

STRINGENDO

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President's Message

Once every four years, registered voters of this country have the opportunity to cast their votes to determine the future of our country. It is not only a civic duty, but a time to get involved and make a difference. Similarly, ASTA members have a voice in their organization, not just once every four years, but every day of the year! If you are receiving this journal, it is because you are a dedicated string teacher who has paid his or her ASTA dues and who makes a difference in the lives of his or her students!

Why not get more out of your ASTA membership by becoming more involved? I would love to hear feedback on what you read in *Stringendo*, and receive suggestions or submissions for articles.

The **Teaching Tips** column is a wonderful opportunity to share your ideas with other members! Did you have your students play in September for "**Strings In Our Community Month**"? We'd love to hear about it! In August, we had a free **Fiddle**

Workshop, led by our President-Elect, Cindy Swiss. We hope to have more workshops in the future, and would love to see more members in attendance.

MD/DC Chapter is the founding chapter of the newly nationalized **Certificate Program for Strings**. We offer the Certificate Program for students every year in February and June; please consider having your students take part. Or at least visit to see what it's all about!

Of course, the **ASTA with NSOA National Conference** in February 2005 promises to be a phenomenal event, with Midori and Rachel Barton, and at least five MD/DC members presenting sessions.

This is your organization, your chapter and your journal. Be a voice, get involved, and make a difference!

Anne Marie Patterson
MD/DC Chapter President

From the Editor's Desk

We have an exciting issue this time! As you glance through, you may be shocked to see Midori's name as one of our contributors. Yes, it really is Midori! Our chapter President, Anne Marie, was surfing the web one day recently, and she looked at Midori's web site. The article on "Interpretation" captured Anne Marie's attention, and she wrote an e-mail asking if the article could be re-printed in *Stringendo*. (Nothing ventured; nothing gained.) And the answer came back—a positive reply from Midori herself.

Not only do we have this article from a world-renowned violinist, but we also have exemplary articles from our very own chapter President-Elect Cindy Swiss, and one of our former chapter Presidents, Ronald Mutchnik, who, in addition to contributing to the **Teaching Tips** forum featured in each issue of *Stringendo*, volunteered his time, home, and expertise to host a workshop. We hope that many of you will be able to attend.

We recently received big news from Lya Stern. The **Certificate Program for Strings** has been adopted by National! We are all so proud of Lya for having the vision to start the program over eight years ago, and for the countless hours of work that she and the many people who have been involved with the program have contributed. Lya has promised a full report on the National CPS for the next issue.

And now a word about the **2005 ASTA National Conference** in Reno this coming February. Please set aside the time to attend; I promise you won't regret it! Some of the presenters are members of our own MD/DC Chapter, and a couple are former members who now reside elsewhere: Philip Baldwin, Charles Caputo, Lynne Denig, Cathleen Jeffcoat, Scott Laird, Anne Marie Patterson, Bret Smith, Lya Stern, and Donald Watts.

Lorraine Combs

Certificate Program for Strings Report on Performance Exams 2004

by Lya Stern, MD/DC Certificate Program Chair

In 2004, an all-time high of 182 students took the performance examinations in our chapter: 32 at the February exams offered at the McDonogh School in Baltimore, and 150 at the June exams at Catholic University in Washington, D. C.

Twenty-three studio teachers enrolled students, a major increase from the previous high of 16.

The following teachers sent students: Linping An, Klara Berkovich, Pat Braunlich, Restell Bell, Mina Choi, Lynne Denig, Nina Falk, Kathy Lehr, Jan Sigmon, Larry Keiffer, John Kendall, Slavica Ilic, Dianna Souder, Anne Marie Patterson, Mark Pfannschmidt, Judy Shapiro, Jennifer Shannon, Jean Provine, Janie Spangler, Cindy Swiss, Kathy Scarborough, Lya Stern, and David Teie.

The examiners at McDonogh School were Colette Wichert and Maya Shih. The examiners at Catholic University were Hazel Cheilek, Doree Huneven, Marianne Perkins, Cathy Stewart, Lynne Denig, Eleanor Woods, Celeste Blase, and Judy Shapiro.

The overwhelming majority of the participants in our chapter are violin students, along with a large contingent of violists. We would like to invite cello teachers to consider getting familiar with the Certificate Program. Jeffrey Solow and Mike Carreras were the main architects of the cello program and it is excellent. In New Jersey, cello teachers are really enthusiastic supporters of the

program and their students turned out in force every year since they started the CPS exams.

The word is spreading about the benefits of preparing for these exams. The students who play for the CPS have no problems when they audition for youth orchestras and their school orchestras, because of the intensive preparation for the CPS exams. They have worked on their scales, have already prepared one or more pieces to performance level and have worked on their sight-reading skills. The exam is not intimidating; it is merely challenging and as a goal it is a great motivator. Preparing for it leads to progress and satisfaction for student, teacher and parents.

Once again we are all grateful to Mark Pfannschmidt for stepping in at the last minute to oversee the exams, because yours truly found herself flat on her back and unable to move or walk for about a week just before, during and after the exams. Wonder if there is some message there—need co-chair, need co-chair...

An invitation to all new members and ASTA teachers not familiar with CPS: please check out the MD/DC website, www.asta.net and click on Certificate Program. Look for Program Description, Syllabus, and Exam Requirements for your instrument and think about what participation can do for your student. I welcome your questions and comments at lya@asta.net or at 301-320-2693.

Certificate Program for Strings 2005 MD/DC Chapter announces the Eighth Annual CPS

Sunday, February 6, 2005 at McDonogh School in Baltimore. Application deadline: January 10, 2005 postmark.

June 2005 (TBA) at Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, Catholic University in D.C. Application deadline: May 1, 2005 postmark.

Exams are offered for violin, viola, and cello, levels F (foundation), and 1–10.

Visit www.asta.net/cps to download application blanks and to view playing requirements and repertoire lists.

Levels F, 1 – 3	\$25
Levels 4 – 6	\$30
Levels 7 – 8	\$35
Levels 9 – 10	\$40

INTERPRETATION

by Midori Goto

Every work of music needs an interpreter to give it life, interpretation being the crucial component in performance by which every artist is ultimately judged. How is an interpretation arrived at? What takes place within the mind of the performer? Can interpretation be learned?

There is no single 'solution' or correct way to interpret a piece of music. I do not believe that interpretation is a matter of 'godly inspiration and mystery best left alone.' Rather, it is an intricate combination of processes--a complex mixture of logic (knowledge and thinking), listening, and responding to the music. Most certainly, imagination and creativity play decisive roles in making these elements of interpretation interface.

Simply stated, music communicates a message that can be received and internalized by the listener. The successful interpretation of a work has everything to do with the clarity, insight and power with which this message, or story, if you will, is conveyed to the listener and its consequent impact.

When I was a youngster, my mother told me that I must "always tell a story" with my music. When I was eight years old and played Bach's *Chaconne*, the story I told, about "my little dog who died and went to heaven," is now only a charming anecdote; a story in music is not that simple. From early on, I knew that this was not what my mother meant. In fact, it was absolutely a last resort when she had to encourage my imagination with a tangible plot and name-able characters. A musical story has a dramatic line without an explicit scenario. It is a musical journey in which the experiences (or stories) of the listener, the player, and their surrounding worlds come together.

The role of an interpreter is indeed an important one and one that I take very seriously. Learning to think plays an important role in the

developing artistic and communicative process, although it is not the only factor. The performer must first understand the format, the shape, and the construction of the musical work. This is a basic given but it is often ignored. The work must then be interpreted so that the logical components can be communicated in a musically coherent manner. This takes time, patience, trial-and-error, and experience.

When a musician looks at a score, he or she tries to de-code the intentions of the composer as printed on the page. Because there are many ways to interpret, or to execute, these markings, from the start there exist individual ways to express them.

In my teenage years, as I tried to find the best way to interpret music, I listened to performances by other artists, read written analyses of music and watched musicians discussing their points of view in particular works. It was still beyond me at that point to know that there was no simple way to 'achieve' interpretation. That it was a case of complicated, interwoven micro-processes rather than a single method was a difficult lesson to learn. I listened to many recordings--particularly of vocal literature--trying to get under the skin of the performers, to breathe along with them, to understand why they did what they did and how they came to their interpretations. I also asked myself why I reacted as I did to particular performers or performances. It was never my intention to imitate them but I wanted to know how others did what they did.

These days, when I think about interpretation, I am often struck by how closely related it is to language acquisition, capacity, and creativity. We know that children learn to speak at different speeds. Some speak early, others later, while this is not necessarily an indication of later success or talent, or of their ability to learn a second language. Some individuals have a great flair

for learning several different foreign languages while others spend much energy just getting to the point of feeling comfortable with one. This is not to mention still others who have more than one first language (mother tongue). But most importantly for the point of this essay, we all speak differently—even when we are telling the same story—because we each have a distinct way of choosing words, combining them and delivering the message. The same goes for listeners who also receive the message in their own distinct ways.

The ‘facts’ of music—as they appear on the composer’s score—are like the factual information of a story, the words, the paragraphs and so on. In reciting it, each story-teller has a unique vocabulary and a distinct emotional temperament to tell the story in his or her own way. And of course, the story-teller’s personal experience influences how he or she tells the story.

Furthermore, language, like music, cannot be learned in solitude. Much is achieved through interaction. The art of language, like music, is malleable, never formulaic, always situational, while following certain basic logic. In speaking a foreign language, when one is keenly conscious of grammatical correctness, the speech, although it may be error-free, often does not sound idiomatic because it is constrained and unnatural. In order to be creative with a language, one needs a certain degree of care-freeness that does not challenge the basic rules. Similarly in music interpretation, the basic rules must be well-ingrained but the interpreter must be free from worry of offending by breaking or stretching them.

Creativity also takes place as the performer listens to and assesses moment-to-moment developments. In other words, the performer must maintain a flexible mind to respond to and reflect the challenges of infinitely-changing situations. For this to occur, certain basic knowledge and logic must exist. So interpretation is a cyclical process where logic

and creativity influence and react to one other.

The most important characteristic of the interpretive process is its infiniteness. For the artist, it is also crucial that in performance, the interpretive process be carried out with full conviction. While the search for the elements of an interpretation is on-going, there can only be one way of presenting the music at any one point in time. Performers need experience to gain the self-confidence to present their interpretations with assurance.

A performance, even by the same artist, cannot be a carbon copy of another. Every performance, be it live or recorded, has the potential to move us, performers and listeners alike, in new and profound ways and to transform our awareness of the experience of being.

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Biography

In addition to a full touring schedule, violinist Midori Goto serves on the faculties of the Manhattan School of Music and the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California, where she was appointed to the Jascha Heifetz Chair in 2004. Aside from her own initiated projects such as *Midori & Friends*, *Partners in Performance*, *URP*, and *ORP*, Midori is passionate about education, community, and social services. As a performer, she embraces music of varied periods from Baroque to the very current; in private, she enjoys her dogs and the continuation of her psychology studies at New York University. Comfortable in both Japan and the US, where she currently resides, she is busy working on her second book, to be published in Japan in 2005.

Midori thanks Evelyn Velleman for comments on draft versions of the manuscript.

More information available on
www.GoToMidori.com

Starting a Youth Orchestra: A Guide to Your First Year

Part 2 of 2

by Lynne Denig

Part 1 of this article, published in the last issue of *Stringendo*, dealt with reasons to begin a youth orchestra and with laying the legal groundwork for the organization. Part 2, the final section, will provide administrative details surrounding personnel and particulars on running the group day-to-day.

Meetings of your newly-elected board will probably be frequent at this point, and for good reason: Because the numbers of people involved in the group are few, most of these steps will be taken care of by the board and other interested people. This foundation stage is a great time for brainstorming, for getting to know your community better and the people in it, and for juggling many balls all at once.

Your new board will want to pose lots of questions in its first meeting and to answer as many of the questions as possible. Some of these answers will be voted into policy, and others will become discussion points to be refined in the near future. One of the biggest hurdles to jump over, but a necessary one, will be applying for non-profit status. Non-profit status will allow the organization to use public facilities at very low cost, to get bulk mailing status, and to be granted certain privileges as far as tax law. Board members who are familiar with working with the IRS or your lawyer will be able to find these forms for you. Getting non-profit status should be a major push of the organization since a tremendous amount of money is saved once the designation is given.

Some of the other questions that should come up in this first meeting should be: what should the group be called, where and when will the group rehearse, who will the first conductor be, how much should the conductor be paid, who should be asked to be an honorary board

member, when and where should auditions take place, how much should tuition be, where should the post office box be located, what telephone number should be used, and what should the time schedule be for completing all of these tasks? Build into the latter extra time for mailings to and from any destination.

Concerning the conductor: Candidates should be public school teachers or other area musicians familiar to the board or to parents of young musicians. These candidates should be well known to the people recommending them on the basis of personality and musicianship. Decent people who are great musicians are a winning combination for young groups. A lack in one area or another of these characteristics can lead to the development of a poor reputation in the community.

Once the list is developed, the list should be divided up among the board members who will contact people on the list to assess their interest. When speaking with the candidate, you will want to have a vague plan for the group that can be presented. A good candidate who is interested will ask you some of the questions posed above. As far as pay, a formula that our group started with was taking the hourly average rate of private teachers in the area, and offering this to the person hired. Our group made the decision to hire a person whose background was a primarily in strings. The reason was two-fold: Any orchestra's largest group is the string section whose players represent many different levels of development while wind players are more likely to be able to solve their problems faster than string players because they are the most select and therefore musically the most mature musicians in the group.

It could be that you are not quite sure whom to hire for the first season. One way to approach hiring conductors would be to see prospective conductors in action, working with their school groups or other ensembles that they might coach. These situations would, of course, take place during the school year. Ask parents how their kids are treated in the group, listen to concerts, and walk backstage to hear how the conductor talks to the students. When organizing a youth orchestra when public schools are not in session, a possible plan would be to hire several conductors, each of whom can work with the group for one concert, then hiring the person best suited to the group at the end of the season. Be sure that whatever the basis is for hiring the conductor, that it is stated in an employment agreement signed by you and the conductor.

Board members should also start checking for rehearsal space. Because the organization will probably not have non-profit status yet and will, therefore, not be able to rehearse in a public school except with great expense, the board will want to check other spaces such as fire halls (typically open Saturday mornings for groups) and area churches and private schools. Check which churches in the area are the newest or very near completion, since these churches are more likely not to be highly scheduled yet with their own activities and with community activities. We found our rehearsal space by checking the church's web site where we read that the church was actively trying to find ways to raise money for their newly completed structure. We were a godsend to each other. Private schools may well welcome your involvement in their school especially if they would like to serve their student body better musically.

Once a building has been located for rehearsals, the next step is to see if the same can be used for auditions. If not, then another space will have to be found. One possibility is even to have the auditions in someone's living room or in a furnished basement with a walk-out entrance. In these situations, musicians would have to understand that they would need to

come to the audition already warmed up and as close to schedule as possible. Those listening to auditions would need to be cautioned to stay strictly on schedule.

Flyers and letters advertising the group should be drawn up and lists made of addresses of schools (check public school web sites and also www.washingtonian.com for private school addresses) and embassies, since some embassies have their own schools but do not have orchestras (see www.embassy.org). Contact the public schools' band and orchestra co-coordinators to see if they would be willing to put a notice of the new ensemble on their web site that lists information for teachers.

Consider setting up a web site in which links to various professional teaching organizations can be established (www.sagwa.org has a great link to many of the area's youth orchestras). Information on the new group and on auditions can also be posted on the site. Web sites can be quite fancy and quite expensive, but a computer-savvy youth orchestra enthusiast can put up a basic site for you in a matter of a few hours. Cost for a domain name is under \$100.

Also needing to be drawn up will be an application to audition, a form letter to notify the student of an audition time and place, and a letter to notify the student of audition results. Very quickly, the board will want to draft a handbook with rehearsal information in it, including policies that students will be held to, a statement about dress for concerts and concert etiquette, a list of contact information and how to report absences, and a list of personnel.

Just before auditions take place, the board will want to hire one or two other musicians to listen to and to rate the students auditioning. Having just the conductor listen to auditions year after year can skew who gets chosen, and it builds a reputation in the community for having biased auditions. The American Symphony Orchestra League's (www.symphony.org) Youth Orchestra Handbook has a copy of an audition form for evaluators that can serve as a model form for your auditions. Also, board policy

should include, for security's sake, that it is always best to have two adults present when working with young people.

Once musicians are chosen for the group and fees are paid, music should be borrowed (contact some of the honorary board members who might have access to parts and scores) or bought. Check local libraries, especially the District's library from which many orchestras have borrowed music. At the point that fees come in, a bank account should be set up, and people who have reached into their pockets to pay for bills so far should be reimbursed.

At the orchestra's first meeting, there should be sign-up sheets for various duties that can be handled by parents. Parents should be encouraged to sign up for some activity since no one, at this point, is paid to do any of the duties needed to run the organization. Especially the parents of any child asking for scholarship money (a break in tuition) should be expected to help. Board members should remember that any duty that a parent does not volunteer for, they will have to see to completion. Parents

who volunteer for activities and who do a good job should be considered for board positions. Volunteers' needs and concerns should be given every consideration and they should be thanked many times for their efforts, since job satisfaction is all they work for.

Indeed, it takes a village to raise a child, and it takes a whole community to grow a healthy youth orchestra that will serve its community well. Good planning, good contacts among good people, and a little luck are all it takes. Good luck to you!



Lynne Denig is Board President of The Youth Orchestras of Fairfax (www.tyof.org), an organization boasting two groups after its first year. Lynne is also President of the Virginia String Teachers Association and Chair of the Virginia Certificate Program for Strings. She can be reached by e-mail at violynne@cox.net or by phone at 703-425-1234.



Teaching Tips

Covering the Bases—An Approach to Organized Practice

by Ronald Mutchnik, former President, MD/DC Chapter

All too often we encounter situations at lessons where it is clear that students practiced and made progress with their assignments from the previous lessons; yet we still had a gnawing feeling that they could have accomplished much more—that the progress was, if truth be told, minimal or piecemeal compared to what it could have been. In the case of otherwise conscientious or well-intentioned students whom the teacher has ascertained did sincerely attempt to accomplish all that was asked of them, it might behoove us to examine how students can organize their practice time on a given piece into categories and know what procedures to follow and what skills to master when learning to play music. The division of phrases or half phrases into categories of **pitch, rhythm, bowings, and dynamics** (including articulations and descriptive musical terms) will help create reasonable goals that lead to mastery of the phrase and eventually the entire piece of music.

PITCH

Let us first examine the aspects related to the category of pitch. It stands to reason that one cannot begin to play the rhythms of a piece of music accurately without being able to recognize pitches quickly enough. Otherwise, a given rhythm's value would be lengthened out of proportion to what it should be. based on the student's lack of ability to figure out in time what the next pitch should be. Therefore, the first information a student must assimilate in the process of learning a piece of music is that of pitch.

Information on pitch includes recognition of notes and where they are found on the musical staff, how they fit into scale and arpeggio patterns, key signatures, fingering patterns related to keys as well as intervals, and positions. One must be sure that students have the necessary information to figure out the correct sound of the pitches for the level of the pieces they are playing. For example, a student attempting to play the opening phrase in the first or

third movement of the Vivaldi Concerto in A Minor should know how to find the A with the first finger



in third position on the E string, by substituting the third finger in first position with the first finger in third position, and verifying the A by playing it together with the open A string. The technical aspects of moving with the arm from first position to third position while keeping the wrist straight and the fingers over top of the E string in preparation for the notes in third position which come after the A must also be in place. While it is true a good ear will find the note regardless of the hand position and the finger substitution and open-string verification process, this procedure is a logical and more secure way to guarantee the note and maintain a posture and balance in the arm, hand, and fingers that is both efficient and physically stress free. It cannot be emphasized enough that consistency of technique and the use of an approach that can help verify the correctness of the note (that is, the guide tone and the matching of the pitch with the open string) brings to students the psychological benefits of confidence and assurance. It also reinforces in them the ability to solve their own problems and trust their technique and approach to intonation so that it can be in the service of making music. Clearly, when one has an inconsistent and unreliable technique and no consistent plan of finding notes except by blind repetition or letting the ear locate the note any way it can, there is a greater risk of playing the wrong note or playing out of tune.

RHYTHM

The next category students should examine is the rhythm. Once the in-tune succession of pitches is stable and reliable for a given phrase or portion thereof, the relationship of how long or short one note is played compared to another must be determined. Here it is wise, and most would say

essential, to use a metronome to establish a basic pulse, even if at a slow tempo. With a steady beat set to represent a particular rhythm value, students can begin to determine how many counts a particular note gets compared to another or if a certain number of smaller time values fit into a larger note value so that accurate time relationships between notes are established. For example, in the first phrase of the last movement of the Vivaldi A Minor Concerto, we



encounter rests that are, for many students attempting to learn them for the first time, of indeterminate duration. Because the rests are by their very nature silent, the beat is not filled up with a sound of which we can feel the precise beginning and end. Invariably, the rests are rushed and the note following the rest enters too soon because students do not use the reliable procedure of subdividing the beat into eighths and hearing those pulses on the metronome. Even if the students determine the right amount of time to hold this or that note, a lack of skill in certain technical aspects of lifting the fingers up and down, shifting, string crossings and bow distribution, to name but a few, can impede rhythmic accuracy. Again, the necessary preparatory groundwork needs to have been laid for students to avoid a major struggle that would lead to frustration over a lack of progress in practicing as well as an increase in physical tension out of a desire to force the correct sound to happen. I find it noteworthy that with all the different teachers and players from whom I learned or gained insights, one common thread was that one must allow the movement to happen and observe it rather than subjugate it to one's will. As an example, in the Vivaldi G Minor Concerto, we have a passage



that requires an alternating bowing pattern of two separate bows followed

by two notes slurred in one bow and, in addition, involves both clockwise and counter-clockwise string crossings as well as shifts in position based on the following fingerings and bowings:

Since we are dealing with the category of rhythm, the ability to use the wrist to cross any two adjacent

strings and the ability to distribute the right amount of bow to keep even the steady stream of eighth notes is imperative. A stiff unbending wrist will lead to fatigue and possibly a choppy string crossing that will cause rhythmic unevenness. Using up different amounts of bow on the separate notes will force an adjustment on the slurred notes that follow, which will force the bow to move too much to the frog or the tip instead of staying in the upper half of the bow and cause unwanted accents in addition to rhythmic unsteadiness. The rhythm of the slurred sextuplets that follow



is dependent on the even dropping of the fingers onto the string from a uniform height above the A string. If the hand position is faulty and certain fingers must work harder and move from greater distances to strike the string, accuracy in rhythm will be compromised. If a solid foundation in bow distribution, string crossings, and balanced left-hand finger movements has been provided to the student prior to learning this passage, the practicing of it leading to mastery will be far more pleasant and less tiresome and frustrating.

BOWINGS

The third category of symbols we see on the printed page relates to bowings. This includes knowing whether to go down-bow or up-bow, the amount of bow to be used, the speed with which it must move, and the bowing strokes that create the various patterns from on-the-string or off-the-string sounds to separate bowings versus slurred bowings. It follows the category of rhythm because knowing whether or not a note lasts a certain duration in time will affect how much bow needs to be used to play it. One could argue that the category of dynamics comes into play here simultaneously because knowing whether or not to make a crescendo on a note has a direct bearing on how much bow is used or how quickly the bow needs to move. In the case of simpler pieces in the repertoire, I separate bowing from dynamics because students at less advanced levels are often in the process of just getting used to going down and

up, slurring or not, and learning to keep their bows straight while developing the rudiments of tone production that will lead, down the road, to greater flexibility with, and a wider range of, dynamics.

As mentioned previously, bowing skills have a direct effect on the accuracy of rhythm; but understanding the rhythms in a piece of music, in and of themselves, is not dependent on whether or not a note goes up or down bow, slurred or separate, done as martelé or done as spiccato. It is in the technical execution of the bowing stroke and the amount of bow being used that rhythm is affected. At the beginning levels of playing, our task is simpler because we want the students to establish a clear tone with a straight bow and with enough flexibility in wrist and fingers so that notes do not sound unnecessarily choppy or abruptly cut off. How often do we hear beginners play with a heavy-handed monotone? Are these really the first sounds we want them

to get used to making with their bows? I think it is far better to patiently go through the process of teaching them to

produce a full but refined sound from the beginning so that they do not learn to accept abrupt stops and crude loudness as the typical sounds one makes on a stringed instrument. Of course there are coordination issues with bowing, so it is crucial to train certain movements first that will make it easier to produce a good sound. Beyond a stable but flexible bow hold or shape of the fingers on the bow, the ability to open and close the elbow to get a straight bow in the middle to upper half of the bow touching one string while at a time is paramount in this regard. From this forearm stroke one can then proceed to teach the use of the lower half of the bow. Then the idea of how much bow to use and how quickly to use it and whether to move closer to the fingerboard or bridge can be taught. With this background, students can proceed to check their bowing patterns and strokes on the printed page without worry that the basic sounds they are making will be unduly rough and crudely executed.

DYNAMICS

This leads to the category of dynamics, which is mostly a function of tone production in the right arm and hand. Here students must examine how loud or soft to play. The skills that need to be in

place here are those of weight, speed, and contact point (where the bow is placed in relation to the fingerboard or bridge)—the three elements of tone production. There are two basic guidelines that can be taught empirically to students so they truly feel the shaping of their tone as a vital and significant factor in making the music come to life. The heavier the weight, the slower the bow speed and the closer to the bridge one must play. The lighter the weight, the faster the bow speed and the closer to the fingerboard one must play. Therefore, when students see the symbols used for dynamics in their music, they interpret those symbols by choosing the appropriate weight, speed, and contact point. As an example we can use the last two phrases in “O Come Little Children,” found in Book I of the Suzuki Violin School repertoire. We start on a C# and rise in pitch to an A six measures later. There is a crescendo that goes along with this rise in pitch.



To make the crescendo happen, students should be practicing the use of increasing the length of bow and speed up until they get to the high A. Here, to really deliver the sound that reflects the triumphant arrival on the mountain peak of the A, students should learn to move the bow longer and slower near the bridge with heavier weight before moving away from the bridge and using lighter weight for the diminuendo that follows. The consistent use of the rules of tone production will shape the dynamics and give, at the very least, a logical sensibility to their budding musical expression.

In sum, we move through the categories of pitch, rhythm, bowings, and dynamics to interpret the symbols on the printed page. Once these things are mastered for a given phrase, it should no longer be necessary to look at the music. Having taken the time to carefully seek out the correct pitches, rhythms, bowings, and dynamics, and having watched over the technical skills that allow for clean execution of these symbols in the music, it is highly likely that the music has been internalized and is solidly memorized. By inference, one cannot be said to have memorized the music in the first place if one does not know what fingering one is going to use, or how long to hold a note, or whether or not it is down- or

up-bow, or whether or not it is to be played loudly, softly, or somewhere in between. Memorization, therefore, is the result of having thoroughly checked out and practiced the pitches, rhythms, bowings, and dynamics of the music and getting used to them. (There are ancillary issues such as keeping straight in the memory two passages that start similarly but have different endings, etc. These, however, are beyond the scope of this article.) Taking the kind of care in the order outlined above will give the student a solid framework for practicing a piece and foster the ability to express the music meaningfully by heart, from the heart, with confidence and conviction. ♪

FREE WORKSHOP

To demonstrate the use of these categories in structuring students' practice sessions, I am offering a free workshop on **Sunday, January 9, 2005, at 2:00 P.M. to approximately 4:30 P.M.** with a **snow date of Sunday, January 16** at the same time of day.

I would like to request that people planning to attend give me a call at **410-461-0618** no later than the evening of the day before the workshop so I know how many to expect. Also, everyone is encouraged to bring instruments. We will do everything as a group. I'll be able to work with three or at the most four students for 15 to 20 minutes each to apply the ideas covered in the teacher's workshop. So, I will also need to speak to the individual teachers and pick a good cross section of students at various levels with different sets of problems to maximize the usefulness of the workshop.

The free workshop will take place in my home, **4222 Club Court, Ellicott City, MD 21042**. You may opt to look for directions on MapQuest online or follow those below:

From the D.C. Metro area, go North on Rt. 29 to Rte. 108 West (marked Clarksville). Stay on Rte. 108 to just before the first traffic light and bear right onto Columbia Road. Continue north on Columbia Road through the neighborhood of Dorsey Search/Dorsey Hall. As the road curves to the left it will change names to Northfield Road. Remain on this same road and continue past the parking lot for the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints. Shortly after passing by the parking lot, look to your left for Southfield Road. Turn left onto Southfield Rd. and then right into my street, Club Court.

From the Baltimore area, get onto Rte. 70 West (towards Frederick) and take the left side exit for Rte. 29 South (towards Columbia). Stay on Rte. 29 South until the ramp on the right for Rte. 103/St. John's Lane. Take that ramp, and at the light at the end of the ramp make a right. Proceed to the three-way stop sign and make a left onto Columbia Rd. Go a short distance and make a right at the next stop sign onto Northfield Rd. Go a short distance again and make a left onto Southfield Rd. Then turn right into my street, Club Court.

If you are closer to downtown Baltimore or on the east side of the city, it may be easier to take I-95 South (toward Washington) and take the right exit onto Rte. 100 West towards Ellicott City. Stay on Rte. 100 West until the exit on the right for Long Gate Parkway. Take the ramp to Long Gate Parkway and turn right at the end of the ramp. Proceed to the second traffic light and make a left onto Montgomery Road (Rte. 103). Stay on Montgomery Road through the lights where the fire station and gas station are and past the junction with Rte. 29. Continue through the next set of lights until you get to a three way stop sign. Make a left at that stop sign onto Columbia Road. Go a short distance and make a right at the next stop sign onto Northfield Rd. Go a short distance again and make a left onto Southfield Rd. Then turn right into my street, Club Court.

From the Anne Arundel County/Annapolis area, go on I-97 to the junction with Rte. 100 West. Continue on Rte. 100 West toward Ellicott City until the exit on the right for Long Gate Parkway. Take the ramp to Long Gate Parkway and turn right at the end of the ramp. Proceed to the second traffic light and make a left onto Montgomery Road (Rte. 103). Stay on Montgomery Road through the lights where the fire station and gas station are and past the junction with Rte. 29. Continue through the next set of lights until you get to a three-way stop sign. Make a left at that stop sign onto Columbia Road. Go a short distance and make a right at the next stop sign onto Northfield Rd. Go a short distance again and make a left onto Southfield Rd. Then turn right into my street, Club Court.

Go straight through the court to the back center of it and see the house with two brick posts, one on each side of the driveway. You may park on the court in front of my house or in the driveway if there is room. Come up the sidewalk to the front door. The workshop will take place upstairs.

Suzuki Workshop with Michele Higa George

The Suzuki Association of the Greater Baltimore Area is very pleased to have Michele Higa George with us this year as the clinician for the Suzuki Play-In and Teacher Training. Mrs. George received a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Southern California. After leaving California, she established a Suzuki String Program in the Baltimore City Public Schools. From 1980 to 1982, Mrs. George studied at the Talent Education Center in Japan with Dr. Suzuki. As a member of the faculty of the Cleveland School of Music, Mrs. George established the Master of Music degree program in violin performance and Suzuki pedagogy. Currently she is developing Suzuki string programs in the inner city schools of East Cleveland and in Arusha, Tanzania.

Suzuki Student Play-In
Saturday, January 22, 2005
9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Burke Center, McDonogh School
Owings Mills, Maryland

Teacher Training
Sunday, January 23, 2005
10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
Location to be announced

Contact Cindy Swiss for details
cswiss@mcdonogh.org
410-889-8325

Strings in Our Community



In honor of Strings in Our Community Month, I scheduled my students to play a fiddle concert at the Charles County Fair. Unfortunately, the weather didn't co-operate, so we had to reschedule our performance for the next weekend at a retirement home. Nine students took part, and we played a variety of easy fiddle tunes. I think we brightened the residents' day, and my students had a fun, valuable performance experience.

—Anne Marie Patterson

My Week in Ireland

by Cynthia Swiss

I have always loved Irish fiddle music. I bought some books to learn the tunes but when I played from the book it did not sound right. I thought it would be grand to go to Ireland and study traditional Irish music from the masters.

I subscribe to *Strad* magazine, which publishes a summer supplement listing string instrument festivals and workshops all over the world. I looked under Ireland and there I found the Willie Clancy Summer School of Irish Music. This school has been held in Miltown Malby for the last thirty-two years. When I asked local Irish music lovers about it they said it is one of the best. So I decided I had to go.

My husband Jeff and I arrived in Shannon airport and rented a car. Driving in Ireland is a challenge, not just because they drive on the left, but also because the roads are very narrow. There is no shoulder and rock walls are right next to the road on each side. Jeff decided he would do most of the driving which was fine with me.

We arrived at our Bed and Breakfast in one piece and went right to sleep. After a nap we went in to town to register for the classes. The next week was one of the most memorable of my life. Classes met for six days from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. There was a lecture on Irish culture every afternoon and a concert every night. All day long you could stop in a pub and hear a session. Or just stand on the street corner and hear a group of students practicing the tunes they learned in class.

After a brief audition I was placed in an intermediate class taught by Gerry O'Connor. There were a total of 30 classes with 276 fiddle players in attendance. The classes were a challenge for me because all of the music was learned by ear. I was so glad I took my mini-disc recorder so I could review the tunes that evening. Gerry was very patient with us. He played a short phrase very slowly and had us repeat it as a

group. He kept going over the phrase until we all could play it. I was very grateful for my Suzuki training because I teach my beginners this way and in the process I have improved my ability to play by ear.

The new technique I learned in the classes was Irish ornamentation. The two main categories are cuts and rolls. The cut is like a grace note except the string is struck with the finger instead of fully stopped. This causes an interruption of the sound without the sounding of a clear note. The rolls are played: note, note above, note, note below, and end on the note. For instance, C# - D - C# - B - C#. When I transcribed the music, I wrote the cuts as grace notes and used ~ for the rolls. Try "The Walls Of Liscarroe" (page 16) to learn these ornaments.

On Friday I finally felt confident enough to play in a session. Gerry invited us all to a pub called The Crosses of Annagh. We packed the place with fiddle players and had a blast. It was so much fun I felt sad knowing we would be leaving the next day.

I would be happy to go back to Ireland tomorrow but I know I have to wait. While I am waiting I have joined a session on Tuesday nights at J. Patrick's pub. Every Tuesday is like a trip back to Ireland. I am also continuing my fiddle lessons with Jim Eagan, the fiddle player with O'Malley's March. 



Fiddle Workshop Report

by Cynthia Swiss

On Wednesday, August 18, 2004, I gave a workshop to share my experiences in Ireland and how I use traditional music in my teaching. Five teachers joined me in my studio at McDonogh and we shared teaching ideas for two hours. In addition to the Irish fiddle tunes we played some of the arrangements from the *Fiddlers Philharmonic* series. I made a list of some of the tunes and where they fit in with the Suzuki repertoire. New techniques can be reinforced using these simple, appealing tunes.

ASTA is encouraging us to explore alternative styles in our teaching. I hope my ideas will be of some help and I would love to hear some of yours.

Technique	Suzuki	Fiddlers Philharmonic	Fiddlers Philharmonic Encore
8th and two 16th notes	Twinkle Variation C	Bile 'Em Cabbage	
Dotted quarter and 8th note	May Song		Mari's Wedding and Finnegan's Wake
G string	Allegretto	Cripple Creek (group key)	
C natural	Etude	Old Joe Clark	
Slurs	Minuet 1	Road to Boston	
Triplets	Minuet 2		La Indita
Grace Notes	Minuet 3		Alison's Waltz
Slurs with string changes	Minuet 3	Ash Grove and St. Anne's Reel	Staten Island Hornpipe
Sixteenth notes	Gossec Gavotte		La Polka
6/8 time		Kesh Jig	
Minor key	Lully Gavotte The Two Grenadiers Witches' Dance	Swallowtail Jig	Lannigan's Ball Battle Cry of Freedom La Polka

THE WALLS OF LISCARROE

IRISH TRADITIONAL
TRANSCRIBED BY CINDY SWISS

ALLEGRO

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 8/8. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a time signature of 8/8. The tempo is marked 'ALLEGRO'. The score includes first and second endings, indicated by '1.' and '2.' above the notes. The first ending is marked with a '1.' above the notes. The second ending is marked with a '2.' above the notes. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.



American String Teachers Association

ASTA'S ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN RENO, NEVADA, FEBRUARY 23–26, 2005

“Strings Alive in 2005!” Features Performances by Regina Carter and Rachel Barton Pine, Plus a Wide Variety of Educational Sessions

The 2005 National Conference of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) will be held February 23 through 26 at John Ascuaga’s Nugget Hotel and Conference Center in Reno, Nevada, and will celebrate all aspects of teaching and performing string instruments.

The conference theme—Strings Alive in 2005!—conveys the excitement of all that the event has to offer its attendees. In addition to a wide variety of educational sessions, the conference features music industry exhibits, master classes by renowned artists, the ASTA National Orchestra Festival™, the National High School Honors Orchestra, and the Alternative Styles Awards.

Highlights of the conference include a concert performance by acclaimed violinist Rachel Barton Pine and an evening of jazz with the Regina Carter Quintet and the Arizona State University Symphony Orchestra. World-renowned violin soloist and music educator Midori Goto will lead a collegiate-level master class—one of many offered at the conference. Dr. Kim Dolgin, a noted psychologist, is the keynote speaker for Strings Alive in 2005! and also will present a plenary session on how to handle difficult students.

Educational sessions, held throughout the conference, are offered in seven categories: Alternative Styles, Chamber Music, General, K–12, Private Studio Teacher, University, and String Industry Showcases.

Back by popular demand is the ASTA Silent Auction, which offers attendees the chance to bid on an array of donated items to benefit the National Foundation to Promote String Teaching and Playing.

As always, attendees can visit the conference exhibit hall between educational sessions and other events. The exhibit hall is packed with industry products and services, and exhibitors will be available to answer questions and offer demonstrations.

Strings Alive in 2005! truly offers something for everyone interested in string music. School orchestra directors and music teachers, private studio instructors, alternative styles enthusiasts, university educators, and professional performers alike will benefit from the many exciting offerings of ASTA’s 2005 National Conference.

Complete details about the conference, including registration materials, travel and accommodations information, and session descriptions, can be found at www.astaweb.com.

The American String Teachers Association is committed to advancing string education and performance in the United States and around the world. Its 11,500 members include educators, performers, string industry representatives, students, and string enthusiasts.

**Summer Orchestra Camp
at McDaniel College,
Westminster, Maryland
July 17–23, 2005**

A one-week residential program for
students 14–19
for the intense study of
orchestral skills.

For more information, contact:
Peggy Ward
P.O. Box 517, New Windsor, MD
21776

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