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President's Message

The achievements and talents of our MD/DC membership were displayed once again at our annual meeting on May 20. I am so sorry that I did not see more of you there. First we were treated to a wonderful performance by Cindi Kornhaus's cello quartet. We heard a lovely arrangement by Cindi herself of a Handel Sarabande. The group also played a tango by Michael Kibbe and a selection by the cello group known as *Apocalyptic*. The concert ended with a rousing arrangement of "Bile Them Cabbage Down." The voicing of the arrangements accommodated players of different levels. One of the cellists is an adult beginner, which tied in perfectly with the theme of the meeting. I would advise all cello teachers to contact Cindi, e-mail: loo277@aol.com for these ensemble arrangements. Several are available online and I am sure Cindi will be doing more arrangements of her own.

For the second part of the program Kimberly McCollum and Jaque Lyman gave the presentation from the national conference in March, 2007: "Work in Progress: Helping Adult Beginners Get On—And Stay On—The Path to Mastery." We each received two very informative handouts. One of the handouts

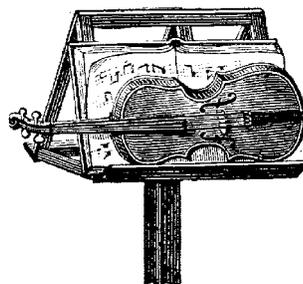
can be given to the prospective adult beginner at the initial interview. I was very impressed with the amount of research Kimberly and Jaque did. The handout includes information about summer music programs for adults and web sites of interest to adult students. In fact, I was so impressed I asked them to allow us to print their pamphlet in *Stringendo* and they agreed! Do not miss it on pages 4, 5, and 6.

It has been my honor to serve you for the last three and a half years. In March, 2008, we will hold our elections for President-Elect and Secretary/Treasurer. I know all of you have benefited by being members of ASTA. Now is your chance to put your great ideas into action. Do you know someone who has great ideas about promoting string education? Or do you yourself have some ideas for teacher workshops? Do you want to represent your fellow members at the next national conference? Serve your state chapter by running for office on the state board. Fill out the nomination form on the following page. You will be glad you did.

Yours in service,
Cindy Swiss

Classified Ads

Do you have something for sale?
Take out a classified ad in *Stringendo*.
\$10 per ad
Maximum 30 words



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

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

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



ASTA MD/DC Chapter Call For Nominations

**Meet new people!
Make professional contacts!
Get your expenses paid for the National Conference!**

**How can you do all this?
Run for office on the MD/DC State Board of ASTA!**



NOMINATION FORM

NAME _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

E-MAIL _____

Check one President Elect _____ Secretary/Treasurer _____

NAME _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

E-MAIL _____

Check one: President Elect _____ Secretary/Treasurer _____

Return to: Anne Marie Patterson
10617 Knollwood Ct.
Waldorf, MD 20603
Or e-mail: annempatterson@aol.com

Nominate yourself and/or a colleague.
Nominees must be members in good standing of ASTA, MD/DC Chapter.
Elections will be held by mail in Spring 2008.

Teaching Adult Beginners

The following is a handout created by Kimberly McCollum and Jaque Lyman for one of two presentations on teaching adult beginners at recent annual ASTA Conferences. They are sharing it with ASTA members who teach adults.

So you think you want to learn to play a stringed instrument . . .



. . . and you already have a driver's license . . .

READ THIS FIRST!

Making the Decision

Many people have always wanted to learn to play a musical instrument; in fact, a common regret among the middle-aged is that they either didn't have the opportunity as children or that they didn't take advantage of it—didn't take it seriously, didn't practice, etc. Many of those people assume that by the time they are thirty, forty, fifty, or beyond, it's too late. It's true that there are obstacles for older beginning students that the youngsters don't usually face. And learning to play violin, viola, cello, or bass as an adult requires a commitment that many adult students underestimate.

But if you are one of those who think you might want to take up the challenge, ***before you run out and buy the instrument, case, and several extra sets of strings***, here are some questions to ask yourself:

Do I have the time to practice?

You, as an adult, probably have myriad responsibilities and time constraints. To make any progress at all on any instrument, you will need to commit to practicing daily for a minimum of half an hour. An hour is preferable.

Do I have reasonable expectations?

Becoming an advanced player on any instrument requires years and years of study and practice, and adult beginners start with physical disadvantages: their muscles did not "grow up" with the postures and movements required to be proficient on the instrument. You have to understand that you will not be applying to Julliard or playing with the Cleveland Orchestra five years from now.

What are my goals for learning to play a stringed instrument?

If you are still reeling from the shock that you won't be recording the Mendelssohn Concerto with the Cleveland Orchestra any time soon, ask yourself why you really want to do this. It's true that new learning experiences will probably help keep our brains healthier as we age. But most of us have more concrete dreams about what we expect to be able to do. Now that we've ruled out the highly unlikely, consider carefully what draws you to the instrument. You may be able to set and reach realistic goals that will give you a great sense of accomplishment.

Will I have patience with my own progress?

Children are neurologically geared to learn. And that's their whole job, as well. They don't spend a lot of time analyzing (and worrying about) their own learning process. But adults do. Many adult students will drive themselves crazy constantly assessing and criticizing their own progress. You will have to be patient with your own learning process.

Do I have physical problems that may affect my playing?

Many of us experience aches and pains and bodily inconveniences as we get older. Playing a stringed instrument is *very* physical, and there will initially be muscle discomfort. This normally will go away once you become more accustomed to playing. But some people will actually want to check with their doctors before starting. Others may simply want to ask themselves if they are willing to put up with the pain.

If you have carefully considered these questions, and you still want to learn a stringed instrument, you may go on to the next page.

Suggestions to Help You Stay on Your String Journey

1. Find a teacher you are comfortable with, and be candid with him or her about your expectations, goals, physical problems, etc. Give your teacher honest feedback if he or she is giving you too much or too little to practice.
2. Discuss with your teacher the types of music you want to play. While he or she may want you to work on classical pieces to learn technique, you should also work on music you enjoy.
3. Get an instrument stand and set your instrument up in a convenient but safe place so that you won't have the added step of getting it out of the case when you have some time to practice. The reason for this will become apparent the first time you come home from work dead tired and that added step of getting the instrument out seems like too big of a mountain to climb.
4. Do warm-up stretches before you start playing; stop and do stretches at some point during your practice time. Then stretch again when you are finished.
5. Work your finger muscles with a Gripmaster or a rubber ball.
6. Map out your week ahead of time and decide on a practice schedule, but try to remain flexible. Don't get discouraged if one week doesn't quite work out.
7. Keep a practice journal.
8. Read George Leonard's book *Mastery*. It will help you learn to love the plateau.
9. Practice left hand and right hand alone.
10. During those times when you are *really* busy and everyone and everything is making demands on your time, just pick up your instrument and play for ten—or even five minutes. It will make you feel better and will help retain your muscle memory.
11. Find someone else to play duets with, even if the other person plays a different instrument. There aren't many group performance outlets for adults, but playing with other people is both enjoyable and educational, and it beats practicing alone all the time.
12. Set concrete and realistic goals with your teacher, and reward yourself with something special when you reach them. For example, if

you really want a pickup for your violin to play that heavy metal solo, reward yourself with one if you get through the first Suzuki book.

13. Subscribe to a magazine like *Strings*. Visit web sites like www.violin.com and commune with other adult beginners.

Reading That Might Help

- Bossuat, Judy Weigert. "Eye Dominance and String Playing: Does it matter?" *American String Teacher*. February 2005: 56.
- Covey, Stephen. *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989.
- Leonard, George. *Mastery*. New York: Plume, 1992.
- Lieberman, Julie Lyonn. *You Are Your Instrument*. New York: Huiksi, 1991.

Programs and Summer Music Festivals for Adult Beginners

1. Harper College www.goforward.harpercollege.edu
Location: Illinois
Classes: String Orchestra for Adult Amateurs, Adult Beginner Group Violin Lessons, Adult Group Violin Lessons (Continuing)
2. The State University of New Jersey (Rutgers) www.rutgers.ce.com
Class: Adult Beginners String Ensemble
Description: This class is intended for the adult beginner who has played before and wants to refine or review his playing.
3. University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa) www.music.ua.edu/cms/adultstrings/
Class: Community Music School String Choices for Adults
Description: Beginning and intermediate levels
4. Cambridge Center for Adult Education www.ccae.org
Location: Massachusetts
Classes: Beginning lessons on all stringed instruments
5. South Shore Conservatory www.southshoreconservatory.org
Location: Massachusetts
Class: String Ensemble
Description: Beginning to advanced levels

6. Kincardine Summer Music Festival www.ksmf.ca
 Location: Ontario, Canada
 Program: Adult String Program
7. Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp www.bluelake.org/adults
 Location: Michigan
 Program: Adult Summer Arts Camp
 Description: All levels of adults on a variety of instruments
8. Artichoke Community Music www.artichokemusic.com/lessons
 Location: Oregon
 Classes: Lessons and workshops
 Description: All levels of lessons on a variety of instruments
9. Treasure Valley Community College www.tvcc.cc.or.us
 Location: Oregon
 Classes: Group lessons
 Description: Beginning and Intermediate instruction for all stringed instruments
10. Neighborhood Music School www.nmsmusicschool.org
 Location: Connecticut
 Classes: Group Violin lessons, Private instruction

Web Sites of Interest for Adult Beginners

1. www.violinist.com
 Description: Discussion boards, blogs, locate teachers, interesting facts and interviews with well-known violinists
2. www.theviolincase.com
 Description: Blogs
3. www.cello.org
 Description: Blogs, forums, tips, ensembles, cellists, and more
4. www.musicforthebenefit.com
 Description: Tips, articles for everyone
5. www.stringworks.com/discussion
 Description: Discussion board
6. www.thesession.org/discussions
 Description: Discussion board
7. www.theviolinsite.com
 Description: List of violin web sites
8. www.violinstudent.com
 Description: Resources for students, including articles, tips, and interesting facts



A Few Insights on Teaching Memorization

by Jody Gatwood

After 30-plus years of teaching, I realize how much I still don't understand about how my students learn, think about, and memorize music. The differences in learning styles among students are huge, yet often subtle and invisible!

Like you, I learned to write my own name very early in life. But it would be absurd to say that I memorized my own name! In fact I did. Not only did I memorize my name, but I came to totally identify with it. This is the analogy I offer a student who asks how to memorize a Paganini Caprice. Those few students who work on these Caprices begin to understand that the work is so deep, intensive, and repetitive that memorization is not an issue. Yet memorization is often an issue with music of longer duration.

I would like to share a couple of unusual memorization assignments I've given to students in the last two years. These were conceived out of my intention to help rebalance some elements of memorization.

Paper Trail

Last year an adult student of mine, a professional orchestra player, told me she had managed to sidestep the issue of memorization with her earlier teachers by concentrating on technique, sonatas, and concertos (often with music). Her childhood teacher had moved her through repertoire so slowly that she now felt insecure about playing without music in front of her.

She was having some trouble memorizing several Kreisler short pieces. I noticed she had a tendency to be distracted by the notes above and below the staff from which she was playing. It seemed to me that perhaps the disjointed nature of music notation—a continuous stream of notes and rests all broken up into lines that fit the width of the page—was somehow distracting her.

So I experimented. I asked her to photocopy one of the Kreisler pieces, take scissors to cut out each line of music, and then tape them together in a long strip of paper. The piece now was only two inches tall, but almost twelve feet long! At my request she taped this music to the walls of her studio at eye level. It now encompassed three walls.

In her daily practicing, she found that each section of music was now location specific. In other words, she stood in front of whatever passage she was practicing. The earlier passages were further to her left, the later ones to her right. Each passage began to feel as if it had a secure location in the room and an orderly, physical relationship with all the other passages.

The result was quite pleasing. After a couple of weeks she was able to play the piece effortlessly by memory and she was excited about the experiment. Interestingly she has continued to memorize music, yet seems no longer in need of the twelve foot long music display.

Sight Reading by Memory!

Another student, a recent undergraduate at my university, memorizes visually. I learned that she actually plays from the music in her mind. Her occasional memory lapses when learning the Bach *Fuga* in A Minor were due to the mental image temporarily getting blurred or going blank. But her later public performance went smoothly.

As an experiment to augment her ability to memorize, I asked her to learn a new short piece by rote. That is, I gave her an audio CD of an original, then unpublished, piece of music from the soundtrack of the movie *Ladies in Lavender* played by Joshua Bell. She learned it without seeing it or writing any music.

What an interesting project! The music flowed beautifully. She played it very well. But when I asked whether she was seeing any music in her mind, she answered, "Yes! But the music is sort of grayed out—not crisp black and white like normal music." I was surprised that she was seeing the music in her mind, having never seen it on paper!

But a photographic memory doesn't always work with music. Ten years ago a student with this type of memory told me that at the beginning of each semester he would take all the textbooks of his courses and read each one once, slowly from cover to cover. After that he would never look in those books again, but would refer to his mental copies during exams. Surprisingly, he could not memorize even

one page of simple violin music, after a semester of trying. His photographic memory was apparently only good for text, not music.

Inter-Relationships of Memory Types

Carl Flesch asserted that there are three types of memory at work simultaneously: aural, muscle and visual. He suggested that when all three types are strong, a performance could be solid if one or even two types of memory failed momentarily.

I think this is a valuable frame in which to look at the issue of memorization. But there are some often overlooked inter-relationships between aural, muscle and visual memory. In the moment when a student looks at printed music, say in sight reading (and there is memorization going on even in sight reading), there are two possible mental processes that will emerge: 1) hearing the music internally, and/or 2) “feeling” the muscle movements necessary to play it.

I have found that the second mental process (muscle memory with mechanical execution) is often predominant. Too many students are translating printed music directly into mechanical (muscle) instructions and then listening to the result, not internally, but externally. External listening, I say, is “past based” since the sounds from the violin always exist in the past (not quite in the present). When this mode of playing is habitual it becomes difficult to improvise or to “play by ear” because the aural component is passive. Some years ago, I asked a student to change her vibrato in a lyrical concerto passage that she did quite well. But when I asked her, “How did that sound to you?” she answered to my horror, “I wasn’t listening; I was too busy managing the vibrato.”

It could be said that internal listening is “future based”, existing as a possibility for the immediate future. A student who is surrendering to the possibility they hear internally is usually the one for whom violin playing is less of a task and more of a pleasurable process of expression and discovery. Interestingly, when the internal intonation is true and precise (revealed in only 10 seconds of singing) the external intonation will tend to reflect to some degree that trueness. But this only occurs when the aural memory is predominant.

I have found that a student whose aural memory is not dominant can often make it temporarily dominant just by the simple act of singing with their voice, because singing is possible only when the

singer hears music internally before opening her mouth. In the difficult cases of teaching violin, I have found that having a student sing a short passage can temporarily open an internal window of active listening, perhaps for 45 seconds, and result in a temporary reorganization of the student’s intonation. Sometimes much good work can be done by repeatedly opening that 45-second window.

Multiple Intelligences

I’m attempting to inquire into some fundamental aspects of memorization. One could go much further by making some distinctions between the “multiple intelligences” written about by Howard Gardner (e.g., verbal, visual/spatial, musical, mathematical, kinesthetic, etc.) and the interactions of these intelligences in the study and memorization of music. For example, my student who walked around the room practicing the piece displayed on three walls was probably making new connections between her visual/spatial, musical, and kinesthetic abilities. And the student who learned a piece by rote, without having seen the music, was likely developing a more predominantly aural orientation to her playing.

I’m skipping over other dimensions of memorization such as what I call the hierarchy of rhythmic importance, imagination, story and image, musical character, teacher-student chemistry, peer support, fragmentation versus integration, micro and macro structures in music, etc. But I hope something here might contribute or provoke further inquiry into the mystery of memorization and into the awesome capacity of the human mind.

Ray Kurzweil, inventor, futurist and author of *The Singularity is Near*, has projected current-day exponential progress in technology far into the future. He boldly predicts the “reverse engineering” of the human brain by 2027. I have no doubt that in the coming years scientists will have many surprises awaiting them as they scan the brains of string players!



Violinist Jody Gatwood, who teaches at the Catholic University of America, has recorded chamber music for Sony and EMI. He was praised by Yehudi Menuhin as “a truly outstanding violinist,” and by the Washington Post as a “world-class musician.” He was named “Teacher of the Year” in 1996 by the American String Teachers Association, MD/ DC Chapter.

The Pittsburgh Jazz and Fiddle Camp

by Cindi Kornhaus

As summer is the time for our students to go off to fun camps, I too wanted to participate in going to a camp! I chose what I knew to be an exceptional one, because I'd been there two years ago: the Pittsburgh Jazz and Fiddle Camp at Duquesne University. The great thing about this camp is the ludicrous number of options to choose from that makes it perfect for virtually anyone. It has a Teacher Training Track, and three levels of each performing ensemble: rock, jazz, fiddle, and world music. There are also electives such as Free Improv, Marketing 101, Cello and Violin/Viola Master Class, Jazz Theory, and Eastern European Folk Jam.

A typical day here might be: Wake up to Jan Farrar-Royce's spunky energy to get you fiddling by ear, transport yourself to Africa and then Latin America all within the hour in Julie Lyon-Lieberman's class, explore the possibilities of sounds you can make on your instrument with Matt Turner, then continue to 'rock out' with Matt. After lunch, you can have a small class with Robert Gardner or Roy Sonne for a more intimate setting, and then you might finish the day off with Martin Norgaard to learn about and practice the art of soloing. In the evenings, you could come back and participate in one of the "jams" so that you could practice what you learned during the day. I especially enjoyed the evening of the Faculty Recital.

The Teacher Training Track and exceptional faculty—Martin Norgaard, Julie Lyon-Lieberman, Jan Farrar-Royce and Roy Sonne—are what lured me there two years ago. Robert Gardner from Penn State and the improvising cellist Matt Turner were an additional bonus this year. One thing is for sure: I left a better teacher than when I arrived. Since then, I have used Norgaard's books and orchestra pieces with my classes with great success because I learned exactly how to teach the students to improvise successfully on his tunes. The Teacher Training Track includes jazz, world music, and fiddling and I learned a lot from each of them.

This year I decided to focus more on my own playing in the jazz idiom and was involved with the various playing ensembles. I cannot tell you how humbling it was to have middle and high school

students playing/improvising better than I do. As badly as I wanted to hide and run away, I *forced* myself to improvise at every opportunity. It was the only way to get better, and if I was going to mess up—which I knew I would but was OK with—this was the supportive environment in which to do so.

The most bizarre thing happened every time I improvised. I had an out-of-body experience of entering an empty, void of all-that-was, pitch-dark room that I was transported to. (By aliens?) As soon as my improv solo was done, however, I was just as suddenly back in my body. I couldn't remember a single thing that I had just played, and was I doing any weird faces? But based on the people smiling at me, I figured it must have been OK—or else they were just being nice...

For the first three days, my goal for myself was *not* to think about the scale or arpeggio that went with the chords, or using cool rhythms and leaving space, or my bowing or ghosting notes, or doing the "vibratrill" that was taught there, plus all the things that everyone else was worried about; it was simply NOT TO ENTER THE DARK CAVE...

I was so excited the morning when I solo'd and stayed present in the room! I didn't play anything particularly impressive; but I was not transported, and for that I was so proud of myself. I laugh when I remember the looks on the teachers' faces when I exclaimed, "Guess what! I didn't enter the cave today when I solo'd!" I don't think they had a clue as to what I was talking about, but they congratulated me anyway.

After that, it was emotional ups and downs for me, because then I started focusing on all the other aspects of making a 'good' solo. I felt like crying in frustration when I got lost on "When the Saints Go Marching In", but Roy's encouraging smile helped me pick my ego up off the floor and keep trying. On the other hand, there were a few times where I rather liked the musical ideas that I played and felt like there might be some ray of hope that I might be able to play with other jazz musicians once I got home to Maryland.

The environment of this camp is very special because of the exceptional faculty and students and

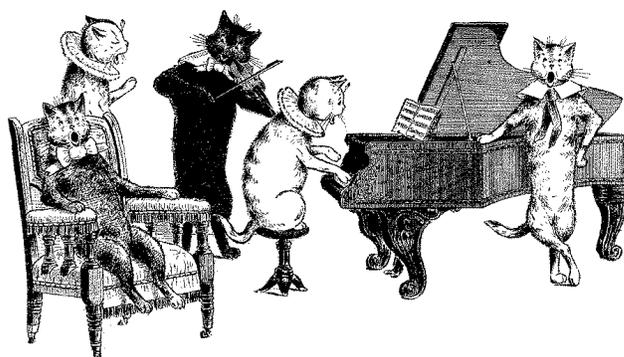
teachers who are drawn to it. Even the man behind the scenes who organizes the whole thing, Steve Benham, is present every day, encouraging everyone with his smile and making sure that everyone has what they need. The camp is diverse in the styles of music offered, but at the same time, everyone offers the supportive environment that is essential to this type of risk-taking in music.

I saw people that I knew from two years ago at this camp, and I'm sure that I will see them again next year when I go. Next year's dates are Monday, July 14 through Friday, July 18, 2008. Their website is www.pittsburghjazzandfiddle.org if you're interested in finding out more. I highly recommend

this affordable camp to those who want to learn how to teach other styles in their classroom, and to people of any age who want to learn how to play other styles in a supportive environment.



Cindi Kornhaus is the membership chair for ASTA MD/DC Chapter. She is an instrumental music teacher at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. She is Principal Cellist in the Capital City Symphony, McLean Orchestra and subs for other groups in Maryland and the District of Columbia. She has conducted the CCS Chamber Ensemble and has formed her own performing cello quartet.





PRESS RELEASE

APPLICATIONS FOR NEW STRING PROJECT SITES:

\$10,000 first year; up to \$25,000 over five years

Deadline: November 16, 2007

The National String Project Consortium (NSPC) is now accepting applications to start new String Project sites at universities in order to address the string teacher shortage. The deadline for this round of applications is November 16, 2007. Each new String Project will receive \$10,000 from grants to start their program in the first year.

The National String Project Consortium is a coalition of String Project sites based at colleges and universities across the United States. The NSPC is dedicated to increasing the number of children playing stringed instruments, and addressing the critical shortage of string teachers in the U.S.

The NSPC now consists of 30 String Projects at universities throughout the United States. These programs are training about 250 string teachers each year. Recent grants from NAMM, the D'Addario Foundation, and the Music Lives Foundation have enabled new String Projects to be created at Baylor University, Virginia Tech, University of New Hampshire, Central Washington University and James Madison University. For more information and the application form, go to the website at <http://www.stringprojects.org> or contact Robert Jesselson at 803-777-2033 or RJesselson@Mozart.sc.edu

Which Is Better—New or Old?

A short discussion of the vagaries of stringed instruments, their age, their prices, and how to choose one

by Kevin Cardiff

One of the most commonly asked questions is whether new instruments or old ones are “better”. The simple answer is, neither. There are some fine old instruments and definitely some bad ones. The same is true of newer instruments. So how can string players be sure they are making an informed decision when looking for an instrument?

STEP ONE: Weigh the Pros and Cons

Old instruments: Pros

1. They may have some value as an investment, and appreciate in value over time. Some instruments, particularly those by some modern Italian makers, have had a large price increase in recent years. However, the auction prices of Strads have actually declined in the past five years.
2. They may have the type of tone you want. Also, the tone may be more consistent, since any changes have happened years ago.
3. Prestige, a certain pride of ownership. You can say “I have a violin by _____ worth \$_____.”

Old instruments: Cons

1. The condition probably will not be perfect.
2. Maintenance will probably cost more, as older instruments tend to react more severely to temperature and humidity changes. Also, any existing repairs will have to be updated as time goes by. Insurance could also be more expensive.
3. The more it is worth, the longer it may take to sell it when the time comes. The market for a \$100,000 violin, for example, is really quite small, and sales fluctuate with changes in the market, much as real estate does.
4. Price. An old instrument that really is a good investment will be much more expensive than a fine new handmade violin. This is because instruments by famous old master violin makers tend to have historical and/or antique value.
5. Questionable authenticity. The potential buyer must beware of fakes and insist on a certificate from one of the major appraisers.

New Instruments: Pros

1. May have exactly the tone you want.
2. May go up in value over time.
3. Will probably have less maintenance than older instrument because condition is perfect. No need to update or refurbish old repairs.
4. In the future, it can most likely be traded for another violin by the same maker. (This is something I do.) It should also be easier to sell.
5. Lower cost. The average handmade new violin, by a well-respected maker costs approximately \$10,000 to \$12,000.
6. Authenticity is usually not a problem, especially if one is buying from the maker.

New instruments: Cons

1. The tone may change in the first few years. There is a definite “breaking in” period.
2. New instruments are not really meant to be investments. The price is a reflection of what the maker can get for his work.
3. Lacks “snob appeal,” usually.

STEP TWO:

Decide what are the most important factors for you in your situation: what kind of player you are, is “snob appeal” important, do you like to switch instruments frequently, etc. For instance, a professional orchestral player may not want the brightest, loudest violin for section work, because he/she may not want to stick out. On the other hand, a string quartet player may want more of a “solo sound.” Relative beginners may not want anything too expensive until they are sure that they will continue playing. A person who likes to change instruments often will probably want something that is easier to sell or trade.

STEP THREE:

Decide what price range is possible for you. There are *many* very good sounding violins in the range of \$2,000–\$3,000. These tend to be rather generic German violins, with good workmanship, but not a

lot of investment value. On the other hand, should one ever purchase a violin solely as an investment? In my opinion, no. All the collectors I have known have collected for the sheer love of the violin; many don't even know the value of the instruments they have. The fact that some of these instruments go up in value over time is usually not really important to them. Also, it is not easy to convert a violin to cash. A violin as an investment does not have the liquidity of, say, stocks. If I own a stock that isn't doing well, I can easily call my stock broker and sell it. It's not easy to sell an expensive instrument quickly.

STEP FOUR:

Within your price range, choose a violin, viola or cello that you like the sound of, that responds the way you like, and also looks pleasing to your eye. Cosmetic appearance is also important! Lastly, always make sure the condition is topnotch.

CONCLUSIONS:

It has been my experience that many professional violinists, violists and cellists have increasingly been purchasing newer instruments. While I acknowledge that there are some great old stringed instruments out there, it's not really a good thing for players that they

are so costly. The high prices of classical Cremonese instruments are a direct result of competitive bidding in the auction market, along with their scarcity. This price inflation simply makes it much more difficult for working musicians to afford these instruments. Also, one must keep in mind that for musicians, a violin, viola, or cello is their most important tool. The more reliable the tool is, the more useful it is.

However, if you are an avid collector of stringed instruments, the history, the tone, the "charm" of an older violin, viola or cello may be just what you need. Be prepared to pay more for it, though, and be sure it has good authentication. Choosing an instrument is, finally, a matter of whether you can find a violin, viola, or cello with which you can fall in love.



Kevin Cardiff, before starting his second career as a violin maker nearly twenty years ago, spent 17 years in professional orchestras, including the Rochester Philharmonic and Baltimore Symphony. He is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and Yale University, and has received two "Baltimore's Best" awards, for his hand-made violins, and for string instrument repair.



Triple Time

by Dorothy Barth

June, 2007. Three performances in two days marked last weekend as a milestone in my gigging career. I'd fantasized about such an exhilarating scenario. Repeated every week, it would ensure that I'd never need a day job again.

Enhancing my excitement and terror was the knowledge that all three performances would occur in intimate settings (where people might really be able to hear me) and were booked on short notice. Two weeks' notice for the Wine Country home wedding and for the reception at the Tuscan restaurant. A mere three days' notice for the dinner celebration at one of San Francisco's most luxurious hotels.

To harness my anxieties about the unknown audience and spaces I would be gracing with violin music, I invited myself to observe each upcoming event with *detached curiosity*, even while playing (I'd heard that term in an online meditation given by my HMO and hoped it might serve performance situations). My posture of detached curiosity would allow me to survey the quirky causes and symptoms of performance anxiety.

Private Dining Room

As the last shall be the first, the reception booked just three days earlier began my weekend of performances. With such short notice, there would be no time to worry, one might think. But where there is a will, there is a way, and where there are causes, they can be chewed over.

Great unknown. Since our Baylink ferry only runs until early evening, I determined I would need my husband Bert to drive me and my two violins to the sumptuous downtown San Francisco hotel. Even if that meant commuting to work with him and spending more than half the day in an empty office previewing the performance in my head while he addressed other people's anxieties. We arrived at the hotel with several hours to spare—in fact, by the time the soiree began, I'd had 12 hours to think about it, and given the travel plans, no time to practice.

Instrument amnesia. The lack of practice prompted a concern that when I opened my violin case that

evening, I might not recognize the instrument inside it (similar to the fear of encountering a word you've spelled correctly your whole life and imagining it suddenly foreign and slightly ridiculous).

Surprises. The client had called two days earlier with repertory requests (her father, the guest of honor, was picky about music and would likely have further requests, she had warned me). I'd managed to download his special ballad and assembled a number of his favorite continental love songs. The event, a surprise birthday and engagement party, took place in the hotel restaurant's long and opulent private dining room, where I placed myself discreetly at one end in the corner. Wow them with understatement, Bert had suggested.

Imagine my startled surprise, when the honored guest, upon learning my name, thunderously announced that I was to play "Over the Rainbow." I shimmied my way out, explaining I'd only brought love songs for this romantic occasion. Eventually, I was asked to play the ballad I had been requested to obtain and which would set the scene for the marriage proposal. It met with scant sentimental response, and as I was dismissed, along with the serving staff, for the moment of the proposal, I wondered, *with detached curiosity*, whether I'd delivered the right song. Summoned back ten minutes later to finish the set, I was again requested to perform a special selection, this time a piece I'd already played. I was grateful to oblige with another round of "La Vie En Rose."

The arrival of the second course was my cue to stop playing. As I began to leave, the guest of honor urged all to applaud, and before exiting the narrow dining room, I returned to shake his hand and to congratulate him on his engagement, which resulted in hearty laughter all around. Had I encountered royalty whose hand I was not supposed to shake?

Gothic guest. In what guise did the unwelcome specter Performance Anxiety appear during the first of my three musical adventures? The repertory of symptoms visited upon me felt all too familiar:

He dampened my left hand. This had an immobilizing

effect, tightening vibrato, especially on the fourth finger, and hampering free shifting, which in turn affected intonation.

He curbed my creativity. I routinely switch octaves to add variety to ballads, but the over-heated left hand prevented me from applying this technique as frequently as I would have wished to. I also felt less adventurous in my ability to add cadential flourishes.

He stole the spring from my bowing. As one hand goes, so goes the other. Though my bow arm did not tremble, spiccato bowing was adversely affected, rendering certain passages of “Schön Rosmarin” not nearly as schön. Inelastic bowing aggravated rhythmic inaccuracies, and the tension made it more difficult to improvise interesting legato bowings.

Did anybody else notice the unwelcome visitor? I believe he escaped undetected; my demure dinner music was enjoyed and may well result in future engagements.

Vineyard

The following afternoon, headache intact from the previous night’s revelries (even though I didn’t partake of them in a true sense), we drove to Napa for a small family wedding. Bert said he was quite sure he knew where the home was—a modest development on the outskirts of town. Today, I came armed with a vial of talcum powder to combat a possible reoccurrence of the previous night’s sticky hand syndrome.

Maze. Winding through the maze of narrow streets, flanked by vineyards, we soon realized our idea of the location had been entirely incorrect and were glad we’d given ourselves an extra hour to arrive. The roads turned hilly and reclusive, and eventually we arrived at our destination, a spectacular vineyard home whose fruits supplied the ingredients for a premium cabernet. I exited the car to ring the security system at the gated entrance and was buzzed in. Halfway through the entryway, the gates shut on each side of our car in Venus flytrap fashion. A perilous beginning—we hadn’t been fast enough. With *detached curiosity*, I considered what damage had just been done to our late model vehicle.

Medley. Safely inside the gate (our car emerged unscathed), I surveyed my play list. For a modestly conceived wedding on such short notice, the bride had made some quite specific demands:

The “Preludio” from Bach’s *Second Cello Suite*, selections from Vivaldi’s *Seasons*, movements from several Vivaldi *Concerti Grossi* (I managed to come up with the D Minor theme), and the “Rondo alla Turca” movement from a Mozart piano sonata, excavated from a gig book (only hours earlier, Bert had assured me that the latter sounded awful on violin). For the remainder, the bride had requested mostly Baroque music, except for a Sinatra ballad, a Righteous Brothers song, and “As Time Goes By.” I wondered how exactly to juxtapose this medley of genres to best effect.

Short season. I like playing Vivaldi’s *Seasons* by season, but the bride had requested the “Largo” from *Winter* as part of the prelude for this late spring ceremony. I rendered it delicately, accompanied by a lusty chorus of vineyard crows. As the minister marched quite suddenly to his purple-flowered pulpit arch on the lawn, I continued to gently usher the “Largo” to its conclusion. I was waved off sharply; it was time for the bride, who had arrived by limo only minutes earlier, to enter. So much for my teacher’s subtle fingerings—the remainder of the “Largo” would languish unheard.

Did Performance Anxiety find an opportune setting to pay a return visit? The gathering was just as intimate, but the outdoor space with its wraparound deck was more expansive, which helped somewhat to keep him at bay. The talcum powder, which Bert judiciously tossed at me at strategic intervals, was a helpful defense but not quite a match against another adversary, the Napa heat.

Tuscan Table

No time to linger, for I had one more gig tonight. I rushed home, changed into something slightly more flamboyant, and even drank a half glass of chardonnay. Much of my gear was already in the car, and I did not need to refresh my makeup—the logistics were getting less complicated. I observed with *detached curiosity* that I felt almost relaxed. I visualized the jazz pianist in the lobby the previous night.

“Let him be your inspiration,” Bert had suggested. “He plays calmly, looks around and thinks a little between each piece, then begins again, totally cool.”

Unbearable darkness. The setting was an intimate dinner in the Tuscan restaurant’s courtyard. Alas,

in my improved, more relaxed state, I'd neglected to bring my battery-operated stand light, and there was little remaining daylight. The large heat lamp did not promise to be a viable alternative either for me or my violin. Bert once again came to the rescue, dashing off on white steed. *With detached curiosity*, I wondered whether he would return in time to save the evening. He rose to the occasion, galloping in with an assortment of battery-powered lights purchased at a nearby Radio Shack. Were it not for his heroism, my Tuscan gig might have lasted a mere half hour.

Water music. This time it was not crows that accompanied the music but the fountains of a large reflecting pool that separated the tables on each side of the courtyard. I worried whether water might escape and flood my violin but was assured its trajectory would remain vertical. The wait staff was forced to maneuver around me for the next two hours but took the imposition on their space with good humor.

The talcum powder worked better in the evening setting. I could not figure out how to take a break, and my back was somewhat the worse for that. The group was less intimidating than the private dining room crowd. The splashing water, Bert said, enhanced the performance, providing a mellow accompaniment to the violin.

Curtain Call

The Tuscan celebration proved the most relaxing of the trio of events, and the music was again well received. Perhaps Performance Anxiety runs out of steam as performing gains momentum.

Now, if I were to tally the number of errors made during my approximately 5.5 hours of playing time over these two days, I'd really have cause for anxiety. Judging the success of a musical experience by its accuracy alone, I would be too inhibited to perform ever again but would take lessons infinitely with a discerning teacher to ensure that no error trespasses against the sacred score.

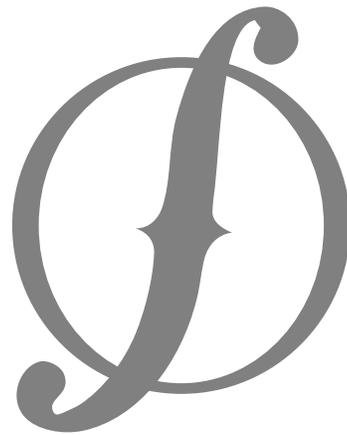
I remember such lessons well. Though they frightened me as a child, as an adult student, I appreciated the purity of the experience, the validation in being assigned noble and difficult pieces, the immersion in a few great works rather than the superficial sight reading of many, and last but not least, the therapeutic luxury of having someone's undivided attention for an entire hour.

But I also remember an observation made to me already two decades earlier by someone with a philosophical bent: "The curtain went up a long time ago."

Thus it may be enough at times to let errors scatter where they may and to trust that sufficient charm remains. And thereby get a little closer to purchasing the violin you may remember from a previous story.



Dorothy Barth's writing has been published in the U.S., England, Australia and South Africa. Triple Time completes her trilogy of personal essays for Stringendo. Dorothy's web site resides at www.flutesoffancy.com.



A Night of Premieres

Loudoun County Public Schools Concert

A Review

by Lynne Denig

Every now and then, one attends a concert that leaves one breathless with the creative and artistic breadth displayed by the conductors and with a wish that, if one could do life over again, it would be to have such conductors as in charge of your musical training. Such was my impression of the Loudoun County String Orchestra Concert on June 7, 2007, at the Heritage High School Auditorium in Leesburg, Virginia.

This end-of-year concert represented the students of Kevin Berdine and Mike Gerdes from roughly grade 6 to seniors in high school. The students, numbering 31 violins, 14 violas, 14 cellos, and (yes!) 7 basses (6 of whom played in the advanced ensemble and full orchestra!), were eventually joined by a full complement of winds for the final selections. Works on the concert ranged from standard classical compositions such as Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" to newly-composed works by Leo R. Van Asten and student composer Alex Boyd. Styles represented were classical, jazz, Latin, and film music. And how the pieces were presented was just as eclectic.

The advanced group, actually the combined forces of string students from Loudoun Valley High School, Heritage High School, and Harmony Intermediate School opened the concert with *Symphony for Strings No. 1: Sinfonia* by Jeffrey Bishop, Berdine conducting, and *Tango Dos Sonhos* by Susan Day, Gerdes conducting. Gerdes continued, leading his After School Strings for the Beethoven mentioned above, *Can-Can* by Offenbach/Gillespie, and "Frere Jacques" (traditional French), rounding this section of the program out with Suzuki's variations on "Twinkle," led again by Berdine. The large stage was packed with string players at this point.

At the end of the "Twinkle" variations, the advanced group launched directly into the Mozart/Longfield/Warner (Christine, student violist) *Variations* and the younger students quietly filed off into the wings and then into the auditorium while

the group onstage displayed its abilities in the more complicated variations. Qualities and problems seen in this piece remained throughout the rest of the concert: wonderful phrasing, great tempos, spirit de corps, great concentration, and rhythmic, bowing and articulation vagaries, the last three of which are not uncommon to student groups.

The jazz element in the concert was heard in Matt Turner's "Stargazer" with principal bassist Ben Walter, whose solo exhibited knowledge of the idiom and very admirable technical fluency. Trying her hand at improvisation also was principal violist Elizabeth Hillis.

Student composer, Alex Boyd, a junior at Loudoun Valley High School, and principal cellist of the orchestra, exchanged places with Berdine, also a cellist, and led his peers in his composition *Plutonian Shore*, a nicely-crafted piece harmonically and formally that contained idiomatic and thoughtful writing for the strings. While one could have wished for more fluidity in the conducting style, the technique was sufficient to masterfully bring the strings through many changes of tempo and through the various rhythmic and lyrical themes.

The greatest challenge for the group of the evening, and the most substantial piece musically was *Bailes Para Orquestra* by Richard Meyer, a work with extensive solo parts for two violins, the soloists in this case being Alexandra Vangsnes, and Jessica Itkin. Both soloists' well-rehearsed parts shone throughout, Alexandra's timbre being the clearer and focused of the two, although this could have been because of the placement of the Jessica behind Alexandra. Hall acoustics, which tended to favor any instrument seated next to the orchestra shell and to swallow anything distant from it, also played into string tone clarity for the evening. That said, all orchestra directors should take note that Heritage's auditorium and stage are very accommodating for orchestra concerts, and can seat a sizeable group.

Berdine chose this night to also focus on another bass soloist, Jennifer Wilkerson, who played Berdine's transcription of a slow movement from the *Sonata in E Minor* by Marcello. Despite greatly reduced forces in the accompanying strings, this performance also was nearly lost perhaps because of the acoustics of the hall, but could have been further enhanced by even better bow placement, greater use of vibrato, and even finer intonation on the part of the soloist.

Berdine's friend, former college roommate, and best man at his wedding, Leo R. Van Asten, was commissioned by Berdine to compose the *Barrington Symphony, Op. 23* for the advanced group. This four-movement Mozart-like work for full orchestra made use of classical symphony forms. The musicians seemingly loved the piece and played it with ease.

Least successful on the program was Van Asten's *Funeral March*, a piece written in 1999 with Van Asten playing the piano part. The piece's greatest problem was that the various musical ideas seemed to need more cohesiveness internally and in a larger sense within the piece as a whole. Balance problems also plagued this piece; much more tympani was needed.

Finishing the concert was Badelt and Ricketts' *Pirates of the Caribbean*. With all of the swaggering themes and style, the audience had no problem rising to their feet for a standing ovation at the end. Particularly outstanding was the lower brass section whose tight ensemble playing raised the bar for the entire orchestra.

I was particularly proud to be an educator that evening, to see how creatively a concert can be put together, how the community rallied around their young players and the conductors, how various genres can be effectively used, to see the effect of good university string teaching (kudos to Lawrence Conservatory in Appleton, Wisconsin) on the conductors, and the wildfire-like enthusiasm that was spread to the students in the ensembles.

It is good to hear that the Loudoun County Board of Education is now going to add sixth-grade strings to the existing seventh- and eighth-grade beginning strings programs. Given the huge growth spurt in the area, families will be looking for enhanced quality of life in the presence of string programs for their children.

The concert rode on the fine musicianship, enthusiasm for the students, love for music,

showmanship, and good community relations exhibited by Berdine. His conducting technique is one of the more solid among orchestra directors in our area, and his place in the hearts of the students and community seemingly deeply etched. Sadly, he and his wife who is also a teacher will be leaving the area to teach in Minnesota where they will both have jobs close to home. The entire program will be continued by Mike Gerdes.



Lynne Denig has taught in private studios, community music schools, and universities in the United States, Europe, and Africa. Her leadership positions have included President of the Virginia String Teachers Association, creator and Board President of The Youth Orchestras of Fairfax, Chair of Virginia's Certificate Program for Strings, creator and chair of VASTA's recital series, creator of the mentor program, Future Teachers Today, and co-creator of the Northern Virginia String Teachers Consortium. She is a member of ASTA's Committee on Studio Instruction, co-author of the CP Handbook, and writes regular articles for VASTA's Fingerboard and for the American String Teacher Journal. She is a regular conference presenter and author on musician and studio health for ASTA, VASTA, and NVMTA. Lynne and Gary Frisch operate the business Customized Violin and Viola Chinrests in Fairfax and Falls Church, Virginia.



Friday Morning Music Club

High School Competition for Strings (Grades 9–12)

The **FMMC High School Competition for Strings** (in memory of Gus Johansen) will be held Saturday, November 3, 2007, at the Sumner School and Museum, 1201 17th Street, Washington, D.C.

Prize awards are \$700, \$500 and \$300. First Prize winner will participate in a recital at Strathmore Hall on Friday, November 23, 2007. Other prize winners will have an opportunity to perform in FMMC events throughout the year.

The deadline for applications is October 15, 2007.

For information please call Suzanne Richardson, 202-232-4355 or email: torichardson@verizon.net.

The FMMC High School String Competition attracts many of the finest string players in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Please note: awards have gone up this year!







The Lighter Side



A violin player is on the phone with his agent. He is concerned that he hasn't had a gig in a while. His agent tells him, "Listen, there aren't many gigs out there, but I found you something. I got you a gig bagging lions."

To which the violin player says, "What does that have to do with my playing?"

The agent then says "Look, the gig pays \$100 for each lion that you bag, don't worry about playing." At this point the violin player will take anything so he hangs up and flies to Africa.

Not wanting to miss any practice time, he takes his violin with him while looking for the lions. He notices a lion coming toward him and the only thing that he can think of doing is playing his violin. He starts to play a beautiful ballad. He then notices that the lion starts to get sleepy and eventually goes to sleep. He grabs the lion, bags him, and throws him in the back of his truck. He goes a little further and sees another lion. Again he plays a beautiful ballad and again the lion falls asleep. This goes on all afternoon. The violin player has 99 lions in his truck when he sees another. He says to himself, "What the heck, one more won't hurt".

He starts to play his ballad and notices that the lion is not paying any attention to him so the violin player plays louder. The lion starts to run toward him. The violin player plays faster and faster but the lion keeps coming toward him. The lion jumps on the violin player and eats him.

One of the lions in the back of the truck turns to another lion and says, "See, I told you that when he gets to the deaf one the gig would be over!"



The following program notes are from an unidentified recital.

Tonight's page turner, Ruth Spelke, studied under Ivan Schmertnick at the Boris Nitsky School of Page Turning in Philadelphia. She has been turning pages here and abroad for many years for some of the world's leading pianists.

In 1998, Ms. Spelke won the Wilson Page Turning Scholarship, which sent her to Israel to study page turning from left to right. She is winner of the 1994 Rimsky Korsakov *Flight of the Bumblebee Prestissimo Medal*, having turned 47 pages in an unprecedented 32 seconds. She was also a 1993 silver medalist at the Klutz Musical Page Pickup Competition: contestants retrieve and rearrange a musical score dropped from a Yamaha. Ms. Spelke excelled in "grace, swiftness, and especially poise."

For techniques, Ms. Spelke performs both the finger-licking and the bent-page corner methods. She works from a standard left bench position, and is the originator of the dipped-elbow page snatch, a style used to avoid obscuring the pianist's view of the music. She is page-turner-in-residence in Fairfield Iowa, where she occupies the coveted Alfred Hitchcock Chair at the Fairfield Page Turning Institute.

Ms. Spelke is married, and has a nice house on a lake.



Two violinists make a pact that whoever dies first, he will contact the other and tell him what life in Heaven is like. Poor Max has a heart attack and dies.

He manages to make contact with Abe the next day.

Abe says, "I can't believe this worked! So what is it like in Heaven?"

Max replies, "Well, it's great, but I've got good news, and I've got bad news. The good news is that there's a fantastic orchestra up here, and in fact, we're playing *Sheherezade*, your favorite piece, tomorrow night!"

Abe says, "So what's the bad news?"

Max replies, "Well, you're booked to play the solo!"



Benefits of ASTA Membership

American String Teacher Journal

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

National Foundation to Promote String Teaching and Playing

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

Comprehensive Website at www.astaweb.com

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

Online Discussion Groups

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

Access to String Employment Opportunities

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

National High School Honors Orchestra

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

Cutting-Edge Publications

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

State Chapter Membership

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

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

Conferences

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

Professional Development Documentation Program

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

Institutional Members

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

String Industry Council

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

Advocacy and Outreach

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