spread over many square miles of former cropland, and all of them seemed to house contemporary art. I have no idea which ring road this was near; maybe it was farther out than Ring Five. I was told that the successful artists moved to Beijing, but in Dashanzi, they lived in their studios. To me it was overwhelming. Some of the art we saw was quite good; a lot was parking lot flea market variety. But all of the artists were zealously trying to sell. Although some of the more established galleries had a bit of heat, most were bitterly cold. Later on that evening, when we chatted about the afternoon, Shan told me that I had slowed him down. Usually he was able to visit twice as many places, looking for pictures to invest in.

On another day he took me to a street completely devoted to shops selling Chinese tea and all related paraphernalia. This was slightly bizarre, since he and his family didn't drink any caffeinated beverages. (My second day there, I had a monstrous headache, which put me to bed for seven hours—until I realized it was from caffeine withdrawal!) On "Tea Street," Shan set about learning about the quite complicated culture of buying, preparing and drinking tea. Together we visited at least ten shops, and drank thirty cups or more. Frankly, I lost count. He bought much tea and a few valuable accessories.

On the night of December 23, 2007, we went to hear Yuri Bashmet and the Moscow Virtuosi. It was quite a ride, getting to the concert, because around Ring Two, a traffic jam closed in on us, and we sat in it long enough to miss half of the Grieg *Holberg Suite*. It wasn't from lack of skill possessed by our "Lao Siji," Old Driver, who drove as if mounted on a quarter horse cutting cattle. It was just appallingly crowded. We finally arrived at a hotel/concert hall/mall complex. Shan had only two tickets, but for some reason, which I still don't understand, he brought along his wife and baby and Jing Jing for the ride. When we got there, he tried to get them all

in with us, but it didn't work, so they stayed out in the lobby. Yuri Bashmet and Company performed a lovely concert in an acoustically dead hall. The real concert seemed to start with the encores: a great number of breathtaking contemporary viola pieces. The audience clapped nervously. Hai Hua, Pan, and Jing Jing amused themselves during the concert in the mega-rich multi-use glitter palace outside the concert hall, losing themselves for two hours in the ostentation. When we emerged from the concert, they looked very contented.

Shan's father is also an accomplished instrument maker. He not only makes violins, violas and cellos, but also tries to invent instruments. I went on my own one day through the maze of high rises to his building to visit. There, I listened to a rather nice sounding instrument vivisection of a cello-*erhu* hybrid. Please. I won't even try to describe what this instrument looked like, but I suggest that you visit Shan's website under his bio (cited at the end of this article) to have a look. The goal was to combine the sound of the two instruments, and the result was pleasing. I tried many violins, drank much tea, and read a few Christian tracts for good measure. Shan's father walked me home and described what life was like during the Cultural Revolution. From what I understood, it was thoroughly diabolical.

My Chinese language skill throughout my trip hovered around 1.5 on a scale of one to ten. On my second day, I realized that although I had covered a first-year college textbook in the months before, I hadn't learned my vocabulary so that I could understand it or use it. Therefore, every morning before breakfast, I got up around five and studied for two hours. For a three-week stay, this was not sufficient at all, but I did learn a very valuable thing: constant self-testing on vocabulary recall will improve overall memory greatly. Shan and Hai Hua spoke to me very competently in English. When I was on the streets, I guessed, faked it, or just didn't understand what was said to me. I mostly faked it. This did not feel good. When I got home, I recorded elaborate vocabulary tests on MP3 players and mercilessly flogged myself until I learned. The results have been good—and the source of much amusement in my violin and viola teaching life. This will be another story.

I remain endlessly grateful to Shan and his family for their hospitality. I had a really good time with them.

I felt very comfortable after three weeks of great interesting outings, great meals and violin lore. My Chinese baby talk became virtuosic thanks to many conversations with Pan. I look forward to future visits from them—perhaps when Pan is older. In the meantime, I follow the progress of Shan’s family, his violin making, U.S. workshops where he is invited to teach, and other enterprises. He is an unusual person, a great artisan, and an extremely kind host.

You can visit Shan’s website: [www.jiangviolins.com](http://www.jiangviolins.com)  
You will find many interesting things there, including a picture of the cello-*erhu* with his father playing it.



*Dorée Huneven has been involved with ASTA MD/DC Chapter for the past six years: as Violin Forum Rep, President-elect, Stringendo editor, and President.*

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## Thanks!

ASTA MD/DC Chapter  
would like to thank

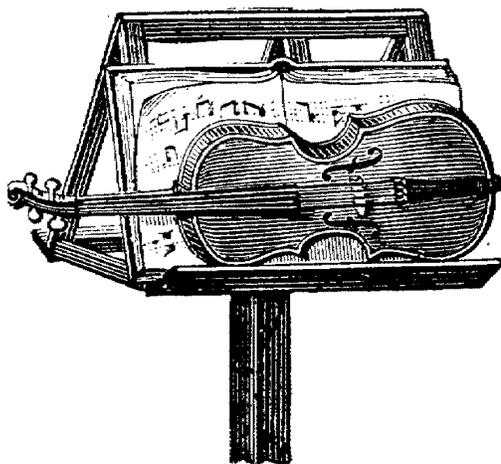
**The Lutheran Church of St. Andrew**  
15300 New Hampshire Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20905  
and Greg Twombly, building manager,  
for consistently making space available  
for our many activities.

## McDaniel Orchestra Camp

McDaniel Orchestra Camp, now in its 6th year, is a one-week camp located in Westminster, Maryland. With a full orchestra, led by conductor Jason Love, the camp also offers an opportunity for more advanced players to work with pianists in small chamber ensembles.

The schedule is busy—classes in musicianship, composition, and rhythmic drumming, as well as master classes, sectional rehearsals, and supervised practice take up a large portion of the day. Evening activities include swimming, hip-hop dance, game night, and concerts. Admission is based on teacher recommendation and is open to residential campers and commuters ages 12–20.

For further information contact  
Lynn Fleming, Director  
[Lynn@lynnflemingstudios.com](mailto:Lynn@lynnflemingstudios.com)  
Phone 301-922-0398  
Website: [www.mcdaniel.edu/6163.htm](http://www.mcdaniel.edu/6163.htm)



# Not Average

by Jaque Lyman

Joe Klingler is one of the top high school cellists in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. He plays in the Severna Park High School Orchestra under the direction of R. Thomas Powell, who has long managed the school's highly respected instrumental music program. Joe is also active in the Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra and the CYSO Chamber Orchestra, plays for the All-County Orchestra, has participated in the Summer Strings Orchestra in Columbia, and, by the time this goes to print, will have auditioned for the All-State Orchestra. In addition, he writes orchestral music, having taught himself *Finale*® (and researched the ranges of the instruments) and has won a coveted spot in the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's Side by Side program. A junior now, he plans on majoring in music in college.

In all other respects, Joe seems like an average teenage boy: he's into popular music in addition to classical (he likes Green Day), plays computer games (he's good at Guitar Hero and Rock Band, as well as the "shoot 'em up guy things," according to his father), and occasionally has to be prompted to practice by his parents. He will tell you that his brother is shy, but he himself isn't, though he tends to be a young man of few words: he often has to be prodded to elaborate further than a "yes" or "no" when asked questions. His parents are skillful in eliciting more developed responses from him. They've had a lot of practice—they've been rising to the challenge of Joe's autism for a long time.

It's easy to see that Jeanne and Marion Klingler are committed to helping Joe succeed. They say it's a challenge—"running back and forth, getting him to all his commitments," but they are willing. As his mother puts it, "We like to encourage him as much as possible to do this because this is his thing." His father adds, "Quite frankly, with his disability, this is what he does best. This is what he's latched on to." But judging from his Firsts in County and State Solo and Ensemble Festivals and his most recent triumph in winning a spot in the BSO's Side by Side Program, Joe has gone far beyond "latching on to" the cello—he's on his way to becoming a fine player.

The Klinglers are generous in their praise of Joe's teacher Priscilla Lyman, who has worked with him since he was in the fifth grade. They credit her with establishing a "nice rapport" with him from the beginning. But Lyman is equal in her praise of them. They seemed to have formed a partnership with her that many music students could benefit from. For the first couple of years, either his father or his mother attended every one of Joe's lessons so that they would be able to better help him practice—until Joe himself asked them not to come anymore. They both say that Joe will listen to Mrs. Lyman (and when they invoke her name) about his playing and practice when he might not listen to them.

When Priscilla Lyman retired from teaching English in the Anne Arundel County Public Schools, she went back to her first passion and profession—music. She teaches cello, saxophone, clarinet, and piano at her home and at Music & Arts in Severna Park. But when Joe first became her student, after a lifetime of teaching, she had to rethink some basics. First was communication. When he first started taking lessons, she always made sure to speak directly to him but he never addressed her. One of his parents would facilitate. Eventually came one-word responses, answers to yes/no questions. Six years later, while still taciturn, Joe volunteers information and observations.

Lyman realized early on that she would have to improvise pedagogically with Joe. At first, she used the lesson time as guided practice time so that he would have even a minor success by the end of the session—some small accomplishment to take home and feel good about that could be the foundation of his continued practice during the week. She says that working with him has given her insight into teaching in general and made her more flexible and creative in approaching students as individuals, people she can guide toward playing in the way that works best for them. For example, she notes that Joe's hand position on the fingerboard has improved tremendously over the years, but it isn't "textbook" and may never be—but it's working for him at the moment, and that's what's important.

Joe says that he likes performing and that he doesn't get nervous, and he certainly gets a lot of performance experience. In addition to playing in the school orchestra, CYSO, and All-County, Joe plays at the concerts Lyman has her students give at Sunrise, a local retirement and assisted living facility. In addition to playing with her eclectic group of instrumentalists, he has also played solos and duets with her other students. Of course, his most prestigious gig now is with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's Side by Side program that gives county students the opportunity to learn from and play with professional musicians. Joe describes it as "basically...some high schoolers playing alongside musicians of the BSO." He says he's challenged by the music, which includes the Overture to *Die Fledermaus* and the second movement of Mendelssohn's Fourth Symphony, among other pieces.

While Joe plans on majoring in music, both he and his parents are realistic about the difficulties inherent in becoming a professional musician—for anyone. His mother says, "He's autistic, but he has talent, and it is capable of being developed...he's achieved a lot." But his parents have stories about friends and

family who have majored in music and are finding it hard to make a living. Like many other parents, they would like to see Joe have something to fall back on, but they support his college intentions. "He's basically seized whatever opportunities that a normal kid would have," his father observes, "and taken them and achieved the level he's achieved despite whatever difficulties he has."

While it's obvious that Joe Klingler is not an "average" high school cellist in more ways than one, the only thing the audience will know when he plays is that he's a great deal better than average.



*Editor's note: As an educator myself, I have followed Joe Klingler's progress from a distance through his teacher, Priscilla Lyman, who also happens to be my mother and a member of ASTA MD/DC Chapter. Subscribers to Strings may remember that an article in the October 2009 issue began with an account of Joe's progress with my mother. (His last name was misspelled.) I met with Joe and his parents at my parents' home in Severna Park on November 14, 2009.*

*Jaquie Lyman is Editor of Stringendo.*



# A Glimpse Forward: A Voice of the Future

by Claire Hebeisen

*(Editor's note: Music—and the world—will be in good hands with young people like Claire!)*

Ever since I was little, I have enjoyed performing. I would get my parents and friends to listen to me whenever I could. I love learning music and then sharing it with others. It also makes all the hours of practice worth it. My name is Claire Marie K. Hebeisen, and I am 11 years old. I live in Boyds, Maryland. I have been playing violin since I was four. My teacher is Catherine Stewart of Olney, Maryland. I think she is the greatest!

Last summer I did a solo recital and I wanted to do one this year, too. This time I decided to play in Mora, Minnesota, where my grandparents live. I did the recital at St. Mary's Catholic Church. Charities are also very important to me, and I thought the recital would be a good opportunity to raise money. St. Mary's has a partnership with Homo Bay, Kenya, and has been actively working with the H2O Project to provide clean water for that area. Water tanks designed to collect rainwater are purchased at \$700 apiece and placed at churches and schools so that people have easier access to clean water. For more information on the H2O Project, please visit: <http://www.h2o-project.org/index.html>

Preparing for the recital was challenging but also fun. I chose a program from pieces I had performed this year, as well as a couple of new ones I learned this summer. There is a lot that goes into preparing

a program (as some of you might know)—hours and hours of practice learning the piece, memorizing, and then polishing and perfecting. I went back and forth between taking each piece apart and then putting it back together. To play a piece musically, you have to practice the technical parts. I worked on bowing, fingering, vibrato, and double-stops. I also played each piece with the metronome slowly and “super-in-tune.” Then I considered each piece musically by shaping each phrase, choosing colors, and telling a story. Once I could play the pieces individually, I had to practice getting through the whole program. I also rehearsed with the piano a lot—especially the Dvořák Sonatina. My mom has a doctorate in piano performance, and she accompanies me. (Don't worry, I thank her by turning pages at chamber music recitals.)

The hardest part of the whole thing was the day before, which was decidedly not fun. My mom told me to play everything slowly with the music. The day of the recital I couldn't get from the beginning to end without any mistakes, but Mom said everything would be okay, and it was. Apart from my shoulder rest almost falling off during the La Folia, everything was amazing. I didn't feel nervous while I was playing; I just surrounded myself in the music. I tried to tell my story and feel the emotions of each piece. Afterwards we had an ice cream social, and I played a mountain song for Grandpa. People really seemed thrilled about the music and were also very

generous. Altogether we raised \$892, which was enough to buy at least one water tank. I am hoping to do many more recitals and raise lots more money for charities. But most of all, I want to play to make people experience the stories and emotions in the music—because that's what performing is all about.



The H2O Benefit Recital	
St. Mary's Catholic Church, September 17, 2009, 7:00 P.M.	
Claire Hebeisen, violin	
Ann Kramschuster, piano	
Mazurka	Młynarski
Prelude from Partita No. 3 in E Major	Bach/Kreisler
Sonatina in G Major, Op. 100	Dvořák
<i>Allegro risoluto</i>	
<i>Larghetto</i>	
<i>Scherzo: Molto vivace</i>	
<i>Finale: Allegro</i>	
La Folia	Corelli
Allegro Brillant	Ten Have

# In Memoriam: George L. Vance

by Carol M. Dana

George Louis Vance, an internationally recognized pioneer in the development of a method for teaching the double bass to children, died August 16, 2009, of pancreatic cancer. The Silver Spring, Maryland resident was 60.

“George Vance developed a successful method for teaching the double bass to children at a time when few people thought it was possible to teach that instrument to kids so young,” according to Madeleine Crouch, general manager of the International Society of Bassists, in Dallas. “It is impossible to overestimate George’s impact on the field of young bassist pedagogy. He was a true pioneer, and his methods and approach were groundbreaking,” she said.

Vance, who held an MFA in music performance from Carnegie Mellon University, was initially influenced by the work of Japanese music educator Dr. Shinichi Suzuki. Dr. Suzuki had developed a technique for teaching the violin to pre-schoolers that first came into popular use in the U.S. in the 1960s. Although the double bass was usually reserved for older students because of the instrument’s size, Dr. Suzuki’s success inspired Vance to work on a method for teaching the bass to youngsters and to travel to Japan to meet with Suzuki.

In 1984, Vance began his collaboration with Annette Costanzi, a Washington-based Suzuki Cello Teacher/Trainer, to develop the first volume of what eventually became the *Progressive Repertoire for the Double Bass*. The repertoire included a series of simple pieces suited to the bass, along with fingering and bowing instructions. “He figured out what would make it easy and pleasurable for children to play the instrument,” according to Costanzi, who now lives in London. “George’s philosophy was that if instruction was done properly at an early age, any child could learn to play well,” she said.

Vance’s double-bass repertoire grew to three volumes with important input from Harold Robinson, then principal bassist with the National Symphony. In 2000, the respected publisher Carl Fischer Music

published Vance’s *Progressive Repertoire*, as well as a compendium of scales and arpeggios titled *Vade Mecum*.

Along with a carefully constructed repertoire, younger students needed a scaled-down instrument. Although “quarter size” basses were available in the 1980s, these were still too large to be played by the five-year-olds Vance was targeting. Vance restrung cellos with bass strings, tuned them to bass pitch, and used those hybrid instruments to test out his method with his first set of students. But Vance wasn’t satisfied with this approach, and in the mid 1980s he commissioned a local instrument maker to build a miniature (“tenth-sized”) bass. “As far as I know, George commissioned the first miniature bass in America and had it made,” Costanzi said.

Vance went on to commission a series of basses of graduated sizes, which he sold to students across the country through his company Slava Publishing.

In 1990, Vance was introduced to François Rabbath, a virtuoso French bassist who had developed a unique technique for playing the bass that transformed the string bass into a highly expressive solo instrument. Vance studied with Rabbath in Paris, incorporating aspects of Rabbath’s spirited style into his own teaching and performing.

Starting in the mid 1990s, Vance and others brought Rabbath to the Washington area to teach and perform at summer bass camps. These evolved into the Summer Bass Workshop, an annual, week-long event that Vance organized and that featured some of the most respected bass teachers from across the U.S. and the world. Rabbath remembers Vance as a teacher “of rare devotion and much talent.”

Vance also lectured and taught at clinics throughout the U.S. as well as in Ireland, England, Finland, Sweden, Canada and Australia. It was at a workshop in Texas that Paul Ellison, a Rice University bass professor, recalls seeing a particularly moving example of Vance’s special gift for working with youngsters. A painfully shy boy had been scheduled to play in an open class, but was “nearly paralyzed

with fear and doubt,” Ellison recalls.

“George quietly went over to him, and with care and empathy proceeded to inquire about the boy’s bass. The boy looked George over and said a few words about his bass, which he clearly liked. George complimented the boy on his bass and asked how it sounded. From that moment on, George and this boy were in their own world,” Ellison remembers.

As others looked on, George continued to hold the boy’s attention. Over the course of the next fifteen minutes, “the boy lost all fear and shyness, playing with ease and naturalness,” Ellison said. When onlookers erupted in applause, both George and the boy were surprised, having forgotten they were not alone. “We were watching a master at his life’s work,” Ellison concluded.

Vance, who was born in Akron, Ohio, was also formerly an adjunct associate professor of string pedagogy at the University of Maryland, College Park, an adjunct associate professor of double bass at George Mason University in Virginia, and had taught bass at the Levine School in Washington, D.C. For many years he was also a choir director at

St. Mark Orthodox Church in Bethesda. He came to Washington in 1978 to serve as a bassist with the U. S. Army Field Band. Outside of music, his most passionate pursuit was cycling.

The American String Teachers Association awarded Vance its Citation for Outstanding Leadership and Merit in 1990. In 1995 the International Society of Bassists honored him with a Special Recognition Award for his groundbreaking work as a bass educator.

Vance is survived by his wife Martha Vance of Silver Spring, mother Catherine Vance of Lecanto, Florida, brother Stephan Vance (Kate Vance) of San Diego; son Sam Vance (Candace Vance) of Seattle; stepson Alexander Barge of Silver Spring, niece Amelia Vance, and grandchildren Max, Echo, and Zoe Vance.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Mark Orthodox Church in Bethesda, Maryland, or to the George Vance Young Bassists Education Fund at the International Society of Bassists, 14070 Proton Road, Suite 100 LB9, Dallas, TX 75244.

*Carol M. Dana is the sister of Martha Vance.*



# Instrument Repair Workshop

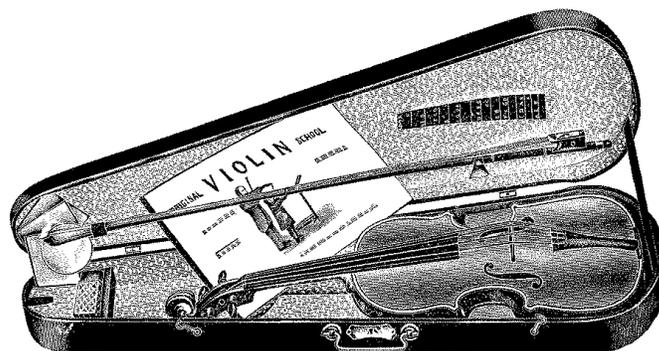
**D**alton Potter and Paul Scimonelli are planning a String Instrument Repair Workshop at the Landon School in Bethesda, Maryland on March 20, 2010. First is a brief lecture, “*Your child’s instrument DOES matter...*” for parents, students, and teachers. Included in the discussion is an analysis of how violins (violas, cellos, etc.) are constructed. Discussions revolve around the materials used, varying styles of construction, history, countries of origin, and how these variables affect the need for regular maintenance. We will cover which common products are most effective for the control of humidity, keeping the tuning pegs working smoothly, and the basics of sound post adjustments, bridges, and the various different kinds of strings. There will also be a review of bows, bow maintenance, differing styles and materials involved in construction. Finally, there will be a ten-minute Q&A period that is open to audience discussion of repair topics as well as insider tips on shopping for instruments and an overview of the effect of the internet on the music business.

Following this is an in-depth demonstration, “*Basic repairs and maintenance: close-up*” of actual repair

processes and techniques in action. Dalton will show you “up close and personal” how to cut a bridge, refit friction pegs, set up fallen sound posts (and how to tell whether they actually fit or not). We will cover tips on installing strings, tail guts, basic maintenance, and analyzing potential repair needs. “Quick-repair” of uneven nuts, bridges, and loose fingerboards will be demonstrated. We will also cover gluing open seams and repairing broken necks in inexpensive instruments. Students are encouraged to bring in instruments for close examination and potential repair during the class. Class consists of a two-hour demonstration segment, followed by a lunch break, then another two-hour demonstration. Participants will mainly observe, but there will be some hands-on experience with, for example, setting up sound posts. Course materials and tools will be available for purchase at the time of class.

Further details of this workshop will be available online: <http://www.asta.net/calendar.php>

*Dalton Potter and Paul Scimonelli are members of the Board of Directors for ASTA MD/DC Chapter. Read their bios online: [www.asta.net/officers.php](http://www.asta.net/officers.php)*



# The Lighter Side

## Your Viola Questions Answered

by Professor Hans Orff

**Q.** Should the beard be worn inside or outside the shirt when playing the viola?

**A.** This is a tricky one. The usual answer is “inside for Baroque and outside for Romantic.” Of course, problems arise with music from the Classical period, such as Mozart, Gruntfutter, Stamitz, Schimmelfarb, Haydn, and Hummel. A good compromise is to wear a waistcoat and tuck the beard into that unobtrusively while re-tuning for slow movements. In fast passages, the player naturally will want the beard to fly freely.

**Q.** Can playing the viola damage my health?

**A.** The simple answer to this is: not if done in moderation. Ardent young players probably will want to play the viola once a day and may even have an uncontrollable urge to try the viola d’amore (or, in extreme cases, the viola da caccia). As middle age approaches, however, three times a week is a good regimen. I know happily-married violists who take the viola out only once a week.

**Q.** Sometimes when I get up in the morning and take my viola out of the case, I find that it has grown from 15 to 18 inches. Is this normal?

**A.** The problem of viola size is one that can never be resolved to everyone’s satisfaction. The case you are describing is called Parallax Phenomenon, in which, if the player has imbibed strong beverages the night before, the viola will, indeed, seem larger in the morning. If the player closes the eyes and relaxes for 10 minutes, the sensation will pass, in most cases. Sometimes a cold shower will do the trick. If symptoms persist, you (or your viola) should see a doctor without further delay.

## Literature for the Viola da Caccia

by Professor Hans Orff

I am often asked, especially by my mother, about the viola da caccia. What can we learn from study

of this instrument (provided we can find one)? What literature is available? Which pieces in the repertoire are best?

As you may know, the viola da caccia was principally played on horseback during the hunt. Its 14 sympathetic strings—to say nothing of its 27 unsympathetic strings—left the player very little scope for managing the horse well. Hence, the number of these priceless artifacts which were smashed and the many virtuosi who were permanently crippled or even killed by falling from their mounts remains yet to be catalogued. The interrogator is quite correct, therefore: it may be difficult to find an instrument.

As to what you might learn, I do not know.

As to literature, the outdoor curse touches posterity here, as well. Judging from the remaining repertory, we must assume that many of the best pieces were blown away, eaten by dogs, used to wrap the remains of lunch, or rendered sodden by inclement weather. These same factors, in slightly different form, may also figure in the paucity of instruments.

Let us move on to the literature that does remain. It is a rather uneven assembly, in terms of quality. Here are some of the less-offensive oeuvres:

Paul Hittenmiss: Sonata for Heckelphone, Viola da Caccia, and Kazoo

KarlHeinz Zwangsarbeit: Trio for Stringless Viola da Caccia, Timpani Stick, and Euphonium Mouthpiece

Johannes Klpfing: Silent Vibration for Prepared Piano and Unprepared Viola da Caccia

O. Nono: Nonet for E♭ Hoover, B♭ Hair Dryer, Unpitched Kitchen Mixer, and Six Violas da Caccia

Sir Egbert Blat: Fantasy Sonata for Highland Bagpipes, Viola da Caccia, and Harp

All are published by Dummkopf u. Würfelspiel, except for the Nono Nonet, which is available from Edizione Chaotica Roma.