

Inside this issue:

- 2 Message from the President
- 3 ASTACAP Exams Held May 21, 2011
- 4 2011 ASTA National Conference Report
by Daniel Levitov
- 5 ASTA Receives Chester J. Petranek Award
- 6 Working with Kids in a Youth Orchestra
compiled by Judy Silverman
- 8 Memories of Youth Orchestras
by Eight MD/DC Chapter Board Members
- 11 Youth Orchestras in Maryland and D.C.
compiled by Jean Provine
- 15 Fiddle Day 2011
- 16 Reflections on the 2011 Starling-Delay Symposium
by Sachi Murasugi
- 18 The World Loves Music!
compiled by Lorraine Combs
- 21 The Lighter Side



Message from the President

By now everyone is in full swing with their fall schedules. I hope you have a wonderful year planned and will include ASTA in those plans. ASTA gives us so many opportunities to share knowledge and learn more about string teaching and playing.

The **Kurt Sassmannshaus Workshop** took place on September 10 and 11, 2011. I hope many of you attended. He is such an inspirational teacher.

Our chapter's third annual **Fiddle Day** will be on Saturday, October 15, 2011. More information is on page 15 in this issue.

Are there other teachers you would like to see in workshops? Would you like to present a workshop? Please let me know! This is *your* chapter.

Our **Studio Teacher Meetings** are moving to Tuesday, and there will be three of them this year, instead of monthly.

October 18, 2011
January 17, 2012
April 17, 2012.

The meetings will be from 10:30 A.M. to 12 NOON with a potluck lunch afterward. They will be at my house, 17500 Princess Anne Drive, Olney, MD 20832.

The topic of the October 18 meeting will be Norman Doidge, M.D.'s fascinating book, *The Brain That Changes Itself*. I hope to see you there!

Please be sure to put the **ASTACAP exams** in your schedule, as well as the **Solo String Festival**. Dates, as soon as they are available, will be posted on our website: www.asta.net/calendar.php

It's not too early to begin planning to attend next year's **ASTA National Conference**, to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, from March 21–24, 2012. Early Bird Registration deadline is on or before December 15, 2011. You will save a lot of money!

I hope you enjoy the focus of this issue of *Stringendo*. The topic of **Youth Orchestras** is close to my heart. I'm sure I wouldn't be a professional musician if I hadn't had the opportunity to play in a youth orchestra.

Our next issue will have a tribute to **Private Teachers**. Please send a memory of your favorite teacher to me or to our Editor, Jaque Lyman, and be a part of the next issue.

Be sure to read the weekly emails and check the website so you can be a part of all the excitement of our chapter!

Cathy Stewart



ASTACAP Exams Held May 21, 2011

Overview of the Program and Report on the Exams

by Lya Stern, ASTACAP chair, MD/DC Chapter

The ASTA Certificate Advancement Program (ASTACAP) spring exams were held for the 14th year in a row at Catholic University, in Washington, D.C. at the Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, on May 21, 2011.

If you are a teacher who is not yet familiar with ASTACAP, a valuable teaching resource and motivating tool for your students, please read the short summary below. Then go to the Certificate Advancement Program page on our website for complete information. <http://www.asta.net/certificateprogram.php>

The CAP starts at the Foundation level and includes eleven graded levels defined by scales, etudes, pieces, and sight-reading from the equivalent of early Suzuki Book 1 Level to the standard concerto repertoire. The CAP is available for violin, viola, cello, bass and harp. Originating in MD/DC, the CAP has been in use nationally for several years.

The exams, offered by our chapter in winter and spring of each year, provide an annual goal for students, guided by their teachers, to prepare and aim for a high standard of excellence. Upon completion of each level, students receive a Certificate of Achievement issued by the ASTA National Office, an achievement they and their parents are rightly proud of.

The exams are non-competitive and private, and are conducted in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. The flexible repertoire requirements are adaptable to any teaching style and will serve well the average as well as the high achieving student.

Teachers use the CAP repertoire list as a pedagogical resource and use the exams as goals to help motivate and accelerate the rate of progress of their students.

Here are some of the statistics of the May 21, 2011 exams:

A total of 56 students from the studios of 10 teachers took the exam. There were 48 violinists and 8 violists.

The following teachers were represented: Lorraine Combs, Margo Guillory, Slavica Ilic, Larry Keiffer, Anne Marie Patterson, Jean Provine, Judy Shapiro,

Cathy Stewart, Chienmo Wu, and Lya Stern. The teachers who entered students served as monitors. Mark Pfannschmidt supplied invaluable assistance with his thorough data entry of applications and scheduling.

The expert examiners were Gerald Fischbach, Laura Kobayashi, and Nancy Kredel.

Number of students in various levels:

Foundation Level to Level 4: **22 students**

Level 5 to 7: **27 students**

Level 8 to 10: **7 students**

Distribution of grades:

V (Very Good) (some V- and V+): **45 students**

S (Satisfactory) (some S- and S+): **7 students**

N (Needs Improvement Student must retake exam to get a Certificate): **1 student**

Comments Only (Optional. Student plays to show effort and get the examiner's comments. Memorization is not expected, exam is not graded and no Certificate is issued): **3 students**

Honors (To earn this, the student must present an over all superior performance of the entire exam and play one piece from a more advanced level): **7 students**

Together with the winter exams of February 2011 in Silver Spring, Maryland, expertly coordinated by Dorée Huneven and Julianna Chitwood, we had a total of 140 students participating in 2011.

We encourage all teachers who have not yet tried the program, especially viola, cello, bass, and harp teachers, to visit and observe the exams, talk to teachers who have used the program, read all about it, and consider enrolling their students.

Visit <http://www.asta.net/certificateprogram.php> for complete description of the curriculum and exam requirements and rules.

The exams will be offered again in winter and spring 2012 (dates TBA). Watch *Stringendo* and the ASTA MD/DC Chapter website <http://www.asta.net/calendar.php> for dates and locations.

2011 ASTA National Conference Report

by Daniel Levitov, MD/DC Chapter President-Elect

The ASTA National Conference in Kansas City, from March 17–19, 2011, was a fantastic event. Well organized as always, the conference was varied and interesting. There were world-class performers, interesting educational sessions, and exhibitors representing all aspects of our field. Because this is my fifth consecutive conference, seeing old friends is part of the draw for me. My conference experience started early this year when on the SuperShuttle from the Kansas City airport to the hotel, two passengers recognized me from previous conferences!

My first day in Kansas City was occupied by the leadership workshop for Presidents and Presidents-Elect from ASTA chapters all over the country. We were seated at tables with regional neighbors, which allowed for natural networking and collaborations. In between informational presentations by Bob Phillips (National President-Elect) and many others, we were challenged with double bass trivia questions (Bob is a bassist, of course). I answered the first trivia question correctly, and my prize was an excellent chocolate in the shape of Michigan (Bob's home state). That chocolate Michigan tasted great after a long day at the conference!

My session (I presented this to our own chapter at the February 2011 Studio Teachers Meeting) was titled, "One Size Does Not Fit All: A Customized Approach to Teaching the Private Lesson," and I was lucky enough to have my session scheduled as one of the first, which meant that I could relax and enjoy the rest of the weekend. I had a good crowd, and really enjoyed the discussion that followed.

I went to many, many interesting sessions, and I just wanted to highlight a few that I enjoyed or may be of particular interest to our chapter. Many of us will be interested in ASTA's newest publication, the comprehensive ASTA Curriculum 2011. Designed over the course of many years, this book contains over 200 lesson plans for teaching the string essentials, advocacy materials that can be used to help you keep and maintain your school music program, and so much more. The book was so new that the authors still had not actually seen it until

midway through their presentation when it arrived in dramatic fashion. Co-author Steve Benham cradled a copy lovingly before reluctantly letting go of it so we could all have a look. The books were selling like crazy in the exhibit hall, and I am sure many of us will want to have a copy for ourselves, as well as another for our institutions and school administrators. It is truly a fantastic accomplishment. It is published by Alfred and available for purchase on their website.

Rachel Barton Pine, the fantastic concert violinist/early music specialist/fiddler/heavy metal violinist, gave two excellent sessions. The first was a wonderful master class that she taught with a keen ear, a direct and no-nonsense approach, and a sense of kinship with the students. When she demonstrated, she somehow transformed a dry, non-acoustic conference space into a resonant recital hall. Her second session taught participants how to shred like a metalhead. Not only did she have participants (students and teachers alike) headbanging, she explained heavy metal performance practice traditions with the detail and clarity of a musicologist.

Additionally, I went to sessions on preparing for orchestra auditions, exploring little-known gems of the string orchestra repertoire, explaining the physics of strings and string technology, creating and funding ASTA student chapters, and Dalton Potter's session on setting a sound post. In that session he planned to speak for 30 minutes and then give everyone a chance to try setting a post. However, his session was so well attended that not everyone got a chance to do it, so he graciously invited anyone who wanted to give it a try to come by the Potter's booth in the exhibit hall. Every time I walked by, it seemed he was patiently assisting someone. Each session I attended was stimulating and offered opportunities for discussion and networking.

The exhibit hall is always a fun place to hang out. Publishers, instrument dealers, music schools, string makers, and many others set up shop, and attendees get to ask questions, play instruments, browse music, and more. I picked up some music for myself and for my students, and learned about a new cello string on the market. Most of all, this is a space where you

are guaranteed to run into someone you want to talk to. In fact, a couple of hours before I was to take the shuttle to the airport to come back to Baltimore, I ran into Sandra Dackow, and ended up sitting in on her last session, sight-reading some music in her orchestra and spending a few minutes on the podium conducting.

The National Conference is always a great experience, and I am already looking forward to the next one in Atlanta in March 2012. I hope to see you there.



ASTA Receives Chester J. Petranek Award

ASTA was selected by Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras as the 2011 recipient of the Chester J. Petranek Award. Established in 1986, this award was initiated by the MCYO Board of Directors as a tribute to its founder and in celebration of forty years of talented young people creating music. It is presented each year to an individual or group for: ***Outstanding Community Service in Enriching the Musical Life of the Washington Metropolitan Area.***

The CEO of MCYO, Bill Ford, presented the award at the Spring Concert, May 22, 2011, at the Music Center at Strathmore. Catherine Stewart, ASTA MD/DC Chapter President, accepted the award on behalf of ASTA. Assisting in the ceremony were Dorée Huneven, MD/DC Chapter Past President; Lynn Fleming, MD/DC

Chapter Youth Orchestra Liaison; and Jody Gatwood, Associate Professor of violin at CUA. All ASTA members in the audience were asked to stand and were acknowledged by the enthusiastic audience.

Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras recognizes ASTA for its considerable contributions in developing educational standards and opportunities for string teachers and their students, many who become long-time, stellar members of the orchestra program. MCYO's reputation as one of the top youth orchestra programs could not have been achieved without the dedication and commitment to excellence demonstrated by ASTA members. The work of ASTA enables MCYO to meet its own mission and enriches the community by providing a wealth of talent, musical experiences and performances.



Working with Kids in a Youth Orchestra

compiled by Judy Silverman

When you work with kids in a youth orchestra, some of the issues you deal with are different from working with professional musicians and different from what private teachers would be dealing with when they go over the music with students.

Selection of Repertoire: Must be appropriate to the level of students in the orchestra. Must be adequately bowed, fingered, and edited for student use prior to first rehearsal. Repertoire needs to be balanced and varied in terms of difficulty and in style so that quality is not compromised and yet musicians are excited and challenged.

Balance: Students must learn how to listen across sections. Students need to know who is playing the melody, the accompaniment, which notes need to be brought out. Students need to be able to ultimately correct balance within sections and in between them. Melody and moving lines need to prevail. Students need to be engaged in this process of improving balance. Dynamics need to be planned in advance to assist with balance. Kids need to know who has the melody and that they must listen for it while they play. Activating student ears improves balance. Sometimes fixing balance can improve intonation in a student group. Even knowing how to mask pitch issues may be important.

Intonation: Students need to play in tune with their stand partners and within sections and across all the orchestra. Experienced youth orchestra conductors spend appropriate amount of time actually tuning the orchestra to begin with. They also know how to figure out why a passage is out of tune and what can be done to fix it. Quite often experienced conductors may suggest a different fingering, an exercise, or an equipment or embouchure adjustment (in the case of winds). Over time, a well trained group will require less fundamental training and can begin to respond to other players within the ensemble and react to the conductor's gestures. Pitch in winds is very tricky. Playing in sharp keys puts them in scales that highlight the notes that are not as in tune. Flat keys are easier for winds and harder for strings.

Experienced youth orchestra conductors encourage kids to hear unisons and octaves, plus chords.

Matching styles, bow strokes, vibrato, dynamics: Students need to learn the importance of matching tone and style in sections and even with their partners on the same stand. String players need to be instructed as to where to play certain sections with the bow, how fast the bow speed should be in a passage, how much vibrato to use within a passage, how much crescendo or accent or how little. While it might work to just tell a professional group to play softer, a student group may need to know where to adjust the bow to get the correct softer sound—less bow, more at the tip, closer to the fingerboard—many possible conclusions depending on the specific passage. This is difficult for the private teacher to deal with. Even if a teacher correctly assumes a passage is spiccato, there are still decisions to be made as to how high off the string the spiccato will be and where it will be done on the bow. Each individual teacher may have his own idea as to how a section needs to be played and interpreted. The youth orchestra conductor needs to unify all these approaches. A professional group often instinctively knows how to do this with minimal guidance from a conductor. Students except perhaps those at the highest level do not.

Rhythm: Students must learn to play together and accurately. They need to know not just how to count their music but what to listen to in the rest of the orchestra so they are playing all together. Students need to be made aware of who is playing the rhythm and the faster notes so that melodies fit properly in that context. They need to be able to follow a conductor when the tempo is steady and when there are changes of tempi and meter. Experienced youth orchestra conductors give clear signals to musicians and explain them if necessary. It is not always adequate to tell students that a passage is not together especially with younger and less experienced groups. It could be as simple as not listening and matching, but it could be a fingering, string crossing issue, or a bowing, articulation, technical issue.

Other issues: Many youth orchestras have extremely varied skill levels in each section within an orchestra. Many sections are only strong for a few desks. Experienced youth orchestra conductors know how to reach the least experienced players and make them more effective within their sections.

No matter how effectively a studio teacher prepares the music with each student, students must learn to listen in the ensemble and learn how to match others in terms of balance, blend, pitch, rhythmic accuracy, and style. The conductor has to coordinate each player's sound to unify it with the group technically and musically using either repetition, rehearsal suggestion, or conducting gesture.

Conductors with strong pedagogical backgrounds can be more efficient and effective and problem solving within the orchestra. Kids present different issues from professional musicians. A highly artistic performance, one that is performed at the highest technical and musical level, is rooted with solid teaching and fundamentals, and is stimulated and invigorated from a passionate and energetic conductor in rehearsal and in concert.

Suggestions for students:

- Maintain focus and energy throughout a rehearsal.
- Develop an awareness of how your part fits into the whole.
- Understand how orchestral string playing techniques vary from solo techniques, i.e., starting spiccato and pizzicato *from* the string for ensemble.

- Learn to *listen*.
- Learn rehearsal protocol, such as always finding in your part where the conductor is rehearsing, even if it's not with your section since he will quite possibly ask you to play there next.
- Arrive on time to rehearsals and concerts.
- Bring your music and a pencil.
- Make sure your instrument is in good playing condition.
- Bring supplies for your instrument. (Rosin, extra strings, shoulder rest, rock stop, etc.)
- Learn to tune yourself in a large group setting. This involves a lot of practice and listening skills. Learn correct playing posture. (Bow holds, adjusting endpins, holding instruments correctly, using shoulder rests, positioning the music stand so that the student can see the music and the conductor).

In the school setting, there are many different skill levels, so the conductor has to establish a "team spirit" where the stronger players help out the beginners. At the same time the conductor has to challenge the advanced players. Rotate seats and vary which section gets the 1st violin music so that they all have the opportunity to be the leader. Other skills that are important: breathing together, listening across the room, listening for the melody, changing dynamics, etc.

Conductors who gave me input were Scott Herman, Victoria Gau, Jane Weber, and David Levin.



Memories of Youth Orchestras

by Eight MD/DC Chapter Board Members

Ed note: In June 2011, MD/DC Chapter President Cathy Stewart sent this email to all the board members: "I have a special request. I would like this upcoming edition to have articles about Youth Orchestras. I would like everyone to contribute a very short memory of being in Youth Orchestra—for example, what it did for you, what you remember, what you loved, if you still have friends from Youth Orchestra days, tricks you played on conductors etc." Eight board members (including Cathy) sent in their contributions.

Lorraine Combs

When I grew up in Montana in the forties and fifties, public schools in the larger cities and towns had music programs for band, chorus, and orchestra. In my hometown of Great Falls, all ten of the elementary schools had a string program for grades four through six. One teacher covered all ten schools! She went to two schools each weekday. Every Saturday morning the All-City Elementary Orchestra had rehearsals. The same string teacher conducted the orchestra. She handpicked all the string players from her school classes. I vividly remember my first rehearsal with All-City. I was buried somewhere in the second violin section and was in awe of the concertmistress, who was from a different elementary school. She was in fifth grade like me but had been taking private lessons for a while. She was such a wonderful player. There were wind players, too, but I don't know how they were chosen. The All-City Orchestra was huge, as I remember. I think there were probably eighty or more kids. Later on, as we got older, some of us were invited to play in the local symphony with adults. Our junior high and high school orchestras were also very good. The music/drama department of my high school presented a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta every year, complete with pit orchestra. Most of us young musicians would also participate in the all-county and all-state solo festivals. The participants in the all-state solo festivals were automatically members of the annual All-State Orchestra. Over any four-year time period, young musicians from the entire state of Montana all got acquainted with each

other. Many of us also attended the annual summer music camp programs that took place at a couple of the state universities. Every summer camp had a youth orchestra. To top it off, during my senior year in high school, I participated in the huge All-Northwest Orchestra, composed of young musicians from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming! I made many friends during these times, and to this day, I am still in contact (via email and Facebook) with some of the people I knew "way back when"—one of whom is the All-City concertmistress I mentioned before. She and I were in high school and university together. We both eventually got married and raised our families. She now lives in California, and I live in Maryland.

Lynn Fleming

A billion years ago back at the conservatory, I remember several string teachers who would not "permit" their students to play in orchestra. "Their technique would suffer," and "They won't have time to practice," were just a couple of concerns. As it happens, students indeed need time to practice and practice well. And, like everything else in life, balance is the goal. Fundamentally, students learn by doing. Telling someone how to do something is no substitute for the "hands-on" experience. We all know that for sure. How many teachers lecture their students, then send them home to practice? None. We teach by having them do, by teaching them to teach themselves, to listen carefully, to evaluate, and to make good musical decisions. Ideally, we feed them a diet of scales, etudes, solo repertoire, and ensemble music, as well as theory and improvisational techniques. Playing in an orchestra is a different experience. Playing in a group situation means listening differently, learning to match not just pitches, but tone and tone quality, dynamics, bowings, and phrasings. It necessitates thorough knowledge of the music in order to observe the conductor and to learn to self-edit parts. The studio teacher is an important factor in the development of ensemble performance. He or she helps students evaluate their parts, having them ask questions like "Am I playing a melodic line? A note that changes a

chord structure? A rhythmic motif?” We can help our students learn the importance of bow function and the multitude of techniques available to them to “color” the music appropriately. And, finally, it helps to produce good musical citizens. Working in a “team” environment, where each person’s performance is critical to the whole is an incredible feeling. When we lock into a “musical groove” we feed our souls, and the joy and kinship that is shared as a group is nothing short of a miracle.

Jeffrey Howard

Youth Orchestra is always a place to make good friends, play great music, and really get excited about all that music entails. My experiences with youth orchestras personally were rather thin, so I am going to relate a similar story about my High School Orchestra. Now, most youth orchestras arrange trips. Indeed, many of the first trips we take as young people, especially trips outside the U.S., are the result of participation in youth orchestra programs. For me, I was privileged to have a very good and rather large (82 people) High School Orchestra. My senior year, we arranged to travel to Germany and Austria, and to compete in the International Youth and Music Festival in Vienna. It was a spectacular trip for me! I played concertmaster and performed the Saint-Saens Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso with the orchestra as part of the tour. We played in several small towns and also performed on Austrian National Radio. I remember so many wonderful things from this trip! It was tremendously inspiring to visit places where many of the famous composers lived. Indeed “culture” was everywhere. And for a young teenager, it was an eye opening experience. I remember going on my own to a violin shop where I got to try my first “superior” (and rather expensive) violin. I remember the food, of course. I also remember trying to cross the street in Vienna around a huge and very scary traffic circle! But mostly I remember the experience of being with friends and exploring where European music had its origins. It really was this combination of music and friendship and exploration that made the trip not only memorable but special. As I now teach in different youth orchestra programs around the U.S. and abroad, I know that these young people will have many great experiences as I did. I wish you all safe and happy travels, with many adventures in your future!

Dorée Huneven

I’m not sure how I even got the idea of joining the San Gabriel Valley Youth Orchestra during my high school years in the 60’s. It could have come from my orchestra director at John Muir High School in Pasadena, California, as he recommended that I do all-city, all-Southern California and all-state orchestras. Or maybe it came from my private teacher, Elizabeth Mills. At any rate, my father drove me way out to San Gabriel, a 50-minute ride, every Thursday evening for two years. After dropping me off at 7 o’clock, he went off somewhere and picked me up at nine. I hazily remember very little, except that it was rather fun to be with the other kids, and the music was just great! We mostly did arrangements like Borodin’s “On the Steppes of Central Asia,” Ippolitov’s “March of the Sardars,” and excerpts from “West Side Story”—not too heavy or difficult but noisy and a bit raucous—at least how we performed them. This orchestra was not competitive or full of children of ambition-ridden parents. There was a calm audition (which I totally do not remember) and then permanent membership. It was a chance to be immersed in pleasant music and a pleasant atmosphere for a few hours a week and an opportunity to be alone in the car with my tired school-teaching dad, driving in the wide night-lit Southern California streets.

Sachi Murasugi

My very short memory about my youth orchestra days is once Erich Leinsdorf came to rehearse our orchestra when he was in town conducting the Toronto Symphony. When the harp played a solo, he said, “Harpists spend half their time tuning and the other half playing out of tune.” A couple of people hissed but I only got it decades later.

Alessandra Schneider

My first experience with an orchestra was when I auditioned and was accepted into the String Preparatory Orchestra. This orchestra, for fifth and sixth graders, was a prestigious group in the Princeton, New Jersey area. The group was arranged such that you auditioned to get in and then you auditioned again with the orchestra music for seating. (We rotated prior to the auditions.) Although I am not a competitive person by nature, I remember

working really hard and looking forward to these auditions. I would say that being in an orchestra was a huge motivating factor for me in my musical career. It provided many musical and personal experiences that one cannot get from individual lessons alone. From reflecting on my first experience for this article, I came up with a list of things I learned. Orchestra exposed me to (in no particular order):

- New music
- Listening outside my own part
- Coloring the music with a story
- Working hard with others towards a common goal
- Organizing my time between orchestra music and private lesson material
- Motivation to succeed
- Preparing and playing in an audition
- Friendships
- Community
- Following the leader (or principal player)
- Leading a section with confidence

I would recommend all children be part of some kind of musical group. In my own Suzuki studio, my students take group classes until they are old enough and advanced enough to join the surrounding orchestras. In fact, the group classes prepare students for orchestras as they learn many of the items from the list above. Orchestra is something I can never do without, as it offers so many life-long lessons.

Jeffrey Schoyen

I played in the Atlanta Youth Symphony at its very beginning in the early 70's. Being a kid from the fairly rural suburbs, this was a fantastic experience for me. I can remember master classes given by Perlman and Zukerman at the beginning of their careers. Starker and Harrel were cellists who also gave classes. One time at rehearsal I crashed a rest in Beethoven's 5th (very much a solo). To this day I'm very careful when I get to that particular spot!

Cathy Stewart

My favorite Youth Orchestra memory is playing Bloch's Concerto Grosso in the Louisville Youth Orchestra Chamber Orchestra. Our conductor, Arvo Aho, was an elderly violinist who loved working with us. He regaled us with stories of escorting Jascha Heifetz to performances in WWII. His joy and enthusiasm for the group was obvious in his approach to the music. He had very high standards, expecting flawless intonation, precise rhythm, and extraordinary dynamics. We always rose to meet or surpass his expectations. There were moments when we all played beautifully together and most importantly, felt the music together. It was as if we were all one person, breathing, thinking and feeling together. These were magic moments. Forty years later, and I still remember them. Experiencing that "magic" is the wonder of music, and it is why I play.



Youth Orchestras in Maryland and D.C.

compiled by Jean Provine

The Academy of St. Cecilia Youth Orchestra

Location:

Damascus, MD

Website:

www.ascyo.org

Contact person:

Lerna May-Frandsen
talenthntr@aol.com
301-821-1162

Ensembles that include strings:

1. Youth Orchestra
Grades 5–6
2. Chamber Orchestra
Grades 3–5
3. Prep. strings
Grades 1–2

Rehearsal place/time:

Damascus, MD
Tuesday nights

Concerts:

December, April, May

Application deadline:

None

Audition date:

Late August

General audition requirements:

Solo, scales, sight reading

Cost per year:

\$155

American Youth Philharmonic

Location:

Annandale, VA

Website:

www.aypo.org

Contact person:

Holly Hanneke
info@aypo.org
703-642-8051

Ensembles that include strings:

1. Philharmonic
2. Symphonic Orchestra
3. Concert Orchestra
4. String Ensemble

Rehearsal place/time

No. VA schools
Monday nights

Concerts:

3–4 per year, Sundays

Application deadline:

Early April

Audition date:

Late May, early June

General audition requirements:

Solo, scales, orchestra excerpt, sight reading

Cost per year:

\$700–\$950
Scholarships available

Chesapeake Youth Symphony

Location:

Annapolis MD

Website:

www.cysomusic.org

Contact person:

Linda Foss
execdir@cysomusic.org
443-758-3157

Ensembles that include strings:

1. Symphony MMEA Level 6+
2. Concert MMEA Levels 4–5
3. String MMEA Level 3
4. Preparatory Strings MMEA Levels 1–2

Rehearsal place/time:

Annapolis MD
Thursday nights

Concerts:

December, March, May

Application deadline:

None

Audition date:

May, early June
New members: late August

General audition requirements:

Solo, scales, sight reading

Cost per year:

\$350 for String and Prep.
\$500 for Symphony and Concert

College Park Youth Orchestra

Location:

College Park, MD

Website:

www.cpyo.net

Contact person:

Richard Biffel
admin@cpyo.net
richard@biffel.com
301-927-8753

Ensembles that include strings:

1. Intermediate Strings, Grades 4–5+
2. Primary Strings, Grades 1–3

Rehearsal place/time:

College Park, MD
Sunday afternoons

Concerts:

December, March, June

Application deadline:

August 31

Audition date:

Early September

General audition requirements:

For Intermediate only: Scales, excerpt, solo, sight reading

Cost per year:

\$275

DC Youth Orchestra Program

Location:

NE Washington, DC

Website:

www.dcyop.org

Contact person:

Ava Spece
ava@dcyop.org
202-723-1612
or: info@dcyop.org

Ensembles that include strings:

1. Youth Orchestra
2. Jr. Philharmonic
3. Six graded String Ensembles
Includes group classes
Chamber Ensembles available

Rehearsal place/time:

E. Capitol St., D.C.
Saturdays, but in summer on weeknights

Concerts:

2–6 per year for most students

Application deadline:

None

Audition date:

Y.O.: late August
Others: by appointment

General audition requirements:

Advanced only: Scales, solo, excerpt, sight reading
Others: any piece

Cost per year:

0–\$225 per semester
0–\$300 non DC resident
Various aid plans

Frederick Regional Youth Orchestra

Location:

Frederick, MD

Website:

www.fryo.org

Contact person:

Peggy Alley
fryolady@hotmail.com
301-695-1187

Ensembles that include strings:

1. Philharmonic
2. Symphonia
3. Concert Strings

Rehearsal place/time:

Monday nights

Performances:

November, December, March, May

Application deadline:

None

Audition date:

New members: April and mid-August
Members: mid-August

General audition requirements:

Scales, sight reading, solo for upper levels.

Cost per year:

\$275

Greater Baltimore Youth Orchestra

Location:

Timonium, MD

Website:

http://gbyomusic.org

Contact person:

info@gbyoa.org
410-617-1524

Ensembles that include strings:

1. Youth Orchestra
2. Concert
3. Two String Prep. ensembles

Rehearsal place/time:

Timonium, MD
Sunday afternoons

Performances:

4–8 per year

Application deadline:

2–3 weeks before audition

Audition date:

early June, early September

General audition requirements:

Y.O. and Concert: Scales, excerpt, sight reading.

Prep ensembles: none

Cost per year:

Y.O./Concert: \$510

Prep. Ensembles: \$275

Landon Symphonette**Location:**

Bethesda, MD

Website:

www.landon.net

Contact person:

Richard Weilenmann

703-527-0734

Ensembles that include strings:

1. Symphonette

2. Chamber Orchestra

Young players mixed with professionals. Members play as many concerts as they like. Two rehearsals before each performance.

Rehearsal place/time:

Landon School

Bethesda, MD

Performances:

about 5–8 year, usually on Saturday

Application deadline:

None

General audition requirements:

None. Students are recommended by their teacher and must be of high standard.

Cost per year:

No fee

Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras**Location:**

N. Bethesda, MD

Website:

www.mcyo.org

Contact person:

Cheryl Jukes

cheryl@mcyo.org

301-581-5208

Ensembles that include strings:

1. Philharmonic

2. Chamber Orchestra

3. Symphony

4. Young Artists

5. Chamber Strings

6. Prep. Strings

7. Quartets

Levels assigned by school grade

Rehearsal place/time

Music Center at Strathmore

N. Bethesda, MD

Wednesday evenings

Performances:

December, March, May

Outreach performances

Application deadline:

Register online

June to mid-August

Audition date:

Late August

General audition requirements:

Scales, solo, excerpt, sight reading

Cost per year:

\$575–\$700

Scholarships available

Maryland Youth Symphony**Location:**

Catonsville, MD

Website:

www.myso.info

Contact person:

Margaret Gatto

mgattomyso@aol.com

410-442-5645

Ensembles that include strings:

One full orchestra: Maryland Youth Symphony Orchestra, Grade 6+

Rehearsal place/time:

CCBC, Catonsville, MD

Saturdays, 1:00–4:30

Performances:

November, February, May

Application deadline:

Audition date:

June, late August

General audition requirements:

Scales, solo, sight reading

Cost per year:

\$425

Peabody Preparatory Youth Orchestra

Location:

Baltimore, MD

Website:

<http://www.peabody.jhu.edu/youthorchestras>

Contact person:

Peabody Preparatory Main Office
410-234-4630

Ensembles that include strings:

1. Youth Orchestra
2. Young Artists Orchestra
3. Preparatory Orchestra

Rehearsal place/time:

Peabody Institute, Baltimore
Saturday afternoons, 1:00–3:00

Performances:

2–3 per year

Application deadline:

Call main office prior to audition date.

Audition date:

Early September

General audition requirements:

Piece, Scales, Sight reading
Specifics on website

Cost per year:

\$560–\$826, depending on ensemble
See website

Potomac Valley Youth Orchestra

Location:

Potomac, MD

Website:

www.pvyo.org

Contact person:

Jennifer Mitchell
executive_director@pvyo.org

Ensembles that include strings:

1. Philharmonia
2. Symphony
3. Concert
4. Preparatory

Levels assigned by school and playing grade

Rehearsal place/time:

Potomac, MD
Mon., Tues., or Wed. night, depending on ensemble

Performances:

December, May

Application deadline:

Registration begins early August

Audition date:

Mid-September

General audition requirements:

Scales, sight reading, solo or excerpt/etude, depending on ensemble

Cost per year:

~\$400, depending on ensemble

Rockville Regional Youth Orchestra

Location:

Rockville, MD

Website:

www.rockvillemd.gov/arts/rryo.htm

Contact person:

Julie Farrell
jfarrell@rockvillemd.gov

Ensembles that include strings:

Youth Orchestra (includes winds, brass)
Grades 1–2

Rehearsal place/time:

Rockville
Tuesday afternoons, 5:30–6:45

Performances:

January, June

Application deadline:

Audition date:

Early September & early February

General audition requirements:

Scales, solo, sight reading

Cost per year:

\$175

Salisbury Youth Orchestra

Location:

Salisbury, MD

Website:

refer to: www.salisbury.edu

Contact person:

Dr. Jeffrey Schoyen
jgschoyen@salisbury.edu
410-543-6381

Ensembles that include strings:

One full orchestra
School grades: 3rd–12th

Rehearsal place/time:

Salisbury University
Thursday 7–9 p.m.

Performances:

December, May

Application deadline:

None

Audition date:

Early September

General audition requirements:

Solo, sight reading

Cost per year:

\$75 per semester

**ASTA MD/DC Chapter
Presents the Third Annual
Fiddle Day!
Saturday, October 15, 2011**

Generously sponsored by Gailes' Violin Shop and Lashof Violins

Join us for a morning of workshops with professional fiddlers

**ANDREA HOAG
and
ELLEN JACOBS**

- When:** Saturday, October 15, 2011, 8:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.
- Where:** The Lutheran Church of Saint Andrew
15300 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20905
- Who:** Teachers and students (*In order to participate, students must be at least age 7, and must be on or beyond Minuet 1, Suzuki Book 1*)
Begin or feel more comfortable playing and/or teaching fiddle styles!
Expand your knowledge of different fiddle styles!
Bring your instrument, your questions about teaching and performing fiddle styles, and your enthusiasm!
- Registration:** Registration forms will be considered until October 8, 2011.
- Cost:** \$25 for ASTA members or students of ASTA members, \$30 for non-members.

For more information and a registration form, please visit www.asta.net/eventdetails.php.



Reflections on the 2011 Starling-Delay Symposium

by Sachi Murasugi

I remember two years ago receiving my Autumn 2009 issue of *Stringendo* and reading Cathy Stewart's enthusiastic account of the Starling-Delay Symposium. I made a mental note then that I would try to go the next time around. So in late May I found myself on a train to Penn Station to attend the *2011 Starling-Delay Symposium on Violin Studies* held at the Juilliard School.

"What are some of the problems you anticipate?" the application for a university grant that I was applying for had asked. Struggling to find an answer, I recalled Cathy's article. "Relating the exceptionally high level of performance and teaching I will encounter at the Symposium to this liberal arts university community," I finally wrote with some trepidation. In retrospect, though, it hasn't been difficult to relate what I learned at the event to my students, most of whom do not aspire to professional music careers.

Granted, the ten student artists who were selected from the U.S., Canada, and Europe to perform in the master classes were exceptionally talented, preparing for careers as concertmasters, soloists, and chamber musicians. Having few technical issues to deal with, faculty artists who led the master classes generally focused on musical ideas. One exception was Ida Kavafian, who moved seamlessly from musical to technical issues, providing students with insightful comments. "If you tend to use too much vibrato, then try playing without vibrato, shading the music only with timing and the bow," she suggested to one student after a lovely performance of Schubert's "Grand Duo." She also reminded her that in Schubert accents are usually expressive and recommended that she "practice the triplet passages slowly to feel the shapes and play every note with love."

During a panel discussion, Dorothy Delay's former students, including surprise guest, Sarah Chang, discussed their teacher's nurturing and collaborative approach (as well as her penchant for eating and food, which she also shared with her students). When asked during his master class what he learned about

teaching from Delay, Itzhak Perlman responded, "To involve the student in the process and ask them what they think." He recounted a time when he played out of tune during a lesson. "Instead of telling me the note was sharp or flat," he said, "Miss Delay asked me, 'What is your concept of G#?' I was a bit annoyed because I just wanted her to tell me which way to move my finger." In the end though, Perlman prefers this subtle approach to an authoritarian one. "At a certain level the most important thing is to listen," he said, then later added, "It's not the student with the fastest fingers that does well but the student with the fastest ears."

As I listened to the faculty and the students perform, I got the impression that playing violin is easy. However, Brian Lewis, in his very entertaining class, *Teaching Individuality in the Music of Fritz Kreisler*, reminded us that technical and musical mastery requires time, effort, and commitment. "Once I asked Miss Delay how I could improve my up-bow staccato," he said. "She told me that for up-bow staccato I should practice Kreutzer No. 4 every day—for a year." Another time he told us that everyone has a magic number. (The number of consecutive times one needs to play something accurately in order for it to become consistent.) "My magic number was..." he said with a dramatic pause, "Fifty!"

During the last two days, Julie Lyonn Lieberman presented some very useful classes: *Joint and Muscle Physiology: A Walking Tour*; and *An Ergonomics Approach to Practice and Performance*. She gave us helpful pointers on developing and maintaining healthy positioning while we play. I could feel the stretch in my chest and shoulders as I followed her directions. "Interlace your hands behind your head while you open and close your elbows," she said. Then she called out, "Keep breathing!" as we all fell silent, concentrating on our stretches.

A poignant moment came when a fifty-something woman asked Lieberman what she knows of degenerative diseases. "All my life I've been helping

injured people play the violin,” she said, continuing in a faltering voice. “But now I find myself injured and don’t know what to do about it.” After a few consoling words and a hug, Lieberman observed, “Yes, we all love to play, don’t we?” The question hung in the air, and it occurred to me that yes, we’ve all come—some from as far away as Asia, South America, and Australia—precisely because we love to play and are eager to learn more. I was there with likeminded people. I felt inspired and energized.

Returning home six days later, I was brimming with enthusiasm and fresh ideas, eager to share what I’ve learned with my students. However, trying to be subtle and understated á la Delay takes much

more restraint, creativity, and patience than I had envisioned. After a day of teaching, I’m tired and more grounded in reality, and for some odd reason, the idea of Chinese takeout and a plateful of pastries suddenly seems terribly consoling.

Information and application form for the next Symposium will be available January 2013 at: symposium@juilliard.edu.



Dr. Sachi Murasugi is full-time Lecturer of Upper Strings at Salisbury University. She can be reached at scmurasugi@salisbury.edu



The World Loves Music!

compiled by Lorraine Combs

There is a website called MusicNotes (www.musicnotes.com) where one can download lots of sheet music (for a fee). If you join, you get one free download (their choice) each month. Much of the music on this website may not necessarily be things that string players and teachers are interested in, but occasionally you might find something in their vast collection that you will want to purchase. This website also has a Facebook page. In the past they have asked their Facebook followers: “What are you learning to play?” Here is a collection of answers. I found it exhilarating to read through them! Music is alive and well in our world! Enjoy!

Liszt Piano Concerto No. 2

“100 Years” by Five for Fighting!!! I just printed it from the webpage last week!!! Love it!!

“United States of Eurasia” by Muse!!

Contemporary gospel, Marvin Sapp, more like enjoying.

Learning to sing all the alto solos in ‘Messiah’ for this season as a counter-tenor.

“Scenes From An Italian Restaurant” on piano.

The score to “I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change”

The tenor saxophone. (I know it’s not a song but Grade 9 music class so yeah)

The guitar.

Forrest Gump Suite!

“Exogenesis” Part III

Attempting to compose the funkier tune I have yet to date. I have invited over a few skunks, for inspiration. Perhaps even to visit a cesspool. Now that’s funky!

“Smile” by Simply Red. Having a go at arranging for 4-part a cappella.

“Land of 1,000 Dances” and “Joy to the World”... (Jeremiah was a bull frog)

The flute.

“Empire State of Mind” by Alicia Keys!

“Just The Motion” on guitar by Richard and Linda Thompson. Sweet.

“Waterfall” by Jon Schmidt

Moonlight Sonata

“Memory” from Cats as well as some from Inception and Beethoven

“Tennessee” from Pearl Harbor on piano

“Danse Macabre” by Camille Saint-Saens.

“The Wizard and I” from Wicked. Stephen Schwartz, I bow to your infinite wisdom...

“On My Own”

Olly Murs: “Please Don’t Let Me Go”

“Blackbird” by the Beatles.

Mendelssohn’s Praeludium in E Minor

Liebesträum, it’s kicking my behind.

“King of Anything” by Sara Bareilles (we want more songs off the new album, guys!)

“Bright and Beautiful” (hymn) on flute.

Bolling’s Suite for Flute and Piano, yikes—it’s tough.

Trans Siberian Orchestra.

Gymnopédie

“Harlem Nocturne”

Wild Cherry. Learning “Play That Funky Music” main riff on tuba.

“Halo” by Beyonce and “Gravity” by Sara Bareilles.

I’m currently working on “Ave Maria” by J.S. Bach on guitar.

“Bring Me to Life” on the piano

“Alejandro” haha

Rhapsody in Blue

Für Elise

The left hand of Für Elise. Only in the middle bit
“He’s a Pirate” by Hans Zimmer and Klaus Badelt
“Gipsy Dance” by Lichner

“Somewhere” from West Side Story. Just got it from MusicNotes last week. Beautiful expressive piece. Next one on deck is “If I Only Had a Brain” from The Wizard of Oz. MusicNotes rocks.

“A River Flows in You.” Purchased it yesterday.

Mozart’s Fantasy, No. 3 (K.397) and the works of Tom Lehrer.

“Because of You” by Kelly Clarkson. Then I’m going to tackle “Anyway” by Martina McBride.

“All By Myself” on accordion

“Sally’s Song” by Amy Lee

“The Meadow” by Alexandre Desplat on piano. It’s beautiful.

“Requiem For a Dream” the movie song

“The Piano!” “Down by the Sally Gardens” in D≤
Acoustic guitar.

Moonlight Sonata. Feels like I’ve been at it a lifetime. (Yep, the Moonlight takes a lifetime for sure.)

Brahms! Liebeslieder Waltzes (piano 4-hands & choir), and some Brahms Intermezzos on the side.

Some Mendelsohn because I have a piano student working on it and I need to get it under my fingers. Also lots of pop stuff for my singers.

Carole King and James Taylor! I just saw them in concert and still flying high!

“I Call it Art” by The Kills

“Suddenly Seymour” (Little Shop Of Horrors) Alan Menken

Beethoven’s Pathetique Sonata

“All I Want to Do” by Ginny Owens. Simple but beautiful.

“The Point of No Return” by Andrew Lloyd Webber

Guitar. (I’m a very good pianist, a choir teacher, and a band teacher who plays just about everything! But I really struggle with playing the guitar and all of the other string instruments!

Jazz piano.

“Dizzy Fingers”

Paul McCartney & Denny Laine’s “Mull of Kintyre” and John Denver’s “This Old Guitar” & “Perhaps Love”

Pomp and Circumstance

John Denver in choral

“Fireworks” by Debussy

“Right Now” by Eddie van Halen on piano. It’s pretty sweet.

Piano. I have just started and I am picking it up very well with your help. Thank you. I play cello as well. And the piece I love at the moment and learning to play is “Hallelujah” by Rufus Wainwright.

“I’ve Got You Under My Skin”

“Lullaby” and “Canon in C” —theme in My Sassy Girl

“Black Coffee,” “Peel Me a Grape,” and “Love For Sale”...doing a benefit concert in three weeks

“Claire de Lune” by Debussy

“Song for My Father,” “Autumn Leaves,” “Blue Train”...I really want the sheet music to Candy Dulfer’s songs

The Ice Dance from Edward Scissorhands

Waltz for Debby

Blackberry Blossom on the dobro

Working on “Midnight Sun”...great, yet tricky intervals.

Gerry Rafferty’s “Baker Street” saxophone solo.

The piano part on the Allman Brothers Bands “Jessica”

Jane’s Song by Christopher Norton...working on it. Have the first part pretty well down. Need to work on middle section.

Beethoven's Hammerklavier Sonata
 "Rondo Alla Turca"
 Military Etude by Chopin
 Fields of Gold by Sting
 "Everything I Do, I Do It For You" by Bryan Adams
 Beethoven's Sonatina for mandolin and harpsichord
 in C Major, but I can't find piano music for it!
 "Every Valley Shall Be Exalted" by George Fredrick
 Handel ugh those runs kill me!!!
 Canon by Yiruma and Looking Through Your Eyes
 by LeAnn Rimes
 Enchanted Island
 Angry Young Man and Scenes from An Italian
 Restaurant by Billy Joel
 We Do What We Can by Sheryl Crow
 Minute Waltz and Waldstein
 Air On the G String for violin.
 Rachmaninoff's Op.3, No. 2, Prelude in C Minor. I
 can play all but last page and 1/2. My piano teacher is
 helping me.
 Silent Hill Theme on piano
 Al Stewart's "The Year of the Cat"
 The soundtrack to Bunny and the Bull by Ralfe Band,
 on piano
 Tokio Hotel's Rescue Me
 Kiss "Rock and Roll All Night"
 "The Heart asks Pleasure First" by Michael Nyman
 (from The Piano)
 Little Guitars (Intro) by Van Halen.
 Chopin Revolutionary and The Dancer by Levi
 Gunardi.
 Endless Love, and All By Myself
 Sultans of Swing by Dire Straits
 Memorizing a full repertoire of Irish fiddle tune
 standards.
 Hank Marvin's solo on Livin' Doll
 "Inventing Shadows" by Dia Frampton! On piano
 obviously

Dueling Banjos on guitar.
 Concerning Hobbits by Howard shore (Lord of the
 Rings)
 Orange Blossom Special on my violin. Hungarian
 Rhapsody on my piano. Johnny Be Good on my
 guitar.
 Don't Rain On My Parade from Funny Girl.
 Broadway songs are amazing but really hard.
 Anytime by Brian McKnight.
 Rachmaninoff's G Minor Prelude. I think he had
 more fingers than I do!
 Donna Lee
 Chopin Preludes
 Classical Gas by Mason Williams



String Section The Lighter Side

Lutheran's Guide to the Orchestra: The String Section

Strings are mentioned in scripture, and some young Lutherans are tempted to become string players. But you want to be careful.

First Violin

The first violin is a problem for a Lutheran because it's a solo virtuoso instrument, and Lutherans are humble and decent people. The first violins see the maestro look to them first, and most of them believe that he secretly takes his cue from watching their bows go up and down. The maestro, who has a great nimbus of hair and is here on a temporary work permit, is hypnotized by listening to the violins and forgets which page he's on and looks to the violins to find out what's going on—this is what most violinists believe in their hearts. They also believe that if the maestro dropped dead, the orchestra would just follow the violins while his body was carried off into the wings, and nobody in the audience would notice any difference except that now they would have an unobstructed view of the violin section. Is this a place for a Lutheran to be? Did our Lord say "Blessed are they who stand up in front and take deep bows, for they shall receive bigger fees?" No, He did not.

Second Violin

The second violin section is attractive to Lutherans because these people are steady, supportive, and helpful, but look who it is they help—they help out the first violins. You want to play second fiddle to that crowd? (I hope not.) One thing you may not know about second violins is that the parts are so easy they never practice, and they wind up staying out late in singles bars on the freeway near the airport and dancing with software and fertilizer salespeople. But I guess that's their way.

Viola

The viola section is no place for a Lutheran, and here you have to take my word for it because I know violists and they're okay until late at night, when

they like to build a fire in a vacant lot and drink red wine and roast a chicken on a clothes hanger and talk about going to Mexico with somebody named Rita. Violists have this dark, moody, gypsy streak, especially when they get older and they realize that their instrument for some reason cannot be heard beyond the stage. You think you hear the violas, but it's really the second violins.

Cello

The cello section seems pleasant, and cellists seem like such nice people. The way they put their arms around their instruments, they look like parents at a day care center zipping up snowsuits. They seem like us: comfortable, mid-range, able to see both sides of things. And yet, there's something about the cello that's hard to put your fingers on. It just doesn't seem right. Maybe it's the way they hold the instrument the way they do. Why can't they hold it across their laps? Or beside themselves? I'm only asking.

Bass

The bass is a very deliberate instrument, the plow horse of the orchestra. Bass players do tend to be more methodical, not so spontaneous or witty or brilliant necessarily, but reliable. Which makes the instrument appealing to Lutherans. And yet bass notes do have a certain texture and a tone, a darkness, a depth that—my gosh, when you see those guys pick up their bows back there, doesn't it make you think the same thing that I do? And if we do, just imagine what they're thinking about.

Harp

The harp is a good instrument for any Lutheran because it keeps you humble and keeps you at home. You can't run around with a harp because it's hard to get them in and out of cars. It takes fourteen hours to tune a harp, and it remains in tune for about twenty minutes or until somebody opens the door. It's an instrument for a saint.

