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# President's Report

It has been a pleasure serving on the Board these past four years, first as Secretary/Treasurer, then as President-Elect, and finally as President. Through my experiences of being the organizer for the Mimi Zweig workshop and the jazz workshop with Gabe Bolkosky, helping to get the Baltimore Certificate Exams up and running, running the Solo Competition in 2001, and finding people to fill the vacancies on the Board, I have met and gotten to know many wonderful, exciting people.

I've had great companions on my journey with the MD/DC Chapter. Lya, who has given years of dedication and shown tremendous vision in developing the Certificate Program; Anne Marie, who always has great ideas and enthusiasm; Nayiri, who's responsible for finally getting the finances organized and computerized; and Lorraine, who has continued to be the backbone

of our chapter as the editor of *Stringendo* for many years.

I am honored to have been entrusted with the leadership of this great organization for the past year and a half. However, the demands of my professional and personal life will not allow me to devote the necessary time and attention to our chapter for the last quarter of my term. I regretfully wish to withdraw from my presidency as of January 2004.

I wish Anne Marie and the rest of the board all the best and will continue to lend a hand to support this great organization in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Melissa Hullman

## From the Editor's Desk

After a year's absence, *Stringendo* is back! The MD/DC Chapter has not been idle, however. The Certificate Program for Strings is still going strong. As of last winter, our chapter now hosts the CPS in two venues in the Baltimore/Washington area. Read all about it in this issue.

The National Office has been working hard to make ASTA an indispensable part of our lives as string teachers. The first stand-alone ASTA convention last spring in Ohio demonstrated to those who attended just how many opportunities there are available for teachers of stringed instruments. Read a review of the convention on page 15. The next ASTA convention in March 2004 in Dallas, Texas should prove just as exciting. It would be wonderful if several members of the

MD/DC Chapter could attend. Please read the press release on pages 12 and 13.

Our chapter's membership list is printed in this issue. If there is an error in your listing, please notify the National Office (see inside front cover for phone number or e-mail address) to make corrections.

As always, I am open to receiving articles and news items relating to string teaching. This newsletter cannot function without input from its chapter members.

Happy reading,

Lorraine Combs

# Certificate Program for Strings

## Report on Performance Exams

### June 2003

*By Lya Stern*  
*Certificate Program Chair*

**T**HE SIXTH ANNUAL CPS EXAMS took place in June 2003 at Catholic University. Twenty-three teachers prepared over 150 students who took the exams successfully. This is a 30% increase in the number of teachers from the previous year, reflecting growing familiarity and acceptance of the program. Teachers who have participated are unanimous in praising the examinations for motivating students.

The following teachers participated in 2003: Linping An, Klara Berkovich, Patricia Braunlich, Kay Budner, Lucia Conrad, Lynne Denig, Ewa Dunian, Nina Falk, Larry Keiffer, John Kendall, Anne Marie Patterson, Mark Pfannschmidt, Nayiri Poochikian, Kate Rao, Kathy Scarborough, Judy Shapiro, Dana Shieh, Judy Silverman, Diana Souder, Janie Spangler, Lya Stern, Eleanor Woods, and Margie Wright.

The examiners were: Rachel Alexander, Evonne Baash, Emily Campbell, Hazel Cheilek, Lisa Pickett, and Margaret Whiteside.

Due to a family emergency, I had to be away during the weekend of examinations. Inevitable last minute problems relating to examiner and monitor scheduling, food, and set-up remained to be handled. I asked Mark Pfannschmidt for help. He responded most generously by stepping up to the task. He took over running the exams smoothly and efficiently. I know I speak for all participating teachers and their students when I express deep appreciation for Mark's work.

I would also like to thank some of the other participating teachers for going out of their way to help run the exams: Pat Braunlich, Judy Shapiro, Eleanor Woods, Margy Wright, and the ASTA board: Lorraine Combs, Melissa Hullman, and Anne Marie Patterson. Please forgive me if I omitted someone.

The CPS has become the most important program of the MD/DC Chapter. Some teachers have joined our chapter in order to send their students to the CPS exams. Many more teachers would benefit from the program, but they may not know about it. Please spread the word.

Teachers who have participated, as well as those considering participating, are invited to read the following article on the CPS, which includes a FAQ section.

More information is available on the internet. The web site, [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net), includes syllabus, exam dates, and application forms. Click on Certificate Program, then choose MD/DC. Or call Lya at 301-320-2693.

### Description of the Program

**T**he ASTA Certificate Program for Strings offers a ten-level graded curriculum guide and annual performance examinations for students from elementary through standard concerto repertoire levels. The curriculum guide, a helpful resource for teachers, includes goals and a listing of scale books, etudes, and solo repertoire for each level.

The program is available for violin, viola and cello. The flexible format is easy to follow and it works with either Suzuki or traditional teaching styles. Unlike the British or Canadian programs, the CPS allows teachers to choose the repertoire to be played for evaluation, and there is no requirement for purchasing music. Students must prepare scales, an etude, and one or more pieces depending on their level. They are also tested in sight-reading. Upon completing the examination, students earn a Certificate of Achievement.

Teachers find that students who prepare for these exams are motivated to play well and make good progress. They generally do better at youth orchestra auditions than other students not involved in the CPS.

### Selection of Examiners

**T**he CPS state committee selects examiners based on their reputations as experienced teachers of the instrument they judge. The examiners are expected to assess the strengths and weaknesses in the students' playing and make specific suggestions for improvement in a positive and encouraging manner. Examiners are friendly and make the students feel comfortable.

Examiners receive training through a detailed instruction sheet mailed in advance, one detailed telephone conversation, and a short meeting before the evaluations. (There are plans for the production of an examiner training videotape to be completed later.)

More than 20 different examiners have evaluated MD/DC students over the past six years. While there have been variations in the writing styles of the examiners, teachers and students found the comments to be encouraging and helpful.

In order to assure impartiality, the examiners do not know the names of students or their teachers.

## Grading

The CPS is not a competitive event; it is designed for the average student who takes lessons on a regular basis.

Students receive a grade of V (very good), S (satisfactory), or N (needs improvement), modified by plus and minus signs. On the average, most students get S+ and V. About 15–20% of students get V+. Some get “Honors.” Only 1–2% of students get N; this is usually limited to merely a portion of the requirements, such as: just scales, just etude, or just the solo piece.

Any student also has the option of playing “For Comments Only,” in which case he does not receive a certificate. This happens if the student has not prepared all required material for his level, or if the scale or solo material is not memorized.

The completed Evaluation Sheet is mailed to the teacher, who will discuss the comments with the student. Most of the time the comments reinforce issues the teacher has been working on with the student. Occasionally, it will show a different perspective that the teacher may consider or ignore. The evaluation will always offer praise for work well done.

The purpose of these evaluations is to give students a new incentive to work hard, master a higher level of playing, and be proud of having earned the Certificate of Achievement. The system is set up to support the teachers’ efforts by requiring the practicing of scales, etudes, and sight reading, as well as repertoire. This preparation will benefit students in all future performances and auditions such as those for school orchestra seating, as well as school, county, and all-state youth orchestras.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Can a student play a piece that is not listed in the Syllabus?** Yes, so long as the piece is the same level of difficulty for that level as the other pieces listed in the Syllabus.

**How does one know for sure if a piece that is not listed in the Syllabus fits in a certain level?** If there are any doubts, check with your state CPS chair as early as possible. She may consult with other CPS chairs. The state chair’s response is final. In MD/DC, e-mail Lya Stern at [lya@asta.net](mailto:lya@asta.net).

**Must the pieces played be the editions that are listed?** No. The editions are listed only to help in finding and buying the works. Teachers may select any edition.

**Do scales have to be played at the tempos listed? Can they be faster? Slower?** Scales should be played within the range listed, but may be played faster if played well.

**What is the best way for a teacher to get acquainted with the CPS and test it?** Read the CPS booklet carefully, talk to the state chair of the program, and most importantly, participate! Enroll a few students and sign up to monitor. First-hand experience is best. The program has been positive to hundreds who have tried it so far.

**Does a student in Level 7 really have to play two pieces?** Yes. This level marks a turning point in the student’s development. Expectations grow as students progress through the levels. Note that in Levels 8–10, three pieces are required.

**Must everything be memorized?** No. Only the repertoire pieces and scales are to be memorized. Sonatas from the classical period and later may be played from music. It’s OK to memorize etudes, but it is not expected.

**What if a student does not have everything (that is required) memorized?** Memorization as described above is a requirement to pass the level. If the student plans to use music for scales and solos, he should play for Comments Only. He may change to Comments Only as late as the day of the exam.

**What about repeats?** In the interest of time, long repeats should not be made.

**Do cadenzas have to be played with concertos?**

No. Cadenzas are optional.

**Is the CPS intended for only high-achieving students?**

No. The program was designed for the average student who takes private lessons regularly. However, the high-achieving student will also benefit from it.

**What happens if a teacher registered the student for the wrong level?**

If the repertoire does not match the level, the state chair will notify the teacher of the options to change the repertoire, correct the level, or to play for Comments Only.

**What happens if a student plays below acceptable standards? Does he/she fail?**

Every effort is made to acquaint teachers with the standards of performance necessary for a successful exam, so that they send only students who are well prepared. Very rarely, a student falls short. If a student gets 5 Ns (Needs Improvement) in a category such as scales, etude, and each piece, it is recommended that he retake the exam in that category, three to six months later. The Certificate of Achievement for that level will be awarded at that time.

**What is Honors?** Honors is a special designation reserved for an overall outstanding performance which includes at least one solo piece from a higher level than required for the level applied for. Please mark advanced pieces on the application form.

**How do I convey to my students the benefits of the CPS?**

Most students have no objections to participating, just as they participate in year-end recitals. Explain to older students that preparing for the CPS evaluation is no different from preparing for a studio recital, youth orchestra audition or festival, except that the CPS evaluations are noncompetitive and not public. Future auditions will be more successful because of the practicing they did for the CPS evaluations. Tell them if they will practice, you will make sure that no one goes to the evaluations unprepared and they will get a well-deserved Certificate of Achievement as they complete each level.

**How do I convey to the parents the benefits of the CPS?**

Parents are happy when their child practices and makes progress. They also have more confidence in the teacher's efforts when they see outside valida-

tion of that effort. The CPS fulfills these needs. Tell parents that the CPS is one of the best ways to motivate students to practice and bring scales and etudes as well as solo pieces to a polished level. The Certificate of Achievement and written evaluation after each level from a national organization such as ASTA WITH NSOA ensures recognition of high standards of teaching and student progress.

**When should a student play for Comments Only?**

This option is available to encourage participation by the student who is worried about being graded, and for the student who has not memorized all the material as required but would like the benefit of the examiner's suggestions. No Certificate is awarded. Same fees apply.

**Is there any informational material for parents?**

Yes. Give them a copy of the ASTA WITH NSOA CPS informational brochure, available from the state chair and soon from [www.asta.net](http://www.asta.net).

**Is it OK to play the same solo piece for two different level exams?**

No, unless one of the exams was for Comments Only.

**Does a student have to complete a level in one year?**

No. The rate of progress varies from student to student and often in the course of the same student's development.

**Is it OK to skip a level?** Yes, if in the teacher's judgment the student is ready for the next level.

**Is it OK to repeat a level?** Yes. Often a student benefits from learning more of the literature in a level, before proceeding to the next. A and B are appropriate designations in this case.

**What does the A or B designation mean?** It means that the applicant is taking the same level exam more than once in order to have time to learn more of the repertoire and master skills suggested for that level. The CPS recognizes that taking the exam on a different level each year does not coincide with the rate of musical growth of many students. The built-in flexibility that is provided by the stretching of levels over multiple exams is an important tool to be used by teachers, when appropriate. Earning a Certificate designated A and then B allows students to feel that they are making progress within the same level.

**Must A or B be designated on the application form?** Only the B designation (the second exam on the same level) needs to be marked. However, both A and B should be marked on the Certificate of Achievement, for example: Level 5A or 5B.

**Must a student be accompanied if an accompaniment is written for the piece?** No. This is at the discretion of the teacher and student.

**Could a teacher evaluate his/her own students?**  
No. In order to assure complete impartiality, the exams are conducted keeping the identity of teachers private.

**May the teacher play the piano accompaniment?**  
No, see above.

**May a member of the student's family play the accompaniment?** Yes.

**May a member of the student's family sit in on the exam?** No. The evaluations are not public and the rooms are not set up for an audience.

**Can we change the repertoire after the application has been submitted?** No, except in unusual circumstances. Discuss with CPS state chair.

**To whom should the check for the application fee be written out?** Parents should make out a check to the teacher; then the teacher will make out one check to: ASTA WITH NSOA MD/DC Chapter.

# Certificate Program for Strings 2004

MD/DC Chapter announces:

The Seventh Annual Certificate Program Evaluation Examinations

Date: Sunday, February 8, 2004

Location: McDonogh School  
Baltimore, Maryland

Dates: Saturday and Sunday, June 12 and 13, 2004

Location: The Benjamin T. Rome School of Music  
Catholic University, Washington, D.C.

Mark your calendars now!

Web site: [www.asta.net/certhome.htm](http://www.asta.net/certhome.htm)

Close to a thousand students have participated over the past six years. As they return year after year, aiming for the next level Certificate of Achievement, they are becoming more accomplished and more dedicated string players.

## Who Participates and Who Doesn't: A Survey on CPS

Based on informal conversations and surveys, participation by teachers (or lack of it) can be summarized this way:

- Teachers who find the CPS useful and regularly send students to the evaluations.
- Teachers who like it and are planning to participate in the future, but have not yet organized their schedules around it.
- Teachers who like it but already are doing a lot of other activities (recitals, festivals, master classes) and don't have the time for an additional event.
- Teachers who like it but feel that their students are underachieving and would not be properly prepared.
- Teachers who are ambivalent because they worry about the examiner's comments.
- Teachers who are set in their routine and don't want to be bothered with a new event.
- Teachers who do not take the trouble to learn enough about it.
- Teachers who appreciate and make use of the graded program and syllabus, but do not send students to evaluations because of one of the reasons described above.

A few teachers who have sent one to three students at one time stopped for reasons other than dissatisfaction. No teacher who sent a great number of students ever dropped out of the program.

The CPS has appeal but it takes time for teachers to understand, accept, and incorporate it in their teaching routines.

We are still looking for feedback on all aspects of the program, please feel free to ask questions or make suggestions.

## The CPS National Appearances

The CPS has received recognition and acceptance by the ASTA National Board as evidenced by invitations for frequent presentations of the program at national conventions and conferences—the latest in May 2003 at The Ohio State University and the next one at the National String Forum, March 2004 in Dallas, Texas.

So far, the CPS has been successfully run in Virginia with Lynne Denig as chair, in Florida with Patrick Clifford as chair, and New Jersey, which under Leslie Webster as chair, held exams in four locations—with 33 string teachers registering 217 students. Hawaii is scheduled to start exams in 2004. ASTA members from Michigan, Idaho, Minnesota, Texas, Iowa and Nebraska have expressed interest in setting up the program in their states.

CPS National Committee members are Leslie Webster, Lynne Denig, and Lya Stern, chair. Along with Mimi Butler, an ASTA National Board member appointed by ASTA President David Littrell, this committee is revising and standardizing all forms associated with setting up and running the program. It is writing a proposal for introducing the CPS nationally, without disruption to the staff, or without additional strain on the budget.

## MD/DC Chapter Announces Winter 2004 CPS Exams

In order to accommodate teachers and students who find it more convenient to participate during the winter, the next exams will take place on Sunday, February 8, 2004, at McDonogh School, Baltimore, Maryland. Please note that these exams are in addition to those held in June in Washington; participants may choose either venue. The driving directions to McDonogh are also linked to the Certificate Exam web site: [www.asta.net/certhome.htm](http://www.asta.net/certhome.htm).

Take the Baltimore Beltway to Reisterstown Road North.


Stay on Reisterstown Road North until you pass a new development called Avalon.

Turn left on McDonogh Road. There is a traffic light and a street sign across the road.

Go over two bridges, past Farm Road and Shell Road until you come to Woods Road.

Turn right on Woods Road. Park in any of the parking lots.

The Burke Center is the brick building on top of the hill to the right with the pillars. The Black Box Theatre is in the basement of the Burke Center and can be reached by the back door behind the building near the loading dock

Download an application from the web site, or call Lya, 301-320-2693, if you do not have access to the internet. 

# The Classroom from a Private Teacher's Point of View

by Gloria Ballamy

**F**OR THE LAST TWO SUMMERS, I have had the opportunity to be on the faculty of the Summer Conference for String Education and Chamber Music at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. When I was asked to teach there, I was worried because my musical career has primarily been that of a symphony and chamber music violinist. I have kept my teaching activities focused on a bustling private violin studio, working one on one with students, with occasional forays into chamber works within the studio. My principal concern was how to keep my standards and style of teaching in a large group of teenage students with widely ranging technical skills and musical education backgrounds. Coaching chamber music groups seemed an easy fit. Conducting sectional rehearsals was an extension of my life as a symphony orchestra musician. Teaching classroom style was a new challenge for me!

The first time out (summer of 2001) I didn't plan to try to work with everyone in my technique class on the proper bow grip, but there was an obvious need for work in that area. This summer I decided that I must find a workable way to do this. These kids needed and deserved some serious help.

My goals were to address the proper positions for the right and left hands, good posture and to enhance the student's musicality in areas where they felt especially insecure. I decided to try to select a melodically interesting vehicle for developing technique and musicianship which would appeal to the most advanced as well as the less experienced students. The summer conference welcomes students from the beginning to very advanced levels and the entrance auditions are for placement only. My plan was to dedicate a portion of each classroom session to working with a small group of four or five different violinists each day after observing them play

a simple two-octave scale. The remainder of the class watched attentively, so that even if I couldn't get to everyone in three days, the whole group benefited from the experience. The students also helped each other and I encouraged them to stop me in the hall if they wished, if they were perplexed or frustrated with an unfamiliar concept—some actually did.

Using the Polonaise from Campagnoli's Divertimento in second position, we first discovered that it was possible to play a beautiful melody in second position and feel good about oneself! I told them that everyone feels less secure in second position and I wanted to help them reduce their discomfort. The piece encompassed problems of bow distribution and various rhythmic patterns, with the absolute necessity of subdividing longer note values with the shortest commonly occurring note. We moved on to double stops. This involved learning the upper and lower notes of the line separately, then placing the lower finger of the chord first and then the higher. Finally the double stops were put together and practiced two at a time and, later, a measure at a time. We worked at acquiring an even, light pressure on the bow. Those who could handle only a few of the double stops were invited to choose the upper or the lower note to play on the other chords. The main message was that all of them could learn to play double stops nicely. There may be mechanical problems to be solved over time, but with appropriate practice skills, these problems can be overcome.


Since the participants had pieces in orchestra and chamber music groups that required well controlled bow speed, measures with eighteen tied notes carefully practiced with six notes per one third bow were especially useful. The students beamed with pleasure at the compliments they received on their new skills.



Intonation problems seemed to dissolve in response to specific suggestions concerning left arm and hand positions, awareness of finger patterns and appropriate repetitions on difficult measures so that their muscles and brains had a chance to make the correct notes a habit. Many students don't know that fourth fingers in first position (not changed by flats or sharps) should make their open strings vibrate in happy participation.

On the fourth day, we played our piece for the other technique classes. I had put the matter up for a vote on the second day because I wasn't sure that they wanted the extra pressure. However, they did and were very proud of themselves.

There is no way that you can affect a student's playing in four days in the way that you

can with weekly one hour sessions over a period of time, but with intensity, peer pressure and a genuine love of the kids and passion for teaching, you might get a few miracles and a lot of satisfaction. 

*Editor's Note:*

*Gloria Ballamy earned her Bachelor's in Music from Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas and her Master's from the New England Conservatory in Boston as a student of Richard Burgin. Both degrees are in violin performance. She has performed with the Atlanta, Denver and Reading symphonies and with the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra. Mrs. Ballamy maintains a busy schedule with a string quartet and recital and orchestral engagements in addition to teaching a class of 25 students of all ages, from elementary through adult advanced. Reprinted with kind permission from the official publication of the Pennsylvania-Delaware chapter of ASTA WITH NSOA: Stringboard – Opus 1, Fall 2002 issue.*



# Tapping Into Velocity and Tension-free Playing

by Anne Marie Patterson

The technique of tapping fingers to release tension and promote good hand shape has been around at least since Paul Rolland, but I've recently discovered a new way of teaching tapping that has been very successful. I have students repeatedly tap one finger at a time in first position, on the tapes if they still have them, in the following patterns:

(0-1) (0-2) (0-3) (0-4)  
(1-2) (1-3) (1-4)  
(2-3) (2-4)  
(3-4)

Having students tap their fingers allows them to release tension in the hand that would otherwise cause the wrist to squeeze upwards. They find the muscles that move only the fingers without involving the thumb. It also provides repetitive "target practice" for the fingertips without the complication of using the bow or reading music. The pattern teaches finger independence, and is an opportunity to focus on placing fingertips squarely on the string with good, round shape. Many students particularly have trouble placing the 4th finger correctly, but with tapping, they do not apply the weight to the finger that would otherwise cause it to flatten or turn sideways. The pattern should be practiced on all 4 strings, paying special attention to the E (or A for viola). Students often twist at the wrist when playing on the E string, causing the fingers to land sideways on the string. Careful practice tapping on the E string helps them to keep the shape of the left hand the same as on the other strings.

A variation of the Fingertaps is to have the student hold a finger down on one string, and tap with another finger on an adjacent string. This helps to alleviate problems in string crossings.

After students master the Fingertaps, I have them do Fingerdrills:

(0 1 2 1) (1 2 3 2) (2 3 4 3)

Each pattern is to be played repeatedly, and may be done without the bow, with separate bows, slurring 4 notes in a bow, or repeatedly in one bow,

depending on the level of the student. It is surprising how many "intermediate" students have difficulty with this exercise. At first their fingers seem stiff and slow, but with practice they become light and springy. As with the Fingertaps, students must find the muscles that move only the fingers, keeping the wrist hanging loosely, with no excess motion. The Fingerdrills may be played using a major tetrachord, emphasizing the half-step between 2nd and 3rd finger, or in other patterns with the half-step between different fingers. These should also be practiced on different strings, carefully observing the hand shape.

Another variation of Fingerdrills is to have students use all 4 fingers in one pattern:

(0 1 2 3 4 3 2 1)

This exercise emphasizes the need to keep the hand turned so the 4th finger is close to the fingerboard. If students have difficulty reaching with the 4th finger, I have them place the 4th by itself, then add the others one at a time. They usually find their hand centered, with a slight backward extension of the 1st finger. Then as they do the drill, they may feel their hand "walk" forward slightly to aid the 4th finger, but all fingers move lightly in rapid succession. I like to see a straight line from the elbow to the back of the hand, and possibly to the back of the fingers. If the base knuckles are sticking out, the hand is usually cupped which makes it harder for the fingers to reach the fingerboard. With good position and practice, students begin to experience greater velocity and ease of playing.

The Fingertaps and Fingerdrills don't take long to do, but make a big difference. Students can even make up their own patterns and do them silently while their section is resting in orchestra rehearsals! No matter which way they choose to practice the exercises, students will begin to notice their fingers moving quickly and easily in everything they play.



# 2004 ASTA WITH NSOA

## National String Forum and Festival

### Press Release

Fairfax, VA—The American String Teachers Association has announced plans for the National String Forum and Festival, to be held at the Adams Mark Hotel in Dallas, Texas, from Thursday, March 11 to Monday, March 15, 2004. The String Forum and Festival is an expansion of the successful Studio Teachers Forum, and will encompass five tracks: National Studio Teachers Forum; the Alternative Styles Forum; K–12 Focus Seminars; the National Solo Competition; and the first-ever National Orchestra Festival.

Special events include a luncheon with keynote speaker Phyllis Young, the opportunity to register for the Professional Development Documentation program, and an exhibit hall where attendees will be able to view new products and services as well as pose their questions to a variety of music industry professionals.

Complete registration information, including session descriptions, travel, and housing information can be found on the ASTA conference website at [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com). Participants who register before January 15, 2004, will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a bow from CodaBow International.

#### National Solo Competition

The 2004 National Solo Competition will be held on the campus of Southern Methodist University. The competition is open to students under the age of twenty-five, competing in junior and senior divisions. Junior division will be held on Thursday, March 11, 2004. Senior division will be held on Friday and Saturday, March 12 and 13, 2004, with the final winners concert being held on Saturday evening, March 13, 2004. Prizes totaling \$20,000 will be awarded. Deadline for all entries to the national office is December 1, 2003, and must be submitted by the state competition chair. Guidelines, repertoire, and entry form are online at [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com), along with a listing of all state competition chairs and contact information.

Finals judges:

- Adam Holzman, guitar
- Paula Page, harp
- Nathaniel Rosen, cello
- Kathleen Winkler, violin

#### National Orchestra Festival

The first-ever National Orchestra Festival will be held on the campus of Southern Methodist University, March 11–13, 2004. Participation is open to ensembles from middle/junior high schools, high schools, and youth orchestras, with a competitive and non-competitive judging option. For complete information and application materials, visit [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com). The finals concert for the orchestra festival will be on Saturday, March 13, 2004.

Sponsors:

- Baroque Violin Shop
- CCIS / Musicate
- Eastman Strings
- Shar Products Company
- Southwest Strings
- Johnson String Instrument
- Super-Sensitive Musical String Company
- J. D'Addario & Company



## Studio Teachers Forum

The Forum will be held March 13–15, 2004. Sessions include:

- Technique for each stringed instrument
- Building musicianship
- Performance posture and pain
- Nurturing independent musical thought
- T'ai Chi for strings; building a business beyond the studio
- Pedagogical traditions
- Using digital video and audio in the private studio
- Adapting double bass repertoire to different skill levels
- Galamian's concepts of violin performance
- Incorporating Scottish fiddling into basic instruction
- Certificate Program for Strings
- Technology in the studio
- Expressive bowing
- Seldom-heard repertoire for the intermediate and advanced violist
- A violist's guide to music and materials
- Unusual music for cello
- Original guitar music of Miguel Llobet
- Teaching and performing contemporary music for harp
- Teaching efficient practice techniques
- Kodaly in instrumental teaching
- Master classes for violin, viola, cello, bass, harp, and guitar

Scheduled presenters include: Sara Avery, Charles Avsharian, Gail Barnes, Jeff Bradetich, Michael Carenbauer, Carey Cheney, Winifred Crock, Susan Dederich-Pejovich, William Dick, Bruce Erwin, Gerald Fischbach, Erzsebet Gaal, David Garrett, Beth Goldstein, Sean Grissom, Michael Hopkins, Hideki Isoda, Melissa Gerber Knecht, Eri Lee Lam, Nancy Lokken, Jose Lopez, Lisa Maynard, Rick Ritscher, Lyn Ritz, Paul Robinson, Marilyn Seelman, Edmund Sprunger, Jeffrey Solow, Kathryn Benjamin Whitcomb, Laura Wilcox, Kathy Winkler, Helga Winold, Ann Yeung, Phyllis Young, and Mimi Zweig.

## Alternative Styles Forum

The forum will be held March 11–13, 2004. Sessions include:

- Helping the school orchestra to fiddle from scratch
- Teaching alternative styles in the classroom
- Fiddling for cello
- An introduction to transcribing for string players
- Rock 'n Roll, the American melting pot
- Discovering creative improvisation
- Celtic fiddling: Scottish and Irish tunes
- Rhythmizing the bow
- Improvising on chord changes
- Texas-style contest fiddling
- Gypsy / Eastern European violin
- Alternative strings curriculum
- Integrating electric strings into orchestra
- The history of blues and swing
- Music theory
- Using alternative styles for recruiting and retention
- Comparison of bluegrass and classical styles
- Introduction and overview of fiddle styles
- Chopping techniques for cello, violin, and viola
- Double Bass quartets
- Jazz improvisation in the string orchestra
- Learning bass lines
- Fiddle styles in the United States
- Jam session

Scheduled presenters include: Renatta Bratt, Andrew Dabczynski, Jeffrey Eckels, Matt Glaser, Richard Greene, Beth Hankins, Reva Kuzmich, Julie Lyonn Lieberman, Martin Norgaard, Geoffrey Fitzhugh Perry, Bob Phillips, Pam Phillips, Crystal Plohman, Randy Sabien, Daryl Silberman, Tracy Silverman, David Wallace, Julianna Waller, Ed Willett, Mary Ann Willis, Mark Wood, Katrina Wreede, and Nicole Yarling.

## K–12 Focus Sessions

Each Workshop will run all day long, Friday, March 12 and Saturday, March 13, 2004.

- Elementary and middle school conducting and string class workshop presented by Pamela Tellejohn Hayes and Doris Gazda
- Middle and high school conductors workshop presented by Marvin Rabin and Bob Culver

# ASTA WITH NSOA MD/DC Chapter

## Minutes of Annual Meeting April 6, 2003

*Submitted by Nayiri Poochikian*

Board members present:

Melissa Hullman, President  
Anne Marie Patterson, President-Elect  
Nayiri Poochikian, Secretary/Treasurer  
Lorraine Combs, *Stringendo* editor  
Lya Stern, Certificate Program

The meeting opened at 11:00 A.M. at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, UM, College Park.

- Treasurer's report: As of 3/31/03 there is \$4400.00 in the checking account and \$2300.00 in Certificate of Deposits. Cecylia Barczyk briefed about the International Friends of Music Camp at Coolfont. The chapter donated \$400.00 for scholarship money to the camp.
- Certificate Program: Lya talked about the time and expense that goes into preparing the brochures for the Certificate program. Only three students took the Certificate exam in Baltimore in March. Possibilities to attract more teacher and student participants were discussed, as well as finding a time that might be more convenient for the students.
- National Conference: Ann Marie reported on the National Conference and the various workshops she attended. One of the important issues string teachers face in today's environment is teaching to play well and not just "hard stuff." Teachers should have excellence in mind while teaching.
- Concerns about the Chapter: Elsa Brant expressed her concern that not many teachers were interested in participating in chapter activities. What could be done to attract members to be more active in the chapter? Elsa also suggested that *Stringendo* could also be like a newsletter with information about what members do.
- Carol Howell presented a workshop about Strategies for Teaching Special Learners.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 P.M.

## Board Meeting Report

*Submitted by Anne Marie Patterson*

The board met on Sunday, October 12, 2003, at 11:00 A.M. at the Starbucks in Greenbelt. Anne Marie Patterson, Lorraine Combs, and Lya Stern were present.

Lorraine presented Solo Competition postcards to be sent to the membership.

Submissions for the fall edition of *Stringendo* were discussed.

It was decided that *Stringendo* should be published three times a year instead of four, and meetings should be planned accordingly. February, July, and September issues are planned, and our next two meetings are scheduled for January 4, 2004, and June 20, 2004, at 10:30 A.M. at the Starbucks in the Greenway Shopping Center in Greenbelt.

Lya and Lorraine will write job descriptions for the board positions.

The new Member-At-Large board member is Cynthia Swiss.

Melissa will remind forum editors to submit articles.

Anne Marie will contact leaders of MD/DC ASTA student chapters, SAGWA, MENC, MODA, etc. to have better communication between organizations.

Ideas for the Annual Meeting were a mock Certificate Program exam, or a fiddling clinic.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 P.M.

## Treasurer's Report

*Submitted by Nayiri Poochikian*

As of 8/31/03, the following funds are available:

Checking:	\$4,554.65
Savings:	\$1,169.48
Certificate of deposit:	\$1,206.00
Total funds available:	\$6,930.13
Total Deposits to Checking:	\$5,217.74
Total Deductions from Checking:	\$5,600.29

# What a Conference!

## A Review of the ASTA WITH NSOA Conference at The Ohio State University, March 27-29, 2003

by Anne Marie Patterson

The National ASTA WITH NSOA Conference this past spring at The Ohio State University was a truly wonderful experience. From the inspiring Opening Ceremony to the last seminar, every hour was packed with exciting information and ideas.

The **Opening Ceremony** featured an Alternative Styles Performance by some of the biggest names in Fiddling, Jazz, Latin, and Indian styles. There was also a performance by the Saline Fiddlers, a high-school group from Michigan that was absolutely amazing. Apparently fiddling is good for bow arms! I made a point of attending the “Beautiful Bow Arms” session by Bob Phillips, the director of the Saline Fiddlers. One of his tips was to have students place the bow on the stand with the hair down and the frog sticking out to the side, so they can set their bow grip easily while holding their instrument in the other hand. Another tip was to have students blow on an imaginary sail on their arm to achieve a smooth, legato bow stroke.

Another highlight was the session by Dr. Robert Duke of the University of Texas at Austin, entitled “**Eleven Years of Violin and I Can’t Get a Date.**” He emphasized the need to define goals for students, whether it is to make their grandparents cry by playing their favorite song, or pick up a “cutie” by playing a cool song. He also said teachers need to teach students to think for themselves, and to play *well*, not just hard music.

In the session titled “**Muscleship,**” Kathleen Horvath from Case Western Reserve University informed us that 82% of professional musicians have had performance-related medical problems, with the highest number of injuries in string players, especially women. The number is even higher for young players. At one time, this was thought to be acceptable, even expected, but with proper training, students can avoid injury. We acquire our basic muscle vocabulary in the first few years of instruction, so good training is vital. Encourage exercise, teach warm-ups and stretches, and take frequent breaks.

Lisa Maynard from Baylor University presented a session on “**Effective Practicing.**” She suggested helping students make specific practice goals, and stressing quality, not quantity. Training students to assess their playing helps them to practice more efficiently. Have students record their practice sessions for you to evaluate. Avoid saying “one more time,” but instead say “five more successful repetitions.” Teach students to practice with their brains, not just their hands.

There were many more sessions, master classes, and performances than I could possibly describe in this article. If you missed this exciting conference, consider attending the **National String Forum and Festival in Dallas Texas, March 10–15, 2004.** Details are listed on page 16 of the August 2003 edition of the *American String Teacher*.



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## Washington Youth Chamber Orchestra

**W**ASHINGTON YOUTH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA is announcing 2003 auditions for violins and violas, ages 12 to 17. Rehearsals are on Saturdays from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

This ensemble has been around for two years and has performed a wide range of repertoire from Bach to Schostakovich, as well as many concertos for solo instruments.

Members of the group are encouraged to solo with the group to keep up the performance level.

For information contact Olga Yanovich at 703-503-8237 (olgayanovich@cs.com)