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President's Message

Last night I received my phone call from an ASTA National board member to report on the health of string teaching in our state. I was very happy to list the many activities all of you organize. I know the All-County and All-State festivals mean a lot to my students. The Certificate Program for Strings is growing in our state with new locations and more participation.

By the time you read this we will have held our Annual Meeting at the lovely home of our President-Elect, Dorée Huneven. I am planning on seeing many of you there to enjoy the beautiful music from the cello ensemble and get new ideas for teaching adult beginners from our presenters, Kimberly McCollum and Jacque Lyman. In our busy schedules we tend to forget how invigorating it is to spend time with our colleagues to exchange ideas and just to get to know each other.

Of special note in this issue are the reports from the National Conference. Please take time to read Dorée's article. If you didn't attend the conference reading about it is the next best thing. When I attended last year I came back with so many good ideas and new repertoire that have helped me throughout the year.

In service to you,
Cindy Swiss



Note from Editor

Welcome to the Spring 2007 *Stringendo*, the third issue I have edited.

There are some marvelous articles herein, from regular and new contributors. See Pat Braunlich's list of her students' favorite pieces, culled over a teaching lifetime. Dan Levitov, professor of cello at Peabody, gives his take on private lessons and how they fit into his life, and Kimberly McCollum discusses teaching adult beginners. Dorothy Barth keeps a fanciful scorecard determining how much she might be entitled to spend on an instrument, and Kevin Cardiff, instrument maker, focuses on what causes buzzes. Vince Patterson describes a trip to Cremona, and Lorraine Combs's son writes about the electric bass! Of course you won't want to miss my report on the 2007 ASTA National Convention in Detroit.

Enjoy, everyone, and please think of what *you* would like to write for our next issue!

Dorée Huneven

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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.

Notes From The 2007 ASTA National Conference in Detroit

by Dorée Huneven

As President-elect of the MD/DC Chapter of ASTA, I attended the 2007 National Conference from March 7–10, 2007, in Detroit, Michigan. It was a superbly organized and entertaining grand event; also I gained two outstanding contributions to my professional development. The first was to give me a great appreciation of what ASTA does for string teachers in America, and the second was to enlarge my personal knowledge of string teaching.

I. State Leadership Workshop

I attended the State Leadership Workshop in the place of Cindy Swiss, our chapter President, on Wednesday, March 7, a day before the conference actually got under way. To my delight, I was seated at the same table as Jeffrey Solow, President-elect of ASTA and a cello soloist hero from my youth in Los Angeles. Although I was starving, and thrown totally off-balance by the sudden plunge into my new leadership position, my attention was drawn by the agenda of the meeting, which touched on the huge number of services ASTA offers to its members and to its state chapters. The newest and most vital is the help in *advocating for string education* in the form of a downloadable power point presentation. Any string teachers whose school systems are threatening to cut their string programs would benefit from viewing and using this extremely well-done presentation: it is easy to use, and powerfully convincing. It could also work to usher in a string program. *Attention D.C. residents and Marylanders:* please check the ASTA website, www.astaweb.com, as there is much more valuable information regarding the Certificate Program for Strings, the Teacher Enhancement Program, ASTA outreach, applying for special projects grants, etc.

There was also quite a lot of encouragement for us to involve you, the members of our state chapter, in supportive and interesting activities. I sincerely hope that all of you reading this will ponder this question: **What would you like to do with your string teaching that you cannot do alone?** ASTA's local chapter can help! And, be warned: I will be

phoning you in the near future to ask for ideas and suggestions!

II. Opening Ceremonies

The conference itself was given a vibrant beginning with a **keynote speech** by Aaron Dworkin, the founder/president of The Sphinx Organization. His speech was entitled “Breaking the Sound Barrier: The Sphinx Organization and Diversity in Classical Music.” Mr. Dworkin is a self-described walking chunk of diversity: black Jehovah's Witness, white Irish Catholic and Jewish. A charming and suave speaker, he also gave sobering statistics detailing the low number of African Americans and Hispanics in classical music today, and what The Sphinx Organization is doing about it. I'm sure it would be of great interest to everyone to visit the two websites, www.sphinxmusic.org and www.sphinxkids.org.

Suzuki-trained string players from Geri Arnold's Michigan program provided musical entertainment, beginning with a three-part arrangement in G major of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” It started with a cascade of G major scales—aha! Good idea, sneaking in that scale practice! After the keynote address, they played a cunning arrangement, again in three parts, of Monti's *Czardas*. It was very clever, in that the three parts were divided according to difficulty, so even 5- and 6-year olds could play, and frequent rubati were no problem due to three adult leaders. “I guess Suzuki Method works,” was an overheard comment.

III. Educational Sessions

The conference educational sessions were extremely varied, and at times it was maddeningly difficult to choose among competing hourly presentations. The site of the conference, Renaissance Center Building (also known as “The Ren Cen”) also provided entertaining challenges to my usually very good sense of direction. With Escher-like spirals, escalators seemingly leading to nowhere, and floors mysteriously existing with no apparent access, I, along with most other people, had trouble finding my way around, even after three days. But as in

high school, I found myself getting into a directional groove, and streamed into workshops with like-minded people with similar interests. In my case, these centered around the private teacher's studio and how to improve it.

I heard **two different approaches to teaching musicianship**, first an analytical and highly-organized one from Dr. Daniel Levitov from the Peabody preparatory division. Dr. Levitov outlined a process of eight steps in developing musicianship, and illustrated his lecture with beautiful cello playing. Ed Sprunger, a Suzuki teacher from Missouri, had somewhat more esoteric and intuitive ideas about getting kids to be musical, and spoke charmingly and extemporaneously from a 15-point handout. His lecture was entitled "The Way the Birds Sing," and some of his points were like Zen koans: "Help develop skills; then raise awareness." "Concrete or artfully vague." "Thomas Edison did not invent the light bulb." "It's all about taste; but give the recipe for vanilla." Needless to say, no one was going to leave the room until we heard what he had to say about these.

I sat in on very stimulating **solo master classes** at the collegiate and high school levels from Stephen Shippo and Mimi Zweig, violin, and Helen Callus, viola. A chamber music master class was directed by Fritz Gearhart. The master class teaching styles were a mix of funny/memorable, intensely detailed, gruffly analytical, and cheerleader rough-and-tumble. All of the performing students were attentive, open, and played better as a result.

For **violin technique**, I heard two lectures. The first, "Charting the Healthy Foundation," was given by Mimi Zweig of Bloomington, Indiana. She emphasized setting up a good beginning and following it through. You can check out hundreds of ideas on her website at www.stringpedagogy.com, as she only gave the briefest of looks into her 30+ years of teaching experience. The room was full of her fans, who yelled out "Brooklyn Bridge!" as she held up a shoulder pad: everyone knows how she feels about these! The second lecture, given by Fritz Gearhart of the University of Oregon was entitled "The String Player's Daily Diet," which he uses to teach his college students scales, note learning, shifting, double stops and vibrato. Particularly arresting was his silky-toned performance of Galamian's "Acceleration Exercise" for scales: 24

notes to a bow/beat at a quarter note = 72 by the end. It caught our attention.

The lecture "**Psyching Up For Sight Reading**," was artfully given by Dr. Leslie Adams Wimsatt of the University of Michigan. Using excellent handout materials, the listeners were snagged into the difficulties of developing sight reading skills with a few challenging tasks. These were funny. We scanned a densely-typed sheet of guidelines for a music composition contest, and then attempted to tell Dr. Wimsatt anything we could remember—very tough! We next scanned an easy Pleyel *Menuett*, and did the same, with kid-like results. The rest of the hour we watched as a poised young man of about 13 (going on 43!) jumped through much more difficult hoops, including sight reading every odd-numbered measure of a piece, then even-numbered, then all measure on the left- then right-hand side of the sheet, and finally—diagonally down the page! Oh, but we auditors need sight reading practice!

If "adorable" is an adjective which could be attached to a session, "**Work in Progress: Helping Adult Beginners Get-On and Stay-on-the Journey to Mastery**" was the one. The presenters were Kimberly McCollum, the teacher, and Jaquelyn Lyman, the adult student. They are both involved in college level teaching, yet in the private music lesson, they are—teacher and student. What was adorable about it was how appealing and informative they were as they took turns describing the many aspects of teaching adult beginners, such as the need for multiple teaching approaches, the varying learning styles of adults, troubleshooting and an appreciation of the rewards. The balance of hearing information from both the teacher and the adult student was invaluable.

The last educational session I attended was the most moving: "**The New Horizons Orchestra: A Model for Teacher Training and Lifelong Learning**," presented by Dr. Andrew Dabczynski of Brigham Young University. New Horizons is a national program for adults over the age of 40 to participate in a band or orchestra experience. Dr. Dabczynski concentrated on his New Horizons Orchestra program at BYU, and how it achieves its goals of involving older people in string playing, giving an entry-level teaching experience for music education majors, and serving as a research vehicle for "identifying and studying the effects of music

education on family life, adult learning processes, and aging.” OK, I’m 55, of course this is going to be interesting to me—I myself am a “new horizon,” as I surf the crest of the aging baby boomers. But after watching a short locally-produced news video about the BYU New Horizons Orchestra, I realized that this idea has huge implications. In the film, a 70-something woman who had brain surgery goes back to playing the violin. Six months later, billions of neurons have re-connected, and she’s playing in the New Horizons Orchestra, having a great time. Her husband sits on a sofa, tears running down his cheeks, saying, “The violin gave my back my wife.” Tears ran down my cheeks. There was snuffling from the other auditors. I was sold. This is a great idea, and it is so low-cost to start a group as to be practically free. For more information, you can visit the website: www.newhorizonsmusic.org.

IV. Contests

This was a serious conference, full of articulate lectures, string industry participation, and string teachers from most of the fifty states. Yet the halls and the elevators and the hanging out spaces of the hotel were jammed with kids—hundreds and hundreds of them every day. This was because there were three concurrent contests happening at the same time as all the educational sessions. One was the **National Orchestra Festival**, in which 19 different middle and high school groups competed for ratings, comments, and the “Grand Champion” title, which awarded them with a full concert for the conference. Another **competition was for alternative styles**. Folk! Jazz! Fusion! Rock! This time elementary school students also participated. At the time I entered the winners’ concert, a devastatingly charismatic 15-year old winner named Antonio Pontarelli was playing cool jazz on his amplified violin, backed up by drums and bass. After that piece, he got an electric violin, played some Led Zeppelin, and *sang!* Such good violin posture he had—no doubt he had excellent classical instruction along the way. Finally, there was the **National Solo Competition**, won by a member of the Junior Division. This was the only concert I attended in full, so I can tell you that the winner was Benjamin Beilman, student of Almita Vamos. He performed short works of Bach, Wieniawski, and the first movement of the Sibelius Concerto. On the way

to Curtis, he is. For full details of the winners, please see the next issue of the ASTA Journal, which will be conference-colored, no doubt.

V. The Exhibitor’s Hall

Student quartets stationed at the entrance to this fancy instrument/accessories/music-and-more fair played with great verve and excellence. They ended up being grandly under-showcased—both by the lack of acoustics and the absence of chairs, but they did pull in the lookers and the spenders to four long aisles of display booths. Very few people were shy about trying out instruments—particularly teenagers on electric violins and cellos. In fact, the celebrated Mark Wood was there with his slick-looking electric instruments, rock star demeanor, and crowds of eager alternative-stylists. Just across from him was a pair of earnest violin makers from Beijing, Shan Jiang and Tong Zhou, from whom I cadged a couple of practice sessions for my fledgling Chinese. Charles Ashvarian tried out their violins as I listened, and they proved to be quite wonderful sounding. Free food, free drinks—people poured in, and perhaps money poured out. One hopes it was worthwhile for the trouble the exhibitors took in getting so many materials to display. At any rate, a potential prize was offered to conference attendees who managed to visit every single booth (they had to get exhibitors to sign a special card to prove they did it.) I caught a few souls involved in this amazing exercise.

VI. Concerts

Concerts were yet another feature of this conference, and I attended all three of them. On Thursday, **Midori played the Bruch Concerto with the Civic Youth Orchestra**—an all-state orchestra for Michigan high school players. The following evening, **Lynne Harrell played Shostakovich’s Second Cello Concerto with the Detroit Symphony, Neeme Jarvi conducting**. We were bussed to the Max M. Fisher Music Center, a few miles from the Conference for these. The final night, the **Turtle Island String Quartet** donated their time to play a concert for us, consisting of many pieces from their Grammy-award winning CD. Hopefully, the fact that they sold out a goodly number of crates not-yet-released CDs to the audience was a kind of compensation for their extreme generosity. All three concerts were very interesting, enjoyable and

festive. Midori, Lynne Harrell and the Turtle Island Quartet performances were truly outstanding. Tickets were a mere \$20 for each concert, and I mention the price out of gratitude to the Conference organizers. I'm only kicking myself only because I didn't buy a Neeme Jarvi bobble-head from the Fisher Music Center gift shop, which would have been quite the perfect souvenir.

A confession (buried deep in this article—are you with me?) is that one morning I did play hooky. A kind employee of the Marriott led me out of the hotel (otherwise I would never have found that exit) and directed me to the number 53 city bus so that I could go to the Detroit Institute for Art. In addition to a huge room covered with Diego Rivera industrial life murals, there is a significant collection of fine works, which I enjoyed. I also had my only good meal of the conference in their café: it was nice to have real vegetables instead of a \$6 plate of iceberg lettuce.

The final evening Gala consisted of a silent auction, a live auction and the Turtle Island String Quartet concert. I'm sorry that I didn't win anything I bid on, but I did make a contribution. There was a very adventurous teacher of folk violin from Galicia, Spain, who impulsively came to Detroit to attend the alternative styles sessions. I convinced him to bid on the basket of goodies from Tennessee so that he wouldn't have to worry about buying gifts for his family—and he won! \$55 to ASTA!

I would like to thank our MD/DC Chapter of ASTA for sending me to the National Conference. I think that I made the most of my time there, and I know that I have certainly made many valuable contacts and added to my string educator's knowledge. But the best part of the experience for me was that it fired me up with enthusiasm to do more for our Chapter. Now I turn myself over to you, members of ASTA who are reading this, to put me to work!



Over The Years

Tried and True Violin Pieces for Students

by Patricia Braunlich

These are among my students' favorite pieces. Some of them are not listed in the ASTA String Syllabus, which grades from 1 to 6 according to ascending difficulty. These ungraded pieces have an asterisk and my best guess as to grade. They are listed, in a very general way, from more difficult to easier.

- Ludwig Spohr, *Concerto No. 2 in D Minor* (David/Svecenski, Schirmer) *Grades 5–6.
- Lukas Foss, *Composer's Holiday* (Carl Fischer) Grade 5. Develops appreciation for contemporary sounds. Has driving energy, three pages go by fast!
- Gershwin/ Heifetz, *It Ain't Necessarily So* from *Selections from Porgy and Bess* *Grade 5.
- Manuel de Falla, *Suite Populaire Espagnole* (Chester) Listen to the Brian Lewis CD. Grade 5
- Kreisler, *Praeludium and Allegro*. Grade 5. There is a practice page of double stop work (thanks to John Kendall) to help the student prepare for the cadenza-like third page. Requests for this can be made to Pat Braunlich directly. See the end of this article for her e-mail address.
- Mozart, *Concerti Nos. 2, 3, and 4*. Grades 4–5.
- Tchaikovsky, *Canzonetta. Second movement from the Violin Concerto*. Grades 4–5.
- Wieniawski, *Romance* from *Concerto No. 2 in D Minor*. Grades 4–5.
- Veracini, *Twelve Sonatas, op. 1*, arr. Kolneder (Peters Edition) Grades *4–5.
- Aaron Copland, *Hoe Down* from *Rodeo* (Boosey and Hawkes) *Grade 4. Higher positions, rhythmic complexity. Students like the energy.
- “Mozart”, *Concerto in D Major “Adelaide.”* Grade 4. Written by Casadesus and incorrectly attributed to Mozart.
- Dvorak, *Romantic Pieces* (Henle) Grade 4.
- De Beriot, *Concerto No. 9*. Grade 4.
- De Beriot, *Scene de Ballet*. Grade 4.
- Mozart, *Rondo in D* (Solos for the Violin Player, Gingold) Grade 4.
- Mozart/Kreisler, *Rondo in G Major*. Good drill for sautillé and the classical style. Grade 4.
- Vivaldi/Respighi, *Sonata in D Major*. *Grade 4. Although this may be more Respighi than Vivaldi, students enjoy the big, rich first movement. It is not printed in Book 6 of Barbara Barber's *Solos for Young Violinists* but it is on her Book 6 CD.
- Fauré, *Berceuse* (Masters Music Publications, includes *Romance* and *Après un Rêve*). *Grade 4.
- Gluck/ Kreisler, *Melodie* from *Orfeus and Euridice*. Grade 4.
- Massenet, *Meditation* from *Thaïs*. Grade 4.
- Rachmaninoff, *Vocalise*. Grade 4.
- Paradis, *Sicilienne*. Grade 4.
- Elgar, *Salut d'amour*. Grade 4.
- Vittorio Monti, *Czardas*. Grade 4. Students always want to play this. Good for the gypsy style, sautillé, and harmonics.
- Bartok, *Rumanian Folk Dances* Grade 4.
- Viotti, *Concerto No. 23*. Grade 4. More interesting than No. 22.
- Eccles, *Sonata in G Minor* (Suzuki Volume 8) Grade 4.
- Gretry, *Tambourin* (Suzuki Volume 8) Grade 4. Requires clear articulation in the left and right hands.
- Veracini, *Sonata in E Minor* (Suzuki Volume 8) Grade 4.
- Corelli, *Sonatas, op. 5* (International) Grade 4.
- Handel, *Sonatas*. Grade 4.
- Haydn, *Concerto in G*. *Grade 4.
- Bach, *Concerto in A Minor*. Grade 4.
- Ten Have, *Allegro Brilliant*. Grade 4.
- William Potstock, *Souvenir de Sarasate*. Grade 4. Repetitive, make cuts.
- Severn, *Polish Dance*. Grade 4.
- Corelli, *Courante* (Suzuki Volume 7) *Grades 3–4.
- Corelli, *Allegro* (Suzuki Volume 7) *Grades 3–4.
- Kreisler, *Tempo di Minuetto*. *Grade 3.
- Fiocco, *Allegro*. Grade 3. Very lively, popular with students and parents. Listen to Perlman's performance.
- Kreisler, *Sicilienne and Rigadon*. Grade 3. Slow, expressive opportunities in the first section, and speed, which students love, in the second.

Persichetti, *Masques* (Elkan-Vogel) *Grade 3.
Introduction to a more modern style. The accompaniment is an integral part, so it helps if the teacher can play the piano.

Oscar Rieding, *Concertino in A Minor*; “*In the Hungarian Style*.” Grade 3. Kids love this rather long piece. We break it up into three parts.

Vivaldi, *Concerto in G Major*; *op. 3, No. 3, RV 310*.
Grade 3. An old standard, a favorite. Good for the student who is learning third position.

Senaille, *Allegro Spiritoso* (Solos for the Violin Player, Joseph Gingold) *Grade 3. Repetitive, make cuts.

Bohm, *Sarabande in G Minor* (Barber, Solos for Young Violinists)

Rieding, *Concerto in G* (Barber, Solos for Young Violinists)

Vivaldi/Applebaum, *Allegro in B-flat Major*. (Book 2 of String Festival Solos) Grades 2–3.

Applebaum, *Two Guitars*. Arrangement of a Russian gypsy folk song. (Book 2 of String Festival Solos) Grades 2–3.

Leroy Anderson, *Plink, Plank, Plunk*. *Grades 2–3. A hit with audiences and works *very well* as a group piece.

Oscar Rieding, *Concerto in B Minor*; *op. 35*. Grade 2. First position. Recorded by Itzhak Perlman on his “Concertos From My Childhood” CD, which sells the piece to the student.

Peter Lee, *Rigaudon* from *20 Progressive Solos for Stringed Instruments*, transcribed by Applebaum. (Warner Bros.) Grade 2.

Edward MacDowell/Applebaum, *20 Progressive Solos for Stringed Instruments*. Grade 2.

A. Biehl, *Hobgoblin*. (Belwin, arr. by Applebaum) Grades 1–2. Kids love the left hand pizzicato.

Gluck, *Andante* from *Orfeo and Euridice*. *Grades 1–2. (The Library of Violin Classics)

Schumann, *Traumerei*. (The Library of Violin Classics) *Grades 1–2.

Ferenz Nagy, *Zigany (The Gypsy)* Grades 1–2. Very dramatic, effective, gypsy style.

Barbara Barber, *Solos for Young Violinists*, Volume 1: The folk songs, plus: Kroll, *Donkey Doodle*; Trott, *The Puppet Show*; Gabriel-Marie, *La Cinquantaine*; Kuchler, *Concertino in D*.

Violin Series from the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto (Frederic Harris Music)

Volume 8
Albinoni, *Sonata in D Major*
Mussorgski/Rachmaninoff, *Hopak*

Volume 7
Senaille, *Sonata in D Minor* (contains *Allegro Spiritoso*)

Volume 6
Mozart, *Serenade*
Borowski, *Adoration*

Volume 5
Corelli, *Sonata in A*
Tartini, *Andante Cantabile*
Rameau, *Rigadon*

Volume 4
Bach, *Rondeau in D*
Kuchler, *Concertino in D*
Corelli, *Allegro in B-flat*
Rameau, *Tambourin*
Gabriel-Marie, *La Cinquantaine*
Gluck, *Aria*
Kroll, *Donkey Doodle*
Persichetti, *Masques*

Volume 3
Couperin, *La Bourbonnoise*
Gluck, *Gavotte in A Major*
Gluck, *Air from Orfeo and Euridice*

Volume 2
Hasse, *Bourrée*

Volume 1
Gluck, *Minuet* from *Iphigenie en Aulide*
Handel, *Bourrée* from *Water Music*

Introductory Volume
French Folk Song
The Grand Old Duke of York
Pony Trot

Easier pieces, ASTA Grades 1–2

Suzuki Volumes 1 and 2

First Solo Pieces for Violin and Piano (Schott)

Gretchaninoff, *The Jester*
Humperdinck, *Sleep Song*
Hasse, *Bourrée and Minuet*
MacDowell, *To a Wild Rose*
Schubert, *Waltz*

Schubert, *Minuet and Trio*
Kirnberger, *Carillon*
Handel, *Bourrée* from *Water Music*
Handel, *Hornpipe* from *Water Music*
Mozart, *Pantomime and Passepied*

Alte Meister für Junge Spieler
Rameau, *La Villageoise*
Lully, *Gavotte and Musette*
Buononcini, *Rondeau*
Loeillet, *La Jeunesse*
Telemann, *Gavotta*
Corelli, *Corrente*
James Hook, *Tempo di Minuetto*
John Stanley, *Allegretto grazioso*
Handel, *Gavotte*

The Student Violinist: Mozart,
by Craig Duncan
Mozart, *Contradance*
Mozart, *Rondo*

Solo Pieces for the Beginning Violinist,
by Craig Duncan
Handel, *The Harmonius Blacksmith*
Corelli, *Gavotte*
Beethoven, *German Dance*
Telemann, *Fantasia*
Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Marche*
Dandrieu, *Rondo*

Solo Pieces for the Intermediate Violinist,
by Craig Duncan
Handel, *Bourrée*
Purcell, *Trumpet Tune*

Solo Pieces for the Advanced Violinist,
by Craig Duncan
Handel, *The Rejoicing*
Handel, *Hornpipe*
Purcell, *Trumpet Voluntary*
Brahms, *Hungarian Dance No. 5*

**Two series of excellent publications of easy pieces,
arr. Paul de Keyser (Faber Music)**
Violin Playtime (3 volumes)
The Young Violinist's Repertoire (4 volumes)

For sight reading and fun:

Betty Barlow, *Violin Pieces Country Style* (comes
with piano accompaniment.)
Edward Jones, *The American Fiddler* (Boosey
and Hawkes) Second violin and optional
guitar parts.
Edward Jones, *The Ceilah Collection* (Boosey
and Hawkes)

Lastly:

Evelyn Avsharian, *New Skills*. For first or second
year violinists. Each page has an interesting
technique: pizzicato, tremolo, hold a finger down,
string changes, accents, open-string double stops,
left-hand pizzicato, triplets, harmonics.



*Pat Braunlich has a B.M. and M.M. from Catholic
University. She maintains a busy studio in Bethesda,
Maryland. Her last article for Stringendo dealt with
helping parents effectively handle practice issues.
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From the Maker's Bench

Focus on BUZZES

by Kevin Cardiff

Buzzes can be a most infuriating problem for a string player. Basically, a buzz means something is loose on the instrument. The most common buzzes are caused by the external parts of a violin, viola or cello—open seams, string adjusters, the little plastic tubes that come with E-strings, a loose fingerboard, loose peg ornaments, a string on which the winding has worn, an *f* wing which has connected itself to the rest of the top with dirt or rosin, a bridge that doesn't quite fit, a cello endpin on which the shaft lining is worn, a fingerboard nut on which the grooves have worn, producing a low spot near the front of the nut, etc.

Less common buzzes can be caused by open cracks (particularly near the *fs*), a lining inside the violin that has come unglued, or an open center joint of the top or back. The famous “loose bass bar” as a cause of buzzes is *very* overrated. The bass bar can be quite loose and not buzz. In ten years as a violin maker, I've only seen one loose bass bar, and the instrument was taken apart for a very different reason—the lower bouts needed correction, but the instrument was not buzzing.

The best way to prevent this problem is to have the instrument checked regularly—at least once a year. Yearly checkups spot small problems before they become big ones, and in the long run, can save you lots of money. For instance, if you bring the violin to me and I discover a small crack near the saddle, there is a good chance that it can be simply (and cheaply) repaired by gluing from the outside. But if you wait a year or two, that small crack could spread to the sound post area and require removal of the top to repair. Just as a regular physical exam is a good idea for one's health, a yearly visit to a qualified violin maker is your best insurance against damage that can seriously affect the condition of your valuable instrument.



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.



Teaching the Private Lesson and the Rest of the Week

by Dr. Daniel Levitov

I awaken with a jolt, aware both of the insistent beeping of my alarm clock, and the pounding rain outside. The two rhythms fit inside each other, the rain listening and adjusting its tempo to the alarm's rigid pulse. It's Saturday morning, and time to begin my teaching day at the Peabody Preparatory.

Shower, breakfast, a packed lunch, and a thermos of coffee. A paranoid second and third check of my bag to ensure that the music I put there last night remains inert.

The expressway that takes me to Peabody cleaves Baltimore into two brain-like hemispheres. I pass the giant Pepsi sign that alternates its display between time and temperature, and modulate my speed, easing up on the accelerator to catch the giant Fahrenheit readout. I exit, and enter the cortex of the city. The brick-faced row houses, so identifiably Baltimorean, catch the rain and channel it into the gutters on each side of St. Paul Street. I am at the basin of this canyon, forging against the current.

A few blocks from the garage, I punch at the dashboard and the sound of NPR is silenced and replaced by the windshield wipers. Not replaced, exactly; the two metallic arms have been slapping and sliding the rain away since I got in the car. This change in my awareness of sound sticks in my head, and immediately I sense that it will influence my teaching. Walking the stairs, hallways, and elevators that link my parked car to the room where I will teach chamber music and cello, my thoughts jump between two ideas: the layers of sound that we peel back and evaluate as musicians and music teachers, and the music pages in my bag—and for that matter, the cello in its case slung over my shoulder—silent and waiting. Some kind of alchemy—a proportioned mixture of instruments, sheet music, and people—will formulate sound over the next several hours. Two cellos will converse, and their utterances, like bird calls between trees, will at first seem identical, and then like variations on a theme, at times mimicking, at times expanding. Sometimes a small fragment is repeated almost endlessly, first slowly, and then again with more confidence.

My teaching has developed to the point that I have come to re-evaluate the role of this conversation—the private lesson—in the musical life of the student. I consider the private lesson to be the most important hour in the student's musical week, an almost sacred time when musical knowledge and experience are transferred—infused—from teacher to student. But lately, I have begun to feel the weight of those other 167 hours a week that my students spend away from me. I wonder what their practicing is like, and how is it influenced by the single hour of the private lesson. I wonder when practice takes place, who is listening, what questions come up, and even whether my students are sleeping and eating well. I think of the weight of those 167 hours multiplied by the many years of study, and I know that despite the importance of the private lesson time, it is those other hours that will determine the musical success of my students. When the first student of the day walks into my studio, methodically performing the rites of unpacking, rosining, and tuning, I hold this fact in my mind, and let it guide my approach.

And so my first question is: How was your practicing this week? To me, it's like a doctor asking after your health. I want to know what worked and what didn't, how much got done, and what exactly has been on the student's mind as she worked towards the lesson. A few sentences tell me whether part of the lesson needs to be a discussion on balancing academic work with practicing, or creating a detailed plan of attack for a specific passage, or covering a specific piece of repertoire. These words, this non-playing time, is just as vital as the performing that will inevitably follow.

Performance is a part of every single lesson I teach. It is the nourishment that sustains our practice, satisfies our intellect, and more deeply, our souls. While I may play with an orchestra and have the opportunity to perform four times in a week, our students might perform publicly four times a semester. This is not enough, and so the private lesson must fill this void. I believe that students should prepare for their lesson the same way one

would prepare for a solo recital, and walk into the lesson with the same anticipatory excitement and energy. Occasionally, I will, hypnotist style, verbally try to conjure the image of the stage before my student breathes and draws her bow across the strings.

But a performance once a week at the lesson isn't enough either. I encourage (well, at times demand) that students incorporate performance into their practice time. I call it "practicing performance" and it means that special time is set aside for a concert-like play through of whatever the student is working on, from one line of an etude to a complete work. Immediately following the performance: a quick post-mortem and a return to practice, which is by definition *not* a performance but a work session designed to prepare for the next performance opportunity.

For me, the heart of the private lesson comes after the performance, when I focus on the how and why of music-making. Most students do a pretty good job identifying what to practice. They hear what wasn't in tune, well phrased, or rhythmic—but knowing *how* to practice is another story. I tell my students this is a life's work, a skill that we are always developing, and I hope that many decades from now, I'll still be figuring out better, more creative, more disciplined, more detailed ways to practice. I spend a great deal of lesson time working through a practice technique that my students will be able to utilize it at home: how to practice with the metronome, how to use a tuner, how to work on phrasing, bow speeds, breathing, varying vibratos, how to make harmonic structures discernible—the list is endless. Each one could make for an article as long as this one, or better yet, the topic of an entire private lesson. Perhaps it is as simple as applying the old Chinese proverb of giving a man a fish or teaching him to fish...

I also want to teach my students why. Rather than have them learn my fingering for a certain passage, I want to analyze fingering possibilities with them, and help them understand how a fingering can change the execution and interpretation of the music. I want to teach them correct hand positions, but more than that, I want them to grasp that an ergonomic, balanced, and relaxed hand shape can improve intonation, vibrato, shifting, and facility. I want to help my students become interpreters of music as well. I demonstrate, and I suggest, but I hope that I help my

students make their own musical decisions based on the composer's style and written instructions.

I guess it comes down to developing and believing in my students' intellectual and musical curiosity, and working towards their increased self-sufficiency. I hope my students feel my influence and support as they work through the 167 hours between private lessons, that they sense their abilities—as cellists and self-teachers—growing. When this happens, instruction, like sound waves themselves, resonates beyond the hour of the private lesson, beyond the walls of the music school, following us on the drive home, ever present.



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Noteworthy, Not Worthy?

by Dorothy Barth

My ultimate violin should cost between eight and twelve thousand dollars. A modest investment by professional standards, but for me my best and final instrument.

The exact number within this range varies according to my optimism. Until now, I've not divulged it to anyone except to the staff at the shop where I rent my current violin, a premium Chinese instrument. The conversation usually goes like this:

"I'll likely return the rental in the next four to six months so that I can purchase something permanent. If I were to come up with (x) number of dollars, might you have something interesting in stock?"

Sometimes I add how I think my future funds will appear—perhaps through a particularly generous work assignment, perhaps through savings from gig money. Their reply is always cordial and encouraging, and if I share my imaginary range, they generally steer me toward the higher end.

Had I managed to purchase my life's violin right after college, I would not now have this dilemma. Several friends acquired violins in the early seventies that were in the five thousand dollar range, a number then incomprehensible to me, representing more than double my student loans, already a terrifying sum. Other friends bought mansions in Southern California for the preposterous price of \$25,000. Looking back, they shared a gift of foresight that was and may still be unfamiliar to me.

My process for deciding whether or not I am worthy of a fine instrument involves a complex formula, something akin to the point system presented to us by Canadian Immigration when my husband Bert suggested, just three months after we had met, that we relocate to his favorite vacation destination, Vancouver, B.C. We never quite got there, although we might have been able to gather the points in 1996.

My personal point system involves my entire life's relationship to the violin, so it is even more intricate than the Canadian immigration model. My assessment covers the areas of childhood wonder and ambition, adolescent ardor, university misadventures,

early adulthood (the lost years in matters of the violin), millennium renaissance, and my current life as a violin player who gigs.

Childhood Wonder and Ambition

In Amsterdam at age five I received my first violin, a loaner, along with my father's fervent hope that I would learn to play just like the young Yehudi Menuhin. I didn't get a chance to hear the child prodigy because first, he was by then grown up, and second, we owned neither a record player nor a television set. However, I studied his photo for many hours, at all angles and with religious fervor and fascination.

Very soon after I began my violin lessons in Holland, I announced to my teacher that I wanted to learn vibrato. Upon being told I lacked the technical apparatus to produce vibrato and might for several years, I indignantly decided I would have to teach myself.

Score one point for early childhood wonder and ambition.

Adolescent Ardor

Our family immigrated to the United States when I was nine, settling first in Lawrence, Kansas, then in Southern California. All this moving interrupted my violin lessons, but sometime during early adolescence I acquired my next violin, which I named Benvenuto. I have no recollection of Benvenuto's quality, and he alas came to an unfortunate end, to be discussed later in the *Mishaps and Misadventures* section. The Nurnberger bow that accompanied him for part of his life was selected by my teacher when I was 15. It survived Benvenuto and serves me to this day.

I fell in love with the Mendelssohn Concerto during the summer of '66, my first summer in Pasadena. I listened to it endlessly and persuaded my parents to buy me a copy of the sheet music. The tan International Edition, peppered with my own insights and explanatory marks, remains in my collection today. I hadn't begun my lessons yet, but when I

did, I vowed to show my promise by playing the Mendelssohn.

While auditioning for my first of several distinguished teachers in California, I was interrupted during the opening *Allegro, molto appassionato* with this memorable verdict: “That’s lovely, dear, but very amateurish.”

Seeking a second opinion, I then played the beloved Mendelssohn for my high school orchestra conductor, the subject of my first adolescent crush other than the Beatles. He smiled, observed “You play that with a vengeance,” and placed me first chair second.

Despite these critiques, I pressed on, even going so far as to donate all my Beatles records to astonished friends upon deciding they detracted from my efforts to gain mastery of the violin.

During summer vacations I would practice for hours, sometimes in the empty auditorium of a local junior high school, sometimes in the practice rooms of a private university. I may or may not have asked for permission to use these venues but was creative in searching them out, and doors were generally less locked in those days. My three-octave scales emanating from the empty auditorium inspired in me visions of future excellence.

My porch playing could be judged as another positive indicator. Ramshackle as it was, its façade covered with bright fuchsia Bougainvilleas, our rented home, like many of the neighborhood’s Craftsman homes, had a front porch. During pleasant late afternoons, I would use this porch as practice room, simultaneously entertaining the neighbors and anyone traveling on Brigden Road.

This community outreach in combination with other indicators of adolescent ardor and effort deserves, I believe, at least one point toward my dream violin.

Mishaps and Misadventures

After two enjoyable and productive years at Pasadena City College as a music major, I transferred to Stanford to finish my degree. Amidst so many wealthy overachievers at an exotic, isolated campus far from home, I felt intimidated—so much so that I refused to join the orchestra.

Not because of fear of the conductor developed in high school, which several benign and supportive conductors in junior college had somewhat neutralized. It was for reasons more complex

and neurotic. I shuddered to anticipate that my audition would land me in last chair second. The concertmaster and other players occupying premium seats would be physics, pre-med, or worse yet, economics majors. This would prove without a doubt that as a music major, I was an impostor.

In retrospect, I believe this may have been a wimpy, unadventurous decision not worthy of a person deserving a fine violin. Subtract one point.

Benvenuto came to an unfortunate accidental end by my own hand during my senior year at Stanford. The details of his demise will not be made public. Suffice it to say, I was suitably devastated and remorseful (our dorm advisor, a graduate student in material sciences, played *Bridge Over Troubled Water* for me), so no points need be subtracted as punishment for this incident.

Lost but not Forgotten

I returned home to Southern California with a music degree but without musical confidence, with bow intact but without a violin. A neighbor who remembered my porch performances and whose hobby was fixing guitars happened to have one violin in his inventory, a rough-hewn specimen down to the pitted fingerboard. I purchased it for \$35, and it became my instrument for approximately the next twenty years.

This was not as sad as it seems, since I didn’t use my violin much during those two decades. I had deemed myself a failure as a violinist and decided to concentrate on matters more mundane.

In San Diego, I began an amateur relationship with the soprano and alto recorders, developing a fondness for early music through workshops available to recorder enthusiasts. It was easier and far less mysterious to purchase respectable recorders for several hundred dollars than to even think about replacing my fatally flawed but well-intentioned fiddle.

Eventually, I was inspired to offer my violin playing to various early music ensembles and took a reverse pride in volunteering that I had bought it for \$35—approximately the level of violin I deserved. A comrade at the early music weekend on Palomar Mountain observed that I nevertheless produced a big tone, and this filled me with satisfaction.

While visiting a friend in Denver, I came upon large music store and engaged two young staff members in conversation. I had been perusing

recorder sheet music but upon telling them I also played violin, they invited me to play a Lupo they claimed had just arrived and was worth \$100,000. But first, they said, they had to put strings on it.

I grabbed some recorder music and was handed the purported Lupo. My friend photographed me playing it with reverence and holding on to it for dear life. The young men said it was awesome that I could take recorder music and play it just like that on the violin. This statement alone might put the authenticity of the Lupo and their access to it in question. When I later considered the incident, it all seemed unlikely. No violin shop since has had the hospitality of inviting me to sample such a valuable instrument, but it was a stirring interlude.

No points added or subtracted for the lost years. They were not without music, and my misguided separation from the violin was its own punishment.

Millennium Renaissance

By the time I met my husband Bert I had begun to perform on occasion. Bert encouraged a modest upgrade to my violin, and through a newspaper ad I found my next violin. I regret not having subsequently taken some private lessons with the interesting man who sold it to me.

He lived in a senior high rise with his wife, previously a concert violinist but now suffering from Alzheimer's. He had toured with her as her accompanist but played the violin remarkably well himself. To supplement his retirement income, he bought violins from various sources and then resold them. His latest stash had arrived from Boston. Pleased to have a visitor, he played for me the modern Italian violin that had been his wife's instrument and said the violin I was about to purchase was not quite as good as that, but close.

The violin I bought from him for \$700 had an Antoniazzi label, and for several years I thought it was indeed an Antoniazzi. More than one violin shop subsequently assured me that it was an undistinguished German violin with significant shortcomings. Apparently, spurious labels come in names other than Stradivarius. Or perhaps the label was real but the violin was not. Still, it was a far better instrument than the pitted wonder of my previous two decades.

We moved to Central California, where I recommenced violin study. For almost three years I averaged at least three hours a day of practice,

kept practice diaries, surveyed lots of repertory, and continued gigging.

My teacher did not comment on my instruments, even when I played the Beethoven Concerto on the cigar box when my more recent purchase was being repaired. Never did he protest, "But this is a really terrible instrument" or inform me that I was now ready for an Advancing or perhaps an Advanced model as described in violin shop catalogs.

While observing lessons at a friend's studio, I became aware that some beginning students were playing instruments far costlier than my violin.

I flashed back to Renaissance music camp the previous year, to the young couple with the matched custom-crafted recorders and sackbuts. Upon seeing us admire their wealth of instruments, they volunteered, somewhat apologetically, "What else were we supposed to do with all those dot com dollars?" At first I envied those people for whom resources for instruments flow freely, but this feeling was tempered when I considered that the opportunity to think about the mysteries and logistics of acquiring a wonderful violin is in itself a privileged pursuit.

Score one point for my violin renaissance. Or may I boldly claim three points, one for each year of committed practice? If necessary, subtract a half point for envy.

Gigs Galore

During the last decade, I've had occasion to perform at weddings as well as more motley occasions such as Renaissance faires and Twelfth Night celebrations. It began with our recorder duo but evolved into mostly violin and recorder. Lately, I boldly added solo violin to the wedding options. The precarious situation of performing solo led me to another instrument. The cigar box could no longer in good conscience serve as a backup instrument for weddings, so two years ago, I delegated my fake Antoniazzi to backup status and rented a premium Chinese violin from a local dealer, believing I would need it for about a year before acquiring my fantasy instrument.

For never having missed a gig in ten years, score one point.

Noteworthy, Not Worthy?

Two years later, I still play the rental violin and have even developed a fondness for it, though not enough to purchase it as my best and final.

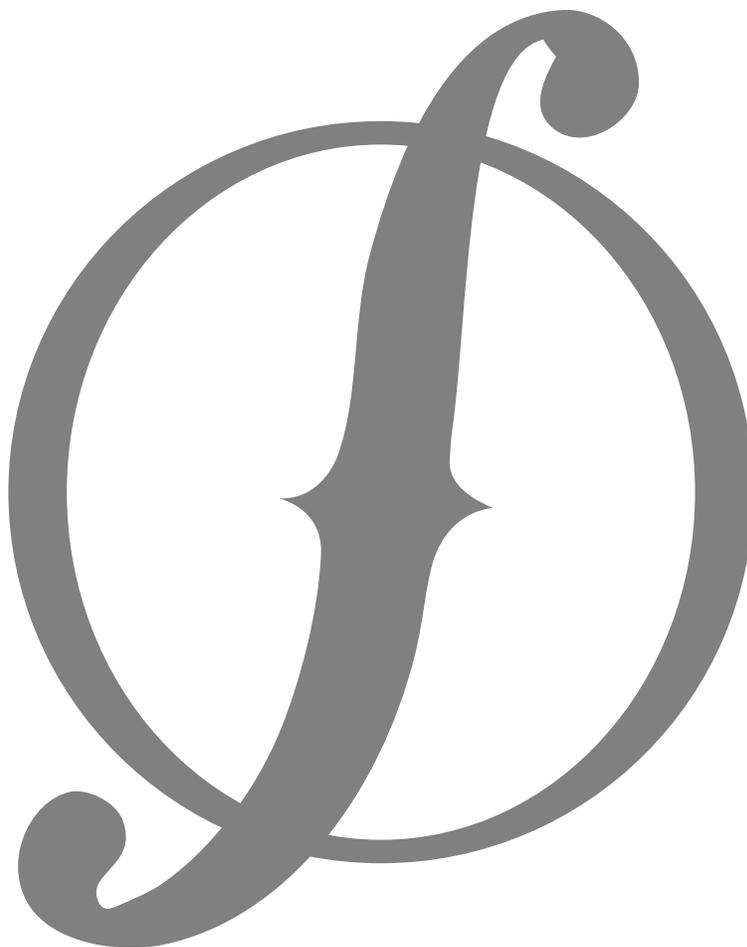
The sum of the points itemized in the preceding sections yields a positive number, indicating that I am indeed worthy of my ultimate, not-yet-discovered violin.

Only thing, the lucrative work assignment didn't last as long as anticipated. The upper range of my imagined violin is just below the sticker price of a budget Hyundai, and Bert is driving a 1999 Escort clunker 60 miles each way to his job in the South Bay.

Suddenly, my heart is filled with gratitude and admiration for my premium Chinese rental.



Dorothy Barth's music essays have been published in the U.S., England, and Australia. A previous essay, Da Capo, appeared in the Summer 2006 issue of Stringendo. She recently completed a set of duo sheet music arrangements entitled Playford Promenade: Music for Grand Occasions. Her website resides at www.flutesoffancy.com.



Why Not Electric Bass?

Electric Bass and the Jazz Tradition

by Mikel Combs

Adaptability and innovation are key components in the preservation of jazz, both in performance and academically. Numerous debates exist concerning the definition of jazz and facets of the jazz tradition. Among such debates are attempts to conclusively define the jazz tradition. Strict adherence to these conclusions, although extremely useful in a disciplined sense, serves to limit the possibilities of jazz performers and educators. Jazz is an art form and a discipline that functions best when testing commonly accepted boundaries.

The use of electric bass within the jazz canon consistently presents obstacles (to the performers) and exposes biases inside the performing and academic communities of jazz. Why is the use of electric bass in jazz contested and who defines the jazz tradition?

Key factors involved with these issues are historical biases, genre association, a lack of thoroughly researched historical significance of electric bass in the jazz idiom, essentially no stylized method for jazz electric bass performance practices, and educational departures from the expansive qualities of jazz. A well-documented history of performance practices and pedagogical methodologies define the foundations of jazz. Combinations of instruments, such as bass, drums, piano, and guitar, serve as a basic model for the core of a jazz ensemble, but in no way define the absolute criteria for the jazz tradition. Drawing attention to these areas will help clarify elements of jazz performance and education that hinder the growth of an important and influential instrument that is ever-present in jazz education and jazz performances.

Modern jazz audiences experience performances inevitably augmented by some form of an amplification device. The prevalence of electrified instruments in jazz performance denotes an acceptance and reliance upon amplification and sound production technology. Technological advancements for individual instruments as well as ergonomic performance techniques, such as

the Alexander Technique, have optimized sonic capabilities in all genres of music. From these fresh sonic capabilities forms a new hierarchal significance. With this significance came chances for role modification of most instruments. The arch-top guitar was already accepted within jazz bands before the late 1930's when the instrument was modified by adding magnetic pick-ups thus making the guitar able to be amplified. Many guitarists wanted this change so they could compete in volume with the bands, allowing them to assume more roles as soloists.¹ Why then does there exist a rift amongst the jazz society (performers, listeners, educators, critics, producers etc.) concerning the use of electric bass within the idiom? Predominant factors include, but are not limited to, historical prejudice, genre association, less enthusiasm for and little preponderance of accomplished jazz electric bassists, and no legitimate stylized pedagogy inside recognized institutions of jazz education. In this writing, I will explore and comment on these issues. I will also highlight aspects of each issue that contribute to an over all solution for performers, audience members, and educators to better understand the role of the electric bass within jazz.

Historically, the upright bass and the tuba performed the role of the bass instrument for early- and pre-jazz ensembles. In 1951, the first electric bass became available in mass production. Very few band leaders chose this new option and even fewer upright bassists were willing to invest the time necessary to achieve the facilities possessed on upright, on the electric bass.² Historical prejudice is no stranger to jazz. Gary Tomlinson's article cites various "monological judgments...in the brief history of jazz." Continuing, Tomlinson states that, "the early, negative critiques of be-bop, or the cries of 'anti-jazz' that greeted the free jazz innovations of Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry around 1960 have often taken the form of white critics' attempts to silence or at least 'whiten' innovative black expression."³ A lingering effect of these racially motivated times would be a continued battle to legitimize certain

points of view in regards to performance practices of instruments and sonic aesthetics. As with many social issues tainted by race qualification, jazz being no exception, the desire to have ideologies fall in line with accepted historical certainty will keep the facts in question and hinder forward motion to establish generally accepted norms. Electric bass playing in jazz also falls victim to this scrutiny.

In the fifty-eight years of the electric bass's existence, very little substantial history has been established for its use in jazz. Even though the electric bass was a technical innovation that changed many aspects of sonic aesthetics in music other than jazz, the jazz community resisted the use of the instrument. "Changes to the practices of a particular social group almost inevitably result in contestation from some other quarter whose work is contingent on that group's adherence to the normal procedures of production... In jazz improvisation, the alteration of the role of the bass player has serious implications for every other instrument, as the normal roles adopted in the production of the music are disrupted by the innovations."⁴

Three main factors contributed to the association of the electric bass to non-jazz settings. Without a doubt, the higher visibility of the electric bass in non-jazz settings left an indelible mark on the capability of the instrument. Changes in the visibility of the electric bass were attributed to rock and roll bands. Enthusiasts then started buying the Fender® basses, which were available in mass production since 1951. The electric bassists that wanted to play jazz were coming from a rock and roll background as opposed to a traditional jazz upbringing. The resistance to electric bass players playing jazz was due to a conflict in stylistic approaches on the bandstand.

Since these associations were also in new musical contexts, the role or place of the electric bass was not connected to older, traditional music but to newer, innovative music.

Jazz double bassists saw no need to switch to the electric bass. There were, post 1951, amplification systems developed for the upright bass, but more importantly, the sonic aesthetic of acoustic music and the traditional practice of dynamics were more often used to compliment the audibility of the acoustic bass. The electric bass was manufactured to provide upright bassists with an instrument that was more easily transported and could, like the electric guitar, compete with the ever-increasing volume of the

bands.⁵ Although bandleaders such as Dizzy Gillespie and Lionel Hampton embraced the electric bass and used them extensively after 1951, this new sonic capability to be heard clearly appealed mainly to younger musicians fascinated by the new sounds of rock and roll. Older, established jazz upright bassists associated the electric bass with loud music. It simply did not fit into the refined, acoustic setting of jazz.

Pursuing a life as a jazz musician is extremely difficult. The sacrifices outweigh the benefits necessary to maintain a professional career. Once that level is achieved, sustaining one's self becomes a skill in preservation. The social circles of jazz around the world help to preserve and foster continued employment for the many musicians contributing to them. Among the thousands of visible and working jazz musicians were a few electric bassists, the likes of which were Monk Montgomery, Bob Cranshaw, and later, Steve Swallow. However, as a whole the jazz community rejected the electric bass. This left the other genres of Motown, rock and roll, and funk/fusion the role of incorporating the electric bass. Thus, it was in these contexts that the electric bass was associated, seen, and heard setting up a generation of electric bassists not embedded in the jazz tradition. Based upon mediocre performance practices and a lack of consistent association with the jazz canon, the electric bass appeared to the jazz community as an unstable factor in the preservation of its continuation.

This unstable factor is directly associated with certain genre associations placed upon the electric bass. In the early 1960's, the Beatles gained worldwide recognition and one of the band members played the electric bass. As might be expected, the attraction to play electric bass would not be associated with jazz. The electric bass is commonly linked to popular music, not jazz. Miles Davis was intensely influenced by this new, loud, simple music and it was incorporated into his expansive musical vision. Miles Davis before this innovation was known as a jazz trumpet master. The consequent melding of his jazz sensibilities and the new rock and roll/funk movement of the early 1960's produced a style, now a genre, labeled 'fusion'. Miles Davis used the electric bass extensively in his various groups during this period. The improvisation format was expanded to all parts of the ensembles, as were the functional roles, such as melody, rhythm and harmony. The association that Miles Davis, a

predominant jazz icon, brought to the electric bass as a new instrument amidst a new style further separated the instrument from associations to traditional jazz. Jazz traditionalists were not calling Miles's 'fusion' jazz, and several critics such as Stanley Crouch and Amiri Baraka feared that 'fusion' would disrupt the jazz tradition. These same feelings pervaded the jazz community, contributing further to the gap between the electric bass and jazz.

The association would be mixed with rock or funk, taking only the improvisational element from jazz. Idiomatically, a common practice of high-volume, ostinato driven bass lines concerning the electric bass developed outside of jazz. Any links to jazz were by upright players competing in the new electric market. Because of the higher visibility and audibility of the electric bass functioning in styles other than jazz, there simply was not an attraction for professional electric bassists to specialize in jazz. This led to a devastatingly low number of electric bass players contributing to and establishing a place in the jazz tradition for the instrument. "In jazz writing, composers and arrangers use the term 'fender bass' to denote a specific sound or style. The instrument has been pigeonholed resulting from the lack of authentic jazz electric bass precedents. Any style of electric bass in jazz has been defined by the instrument and its connotations rather than a musician."⁶

Stylistic discrepancies with the performance of the electric bass within jazz settings grew into genre associations. The acoustic bass represented refined, nuanced music and performances. The electric bass represented loud and uneducated music and performances.⁷

An important factor not attributed to genre association was the players' attitudes concerning their own playing of the electric bass in jazz. Even though there was rigid resistance to the electric bass, jazz upright bassists still were called upon to play the electric bass. The negative attitude towards the instrument came through in their performances via mono-dynamic, uninspired playing.⁸ The attitude seemed to be that the electric bass was not worthy of participating in a jazz setting. The result of these lackluster contributions to the electric bass by jazz upright bassists was minimal effective representation of the electric bass functioning well in a jazz ensemble.

Still, there was a portion of the younger

generation who were drawn to the electric bass and to jazz. The tradition and the jazz canon were well established by the late 1960's. Because of the proliferation of rock and roll as the new popular music, many jazz clubs went out of business. There was a mass exodus by jazz musicians to Europe, where there existed fertile, supportive environs to continue their development of jazz. These two events severely limited the number of 'informal' institutions where young players could hone their skills in jazz. Fortunately, around this time there were a few institutions offering a formal education in jazz. Among them were Juilliard and North Texas State University, now the University of North Texas. Gradually, the responsibility of jazz education left the clubs and jam sessions and made its way into universities and schools across the United States.

The standard accepted instrument that functioned as the bass role in jazz was the upright bass. There is a wealth of recorded history concerning the upright bass. There have been innovations to the role and function of the double bass within jazz that have brought it to the level of the other instruments, such as the saxophone and trumpet, as a solo voice. The standard and commonly accepted role of the double bass in the jazz tradition is practically an institution in itself. There is a plethora of methodologies, stylistic considerations and technical approaches that solidifies the double bass as a legitimate musical instrument. This is further supported by the double bass' history within baroque and classical music. There is unquestionably a history and stylized tradition for the double bass.

The electric bass is not so fortunate. The few writings I have found on the teaching of electric bass leave the instrument virtually devoid of stylistic considerations. "The two major considerations [in the teaching of electric bass] include basic technique, and the less tangible element of style."⁹ Quotes such as this are common. There are some articles published that address the topic of electric bass use in stage bands but the stylistic consideration is to emulate an upright bass, or even an organ, as much as possible. Currently an overabundance of methods for electric bass circulates among music stores. These methods highlight various technical approaches and inadequately address the function of electric bass in jazz. The upright bass has standardized technical approaches and stylistic considerations. However, the topic of

electric bass acumen in a *contemporary* setting has been published in the Journal for the International Society of Bassists¹⁰, a predominately acoustic bass publication. This and a few other articles have appeared in recognized and academic journals, such as *Bass World*, *American String Teacher*, *Canadian Music Educator*, and *Canadian Musician*; yet there have been no legitimized pedagogical methodologies focused on the electric bass. Without any historically established performance practices of the electric bass or academically scrutinized methods, the instrument itself has difficulty being considered a legitimate instrument worthy of specialized study or pedagogical development in institutions of higher learning. This drastically lessens the chances for the electric bass to be viewed as a singular voice and developed as a legitimate musical instrument, especially in the jazz idiom, on the same level as the double bass or the tenor saxophone.

I fervently believe that the future of jazz is in jazz education. The future of this relatively new instrument has a few credible and established players like Monk Montgomery, Al Macdowell, Bob Cranshaw, Steve Swallow, Jaco Pastorius, Stanley Clarke, Jeff Andrews, John Patitucci, and Anthony Jackson, who have bravely pioneered a small but clear path for current and future developments of the electric bass within jazz. The obstacles hindering the sooner rather than later acceptance of the electric bass as a legitimate instrument capable of virtuosity and complex musical expression are social and historical prejudices, genre associations, and lack of institutional recognition, to name a few. The path to gain acceptance of the electric bass on the level of the upright bass begins with maintaining high and noble standards in the performance and educational practices of jazz electric bassists. The solution to this problem is simple, but requires the same steadfast determination exhibited by the forefathers of jazz and of jazz bass playing. Those wishing to find the electric bass accepted by the jazz community and institutions of higher learning must saturate themselves in the jazz tradition. Part of that tradition is playing the instrument in jazz settings. Furthermore, an intimate knowledge of the upright bass is essential for the legitimization of the electric bass as a serious musical instrument. The electric bass is not a threat to the double bass or the jazz tradition; and neither one is a threat to the electric bass. Rather, the electric bass is a

natural continuation of the evolution of the upright bass as an instrument capable of standing on its own. Technological innovations to the upright bass, such as amplification systems, improved building techniques as well as established pedagogical methodologies have allowed players to play more intricate music and still be heard above the rest of the band. The electric bass was one of those innovations, as the electric guitar was for the acoustic guitar. The well established jazz electric bassists mentioned above have common traits that allowed them to succeed as electric bassists in the jazz idiom: a strong harmonic foundation steeped in the jazz tradition, a sonic approach self-scrutinized as much as any other established musician, a deep understanding of the jazz aesthetic, an open acceptance of the upright bass as an established instrument, and the knowledge that the electric bass is their extension of the concepts put forth by double bassists and their medium of contribution to the jazz tradition.



¹ Kernfeld, Barry, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1994.

² Ferguson, Jim. (1986, January). The one and only Anthony Jackson. *Guitar Player*, 40–47.

³ Tomlinson, Gary. (1991, Autumn). Cultural dialogics and jazz: A white historian signifies. *Black Music Research Journal*, 11, (5), 229–264.

⁴ Gibson, Will. (2006). Material culture and embodied action: sociological notes on the examination of musical instruments in jazz improvisation. *The Sociological Review* 54 (1), 171–187.

⁵ Kernfeld, Barry, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1994.

⁶ Ferguson

⁷ Waters, D. "Electric guitar, electric bass and the predominance of the acoustic bass in jazz." *BASS WORLD* 28, no.3 May 2005, 21–27.

⁸ What is meant here is that a number of prominent double bassists clearly did not perform on electric bass at an equal standard established by their own upright bass performances.

⁹ Cohen, S. M. "The electric bass guitar (double-electric bass in the schools)." *AMERICAN STRING TEACHER* 28, no.3 (1978): 27.

¹⁰ Morris, Daniel. (1990). Contemporary electric bass acumen. *International Society of Bassists* 16 (2) 44–45.

Bassist Mikel Combs makes his home in Denton, Texas, where he is currently working toward his Master's Degree in Jazz Studies. His mother is Lorraine Combs, past editor of Stringendo.

Helping Adult Beginners

A Synopsis of the Presentation at the 2007 ASTA National Convention

by Kimberly McCollum

This year marks my second year in co-presenting a session with my violin colleague/adult beginner, Jaquelyn Lyman, on teaching adult beginners at the ASTA National Conference in Detroit, Michigan. In our follow-up session titled, “Work in Progress: Helping Adult Beginners Get On and Stay On the Journey to Mastery,” we elaborated on concepts that were briefly discussed in the 2006 session and investigated some new strategies to make teaching adult beginners more rewarding and less frustrating for teachers. We began by posing a question to the audience: What are some of your wildest expectations that your adult beginners have had? Answers ranged from “Playing Vivaldi in Italy” to “Performing in a professional symphony orchestra” to “Retiring my full time job and becoming a professional musician.” I think we all can deduce that these expectations are just simply unrealistic. In the 2006 session, Jaque and I explored ways to get adult beginners and their teachers thinking in terms of short and long term goals. We put together a Goal Organizer sheet to help adult beginners stay focused while reminding them why they were pursuing lessons in the first place. This year, the focus was on the *journey* of learning a stringed instrument. Adult beginners should be reminded that it is the process that is most important when taking up a stringed instrument. This process will involve high and low points in their learning, just as professional musicians have highs and lows in their careers.

Some of the strategies we discussed this year included modifying teaching approaches to be more learner-centered than teacher-centered, adapting to specific learning styles, choosing the most appropriate repertoire, and investigating the adult beginner community. One of the handouts that we included in the teacher packet, which was given out at the session, was on matching skills between etudes and fiddle tunes. Sometimes it is difficult to get an adult beginner (or any student for that matter) to want to practice classical etudes. We explored the idea

that you could either use fiddle tunes in conjunction with etudes to teach specific skills or even substitute etudes for fiddle tunes. The handout included excerpts from etudes and corresponding fiddle tunes using various techniques. For example, Wohlfahrt Opus 54, No. 21 and “Devil’s Dream” both have string crossings and “Devil’s Dream” contains challenging, off the beat bowings. We adapted some of the bowings on the etudes to match the bowings on the particular edition of the fiddle tunes. As a teacher, there is a multitude of possibilities for making repertoire accessible to adult beginners.

We also offered some troubleshooting strategies for practicing. At the 2006 session, we handed out a sample practice log that could be used for adult beginners to keep track of their own time. I suggested to my adult beginners to choose one main piece/etude to practice in order to be more efficient. For example, they would play a warm-up scale and then concentrate on either the etude or specific piece for that practice time. They can then write down in the practice log the time that they practiced and what pieces they worked on. I also tell them to simplify the amounts by practicing smaller sections at a time. They should also move at a comfortable pace and set aside plenty of time for practicing. Sometimes this is the biggest challenge when we are faced with teaching adult beginners. I believe that these strategies can help them to become more organized and efficient during the process.

Another troubleshooting strategy that we continued to address this year was health concerns. In consulting a physical therapist for last year’s session, we learned that conditions such as arthritis and even general stiffness can hinder an adult beginner’s experience. We referred to the ASTA publication titled, “Stretching for Strings” for warm-up and stretching exercises that are beneficial. We also pointed out the main areas of the body to focus on for each instrument when doing the stretches.

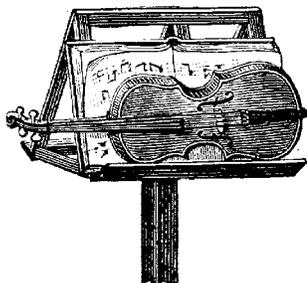
The conclusion of the session was focused on the positive aspects of teaching adult beginners.

For teachers, one particularly positive aspect is that they are avid contributors to the arts community. They are the ones whom we see in our audiences at orchestra and chamber music concerts and who contribute financially to these organizations. There are sociological benefits for them because they can meet other adult beginners that they might not have met otherwise. The physical and mental benefits are tremendous because they are exercising their bodies, including their brains. The quote “use it or lose it” certainly applies here. There are more opportunities for performing than ever before, with the addition of community orchestras and adult beginner summer music festivals. Lastly, they are wonderful role models for our younger students in our studios.

Our main goal in presenting these sessions at the ASTA National Conference was to address some of the issues that we all face as teachers of adult beginning students. Ultimately, we want our adult beginners to gain the most out of their experience learning a stringed instrument. We should give them many tools that they can work with as they continue this life-long journey of music making.



Kimberly McCollum has recently conducted presentations with her adult beginning student, Jaquelyn Lyman, on the topic of teaching adult beginners at the last two ASTA National Conferences. She received her Master of Music in Violin Performance from Boston University and her Bachelor of Music in String Performance from Florida State University. Ms. McCollum has taught all levels of students in private instruction, chamber music coaching, and in formal classroom settings. Currently, she is on the faculty of the Anne Arundel Community College, teaches strings in the Baltimore City Public School System, and performs with various other orchestras in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. regions.



Museo Stradivariano

by Vince “Vincenzo” Patterson

Back in January, I had an opportunity to visit Italy—for the first time—and experienced what has turned out to be the most thrilling five minutes of my musical life!

There were 28 of us, all musicians, and the tour began in Rome where we spent two days investigating concert venues, churches and, of course, the Vatican. We’ve all seen St. Peter’s Basilica on TV but until you’re standing in that great cavernous space you have no real concept of its vastness; it’s simply mammoth! And what a place to perform in—the acoustics are unbelievable.

Then it was on to Florence, again seeing performance spaces and standing on the “Old Bridge” where legends like Cellini and Dante once promenaded. The night life is vibrant!

Little did I know what was in store for us next. The bus ride took us far out into the countryside to a little old town in the agricultural center of northeastern Italy, some of you may have heard of it, Monteverdi’s birthplace, CREMONA! Because the trees were so splendid in this area, luthiers’ fondness for Cremona timber became well known in the Renaissance world; top string instrument makers were attracted to this charming little town and its luthiers thrived.

We were privileged to visit Cremona’s famed Museo Stradivariano, opened to the public in December, 2001. There are two sections: the Didactic Room—here you can see the violin-making molds, tools and “blueprints” designed and used by Andrea and Nicole Amati, Antonio Stradivari and Giuseppe Guarneri, among others. Truly an awesome collection—how could such magnificent-sounding instruments come from such crude-looking tools and molds?

Part two made me a believer in the divinely-inspired gift received by these luthiers: you can see on display eleven instruments, nine violins, one viola and one cello. Each is housed, eye level, in its own lucite case; the violins and viola are suspended inside by clear filaments stretching from side to side; the cello stands on its endpin. The violins and viola appear to float, vertically, as if on a magic carpet. The lighting is excellent and each instrument is

identified by name. Here you can tremble in front of the 1615 “Stauffer,” the 1669 “Crisbee” and the 1724 “Vesuvius.”

As a former violist, I was thinking “this is as good as it gets,” then we were asked to move to an adjacent room. We entered a large, nicely decorated meeting room, where various chairs and tables sat as if a meeting had just concluded. We were asked to have a seat. Our Italian tour guide, Simona, said, “Please be patient, we have a special treat for you.” Several of us looked around, wondering, and a few minutes passed by. Then, from the opposite end of the room, a dapper, distinguished-looking 72-year-old Italian gentleman walked towards us. It was the curator. In Italian, he spoke at length about the museum’s history since 1893, how the instruments came to be housed there and about the sacrifices of so many to make all this possible. He thanked us for coming and excused himself, walking back to the far door from which he had entered.

When someone said, “Well, that’s it,” that door again opened and in walked the curator, holding a violin and bow. Now comes his news—this isn’t just *any* violin, this is “the oldest Cremona-made violin still in playing condition *in the world*: Andrea Amati’s 1566 “Carl IX of France,” commissioned by the French king himself. The curator tilted his head, he then smiled—a beatific smile I shall always remember—and began to play Bach.

What followed can only be described as “the living voice of heaven”—truly the most satisfyingly beautiful music I have ever heard. Please note: the curator wasn’t note-flawless, but no matter; Carl IX’s *tone*—there is a *vocal* element to it—comes at you like a drill into your third eye, simultaneously into your heart, and every fiber of your being. I was on fire, every nerve cell tingling, waves of emotions rolling over me. I succumbed, unabashedly, to tears; I wasn’t alone.

Suddenly, in this moment of ecstasy, I realized the room was quiet; no talking, rustling, movement, even breathing were heard as the Amati’s sound swept us into a little pile of humble, small human beings. We were witnessing the *burning bush* of instrument makers, the greatest the world has ever known.

Then, as I knew it must, the curator's playing ended. Lovingly, still smiling, he brought the *Chaconne* to its closing cadence. Not another sound was heard until he lowered the Amati, opened his gleaming eyes, smiled at us, signaling his return to the planet earth, and spoke: "Ladies and gentlemen, I have the best job in the world—every day, for five or six minutes I must play each of the collection instruments to keep the living voice in them." Obviously, he has done his work well.

Then he spoke again, grinning proudly, saying "String players with the proper credentials—teachers, performers—are permitted to play these instruments. Please tell your colleagues and when you are again in Cremona, bring your bow, or (snickering) *you may use one of ours.*" Can you believe this? Hearing this news, I at once began developing a plan to make this experience possible for other string players, their teachers and music lovers. It is now possible to make

this Italy tour, play concerts in Rome, Florence, perhaps Venice, and then *crescendo* to Cremona for the Big Event! I'd love to make this an annual event for area students—whereby they can proudly say, "My teacher played a Strad! I was there!"

At the conclusion of June, 2008, school year, I'd like to host a self-funded Cremona/ Italy performing tour. Please contact me for further details. Let's Go To Italy!!



Vince Patterson, DMA, is a professional musician performing and teaching in the Washington, D.C. area. Since joining the Marine Band in 1974, he has played, sung and conducted in Coolidge Auditorium, the Library of Congress, The Kennedy Center, Washington National Cathedral and many other concert sites on the east coast.

For information on musical tours, please visit: www.musiccelebrations.com

National High School Honors Orchestra APPLICATIONS ARE DUE AUGUST 1, 2007

Please submit your applications for the 2008 National High School Honors Orchestra (NHSO) to your state coordinator (addresses can be found online, or call Cindy Swiss, 410-889-8325 for information) by August 1, 2007. Full details including requirements, repertoire, state coordinators, and application process are available online at: www.astaweb.com/competitions/NHSO.htm The mission of the NHSO is to competitively select talented young musicians from school orchestras to assemble biennially and perform in a national showcase, playing music from the professional orchestral literature under the direction of an internationally recognized conductor. The students working toward excellence in the NHSO are inspired to carry that excellence back to their own schools and on to a musical future.

In addition, mark these upcoming national events in your calendar!

ASTA National Conferences

February 27–March 1, 2008 Albuquerque, New Mexico
March 19–21, 2009 Atlanta, Georgia

2007 Summer Bass Workshop

under the direction of George Vance
in cooperation with
Institut International François Rabbath
& the University of Tampa, Department of Music

July 30–August 3, 2007
University of Tampa

François Rabbath in Concert

August 2, 8:00 P.M.

Faculty

François Rabbath
Anthony Bianco ~ Caroline Emery ~ Lloyd Goldstein
Sandor Ostlund ~ Robert Peterson
Ken Poggioli ~ George Vance
Christian Laborie, luthier ~ Gilles Duhaut, archetier

Information:

tel/fax: 301-588-9275

www. slavapub.net

e-mail: george@slavapub.net

2007 Summer Bass Workshop General Information

Eligibility The workshop is for bassists who desire an intense five days of study with master teachers. The curricula *Progressive Repertoire for Double Bass* by George Vance and *New Technique for the Double Bass* by François Rabbath are central themes of the workshop.

Program Participant's daily schedule will include: a master class (semi-private lesson, open to the public), a group lesson, participatory lecture/demonstrations, and an evening concert.

Preparation Each student should prepare one or more polished pieces for the daily master class and review the workshop repertoire list for group lessons. Bass choir music will be distributed the first day, to be prepared for the final concert.

Parents Parental attendance is encouraged. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent or designated adult guardian.

Teacher Course Participation in the teacher course taught by François Rabbath and George Vance is by invitation and is designed for those who are interested in disseminating the ideas of The Rabbath Method.

Auditors may observe all workshop events and free recitals.

Virginia ASTA Events

VASTA is sponsoring several exciting programs in the near future. Members of MD/DC ASTA can register at VASTA member prices.

1. MASTER CLASS with CELLIST

ZUILL BAILEY

Saturday, June 2, 2007

10:00 A.M.—12:00 NOON

George Mason University Center for the Arts

Admission: Students \$5

VASTA members (adults) \$10

Non-members (adults) \$15

2. TEACHER WORKSHOP

on SHIFTING, BOWING, &

PERFORMANCE

Monday, June 25, 2007

9:00 A.M.—1:00 P.M.

George Mason University

Workshop Fee:

Pre-registration/At-the-door

Pre-registration deadline: June 15, 2007

\$25/\$30 VASTA members (or Students of VASTA Members)

\$40/\$45 Non-members

No charge for master class soloists

VASTA is proud to present a workshop for string players and teachers utilizing ideas and techniques shared by our own talented teachers from Virginia.

Dr. Rami Kanaan will present and demonstrate from his new book, *A Handbook for Teaching Shifting to the Intermediate-Level Violin Student*, which includes original exercises and tuneful duets composed by him.

Lisa Cridge will present and demonstrate ideas from her book, *Bow Games and Goals: An Activity Workbook for Young Violinists and Violists*. The book is divided into four sections: games with and without the bow, games for more advanced students, and a trouble shooter's guide.

Both Dr. Kanaan and Ms. Cridge will have books available at the workshop.

Akemi Takayama, violinist with the Audubon String Quartet, will finish up the workshop with a Violin Master Class. The Audubon Quartet is now the Quartet-in-Residence at the Shenandoah Conservatory and serves as the faculty for the new Graduate Quartet Program at that institution.

Following the workshop, participants are invited to observe the GMU *Chamber Music Connection* summer program for string students, concurrently in session. Cellist **Anne Rupert** and violinist **Allison Bailey** will be teaching master classes and GMU's Director of Instrumental Studies, **Tony Maiello**, will be conducting a rehearsal of the CMC Orchestra in the afternoon.

3. BURTON KAPLAN, Founder &

Director of the famous

Magic Mountain Music Farm &

Practice Marathon Retreats

Presents:

**PRACTICING FOR ARTISTIC
SUCCESS: A Seminar and Master
Class for Musicians'
Self-Empowerment**

Saturday, September 8, 2007

1:30 P.M.—5:30 P.M.

McLean High School Auditorium

1633 Davidson Rd.

McLean, VA 22101

Mark your calendars for this event in the fall—you won't want to miss Burton Kaplan's insightful presentation and master class on practice! This event is for professional players, college and high school students, and teachers of any level.

Registration fees:

(Pre-Registration/At-the-Door)

\$25/\$30 VASTA Members (or students of members)

\$35/\$40 Non-members

For more information on any of these programs, contact: Helen Fall, VASTA President

E-mail: vaviola@aol.com

Phone: 703-425-9279.



The Lighter Side

GLOSSARY OF MUSICAL TERMS

ACCIDENTALS: Wrong notes

AGNUS DEI: A famous female church composer

ALLEGRO: Leg fertilizer

AUGMENTED FIFTH: A 36-ounce bottle

BROKEN CONSORT: When somebody in the ensemble has to leave and go to the restroom.

CADENZA: The heroine in Monteverdi's opera "Frottola"

CANTUS FIRMUS: The part you get when you can only play four notes

CHANSONS DE GESTE: Dirty songs

CLAUSULA: Mrs. Santa

CROTCHET: A tritone with a bent prong—or

CROTCHET: It's like knitting but it's faster

CUT TIME: When you're going twice as fast as everybody else in the ensemble.

DUCTIA: A lot of mallards

EMBOUCHRE: The way you look when you've been playing the Krummhorn

ESTAMPIE: What they put on letters in Quebec

GARGLEFINKLEIN: A tiny recorder played by neums

INTERVAL: How long it takes you to find the right note. There are three kinds:

1. Major Interval: A long time
2. Minor Interval: A few bars
3. Inverted Interval: When you have to back one bar and try again

ISORHYTHMIC MOTET: When half of the

ensemble got a different xerox than the other half

LASSO: The 6th and 5th steps of a descending scale

LAUDA: The difference between shawms and krummhorns

METRONOME: A dwarf who lives in the city

MINNESINGER: A boy soprano

MUSICA FICTA: When you lose your place and have to bluff till you find it again

NEUMATIC MELISMA: A bronchial disorder caused by hockets

NEUMS: Renaissance midgets

ORDO: The hero in Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings"

QUAVER: Beginning viol class

RACKETT: Capped reeds class

ROTA: An early Italian method of teaching music without score or parts

SANCTA: Clausula's husband

SINE PROPRIETATE: Cussing in church

SUPERTONIC: Schweppes

TEMPUS PERFECTUM: A good time was had by all

TRANSPOSITION: An advanced recorder technique where you change from alto to soprano fingering (or vice-versa) in the middle of a piece

TROPE: A malevolent Neum

TUTTI: A lot of sackbuts

