

Inside this issue:

- 2 Message from the President
- 3 ASTA MD/DC Chapter Annual Membership Meeting and Dinner  
Nominations for Awards
- 4 Mark Wood *Inferno Tour*—Workshops for Students and Teachers
- 6 Spring Festival: Solo String Instruments
- 7 Application Form for 2011 Spring Festival: Solo String Instruments
- 8 2011 ASTACAP Exams
- 9 Reports on Autumn 2010 MD/DC Activities
  - Fiddle Day 2010  
*by Kimberly McCollum*
  - My Fiddle Day Experience  
*by Kayla J. Merriweather*
  - Senior All State Workshop for Strings at Towson University  
*by Dr. Jeffrey Howard*
  - ASTA on the Eastern Shore  
*by Paul Scimonelli*
  - The Dueling Fiddlers Workshops and Concert  
*by Ronald Mutchnik, Ella Joklik, and Lorraine Combs*
- 13 The View From Both Sides  
*by Robert Battey*
- 16 Youth Orchestras, Part 2  
*by Lynn Fleming*
- 17 The Orfeo International Music Festival  
*by Jeffrey Howard*
- 19 Value-Added Contests  
*by Dorée Huneven*
- 22 The Lighter Side



# Message from the President

## National Membership Challenge

Come join us and bring a friend! Our ASTA chapter is participating in the National Membership Challenge. Let's double our membership in 2011. If everyone invites one person to join, we will reach our goal. There is so much happening in our ASTA chapter right now, and it is only going to get better. I know everyone will want to share the excitement.

## Mark Wood is coming back!

It is our good fortune to be partnering with The Potter Violin Company, Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras, Black Rock Center for the Arts, and Montgomery College to present two Mark Wood Workshops. The Mark Wood Inferno Tour will be at Black Rock Center for the Arts in Germantown, Maryland, Saturday, March 26, 2011. Mark and his assistant, Bridgid Bibbens, will rock out with a Student Workshop from noon to 4 P.M. and a Concert at 5 P.M. The Teacher Workshop is Sunday, March 27, 2011, from noon to 5 P.M. at Montgomery College. If you participated in these events last year, you know how exciting and inspirational Mark is. Registration forms are on pages 4 and 5 in this issue of *Stringendo* and on our web site: [www.asta.net/otherprograms](http://www.asta.net/otherprograms)  
Come join us and bring a friend!

## Informational emails

We are sending informational emails every Tuesday morning. The emails contain announcements of upcoming ASTA events, news, and discounts for ASTA members. Please be sure to open the emails so you don't miss something. Have an announcement? Please send it to me at [cstewart91919@msn.com](mailto:cstewart91919@msn.com)

by 9 P.M. on Sunday evening for inclusion in the Tuesday ASTA email.

## Second Monday Teacher Meetings

Our Second Monday of the Month Teacher Meetings continue. These meetings are a terrific way to share teaching ideas, learn, ask questions, network, and eat some great food. Check our website [www.asta.net/calendar](http://www.asta.net/calendar) for location and topics. Come join us and bring a friend! Don't feel like driving to Montgomery County, or can't make Monday morning? Start meetings in your area. Wouldn't it be great to have meetings in every county in Maryland and in D.C.?

## Award Nominations

Award nominations for Teacher of the Year and Outstanding Service to Strings are being accepted. Details are on the next page. Our chapter will be paying the "Early Bird" registration fee for the 2011 Teacher of the Year to attend the National ASTA Conference March 22–24, 2012, in Atlanta! What a great opportunity for an exceptional teacher!

## Annual Membership Meeting

Our Annual Membership Meeting is Sunday, May 15, 2011. More details about this event are on the next page. This is always a wonderful time for seeing old friends, and making new ones. Information will also be posted on the website as it becomes available: [www.asta.net/calendar](http://www.asta.net/calendar)

Come join us and bring a friend!

Cathy Stewart  
President  
ASTA MD/DC Chapter

---

---

## The 2011 ASTA National Conference

will be held in Kansas City, Missouri  
March 17–19, 2011

Complete information and registration available at  
the ASTA national website: [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com)

Then click on Conferences in the menu bar

# ASTA MD/DC Chapter Annual Membership Meeting and Dinner Sunday, May 15, 2011 6:30 P.M.

**Featuring: Daniel Heifetz and French Cuisine**

*by Daniel Levitov, President-Elect, MD/DC Chapter*

**M**ark your calendars now! ASTA MD/DC Chapter's Annual Membership Meeting and Dinner will be held on the evening of **Sunday, May 15, 2011**. This year, the dinner will be held at a very special location, Bonaparte Breads in Fells Point, Baltimore. For those of you who have not yet had the pleasure, Bonaparte is an authentic French bakery located right on the harbor in Fells Point (If you want to stop in on a Sunday, you might just see me camped out with an oversized croissant and the *New York Times*!).

At the membership dinner, we will dine on quiche and have pastries for dessert, and enjoy the waterfront view. We are very fortunate to have Daniel Heifetz confirmed as our guest speaker. Mr. Heifetz is an internationally known violinist and educator, and is director of the Heifetz International Music Institute, a wonderful summer program.  
[www.heifetzinstitute.org/](http://www.heifetzinstitute.org/)

It is sure to be an engaging (and delicious) evening! Stay tuned for more specifics on registration information, which will appear on our website:  
[www.asta.net/](http://www.asta.net/)

I hope to see you there!

**Sunday, May 15, 2011, 6:30 P.M.**

**BONAPARTE BREADS  
903 SOUTH ANN STREET  
BALTIMORE, MD 21231**

**Dinner: \$21**

*Please select one:*

- 1. HAM AND SWISS QUICHE**
- 2. SPINACH AND FETA QUICHE (VEGETARIAN)**

*Make checks payable to:*

**ASTA MD/DC Chapter**

*Send to Jean Provine, Treasurer  
(address on inside front cover)*

## Nominations for Awards



**A**ny MD/DC member may nominate someone for an Award, to be presented at the Annual Membership Meeting and Dinner on May 15, 2011. A member may nominate someone for either award, or may nominate two people, one for each award. Use the following information to use as a guide in making your nomination.

**Teacher of the Year.** Explain why you think your nominee deserves the award, and how this person has contributed to the noble profession of string teaching.

**Outstanding Service to Strings.** Explain how this person has contributed to the improvement of ASTA MD/DC Chapter.

Send your nomination(s) to:

Catherine Stewart, MD/DC Chapter President  
17500 Princess Anne Drive  
Olney, MD 20832

Or send via email: [cstewart91919@msn.com](mailto:cstewart91919@msn.com)

**Deadline for nominations is April 1, 2011.** The Executive Committee of MD/DC Chapter will review all nominations and choose a winner for each award.

*The 2011 Teacher of the Year award winner will receive free Early Bird Registration, to be paid for by our chapter, to attend the ASTA National Conference, to be held in Atlanta, March 22–24, 2012!*



# THE MARK WOOD INFERNO TOUR

'Rock Out' with Celebrated Electric Violinist Mark Wood

**SATURDAY • MARCH 26, 2011**

Black Rock Center for The Arts  
12901 Town Commons Drive • Germantown, MD 20874



The Potter Violin Company, MD/DC Chapter of the American String Teachers Association, Maryland Classic Youth Orchestra and Blackrock Center For The Arts invite fans to enjoy a special Mark Wood workshop and concert. All string players are included and the workshop will be conducted with your acoustic instrument. Electric instruments will be available to try.

Experience the exciting alternative style of electric strings with a true pioneer, Mark Wood. A highly acclaimed international recording artist, performer, producer, inventor and Emmy-winning composer, Mark Wood has delighted audiences with his unique sound and paved the way for electric string players.

**REGISTRATION FEE \$60.00 per student** includes both the workshop and concert

**CONCERT TICKETS \$10.00 each**

REGISTRATION FORMS available at [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net)

REGISTRATION DEADLINE **Saturday • March 12, 2011**

Space for the workshop will be available until enrollment registration. Students should not be late to the workshop.

PRESENTED BY



Visit [www.markwoodmusic.com](http://www.markwoodmusic.com), [www.woodviolin.com](http://www.woodviolin.com)  
and [www.electrifyyourstrings.com](http://www.electrifyyourstrings.com) to learn more about Mark Wood

## FOR STUDENTS:

### THE MARK WOOD INFERNO TOUR WORKSHOP & CONCERT REGISTRATION

Registration Deadline: Saturday • March 12, 2011

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Instrument \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Cp \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Name \_\_\_\_\_

Place currently staying \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**FEES** All fees are non-refundable.

Workshop: \$60 per student \_\_\_\_\_ = \$60 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Late Fee: \$10 per student \_\_\_\_\_ = \$10 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
After 3:15

Concert Tickets: \$10 each \_\_\_\_\_ = \$10 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Tax: \$15 each \_\_\_\_\_ = \$15 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate size: Child  S  M  L  
Adult  S  M  L  XL

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### SCHEDULE

Workshop with Mark Wood: 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Concert with Mark Wood: 5:00 pm

#### PHOTOGRAPHY & FILMING

Photography and filming may be done for PERSONAL USE ONLY. The posting of any text, videos or websites such as YouTube or MySpace will not be permitted. If any text, videos or a found on these websites, appropriate action will be taken.

Make check payable to: ASTA MD/DC Chapter

Mail payment and registration form to:

MCYO

The Music Center At Strathearn

5301 Buckerman Lane

North Bethesda, MD 20852

For more information & questions contact:

Cathy Stewart • [cathy@stewartstellastrings.com](mailto:cathy@stewartstellastrings.com)

# THE MARK WOOD INFERNO TOUR

'Rock Out' with Celebrated Electric Violinist Mark Wood

SUNDAY • MARCH 27, 2011

Montgomery College • Rockville Campus



The Potter Violin Company, MD/DC Chapter of the American String Teachers Association, MCYO and Montgomery College invite teachers to enjoy a special Mark Wood workshop. All string players are invited and the workshop will be conducted with your acoustic instrument. Electric instruments will be available to try.

Experience the exciting alternative style of electric strings with a true pioneer, Mark Wood. A highly acclaimed international recording artist, performer, producer, inventor and Emmy-winning composer, Mark Wood has delighted audiences with his unique sound and paved the way for electric string players.

REGISTRATION FEE \$40.00 ASTA Member  
\$50.00 Non-members

REGISTRATION FORMS available at [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net)

REGISTRATION DEADLINE Saturday • March 12, 2011

PRESENTED BY



Visit [www.markwoodmusic.com](http://www.markwoodmusic.com), [www.woodviolins.com](http://www.woodviolins.com)  
and [www.electrifyyourstrings.com](http://www.electrifyyourstrings.com) to learn more about Mark Wood

## FOR TEACHERS:

### THE MARK WOOD INFERNO TOUR TEACHER WORKSHOP REGISTRATION

Registration Deadline: Saturday • March 12, 2011

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**FEEES** All fees are non-refundable.

Workshop: 540 ASTA Member \_\_\_\_\_ \$40 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

550 Non-member \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Late fee: \$10 after 5/12 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

T-shirt: \$15 each \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate size:  M  S  L  XL

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**WORKSHOP SCHEDULE - 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm:**

Introduction

Basic improvisation Methods - Handout

New Techniques

Focusing on Electric

Wood Violins

Reading Session

Recruitment Ideas/CBA

**PHOTOGRAPHY & FILMING**

Photography and filming may be done for PERSONAL USE ONLY.

The sharing of amateur videos or photos such as YouTube or MySpace will not be permitted. If amateur videos are found on these websites, appropriate action will be taken.

Make check payable to: ASTA MD/DC Chapter

Mail payment and registration form to:

Catherine Stewart

17500 Princess Anne Drive

Olney, MD 20832

For more information & questions contact:

Cathy Stewart • [cathy@stewartstefanstrings.com](mailto:cathy@stewartstefanstrings.com)

# MSMTA / ASTA MD/DC Chapter Spring Festival: Solo String Instruments

Sunday, April 3, 2011

Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center  
University of Maryland, College Park

by Jean Provine

For those of you who haven't already participated in this yearly event, it is a great opportunity for your students to show off a polished piece for a small audience, consisting of other players of the same age from all over the state and their parents, and receive some written suggestions and a certificate from a judge. Some students view this competitively and go for the ribbons awarded at each session; others enter as non-competitors just for the performance experience and the opportunity to hear others play. The day is organized in conjunction with the Maryland State Music Teachers Association. An application form is on the following page. Or you may download a form from our website [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net) or the MSMTA website: [www.msmta.org](http://www.msmta.org). Think about it *now* as the application deadline is February 28, 2011!

**Date:** Sunday, April 3, 2011

**Application Deadline:**

Monday, February 28, 2011

**Location:** Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center  
University of Maryland  
Rt. 193 and Stadium Drive  
College Park, 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 April 3, 2011.

First Place winners from last year may enter competitively.

<b>Time Limits:</b> Ages 6–8	4 minutes
Ages 9–10	6 minutes
Ages 11–12	7 minutes
Ages 13 and up	10 minutes

**Procedure/Rules:**

- Teachers are not allowed to accompany their own students, but parents may accompany them.
- 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 must be available to help on the day of the event.

For more information, contact any of the following:

Sarah Cotterill, co-chair, 301-588-8983  
[pscotterill@verizon.net](mailto:pscotterill@verizon.net)

May Ing Ruehle, co-chair, 301-277-8031  
[wuyeemei@gmail.com](mailto:wuyeemei@gmail.com)

Jean Provine, co-chair, 301-927-5312  
[jean.provine@gmail.com](mailto:jean.provine@gmail.com)

*The general rules governing MSMTA events also apply. Please read them carefully:*

[www.msmta.org](http://www.msmta.org) under **Student Activities**



**Application Form** *(Please duplicate as many as you need)*  
**MSMTA and ASTA MD/DC Chapter**  
**2011 Spring Festival: Solo String Instruments**  
**Clarice Smith PAC, University of Maryland, College Park**

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.

**Postmark deadline: Monday, February 28, 2011**

Send 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 \_\_\_\_\_ 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 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
----------	-------	----------	------------------

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 \_\_\_\_\_

# 2011 ASTACAP Exams

**T**wo ASTACAP exams will be given in 2011. Begin preparing your students today!

The first will be **Sunday, February 20, 2011**, (application deadline: January 30, 2010), at The Lutheran Church of St. Andrew, 15300 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland. The second will be **Saturday, May 21, 2011**, (application deadline: April 21, 2011), at the Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, Catholic University, Washington, D.C.

Teachers, students, and parents who have participated in previous ASTACAP exams can attest to their value in preparing students for a performance/audition situation. The comments from the examiners are extremely helpful to all, and the level attained by taking the exam is important in assessing a student's level for orchestra auditions, etc. Students can also describe their ASTACAP achievements on their college applications.

The following information about the exams is also on our website:

## **[www.asta.net/certificateprogram](http://www.asta.net/certificateprogram)**

The ASTA Certificate Advancement Program (ASTACAP) provides students with an incremental means of achieving playing goals, motivating them to persevere and excel in their instrument studies.

- There are eleven levels of graded curricula for violin, viola, cello, bass, and harp. (Guitar requirements to come later.)
- ASTACAP provides definite goals and awards for all students, from beginner to advanced levels, through non-competitive examinations.
- Students are judged on technical and musical preparedness at specific levels—Foundation

Level through Level 10—by an examiner of musical and pedagogical stature.

- Each level is defined by a set of technical and musical goals (for instance: starting vibrato, third position, sense of style), along with corresponding study material.
- Completion of each level is demonstrated at a performance exam. The student plays one or more pieces, an etude, scales, and arpeggios. The student is also asked to sight read.
- The student's success is recognized by ASTA with the awarding of a Certificate of Achievement for each level successfully completed.

Teachers of all traditions find that ASTACAP complements and strengthens their programs. As a result of its great success in several ASTA state chapters, it was adopted as a national program in 2004. Benefits to ASTACAP teachers and students include, but are not limited to:

- Uniformity of expectations between states.
- Continual feedback through an examiner's comments on student progress.
- Documentation of achievements that can be used when applying to youth orchestras, summer music camps, and college admission.
- Professionally designed and printed certificates for students.
- Member access to the ASTACAP Handbook online.

To register online, click on the brown "Apply Now" button on the Certificate Program page. Members without computer access may contact Dorée Huneven (301-649-3170) about the February exams, or contact Lya Stern (301-320-2693) about the May exams.



# Reports

## Autumn 2010 MD/DC Activities

### Fiddle Day 2010

*by Kimberly McCollum, Violin Forum Chair, MD/DC Chapter*

The second annual ASTA MD/DC Chapter “Fiddle Day” was held on **Saturday, October 16, 2010**, at Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold, Maryland. Music & Arts and Menchey Music generously sponsored the event and had tables of books and materials available for sale. There were 40 participants that included both teachers and students who wanted to learn about different styles of fiddling.

The first workshop was led by Mitch Fanning, who focused on Irish fiddling. We started off by learning the A and B sections of several fiddle tunes by ear. Everyone quickly caught on and we were able to learn some really catchy Irish tunes, including a reel and a hornpipe.

Andrea Hoag, who specializes primarily in Swedish fiddling, led the second workshop that included learning a Norwegian *reinlendar* called “Johan in the Loft.” We began by singing and dancing to the melody of the tune, which was a great introduction into learning the tune. At the end of the session, we

learned to improvise on the notes of the blues scale.

Following lunch, Dorée Huneven presented a workshop on the Mark O’Connor Violin Method, which she has carefully researched and implemented into her private studio. Her presentation focused on several tunes found in Books 1 and 2. Participants played through each of the tunes to experience the range of skills introduced.

At the end of the day, we had an informal concert given by Mitch and Andrea, where they performed several tunes for us. At the close of the program, they even performed two tunes together, which was a real treat! I think everyone who attended would agree that the day was extremely successful and lots of fun.

As chairperson of the event, I would like to thank the committee members, Dorée Huneven, Ale Schneider, Jaque Lyman, and Marion Spahn, who played an integral role in making this happen. We look forward to seeing even more participants next year!

### My Fiddle Day Experience

*by Kayla J. Merriweather*

On **Saturday, October 16, 2010**, I went to Fiddle Day at Anne Arundel Community College. We did three workshops. Mitch Fanning taught the Irish fiddling workshop, Andrea Hoag taught the Swedish/Norwegian workshop, and my teacher, Dorée Huneven, taught the Mark O’Connor method. All were very fun.

To me, Mitch’s workshop was a little challenging because it was very fast paced. Also because there were a lot of high notes, and I’m still learning how to shift, I was kind of lost during most of it. Andrea’s workshop was fun and not too hard, but not too easy. I especially liked the singing and dancing, even though that has nothing to do with string instruments, but that’s okay. I personally liked Dorée’s workshop the best because the songs were a little simpler (plus I know almost all of them) and she is my teacher.

The three things I liked best were the classroom, the instructors, and the food. I liked where Fiddle Day was taught because it was very spacious and it wasn’t in some old, moldy, cramped classroom. The instructors were very humorous and friendly although it would’ve been better if they had included violas more (that’s the instrument I play).

The food was delightful. I accidentally brought my own lunch because I didn’t know food would be provided. But, since I helped with the setup, I got some food to bring home!

Overall, it was a great experience. I made new friends, learned new songs, and just had fun!

*Kayla J. Merriweather is a 6th grade student at Eastern Middle School in Silver Spring.*

# Senior All State Workshop for Strings At Towson University

by Dr. Jeffrey Howard, University Representative, MD/DC Chapter

**O**n Friday, October 15, 2010, Towson University hosted the first Maryland Senior All State Workshop for Strings. This innovative program brought in students from around the state to study and jointly prepare the etudes, scales, and orchestral excerpts for All State auditions. Students practiced together in groups, took a mock audition, participated in a solo master class, and enjoyed a performance of

the Ravel Piano Trio by the Baltimore Trio (violinist Jeffrey Howard, cellist Cecylia Barczyk, and pianist Reynaldo Reyes) in Residence at Towson University. This workshop also included a very successful event for percussion! Both of these workshops will continue in the Fall of 2011. For further information, please contact Dr. Jeffrey Howard at [jhoward@towson.edu](mailto:jhoward@towson.edu)

## ASTA on the Eastern Shore

by Paul Scimonelli, Bass Forum/Private School Representative, MD/DC Chapter

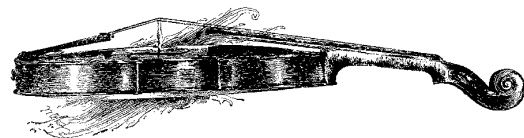
**O**n Saturday, October 30, 2010, ASTA MD/DC Chapter board members Dr. Paul Scimonelli (that's me) and Dalton Potter, traveled to the beautiful campus of Salisbury University on Maryland's Eastern Shore to hold what we hope will be the first of many ASTA outreach and membership conferences. Dr. Sachi Murasugi, a faculty member of the music department at SU and one of our board members, organized the workshop.

Twelve stalwart souls joined us on this cool, crisp sunny Eastern Shore morning to listen and be involved with my membership and advocacy presentation and Dalton's stellar workshop. We had a broad representation of current and retired string teachers, orchestra directors, and working professionals, all interested in what ASTA had to offer. In addition to residents of the Salisbury area, others came from as far away as Prince George's County and Delaware. They were quite impressed with our new chapter website, as well as the National website. Each attendee received a packet brimming with information on the ASTA Life and Instrument insurance policies, Arts Advocacy, how to build a string program, the ASTA National Conference and a copy of *Stringendo*. Many commented not only on the "look" of our website, but also the advertising. Special thanks go to ASTA Executive Director Donna Sizemore Hale, Membership Coordinator Amanda Bernhardt, and our chapter President, Cathy Stewart, for their help and generosity with all of the materials for the packet.

After my presentation, we took a short break to set up for Dalton's valuable "Kitchen Table Repair" workshop. The attendees give Dalton their rapt attention as he showed them the inner workings of the violin, how to cut a bridge, set a sound post, plus easy and quick fix-ups any string teacher or orchestra director should know. After some work on their individual instruments, the attendees left with a copy of Dalton's repair handbook and a renewed energy for their craft.

There were many great suggestions from the group. They expressed a desire to hold ASTACAP exams on the Eastern Shore and wanted Dalton to return to do a full day's repair session on student instruments. Future conferences are being planned for the Prince George's/Anne Arundel County areas, as well as Frederick, Hagerstown, and the western Maryland counties.

Many thanks to Salisbury University for their hospitality, and to Sachi and her husband Jeff Schoyen, also an ASTA MD/DC board member, for all of their hard work and effort in coordination of this workshop with Dalton and me. We look forward to doing many more!



# The Dueling Fiddlers Workshops and Concert

by Ronald Mutchnik, Ella Joklik (student of Ronald), and Lorraine Combs

## **Ronald Mutchnik:**

Improvisation for the uninitiated can be a scary thing. For those who improvise, however, a greater freedom comes into play. This permission to let go and explore beyond the boundaries is the ticket into the world of improvisation.

To start the first workshop, Adam and Russell had the class work with different rhythm patterns on just one note, progressing during the session to where each participant got a chance to try out his/her solo with the rest of the class providing the bass. As in jazz clubs, the group applauded each solo as different people took the stage and improvised.

The second workshop dealt with alternative styles of playing to create a more rock or pop feel. In effect, the sound of an entire band, complete with rhythm/percussion, bass line, chords, and melody can be created on two violins. In order to do this, one must think “outside the box.” The caveats of not making an ugly sound, or not playing on the wrong side of the bridge, or not turning the bow to the opposite side all had to be disregarded in order to move into a new world of percussive sound.

The technique known as the “chop” was particularly useful for creating percussive sounds, which, combined with syncopated rhythms, gave the appropriate kick to the melody. It is surprising how varied and diverse the world of “chops” can be.

Another area explored was distortion. This is similar to electronic amplified sounds such as feedback that rock guitarists use to add another dimension of excitement and power to the sound. But bowed string players can do this acoustically. Different bow speeds and weights also affected the distortion.

Other techniques are the “grab,” the use of fifths to give an earthier “rock” effect to the harmony, pizzicato for its percussive potential, as in the



“Bartok snap.” Adam pointed out that the discovery of these different sounds was based on listening closely to what traditional rock instruments were doing and then experimenting with how to translate that to the violin and bow.

And that’s what it’s all about. The world of sound for string

instruments is much bigger than we might have formerly imagined. By opening our ears and listening to what we are really doing, we can discover new possibilities and keep the art of string playing fresh and inspiring for the next generation and beyond.

## **Ella Joklik:**

On November 21, 2010, I attended two workshops and a concert by Adam DeGraff and Russell Fallstad. They make up the dynamic and highly talented improvisation duo, The Dueling Fiddlers. Both musicians have a passion for teaching and sharing their talent that readily shows itself in their concerts and interactions with their audience.

Adam and Russell teach the same way they make their music, impromptu. Both musicians teach with passion and a determination to spark interest and love for music in their students. With impressive classical careers behind them, they stressed the importance of solid technique in all styles of violin playing.

The first workshop focused on building a basic process to follow when improvising. They broke it down into simple steps. Build your base: the chords you want your improvisation to fit into. Improvise on that for a while until you find a melody that works. Then, select another set of chords, and improvise around them to provide a bridge.

What they said was most important in improvisation was fearlessness and the confidence to make mistakes. Before this workshop, I had done a little bit of improvisation work on my own, but never had any sort of formal introduction. This workshop provided

a welcome platform to build on, giving an accessible process to follow.

The second workshop was on alternative techniques. It explored percussive techniques such as the “chop” (bringing the frog of the bow down very sharply near the bridge), and a method of making the violin mimic distortion. This workshop particularly emphasized thinking outside the box when considering the different sounds and effects possible on a violin.

Adam and Russell perform a compelling style of “rock violin” that gets the audience engaged and smiling. The Dueling Fiddlers have a mission to inspire kids and teenagers to love music and to be involved in music from a young age. They accomplish this through playing contemporary songs in breathtakingly complex arrangements. As a student and aspiring musician, they inspire me to also think outside the box in terms of what I can do with my instrument, embrace experimentation and mistakes, and most of all, love the music I play.

### **Lorraine Combs:**

Thirteen people participated in the workshops, mostly students, plus a few young adults. There were also a few observers, including me.

Unlike many rock violinists, Adam and Russell use regular acoustic violins. Their instruments are Realist™, which are basically inexpensive Chinese instruments with an input jack built right into the underside of each violin. In concert, they use wireless transmitters that are strapped onto the small of their backs, broadcasting to one large, tall speaker with a small footprint, located right in the center of the stage. At the workshops they use their instruments without the loudspeaker capability, and they sound just like regular violins. With one exception—Russell plays a 5-string violin: E, A, D, G, and C. The C string is quite weak sounding when played without amplification, but the transformation is amazing when he’s playing in concert with amplification.



# The View From Both Sides

by Robert Battey

**Critic** -*noun*. one who walks out onto the field after a battle to shoot the wounded.

As a still-occasionally-performing cellist as well as a regular music critic for the *Washington Post* and *Strings* magazine, I feel exquisitely the sentiment expressed by the wag above. There are few things more discouraging than to give a concert of which one is proud, only to later read that you “had an off night, with wayward intonation and a pinched sound.” On the other side, to judge from the press quotes sprinkled in concert flyers and musicians’ bios, one might think that *everyone* is incredible. In such a subjective realm as the performing arts, these anomalies and injustices will always be with us. No two people hear the same thing at a concert because each of us brings a different set of ears, references, and prejudices into the hall. So what, then, is the point of any of this?

Well, to be honest, I’m not sure. The system has so many inherent problems, that readers and concertgoers would be wise to discount a single good or bad review. In general, the way things should work is that after you’ve read enough of a given writer, you can form an opinion of whether his/her sensibilities seem to align with yours. This of course is easiest to do when you’re reading a review of a concert you attended; but regardless, a writer’s prejudices, bugaboos, verbal tics, and general attitude towards the job are discernable after four or five reviews. If you have come to trust a writer, you can then read with more enjoyment and partially rely on those opinions when you make future choices as a music consumer or presenter.

Despite the risks and flaws of this undertaking, I write because I believe that once in awhile I can offer useful insights about a performance, given my training and experience. I certainly have my detractors out there, to judge from letters and online comments, but that will be true of anyone who expresses a firm opinion. So let me now take you through the mind of one critic as he goes through the process of producing a review. I certainly speak for no one other than myself here. And this is just a “general interest” article, to the extent that it’s

interesting at all; I have no advice as far as how to get a good review other than “play your best.”

First, the nuts & bolts. Towards the end of each month, the *Post* editors decide what concerts will be covered the following month. (In other words, those decisions are above my pay-grade, and I can’t help you get something on the list; my only piece of advice here is to send a really compelling press kit to the paper well in advance of your concert.) We “stringers” (about eight of us) are then sent a list of events and are asked to submit our preferences and availability. As a still-active free-lancer in the area, I am precluded under the paper’s conflict rules from covering virtually any local group unless I can determine ahead of time that everyone’s a stranger to me.

There are still sometimes close calls. As I write this, I’m in California, traveling and performing with a little opera troupe that includes an excellent pianist who I just met. But two years ago, in a review of a mixed chamber music concert, I said uncomplimentary things about most of the performers, thankfully singling this pianist out as an exception. This could have been a rather awkward gig!

And of course I have friends in both the National and Baltimore symphonies, which I frequently cover. But with orchestras, I always focus on conductor, soloist, repertoire, etc., adding some broad comments about the band’s playing when pertinent. In any case, whenever I have a question about propriety, I discuss it with my editor. Sadly, despite my particular expertise in the area, there are few cello recitals I can cover now, and many established chamber music groups are out too; I’m friends with a lot of people in the industry and have to just wish them well.

Once my assignments are set, the next question is whether I need to do any preparation. Usually the answer is no, but once in awhile I’ll be reviewing something I should know (like a popular second-tier opera that I never got around to playing, or perhaps a major twentieth-century work that I somehow missed), and I will trouble myself to listen to at least part of it.

Most of my pieces in the *Post* are restricted to about six column inches, basically three short paragraphs.

When I'm finished with the obligatory who/what/where/when, there's barely space for a sentence or two about the playing. If one of the works is a premiere, that always has to be discussed in particular, leaving me still less space to address the performance.

And premieres are the biggest challenge for me. First of all, I have no formal training in composition, and can't offer any technical insight. Second, words and music are basically incompatible; if what the music "says" can be adequately described in words, it is poor music indeed. And trying to describe modern music in particular is almost impossible—has anyone ever read a written description of a contemporary piece, then heard the piece and thought, "wow, that's just how I thought it would sound"? Not me, certainly. But I know that, in many cases, my words about a new work might be the only ones that will appear in the mainstream media, and the burden really weighs on me. The best I can do (particularly with my space limitations) is to sketch a general impression of the piece, mention any influences I hear, and give it a kind of verbal letter grade. Inadequate, I know.

I'm most comfortable evaluating performances of standard repertoire—solo, chamber, or orchestral. I have a broad frame of reference, know a piece's pitfalls and challenges from the inside, and will be the first to cheer a fresh creative approach. Of course, I have my prejudices as well. At the level of concerts where the *Post* elects to send a critic, I expect absolute professionalism. I have a friend who has to read résumés and cover letters in her job, and she's remarked that if she sees a single typo on either one, the application goes into the wastebasket. For my part, if I hear a wrong note or rhythm in a Beethoven or Ravel quartet that's clearly not a slip of the finger, that carelessness will color every other impression I form about the group. If the conductor can't be bothered holding down the brass so that the more important string parts may be heard, I can't be bothered to look for positive things to say about him or her. If a violinist ignores the piano part when performing a sonata, doing the ornaments and phrasings differently, my patience will be at an end before we've even started.

But these kinds of lapses are rare at this level, and, thankfully, I'm usually able to comment on more substantive matters. We all react positively to

true commitment and passion. I do like to get the impression that young players are aware of their heritage and have done some listening to iconic interpretations that came before. I have certainly seen the wheel re-invented on numerous occasions, and just smile to myself. But I try not to be an old fuddy-duddy; I am quick to praise young artists if their musical instincts are strong and natural, even if the ideas are less original than they realize. As for veteran musicians, the issue (for me) can sometimes be to what extent the depth and richness of interpretation compensates for eroding technical skills. I covered the last several appearances of the beloved Guarneri Quartet at the Kennedy Center, and it pained me to have to acknowledge the actual state of their playing compared to what it once was.

But again, there's so much subjectivity in this racket that it's a wonder people put as much stock in our words as they do. Your opinion about a performance is just as valid as mine, particularly if you know the piece. When people sometimes ask me "what are you listening for?" I'll respond, Brando-like, with "what have you got?" Having been on the receiving end of both good and bad reviews, I can say that what I was focusing on and worrying about during a performance has never been what the reviewer commented on. What does that tell you?

My philosophy about the job is that I'm writing principally for musical history, posterity. Certainly, some get entertainment from reading a review of a concert they attended, just to see how much I missed and how clueless I am. And if I think a group was terrific and say so, I have no problem with its publicist quoting me in flyers, etc. With National Symphony programs (the only pieces I have to file for overnight), the review can affect people's decision about whether to attend a subsequent performance. But for me, all these things are secondary to the main purpose. I want to fix a concert in place for all time—the good, the bad, and the beautiful. Decades or centuries from now, someone might be working on a biography of a certain artist, and the arc of his/her reviews is often a major component. Also, some of the penetrating critiques I've read by Shaw, Krehbiel, Downes, Thompson, Schonberg, and Porter have not only broadened my knowledge, they've affected my own interpretations. Even Heifetz once told an interviewer that a particular review made him stop, think, and reconsider some of his habits. Evgeny Kissin said much the same thing in a documentary video.

As a lowly stringer, I will never have the force and influence of the names I mentioned. Even if I had their writing talent, which I don't, I'll never have the acres of column inches they had to work in. But my goal is the same: to leave behind something permanent and true (however brief) from the transitory, ephemeral experience of this miracle we call "music."



*Cellist Robert Battey grew up in Montgomery County and now lives in Arlington, Virginia. He is an active teacher, performer, clinician, competition judge, and writer. He has served on the faculties of the State University of New York, the University of Missouri, the Levine School, the Gettysburg Chamber Music Workshop, Cellospeak, and Point CounterPoint.*



# Youth Orchestras, Part 2

by Lynn Fleming, Youth Orchestras Liaison, MD/DC Chapter

This second in a series of articles is an in-depth look at Greater Baltimore Youth Orchestra. One of the unique attributes of GBYO is that it has a “feeder” program called BRIDGES. Additionally, the orchestra regularly performs new compositions in addition to traditional symphonic repertoire.

“The first reading took some doing, but they’re really getting the hang of it now,” Artistic Director Jason Love says of the Greater Baltimore Youth Orchestra’s second rehearsal of Michael Daugherty’s *Route 66*. “Some of the notation is tricky for student players, and you have to live with the jazzy rhythms a while before you can play them naturally,” Love says. “But once they get it figured out, they can really lay into it.”

In fact, GBYO string players have been “laying into” both traditional masterpieces and new cutting-edge works for thirty-four years. “Part of the philosophy of our programming is that students should be studying pieces like the Schubert [“Unfinished” Symphony] and the Daugherty at the same time,” says Love, who started with the GBYO in 1997. “Not only do kids who study contemporary works simply end up better string players than ones who only play nineteenth-century lit, we also believe that every GBYO alumnus should come out of the program with a much deeper understanding of where American musical culture is in 2010.”

String training is a top concern for Love, who concertizes as a cellist in addition to conducting. The GBYO Association now has string-playing opportunities in orchestras at every level. MaryAnn Poling leads the full, intermediate-level Concert Orchestra. “For years the intermediate group was strings-only, but we knew we had many more wind, brass, and percussion students eager to participate,” says Poling who has been with GBYO eleven years and is a recent addition to the MCYO conducting staff. “We shaped the level of each of our string groups until we felt sure the playing could match the needs of the winds in a full orchestra setting. Finding just the right rep is the key, too. Going to a full orchestra has been a huge success.”

The GBYO string program now relies heavily on the long-term investment made in their BRIDGES program. Now in its fifth year, BRIDGES is a string program for at-risk youth in Baltimore City After-School sites. About 240 students receive instruments, twice-weekly group lessons, and string orchestra on many Sundays. Older students have transitioned to subsidized private lessons thanks in part to a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

“We knew if we did this right, it would work both ways,” says BRIDGES Program Coordinator Frances Belcher, whose vision for the program was inspired both by Venezuela’s *El Sistema* model as well as the Boston Youth Symphony’s Intensive Community Program. “After Baltimore City’s string programs were cut twenty years ago, we believed that GBYO was well-positioned to step in to help the kids learn music, with an excellent orchestral program to support them as they continued to develop their skills. At the same time we felt that we would be enriching our existing orchestras by getting more City talent into the groups. BRIDGES seemed like the best way to do both at once.”

The program is starting to have the desired effect. GBYO has two early-level string orchestras, the Sinfonia and Sinfonietta led by Michael Gamon. “The City program has been around long enough that we have several BRIDGES kids who have made it into Sinfonia and Sinfonietta, and even one in the Concert Orchestra” says Gamon, a Peabody String Pedagogy Alumnus who also teaches in BRIDGES. “In time I think the number of GBYO string players from the City will eventually match or even surpass the number coming from the suburbs, and that’ll be a real turn-around for us here in Baltimore.”

[www.gbyomusic.org](http://www.gbyomusic.org) 410-617-1524



# The Orfeo International Music Festival

## Music, Food, and Fun in the Italian Alps

by Dr. Jeffrey Howard

These days, summer music festivals can take every conceivable size and shape. Whether for young or old, or specifically for orchestral or chamber music or solo, there is a lot to choose from!

I wanted to share with you a bit of my experience this past summer at the Orfeo International Music Festival in Vipiteno, Italy. For me and my family this was a wonderful festival that allowed us to combine all of the above with a good deal of excellent teaching, wonderful food, and several opportunities for great sightseeing!

First the basics: Vipiteno (called Sterzing in German) is a modestly sized town just on the Italy-Austria border with some 5,000 residents. About 75% of the people speak German, so for us the rare *Buongiorno* was the exception to *Guten Tag*. Vipiteno is something of a tourist town, which boasts a beautiful view of the Italian Alps and some wonderful winter skiing. While the chair lifts were not running in

summer, there was still a splendid opportunity to go up the gondola to the top of the mountain and enjoy some wonderful hiking and a superb apple strudel at one of the four hotels on top of the mountain.

The festival itself had about sixty-five students and thirty professors. During the first three weeks of July, we performed some thirty concerts, which included a large portion of chamber music, some string ensemble music and occasionally some solo pieces. For me, this included Poulenc's Violin Sonata with my wife Anna Soukiassian at the piano (she teaches at the Peabody Institute) and Brahms' F Major Piano Quintet with colleagues from Florida, California, Chile, and Germany.

Participants ranged in age from about sixteen to twenty-eight years old, with a few adults mixed in, and most lived in the United States. The faculty was incredibly diverse with worldwide performing and teaching credentials. The five distinguished guest



artists included the Director of the Bolshoi Opera Young Artists Studio, baritone Dmitry Vdovin, baritone Dmitry Trifonov, soprano Zhala Ismailova, violinist Pavel Vernikov from Vienna Conservatory, and violinist Svetlana Makarova—also from Vienna.

Overall, our experience was excellent. Events were both well organized and well attended. For students especially, there were opportunities to take day trips to Cremona, Venice, Verona, and Salzburg. My students mentioned many times how much they benefited from this exposure. They practiced a great deal and played for many wonderful faculty members in master classes. But they also got the chance to view a living history. How wonderful to be able to visit St. Mark's in Venice, or see Mozart's keyboards in his home in Salzburg, or walk the streets of Cremona where Stradivari lived!

For my family though, this was a combined work and vacation trip. We were able to bring our children (Michelle and Ani, ages nine and seven) and show them a bit of European culture. Their favorite location was Hellbrunn Castle outside Salzburg—marvelous and very child friendly with water hazards all around. In Vipiteno, we stayed in a small apartment for three weeks, which happened to be part of a farm, so we woke to sheep outside our balcony and fresh eggs (straight from the chicken!) for breakfast. Anna and I both gave master classes while there, but the kids went with us to maybe

twenty other master classes and recitals. It was an eye-opening experience for them.

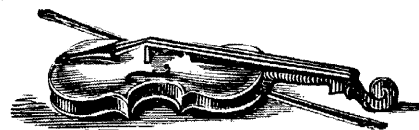
In the end it was quite a wonderfully satisfying experience. My students performed frequently and worked hard while they were there, giving performances of concertos by Stravinsky, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky, the Bach Chaconne, and several chamber pieces. For my wife and me, it was a great pleasure to make connections with so many wonderful teachers and performers from around the world. And for my kids, well, it was invigorating. Sometimes we would go to a restaurant and only have German menus. One time, the soup had *Speck* in it. We did not know what it was, but when we asked, the waiter gave us a funny look and said "*Speck* is...*Speck!*" Turns out that it was bacon. But the moral of the story really is that sometimes you just have to order something and trust that it will turn out good in the end. We did not know many food names in German when we arrived, and, frankly, we did not know anything about Vipiteno either. But we are looking forward to returning, and no doubt next summer we will order something with *Speck* in it, and possibly something else we have yet to discover. My bet is that all will continue to turn out for the best.

For more information or if you have questions, please feel free to email me at [jhoward@towson.edu](mailto:jhoward@towson.edu). The festival web site is [www.orfeomusicfestival.com](http://www.orfeomusicfestival.com).



**Be a part of Maryland's newest orchestra!**

A new community orchestra, performing in Silver Spring, will be having its inaugural concert season this spring. For more information, please contact Leah Kocsis at [leahkocsis@me.com](mailto:leahkocsis@me.com).



# Value-Added Contests

by Dorée Huneven

In principle, we don't need prizes, rewards, or other incentives to get us to start our daily disciplines, do we? The joy of the process, the pride of small accomplishments leading to larger goals being met—those rewards are enough! Well, maybe for some of us, sometimes. For my own highly-disciplined life of violin/viola practice, running two music studios, growing all my own vegetables, exercising, maintaining a household, and, need I mention, going through 2500+ Chinese vocabulary words a day among other bits and pieces, I confess that I run from reward to reward: prizes are the way to go! I love the processes, I value the results, I love my accomplishments, and—the prizes grease the way.

So of course, I always want to encourage my violin and viola students to practice a well run, disciplined musical life—one that gives birth to fabulous accomplishments. How? What specific tasks in that musical life do I want them to value? Two years ago, I made myself a wish list for my students to absorb. I want them to:

- Practice six days a week for the amount of time of their lessons.
- Recognize and credit themselves for how much they are learning.
- Attend concerts and workshops regularly, and to join an orchestra.
- Perform regularly to share their music with others.

Three of the above items have long been a part of my studio instruction and policy. The practice item has been in my studio policy for around thirty years. At least eight run-through performances are a requirement before any solo recital or audition. I have always praised students for their accomplishments. I enthusiastically encourage attendance at concerts and workshops. Yet somehow, all the energy was coming from *me*; making that list pulled my brain in another direction, and off it went—to incentives, rewards, competitions, prizes.

So in the summer of 2009 I concocted two separate Studio Contest plans that would encompass my wish list. Since they have been extremely successful,

both last year and this year, and in two different incarnations, I would like to share them with you, my ASTA colleagues.

## I. PRACTICE CONTESTS

My *basic idea* is that the student records the number of minutes practiced daily in the assignment book.

### The Studio Practice Minutes Contest

In my first try at a contest, the “Studio Practice Minutes Contest,” I recorded the times for each student each week, and at each of my three studio concerts I announced a 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place winner. I told the audience how many minutes they had practiced for the months preceding the recital, together with their weekly average, and gave prizes. The prizes included CDs, tuning forks, mutes, music-related books, etc. At the end of the year, I announced the “Practicer of the Year,” and gave a really nice prize: a high-quality music stand.

The *good results* of this first contest were as follows:

- Everyone became aware of practice minutes and got into the habit of writing them down daily.
- The possibility of public recognition really did inspire everyone to work; as a result of this work, studio standards rose a lot.
- Awareness grew among the students and parents that this daily discipline really did help them to achieve good results faster.

What I felt was *not so satisfactory* was that students were still falling short of my policy of “practice the number of minutes of your weekly lesson six days a week.”

### The Magic Minutes Club

So for this year, starting in the summer of 2010, I decided to try a different approach that encouraged *self-competition*, and I called it the “Magic Minutes Club.”

The *rules* are baroque and elaborate—just my style!

- “Magic Minutes” means that you practice the length of your lesson 6 days a week. So a 30-minute lesson = 180 minutes a week; a

45-minute lesson = 270 minutes; a 60-minute lesson = 360 minutes.

- If you get *five* “Magic Minutes” weeks, you get to choose a prize from the basket. (These don’t have to be five weeks in a row.)
- “Magic Minutes Plus” means that you practice 10% over your time. (198, 297, 396) If you get *four* “Magic Minutes Plus” weeks, or *three* “Magic Minutes Plus” weeks and *one* regular “Magic Minutes” week, you get to choose a prize from the basket.

For this, I made a chart with the children’s names (see example below.) Each week I recorded the weekly total number of minutes and showed them how many “magic minutes” or “magic minutes plus” weeks they had. (This is notated as “MM” or “MM+”) Note: I recorded *all* weekly totals, even if they didn’t achieve “magic minutes.”

Student A: 45-min lesson	278MM 280MM 298MM+ 200 270MM 272MM=PRIZE! etc.
Student B: 60-min lesson	365MM 380MM 410MM+ 280 452MM+ 360MM=PRIZE! etc.

### Prizes

I put the prizes in a nice plastic box. They are all \$2-or-under items (OK, sometimes they go a bit over) that are all really wonderful. (Examples: those rubber bands that form into shapes, music-design pens and pencils, markers, colored shoe laces, pencil cases, etc.) I place the box on a table, but do not draw attention to it. All by itself, it garners attention. It foments desire.

The “Magic Minutes” results were much better than for the predecessor. Students ended up practicing 15 to 30 hours or more for a \$2 prize. Also, only two or three students out of my class of 31 consistently fell below their required practice per week. I call that *success*. Therefore, I am going to continue with this great contest indefinitely.

## II. POINTS CONTESTS

The *basic idea* is that students get points for everything that I consider valuable.

The *rules* are as follows:

- One point for a new posture item, exercise,

etude, scale or piece.

- Ten points for going to a concert, performing for five people minimum, attending a workshop, joining an orchestra.

### The Team Point Contest

The first year I tried this, I pitted my D.C. students against my Gaithersburg students for points, which were all entered on a chart anonymously. (See the example below.) The monthly team winner was announced, and at the end of the year, the winning team met at a buffet restaurant and had a jolly party.

MONTH	Team Washington DC	Team Gaithersburg	Totals (the numbers were in the hundreds, actually!)
January	/////////10//10 10//////////	10 10/////////10//// 10////	54 to 58
February	10 10//////////10 10 10	/////////10//// 10//// 10//	75 to 54

*Good results:*

- Students were surprised to see points accumulate with each new thing I assigned. Everyone got at least one new thing per lesson, but usually there were two to five.
- Performances in front of others increased dramatically, as students’ points increased so much.

*Still not so satisfactory:* Concert attendance was low: the average seemed to be two per year. I might change this to make it mandatory, as some of my esteemed colleagues do!

### The Points Club

For the second try at this contest, now ongoing in my studios, children gently compete against each other for points. The *prizes* for getting the most points in any given month are: a) a beautiful certificate announcing the monthly win (this certificate was designed by a student’s mother); and b) a copy of that certificate hanging on the studio music stand for everyone to see for one month! This certificate also includes the 2nd, 3rd and 4th place winners. At the end of the year, the Points Club winner will get an especially elaborate certificate. I’m also thinking about a trophy.

So far, interest is high, performances, concert and workshop attendance is growing, and everyone is rapidly accumulating more points by the month.

### Conclusion

I have to report a couple of really amazing results of having these ongoing contests.

- My nagging, cajoling, warning, etc., has practically disappeared. The charts say it all. The kids get it.
- The prizes are not big or bribe-like, but they are generally liked and appreciated. They are noticed, and provide subtle and ongoing reminding of what I consider important.
- I myself am motivated, and have fun! It only takes a few seconds at the beginning of the lesson to record practice times and points, but watching the results accumulate is motivating for all of us.

- I can see my values are being absorbed.
- OK, I confess. Whenever I see a toy store, an office supply store, a dollar store or a thrift store, I am inside, rummaging for bargain treasures. I relax and recreate!

So in their music studies, do my students appreciate the processes, value the results, and love their accomplishments? I will ask them when they are over twenty-one! But I suspect that they do. In the meanwhile, my prize for writing this article is—reading *The New York Times Book Review!*



*Dorée Huneven is Past-President of ASTA MD/DC Chapter, and has private studios in Rockville, Wheaton, and at The Academy of Music in Gaithersburg.*



# The Lighter Side

## Trombone Audition

To:  
Chicago Symphony Orchestra  
Selection Committee  
220 S. Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois

Gentlemen:

I wish to apply immediately for the job of Second Trombone, and I already have the two trombones. Although I have not played much in an orchestra, I have played along with lots of classical (no vocal) records. I found that if I slowed them down a little that the songs automatically went into the flat keys, which are much easier, but I think I could do the sharp keys in a short time.

I was a student for several years of Mr. Remington (Buck, not Emory) and then went with the circus band where my tone really got great. You don't have to worry about that I might not be to blast through on the Vogner stuff, that's for sure.

After I watched "10," I got out my horn and worked up a really great solo on "Bolero". (Do you know that there is a dance by this name, too?) I'm wondering, however: does your arrangement sound the same all the way through? I still have trouble knowing when to come in with the record, but I'll work on that tomorrow afternoon for a couple of minutes. Anyway, I know if I get the job that the people in Chicago will like my version, which is doo-wop.

I have a question. Would I have to sit real close to the violins? They never seem to play very loud, and my tone sort of cuts off if I have to play too soft. It would be best if I could sit in front of the drums, like in the circus band. Also, I'd kind of like to sit on the outside so that people could see me.

I am practicing every day for the audition and am working on a new thing called legato, but it's still a little smeary. I think you'll like it, though.

But, if your music is anything like this Rubank stuff, it will be a challenge to my teck... techininue... tequch... ability. There is a position on trombones called 5th, but hardly any notes are there. Does your music have many of these notes, and, if so, what are they? I'd like to know all of this before I pay bus fare down to Chicago.

How much does the job pay?

I'm really looking forward to coming down, but tell me why would I have to play behind a screen in the winter?

Sincerely,

Slide Rafferty

P.S. I have lots of music stands and probably have one like you guys use, so that would be a cost saving.

